

Sermon: That's What Family Does

January 26, 2020

Text: Joshua 24:13-26

Discussion Questions:

I have borrowed the title of this sermon (That's What Family Does) from something my older brother likes to say. He and his wife live in Columbus, Ohio—near the home that my mother (who is 97 and in good health!) and my older sister live in. Every now and then, when visiting Columbus, circumstances arise when there are too many of us to all fit in one house for the night. Or...one of our kids might be flying into the airport in Columbus and need picked up. Or...one of our children who attend college in western Ohio need to be picked up from school. Or...the list goes on. I'll call up my brother (his name is Ric, by the way) to ask for his help. His reply is always the same: "Of course! That's what family does!" Honest—I can hardly think of a sweeter phrase.

This phrase gives such value to what family really means. "Of course I'll help! Of course I'll be there for you!" I think what I appreciate almost more than anything else is that Ric's response is immediate. He doesn't even have to think twice—or check his calendar. Everything else takes second place to helping out family. Why? Because that's what family does.

- Take a few minutes to talk about this as a group. Why are these such sweet words?
- Has this been your experience with your family? Or perhaps with certain members of your family?

Unfortunately, I realize that asking this question might dredge up bad memories. Sadly, some of you might answer this question by saying: "No...quite the opposite. I've never heard something like this from anyone in my family."

- Has this been your experience. Does talking about this trigger negative memories—and negative emotions? If this is the case, would you be willing to share just a little of your story. Something important and valuable happens when you trust others with this information—even your hurts and disappointments.

Let's talk for a minute about a "perfect world." Set your personal experience aside. When you consider the statement, "That's what family does"—what would the best case scenario of this look like?

- Jot down some bullet points of ways in which you think a family OUGHT to operate? If you were teaching a course entitled "That's What Family Does," what would be your ten teaching points?

We all know that God is actually the "inventor" of the family. Family is God's idea.

- Are there any Bible verses or stories that come to your mind when you think about what God has in mind when it comes to the family?
- Why do you think God invented the family in the first place? What do you think He was thinking? How important is the family in God's plan for His created world?

Examination:

- Read **Joshua 24:1-12**

Joshua inherited a really tough assignment! He was given the job (by God) to take over for Moses, and be the one to actually lead the Israelites into the promised land! For one thing—how in the world can you imagine following a man like Moses?! This seems like an impossible assignment right from the start. But this task was made far worse when you consider what Joshua was being tasked to do. It was his job to lead several million people, who had a terrible track record of being compliant, into a land that was already occupied by numerous other armed and powerful nations.

And yet—that is exactly what happened! God did exactly what He said He would do!

And now—Joshua is at the end of his life. He is looking back on the previous twenty or thirty years, and he is recounting all that God has done.

- How would you summarize these twelve verses?
 - What stands out to you about this record of God’s mighty acts?
 - Why do you think Joshua finds it important, in one of his final speeches before his death, to recount all of the amazing things that God has done on behalf of the Israelites?
- Read **Joshua 24:13-26**
 - Joshua moves from retelling the story of God’s faithfulness—and he issues a command in verse 14.
 - What is that command?
 - What do you think it means to “throw away” the gods their ancestors had worshipped?
 - Think about your own life today. How easy is it for us to continue worshipping “gods” that our ancestors have worshipped? How difficult is it to “throw them away”?
 - What are the consequences if we fail to throw away our false gods & idols?
 - Verse 15 is probably one of the most outstanding declarations regarding the family in the entire Bible. Joshua is not only giving the people a choice—he is also driving a stake in the ground regarding his own household.
 - Is there any doubt as to where Joshua stands?
 - How is it that Joshua can speak for his entire family? How can he speak for his wife, and his kids, and his grandkids? What do you think this means?
 - Has anyone in your family lineage ever made this kind of a declaration?
 - Is this something that you are willing to say on behalf of your family?
 - It’s one thing to say this—it’s another thing to back it up with actions. What are some things that we ought to be doing to make good on this promise? What can you do TODAY to make good on a promise like this?

Application:

In verse 19, Joshua says that they “are not able to serve the Lord.” This is still true. We can’t do this on our own. Whenever you feel inadequate—ask the Holy Spirit to help you lead your family.