

S.N - May 10, 70 A.M -  
Mother Day

THE HOME NEXT TO THE CHURCH

Acts 18:7

A YOUNG LAD IN SCOTLAND -  
SMALL VILLAGE - GORT BRIDGE

was four years old, his father died. His mother married again and somehow the young lad was not quite adjusted to the stepfather that had taken the father's place. He was rebellious.

At 14, he ran away from home and joined the Royal Navy, lying about his age. They soon discovered that he was in the Navy under false pretenses and sent him home with a dishonorable discharge for lying. He went back, humiliated before his friends, and even more hostile toward his mother and stepfather. At age 20, he ran away again to join the Navy, and was rejected. He came back home a failure.

At 21, however, he said, I am going to leave home - I just do not want to live there any longer. And, like the prodigal son, he told his mother and his stepfather goodbye. I am going to find my fortune - I am going to Edinburgh or on to Glasgow - I am going away. And his little Scottish mother escorted him to the gate. Her parting words were these: Peter, when you were born, I put you in God's care. I have never taken you back from him and I still commit you to the care of God, Peter, just remember - this is your verse: Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all other things shall be added to your life. Those words of farewell from his mother never left him. He wandered around in trouble several times - was almost killed three times, he recalls - a wild young man trying to find his way.

Finally, at age 25, he went with a friend across the seas and came to America to seek his fortune and wound up in Birmingham, Alabama. And there in the old First Presbyterian Church, he had a glorious spiritual experience. He remembered his mother's words committing him to the Lord. He also remembered some other things that happened in that little home, for the Bible was always open there and Christian ideals were taught. He had a blind grandmother who lived in the home and the mother would often say, Peter, I want you to read to your blind grandmother. He would sit by the fireplace and read scripture to her, and all of that flooded back. He could never escape that influence.

So, in that church, he not only found a new direction for his life as a Christian, but he also found a calling to the Christian ministry. A men's Sunday School class in that Presbyterian church said, We will take you under wing - this slender Scottish boy with his unique brogue - you have no family here. If you want to go to the seminary, we will send you. They gave him \$50 a month to go to Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia.

He graduated from that seminary and pastored a little church in Alabama; then came to a downtown church in Atlanta, an old staid aristocratic church, the pews empty and a dying congregation. But the magnetism and the zeal of this young Scottish preacher by the name of Peter, began to attract crowds and he was packing the church in the course of a year and a half.

Then the prestigious Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church of New York City called him and, again, he filled the church. Among the congregation was one Franklin Roosevelt, President of the United States. A Washington church called him, and the same story was repeated. It was then that they asked him to become Chaplain of the Senate, Peter Marshall. He accepted it, serving for only two years, when he died an untimely death from a heart attack.

Peter Marshall lived life at its fullest. He had said again and again, It is not how long you live; it is the quality of life that you live that counts. And he packed so much into that short life and those two years as Chaplain of the Senate in Washington, D.C., that even to this day his life continues to be an inspiration through the writings of his widow, the late Catherine

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The story is, Paul goes to the home of Titus, Justus. Evidently a Roman citizen. He was a God fearer, whose home joined hard to the synagogue. Hence, my subject, a very wonderful relationship -- The Home Joined to The House of Worship.

Now whether Paul chose this location for an advantage to his work, we do not know. But indeed, it has some spiritual implications for thought this morning.

The meaning - joint. Boundary right next too.

Every home should be next to the church. A tragic story is told by a Dr. Paul Roberts. He received a letter from a woman. She criticized him greatly. Not only him, but the Pastor before him. And the Pastor the church had before that. In the last part of her letter she said, I have five children. They all hate God, they hate the church, and they hate religion.

Dr. Roberts says, of course they do. She was reaping what she had sown. She criticized the Preacher, she criticized the church, and planted the black seeds of irreligion in the hearts of her children. A home where the parents have a loving and vital connection with the church will not be like that.

