

Supporting The Home.

Text: John 7:53

1) Materially

Suggested Hymns:

2) Spiritually

619, 822, 589, 587, 609

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is John 7:53, ⁵³ *And everyone went to his own house.* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

“*Home*” is one of the richest and deepest words in our language. When a little child says, “*I want to go home to mummy,*” or when a patient at a hospital informs us, “*Tomorrow I am going home,*” or when an aged pilgrim reveals his pre-sentiment of death by saying, “*I am going home to my Lord,*” it is then that we feel somewhat the deep and rich significance of that beautiful word “home.”

We all long to be in our eternal home with Jesus in heaven as we read in 2 Corinthians 5:8, ⁸ *We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.*¹

In the English language we first meet the word “home” in the form of “hem” or “ham.” It is a form that is still preserved in many English place-names, for instance, Birmingham, the dwelling-place of the Beormings, Cheltenham, Durham, Nottingham, the dwelling-place of the (S)notings.

This is very similar to the German place-names of Hochheim, Mannheim, and Muehlheim.

Long before John Howard Payne in 1823 sang: “*Be it ever so humble, there’s no place like home,*” John Heywood, way back in 1546 wrote “*Home is homely, though it be poor in sight.*”

We are most interested, however, in the Bible's declarations and directions about the home, and our present concern is to show what God's Word has to tell us about supporting the home.

Our text suggests this subject very effectively. Our theme is *Supporting the Home, Materially and Spiritually*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. Supporting the Home Materially.

In the Bible we meet the word home for the first time in the story of Joseph, who at that time was far away from his father's home, which happened to be a tent.

Joseph was sold to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh *and* captain of the guard.² In Egypt, at the house of Potiphar, his wife tried to seduce Joseph for he "***was handsome in form and appearance.***"³ You recall the story. Note that if it was a Jewish woman who tried such a thing she would have been put to death by strangulation or stoning according to the Law.

How significant it is that we meet with the word "home" for the first time in the Bible in the story of Joseph! Do you think that this woman was supporting her home? Certainly not! Joseph, the young Hebrew man however, was laying a good foundation for future home happiness.

But for the present time let us note well that the tent in which Jacob dwelt in Canaan, the house in which Potiphar lived in Egypt, the hut of the African native, the igloo of the Eskimo, the wigwam of the American Indian, was and is in each case "home," adapted to the respective persons' needs and requirements. Never make fun of any one's particular kind of dwelling-place.

Now, in our text we are told, ⁵³ ***And everyone went to his own house*** and in the next verse, "***But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.***" What a stark contrast!

Every person, after having heard Jesus teaching at the Feast of Tabernacles,⁴ and having discussed them,⁵ went to his own house. Jesus, however, went to the Mount of Olives. This at once reminds us of what Scripture tell us, namely, that during His ministry Jesus had no permanent home.

We read in Matthew 8:20, ²⁰ *And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."*⁶ Jesus was homeless that we might have homes.

We lost our home in Paradise, but Jesus regained it by being homeless. Yes, God, who is our Dwelling-place in all generations, sets the solitary, for whom it is not good to be alone, in families, in houses.⁷ And by the divine command *"You shall not covet your neighbor's house,"*⁸ God has safeguarded to each one his own house.

And His threat stands to this day against those who violate God's sacred command. We read in Isaiah 5:8, ⁸ *Woe to those who join house to house; They add field to field, Till there is no place Where they may dwell alone in the midst of the land!* The scribes and Pharisees even devoured widows' houses!

How kind our heavenly Father is! But how heartless, greedy and covetous man is! Such a man is not supporting the home.

There is need in our day of reminding ourselves again and again that God is the Giver of the home and that He has safeguarded the home by most positive commands, which man must observe if chaos and ruin are to be avoided.

But if God is the Giver of the home and the family, and if His divine Law protects that home from outside intrusion, do you think for one moment that God has nothing to say to those living in the individual home by way of moral duties placed upon them? God has much to say!

The Book of Proverbs, Ephesians, Colossians, First and Second Timothy, and Titus are full of directions about family life in the home. God has indeed a great deal to say to us about our home.

The fact that by divine design every man has his own home, involves that the most basic and important duty of supporting the home, is supporting it materially or, as we like to say, financially. This duty is placed primarily upon the head of the family.

