

Gospel of Matthew

6:1-6

for the One Who Sees



I would say that one of the most difficult problems the church faces is children abandoning their parent's faith, conspicuously renouncing the faith they were raised in. Sometimes it happens in high school. They idolize a teacher who instructs them in atheism and politics, or they hang out with the wrong crowd. But it usually happens after they go to a university and get indoctrinated by aggressively atheist professors and influenced by hedonistic students. In fact, it has gotten so bad, so egregious as of late, that I think it is actually a bad idea to send your children to the typical college or university. They will come back to you changed, indoctrinated in political correctness, and in the current culture. Only the strongest-minded young person, with a very strong background in Bible, who involves themselves heavily (multiple times a week) in on-campus Christian support groups, can survive the current college spiritual climate with their faith intact! But that doesn't really explain the underlying reason of why many do not survive.



Let me preface what I am going to say by saying that this is going to be a hard word, possibly even for some here today, but it must be spoken. The other thing is that it is generally true, not ALWAYS true. The Bible says “*Raise up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it*”. But that is not a promise of God as many have claimed it to be. It is a general principle. It is generally/usually true. Sometimes kids grow up in a home that is godly, that presents an attractive picture of Christ that most children would flourish in. But some are literally born with a rebellious or vain spirit that will at some point bust out and they will go their own way, and in so doing, ruin their lives, and break their parent’s hearts.



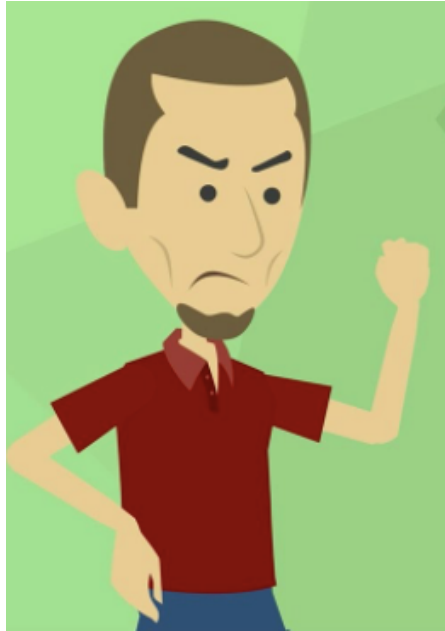
But the underlying reason for children losing their faith is what went on in their home as they were growing up. The bane of Christianity is the family that presents itself as one thing at church, attractive, wholesome, clean - and is something quite different at home – controlling, angry, ugly, mean-spirited, critical, and God is used more like a cudgel, a club, than a leader! OR, God simply does not figure into home life – rarely even brought up, not even in prayer, or family devotions, not in discussions. In some homes God is relegated to being very much a Sunday God. So to the child in such a home God seems unreal – off to the side of one's life – compartmentalized – certainly not personal – a real part of one's life.



Sometimes, when a child rejects the faith of their parents it is because one or both parents have failed morally, or they fight bitterly and perpetually - who are teaching one thing and doing the opposite. Blatant hypocrisy in parents has short-circuited many a child's faith. They turn up their nose at Christ because the hypocrisy they find in their parent(s) is ugly, repulsive, and it makes them angry. They tend to blame God for it and come to hate God, the church and Christians. "*Christians are all hypocrites*", and "*the church is just about wanting me to give them my money*", they say, even though they usually know at least some Christians and churches that are ***not*** like that.



Our text today is the answer of Jesus to this problem. He knew, even before His church was really formed that the church could not survive if its families did not live the leadership of Jesus on a consistent basis



during the week as well as on
ays. Without 7-day Christianity,
cidivism rate is really quite

*I was talking with my
week. She had been

Christian radio and she

a program where they were discussing

this very thing, claiming that only 6 percent of all
Christian kids that enter colleges and universities
come out with their faith intact.

What Christ is advocating for is for real followers to follow! Real followers don't do things for appearances. Real followers do things out of love. They mean it! They are not posing! Their inner being has been changed by Jesus. So if they present themselves as loving God or people, it is because they actually *are* loving God or people! By real love, an authentic Christ-follower silently and consistently, builds the most convincing case for the validity of faith that can be built, because authentic faith is a beautiful and attractive thing! Authentic faith draws people in. It is rare – a curiosity – but a good one.





