

Christ and Your Family

BY FAITH Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Hebrews 11:7.

Our heavenly Father, we invoke Thy special blessing on every family within hearing of this broadcast. For all husbands and wives, we ask the true spiritual union of Christian marriage. Remember all the mothers of our land and keep them loving, sweet, and pure. Bless the fathers and revive their sense of responsibility as examples and guides to their children. And we seek Thy grace and guardianship for the boys and girls today. All this in Christ's name, we ask. Amen.

We have entitled this message "Christ and Your Family." It is an appeal, as earnest as we know how to make it, for Christian family life in our country. It is addressed to you fathers and mothers, for we have certainly reached an hour of spiritual need such as the world has not seen for ages—possibly not since the times just before the Flood. It was then that Noah "prepared an ark to the saving of his house."

It is clear that the salvation of his family from the Flood depended upon Noah. He believed God and acted upon the divine instruction and, in doing so, saved his family. It was a time of such terrible sin and moral decadence, of apostasy from God, and plunging into wicked pleasures, that the Holy Scripture declared: "It repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." Genesis 6:6.

All this wickedness was the outworking of the natural mind of man in rebellion against the law and truth of God. This degeneracy had finally reached the intolerable state in which "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Verse 5. Then Heaven intervened, and the deluge washed the world.

In such a time, in such a crisis, Noah saved his family. How?

He heard God's Word. He believed it. He acted upon it. He sacrificed time, energy, everything, to build the ark. But it was worth it, for he saved his house. His life was a grand success, and his name is among the heroes of faith here in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews.

We have come to a crisis hour for the Christian home. Always in wartime the strain on home ties is strong. Thousands of homes are broken by the absence of husbands and fathers. Great distortions of home life have been necessitated by shifts of population in defense work. Also, millions of people have found themselves possessed with more money than ever before in their lives. The speed and pressure are terrific, and the home is in danger as never before. Home has been pushed into the background by the headlines of war, and a new wave of crime and delinquency has reached startling proportions.

It is time to call on all Christians for a new dedication of home life. No nation can prosper when the home becomes precarious or degenerate. History proves this again and again. As water can rise no higher than its source, so the life of a nation can rise no higher than its source; and the source of its life is in its homes.

What about our homes? Is my home a Christian home? Is yours?

The home was founded by God in the very beginning of the world, and to our first parents was given the command to "be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." Genesis 1:28.

When our Lord and Saviour came to earth, He entered human nature through a family and was an obedient child and youth in a godly family relationship until in perfect manhood He reached the age of 30 years. What an example to the youth of today! Obedience is a lost grace to millions, but it is one of the fundamental foundation stones of family happiness—and of all happiness.

When our Lord began His ministry He performed His first miracle at a marriage supper where He, with His disciples, honored the divine institution of the family and the home.

All of us may well ask, Is my home a place where Christ would be welcome? Would I feel at ease if the Master should

step in unannounced this afternoon?—or tonight? In other words, Is mine a Christian home?

I remember that when I was a boy a certain motto hung on the wall of our dining room, and the deep impression of its words has never left my heart, because I loved them. And I believe now that, through the life and teachings of my godly parents, they were literally true. This was the motto: "Christ is the Head of this house, the unseen Guest at every meal, the silent Listener to every conversation." What those words meant to one boy in many an hour of temptation, none but God will ever know. Whether these words are hanging on the walls or not, they ought to be true of every home in our land today. There will be no safety for the 35 million children and youth of our country until they are.

How about the children in our family?—in your family? Have we done our part to lead them by example and by teaching in Christian faith? The father, under Christ, should be the religious head of the home. Now, Father, are you a representative of God? If your boy follows your example, will he be just what you want him to be? Will he be the kind of man the country needs? Will he be a man of faith and courage? Has your boy ever heard you pray? Do you read the Word of God to your family?