The material needs of mankind are the same the world over: food, clothing, shelter, fuel, and tools. There are only five! These five needs every father is held by God's Moral Law to provide for his family.

In writing his instructions to Timothy, Paul prescribes principles and practises that are valid for the Church throughout all time, and among them we find this decisive declaration.

We read in 1 Timothy 5:8, ⁸ ***But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.***

The apostle emphasises: “***especially for those of his household.***” In other words, particularly for his own family. And his verdict and judgement upon such a man could not be more severe: “***he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.***”

A man who does not provide for his own violates and strangles the deep-seated, natural law of God placed in his heart at creation. Even the fish in the sea, the birds of the air, the animals of the earth, support, and provide for their own. Self-respecting pagans and unbelievers by natural, inborn knowledge provide for their own, and a Christian man must also provide for his own family.

A man who wilfully neglects his home, no matter what his excuse or pretence, is worse than an unbeliever. That is sound doctrine, sane judgement, and valid for all times in all places. Even these wicked men of whom our text speaks supported their homes. There is never and nowhere an excuse for the morally responsible head of the family to neglect or desert his own.

And yet, think for a moment of the many, many homes where the father has deserted his wife and children, leaving the entire work of supporting and rearing the children to the mother.

Think also of those homes where a lazy and irresponsible father can calmly witness his wife burdened with the ways and means of making a living for the family.

Think of all the handicaps and drawbacks that have been placed upon children by fathers who have deserted them. How inhuman! Yet, cases of fathers and even mothers forsaking their children are known among all peoples.

We read in Psalm 27:10, ¹⁰ ***When my father and my mother forsake me, Then the LORD will take care of me.*** And in Isaiah 49:15, ¹⁵ ***“Can a woman***

forget her nursing child, And not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, Yet I will not forget you.

How is it with you at your own house? Are you supporting your home, providing for your family? We read in 2 Corinthians 12:14b, *For the children ought not to [save] up for the parents, but the parents for the children.*

Are you meeting your obligations fully, freely, and cheerfully? And are you rearing your children to become providers for the next generation? *“He who does not teach his son a trade teaches him to steal,”* says a proverb.

Indeed, the father who does not teach his son a trade or a profession, the mother who does not teach her daughter the duties of a housewife, such parents are teaching dangerous doctrine, dangerous to them and the next generation.

See the beautiful description, for instance, upon the virtues of a good wife, as written in Proverbs 31:10—31.

To be sure, there are times when life’s journey bears upon us, when the support of a family becomes difficult, and even trying.

But remember especially two promises of your Lord at such times. 1 Corinthians 10:13, ¹³ *No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.*

And Hebrews 13:5, ⁵ *Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”*

Also remember the words of Jesus in Matthew 6:30–34, ³⁰ *Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?* ³¹ *“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’”* ³² *For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.*

³³ *But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.* ³⁴ *Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for*

tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

2. Supporting the Home Spiritually.

Providing for the home financially, or materially, is, however, not the only support needed to make a real home. A man may give bountifully in a material way to his home and household and yet not be supporting it in the real sense of the word. *“It takes a heap of living to make a home.”*⁹ The head of the family will have to give of his time, of his thought, of his care, and, above all, of his love to his home, his wife, and his children.

Just how much time do you devote to your home? Is your home merely an eating-place? merely a place to sleep? Are all your leisure hours spent at the club, on the golf-links, or elsewhere away from home?

After the men referred to in our text had heard Jesus speak at the Feast of Tabernacles in the Temple,¹⁰ they did not go to a club or other place of entertainment. No, to their credit and for our example it is said, *And everyone went to his own house*, to be with those whom God, *“sets ... in families,”*¹¹ and has committed them to His care.

With their loved ones they spent their time. Now, how much time do you give to your own home? Young man, young lady, you, mother, you, father, how much?

There maybe a serious need for some of us to wend our way back to the home, to love our own home, and to spend more time there than we have been doing. The times in which we live are a gentle warning from the Lord, bidding us, perhaps even compelling us, to use time’s precious hours to support our home more faithfully than in the past.

Life, after all, is not golfing, show-going, idly passing by time at clubs, or wasting time on modern screen devices. Life, real life, is found in the home, in the family circle.

As many people cannot find the space of one hour a week, one hour out of 168 hours, to be in the house of God on Sundays because they have so many other interests to support, so many can hardly find one hour a day to spend

enjoyably and pleasantly with their own family because they have so many interests outside of their home circle.