On the other hand, fake faith, inauthentic faith is a spectacle too.

le point, laugh, ridicule, and are
ely turned off by it. I remember
angelists of the 1980s, loud,

y, caricature-like and clownish. And when

some of them fell into moral failure, the national media went crazy! They were obsessed! The American public could not get enough of these huge falls from grace! Suddenly, evangelical Christians were a laughingstock – a carnival freak show! The evangelical-based Moral Majority political group had been a true political force in those times, but afterward, the organization was in ruins! Those were hard times – a gut check for churches everywhere! It was hard for authentic Christ-followers to be lumped together with that kind of epic hypocrisy and failure! But showmanship, Christianity with a big flourish, glitz and glamor, and the big name in lights have usually been just a prequel to disaster, to dishonoring Christ.

Not always though. We just recently lost a big name – Billy Graham. His was the biggest name of all, but he used the drawing power of his name to point people to the real Jesus! He was devoted to Christ in a completely authentic way. He did not care for the admiration of the crowd, but he had it, so he used it to bring hundreds of thousands of people into the Kingdom of Christ! He did it because He was a one who genuinely loved Jesus and the people that Jesus loves! He did it for the eyes of God! He was respected by all but the most angry secularists and atheists (and they don't respect anyone but their own kind anyway). Rev. Graham was consistent for approx 85 yrs. and that is a VERY unusual thing! ***But it shouldn't be!***



Christ has call us to live in a new paradigm. A “paradigm” is what is normal, a typical pattern of something, what is expected. When someone gives their heart to Jesus, the new paradigm/new normal is that we follow Jesus with our whole heart – with everything we have! We are not actors/performers/posers! We are not one person on the surface and another in the attitudes deep inside - in our private thoughts and inner conversations. We are literally channeling Jesus to everyone we meet – even our enemies! We are kind to everyone. We care about the needs of others - and do something about it whenever and wherever we can! We are primarily positive people, not negative. We love to say good things about people and hate saying bad things unless it is absolutely necessary! We worship heartily on Sundays because we worship on the other six days of the week as well! We pray in public as an extension of our prayer life, not as the extent of it!



This is the only kind of Christianity that will impress our children! If you want to be the best father to your children you can be, then follow Jesus wholeheartedly! Nothing will draw your children to you more than if they know that you are genuine in all you do! Nothing will give them more security than to know that everything you do, you do for His eye only, you do because you know it is right, best, approved of by Him and Him alone!



*My father was not a perfect man. He was just a man. Yet, I always admired that he did what he knew was the right thing in the eyes of God! He did not do wrong purposefully! I *never* saw him do or say what he knew to be wrong! Now, some of what he said and did *was* wrong, but he did not do it purposefully. Most of what he did wrong he did thoughtlessly, and by that I mean that he hadn't taken the time to think it through. But that was not unique to him. It is a problem for all humans. It is a defining characteristic of our race! But my father was a Christ-follower, and when Christ-followers are on their game, the Christ-follower figures out what is right and does it purely because it is the right thing because they know God approves of doing right!

This passage of Scripture – **6:1-4** – is not a new legalism for us regarding secrecy in giving, or in the exercising of compassion and/or generosity. It is about the One who sees the totality of what we do and say! We live for Him and no one else. We live for His approval and not for the respect or admiration of other people. It doesn't matter to God even a little bit how much people admire you because He knows the truth! He knows the totality of who you really are! So get your motives right in following Christ! Don't do anything for appearances. Do it for the love of Jesus! Do it from your core being, not from your desire to impress other people, or even to not disappoint them. In so doing you will inadvertently present an accurate (and beautiful) portrait of Jesus that your children will always admire. They will seek ***THAT*** Jesus in their own lives!



CHANNELS ONLY

**1.] How I praise you, precious Savior, that Your love laid hold of me;
You have saved and cleansed and filled me, that I might your channel be.**

CHORUS:

**Channels only, blessed Master, but with all Your wondrous pow'r
Flowing through us, You can use us, every day and every hour.**

**2.] Just a channel full of blessing, to the thirsty hearts aflame;
To affirm Your full salvation, and to them Your love proclaim.**

**3.] Emptied so that You can fill me, a clean vessel in Your hand;
With no pow'r but as You've given, graciously with each command.**

**4.] Witnessing Your pow'r to save me, setting free from self and sin;
You who bought and paid to claim me, in Your fullness, Lord, come in.**

**5.] Jesus, fill now with Your Spirit, hearts that full surrender know;
That the streams of living water, from our inner self may flow.**