Judges all over the land lay the blame for juvenile crime upon a lack of home training. Could the blame be upon *too much* home training of the wrong kind? Can a godless home—and by that I mean a home where God's Word is neglected, prayer is neglected, for that's a godless home, even if the parents are church members—I say, can a godless home prepare young men and women to meet the issues before the world today?

Father, what about it? Is Christ the head of your home? Are you, by faith and prayer, building an ark of safety for your family? If not, isn't it about time to begin?

One of the great preachers of our generation held a meeting one night in a Western city and impressed upon the Christian people there the fatal sin of neglecting family religion, especially the family altar. The next day, as he was going down

town, a boy of 14 passed him and said, "O sir, I wish you had been at our house last night!" He asked, "Why?"

"Oh, something happened, sir; I wish you had been there. I found out something I never knew before." And then the boy began to cry.

The minister stepped aside with the boy into the entrance of a vacant store and asked again, "What was it, my boy?"

"Oh, I wish you had been there, sir, for—for—Father *prayed!* And I found out something—something . . ."

"What was it?"

"Oh, I found out that I was a sinner. Father came home from the meeting and called us all together and told me to get the Bible. I did, and he opened it and started to read, and then he started to cry and couldn't read any more. And he told Mother he had been a poor husband, and she said he hadn't. And then he asked us children to forgive him for not helping us live right, as a Christian father should, and for not reading the Bible to us and praying with us. He said he was going to be a better father, and asked Mother to pray for him—and—and—I found out I was a sinner. And, O sir, I wish you had been there!"

With a few kind words the minister pointed the boy to Christ, and the next week a united family worshiped God.

Father, you are the best man your boy knows. Do not blast his faith in you. You owe it to him, to God, to your family, and to your country to keep faith with that boy. When Father leads the way to heaven it means everything in the world. We as fathers can never pass the responsibility off onto mother, the school, or the church. Sometime we must hear the question we shall have to answer: "Where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock?" Jeremiah 13:20.

This is an hour of decision for us all. Will you make the right decision? With the blessing of Christ, say, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Joshua 24:15. Your family needs Christ.

Mother, are you doing all you can to fight back the wave of sin that threatens our homes today? The big questions of

the hour are not What's the matter with the church? What's the matter with the schools? What's the matter with the Government, or the Army, or the Navy, or the Air Force? The question of greatest importance to our country is, What's the matter with our *families*?

If the cynical spirit of some circles goes much farther, it will be a sad day for our country—200,000 families broken by divorce each year are too many, but that is only a symptom of shifting foundations. Of the 7,000 babies born each day in our land, how many will be *welcomed* into a real home?

There are millions of mothers who gladly sacrifice everything for their children; but, Mothers, are you neglecting the supreme thing? You go without new clothes so that Mary may have the very latest and keep up with her set in school. You skimp and save so that John may have the chance to go on with his education. And millions of dollars are expended on the very latest ideas in teaching these children of ours the three R's of education. But there is one R that very few have at home or anywhere else today, and that is *R-eligion*.

If the foundations of religion are not laid in the home, it's doubtful if they will ever be laid at all, for experience proves the Scripture statement true: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Proverbs 22:6.

William Cady tells about a visit his mother made with her three small children out to the farm of Uncle John and Aunt Sarah. There he saw a square bottle containing an apple much larger than the neck of the bottle. He couldn't figure it out, so he took it to Aunt Sarah and asked her about it. She said, "Ask Uncle John; he did it." So he carried the bottle to his uncle who took it, looked at it thoughtfully and then into the boy's eyes, and said, "Someday, Willie, you will know!" And all Willie's begging could get no more from him.

The next summer Willie was determined to learn the secret, so he spent hours searching the whole farm. Finally he found another bottle fastened to a limb of an apple tree, with a little apple growing inside. He ran and told Uncle John that

he had found out his secret. "Yes," he said, "I put it there when it was little—and it stayed!"