This ought not so to be. Give generously of your time to the family which God has given you.

And how much thought do you give to your home and family? To provide for your own materially requires time and thought, to be sure, and it may require more time and thought in these times than previously. But you must support your home with spiritual thought above all, having regular family devotions.

If the right spirit and the proper mind are present in your home, the material support will not be nearly so difficult. Thus we read of Jacob that he served Laban, his uncle, seven years for Rachel; and, — what's coming? — and they seemed to him but a few days, for — what's next? — for the love he had for her.

We read of this in Genesis 29:20, ²⁰ *So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed only a few days to him because of the love he had for her.* Did you hear that? A marvellous statement!

Seven years of service, and it was by no means easy service;¹² yet they seemed to Jacob but a few days — yes, it says, a few days — for the love he had for her.

There we have the secret of a service that does not notice time at all, a service prompted by love. Surely the word love and the word home belong together, very closely together.

If you have faith in God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for without faith it is impossible to please Him, you will have love.¹³ In other words, if you have faith in Christ, you will also have that normal, natural, sound domestic love which loves your nearest neighbours, your wife and children.

For this is the very love prescribed in the Word of that God in whom you have faith, as we read in Ephesians 5:28, ²⁸ *So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.* When one sees so many unhappy homes, one cannot escape asking, “*Did those men marry because they loved the woman they chose for a wife, or did they marry her because they loved something else, maybe something she owned?*”

We read in Ephesians 5:29, ²⁹ ***For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.*** No man! In every home 1 Corinthians Chapter 13 ought to be the daily spiritual support. Every virtue of love mentioned by Paul in that sublime chapter finds its exemplification in Christ's character. And Christ, as you know, is the great and glorious Bridegroom of His bride, the Church.

As He nourishes and cherishes the Church, so a man, every man, ought to nourish and cherish his wife, who is his own flesh.

Read also Psalm 128, ¹ ***Blessed is every one who fears the LORD, Who walks in His ways.*** ² ***When you eat the labor of your hands, You shall be happy, and it shall be well with you.*** ³ ***Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine In the very heart of your house, Your children like olive plants All around your table. ... Yes, may you see your children's children.***

As from the riven side of Adam, Eve came into being, Eve, the bride of Adam, the mother of all the living, so from the riven side of Christ, blood and water flowed, the life of all believers, who are the Church, the bride of Christ. Truly, this is a great mystery!¹⁴ Note how that mystery supports and elevates the home.

Whatever is wrong in your home, love can correct it. Whatever is weak, love can strengthen it. Whatever is wanting or lacking, love can supply it. Whatever is needed, love can provide it. Whatever needs to be borne, love can bear it.

And look also to your hope. Faith, love, hope, these three, must operate not only in our church, but also in our home. And what hope is ours? It is the hope of being at home with the Lord, our Lord, who calls heaven His Father's house, just as He called the Temple His Father's house.¹⁵

Will not the kind of home you are hoping for in the life to come reflect itself in your home here below? Do those who visit with you receive the impression that home is the nearest synonym for heaven?

And now as we leave our house of God and each one goes to his own home, let us enter it with the firm resolve to support it and strengthen it, to ennoble and sanctify it with the Word of God and prayer. Let us love those whom God has

given us having in our hearts faith in Christ who loved us and gave Himself for us.¹⁶

Then our home also, like the house of Mary of Bethany, whose deed of loving service to her Saviour is admired wherever the Gospel is preached in the whole world,¹⁷ will be filled with the fragrance of the ointment of true faith and love.¹⁸

And may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus until you reach your heavenly home! Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ See also Eccl. 12:5; Job 17:13

² Genesis 37:36

³ Genesis 39:6

⁴ John 7:14—39

⁵ John 7:40-42

⁶ See also Luke 9:58

⁷ Psa 68:6

⁸ Exodus 20:17

⁹ Edgar Guest.

¹⁰ John 7:14—39

¹¹ Psalm 68:6

¹² Gen. 31:38—41

¹³ Heb. 11:6

¹⁴ Ephesians 5:32

¹⁵ John 2:16; John 14:2

¹⁶ Galatians 2:20

¹⁷ Matt. 26:13

¹⁸ John 12:3