The best time to get people into the kingdom of God is when they are young. Professed Christian Mother, are you working at this—or are you too busy? With the father, you share the apostolic command concerning the children, to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Ephesians 6:4.

Thousands of children are now practically parentless because so many mothers are working outside the home. But we must not neglect the work God has given us as parents. Don't expect the judge to teach your child obedience. You must teach him if he ever learns it. The earliest years are the most important.

How is it with your family?—your husband?—your children? "Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child?" 2 Kings 4:26.

Worldly parties, late hours, liquor, and sin kill the beauty and power of a mother. You, Mother, may be the only hope for good your family has. Is it well with you? Is it well with your husband? Is it well with the child?

I think of one home where the father never carried his share of the responsibility for training the children and was against Christian living, yet the loving Christian example and prayer-life of the mother led a whole flock of children to Christ. And they have all gone forth to start Christian homes of their own. Great is the reward of that mother now, and it will be greater when the Master says, "Well done!"

"Is it getting night?" asked an old Scotch woman, 97 years of age. "Husband," she said, "is it getting night?" Her aged husband, seated by her side, realized that she was about to leave him alone. He bent down close to her and said, "Yes, Janet, it is getting night." She was wandering a bit, and thought herself back in other days with the children still about her. She was quiet a little while and then asked, "Are the boys all in?"

"Yes," he said, "the boys are all in."

She was still for awhile and then said, "I'll soon be in."

“Yes, Janet, you’ll soon be in.”

“And you will soon come, too?”

“Yes, by the grace of God, I will come soon, too.”

Then, as she stretched out those thin hands to draw him down to her side, she said, “And then He will shut us all in!”

“All in!” Can we say it?—with the boys all in, the girls all in, all the family in?

“Are all the children in? The night is falling,
 And storm clouds gather in the threatening west;
 The lowing cattle seek a friendly shelter;
 The bird hies to her nest;
 The thunder crashes; wilder grows the tempest,
 And darkness settles o’er the fearful din;
 Come, shut the door, and gather round the hearthstone;
 Are all the children in?”

“Are all the children in? The night is falling,
 When gilded sin doth walk about the streets.
 O, ‘at the last it biteth like a serpent’!
 Poisoned are stolen sweets.
 O mothers, guard the feet of inexperience,
 Too prone to wander in the paths of sin!
 O, shut the door of love against temptation!
 Are all the children in?”

“Are all the children in? The night is falling,
 The night of death is hastening on apace;
 The Lord is calling, ‘Enter thou thy chamber,
 And tarry there a space.’
 And when He comes, the King in all His glory,
 Who died the shameful death our hearts to win,
 O may the gates of heaven shut about us,
 With all the children in!”

—*Elizabeth Rosser.*

Your family will always lack something without the love and blessing of Christ. “Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.” Psalm 127:1. Christ makes the home secure.

1. We need Christ in our family, so that every member of the circle may be saved. Think of the blessing that came to that home in Philippi of old when the jailer and all that were in his house "believed" and were baptized together. (See Acts 16:30-34.)

2. We need Christ for the whole family, so that the service of God and right may be made easier for everyone. Children need the help of Christ in learning obedience and love of parents. Husbands need the help of Christ for purity and faithfulness. Wives need His mighty encouragement for constancy and kindness.

3. We need Christ in our family for the peace and tranquillity of the home. What a difference when Father, Mother, and all the children are Christians! Quarreling, fighting, drinking, and all the confusion gone—and peace and love in their place. Come to Christ in faith, and He will help you settle all family troubles.

4. We need Christ in our family when sorrow comes. There is no comfort in the world then—no comfort in sin—no comfort in unbelief—no comfort anywhere but in Christ.

Radio friends, America needs Christian homes — homes where husband and wife are true to each other, true to the children, true to God. May we all find the blessing of Christ in building an ark of safety for the saving of our house. And, at last, may the gates of heaven close about us with all the children in!