In an American museum there is a piece of sculpture. It depicts a pioneer family, seeking to make their way to the then uncharted West. The father is tall and strong - pulling a small two-wheel cart, packed with the families earthly belongings. On the left side the Mother walks - steadying the little child who is sitting on the baggage to the front. At the rear, a boy of ten or twelve years pushes, lightening the load of his Father.



Strength, courage, faith, and love - and unity of the family are evident in every detail.

Few modern families know either the physical hardships or the simplicity of faith, in those early days. The external pattern of our living has changed. But the needs are still the same. A home must be more than a shelter from rain, a protection from storms. It must be the center of religious life. Families that are making their homes genuinely Christian are the salt of the earth.

### I. The Nature Of A Christian Home

What are the marks.

✓ First, a home (dedicated to God) Christian marriage - the ceremony - conveys this. The newly established home conveys this. The Christian couple that enters a new home will consecrate both the building and themselves, to their God and Saviour.

✓ Second, (Christ will be at the center) The first obligation is to God. The Christian home sees Christ as the Son of God. Christ is the head of this house. The unseen guest at every meal. The silent listener to every conversation.

The fact that a home is Christian, measuring all of its relationships by this standard, will not take away joy from the home -- instead it will bring real joy.

I do not mean that strain and conflict are eliminated from the husband and wife relationship. Some of these are normal, and will arise.

When husband and wife are united by love and trust, it will be different.

A Christian home is like a church in that its purpose is chiefly spiritual. It is true that the home attends to many physical needs of the family, financial and social relations. But the home also needs the spiritual - that's why Acts 18:7



says that the people who live next door to the church will have an atmosphere at home as prevails in the church. Everything is done with Christian concern and Christian objectives.

✓ Third, Produces Christ-like character.

This is the test. Husband, wife, children will be growing in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 3:18.

Christian men and women can look back upon the godly and spiritual home which they were fortunate enough to enjoy in their youth. They count this as a factor in shaping their lives.

Leaders in the church, state, and government are direct products of Christian homes.

Suzanne Wesley, mother of 19 children, found time to speak to each child about his spiritual life.

It was no accident that Moses was willing to chose the suffering of the people rather than the pleasures of sin. Hebrews 11:24-26. The devout parents were responsible. .

I Samuel 1:1 tells about the parents of Samuel. They gave to God the child. And he became an outstanding Prophet. His mother, Hannah, and the devotion of his Father, had a home that was next to the church.

## II. The World Needs Christian Homes Next To The Church

Everywhere in this world, there is a need for this.

Cicero, the Roman statesman said, the empire is at the fireside.

LinYutang, the chinese philosopher said, the final test of civilization



is the type of husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, that it turns out.

Russia gives us a modern example of experimenting with marriage and the home. For years throughout World War II, they minimized marriage and the home. Marriage and divorce were easy. In July, 1949, however, it was time for a change. Divorce and illegitimacy had filled the orphans homes and this was a heavy burden on society.

The world need this.

First, for peace. The home is in an important position in the struggle for peace. Blessed are the peacemakers. For they are called the children of God. Matt. 5:9.

Love your enemies - bless them that curse you. Do good to them that hate you. Pray for them that despitefully use you. Matt. 5:44.

Such teaching will produce a different kind of men and women.

Second, it will make a contribution to morality. Some in our generation try to do good. There is a desire to spread good. Many of the movies today say it is smart to be dirty.

A few years back, moral standards were unquestioned. But today, they have been challenged.

1945, Dr. W. Overholzer, head of the Federal mental hospital, "the loosening of morals started after the last war." And it has continued every since. And it is reaching a new high, evidenced by the soaring rise in illegitimacy.

The high divorce rate, the lax marital relationships, the delinquency are along the road of disintegration.

The Christian home is the most potent factor in turning the tide.

Wm. Ross Wallace put it, the hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world.

The power of the home next to the church is needed in the world. The humble, modest home will push out into the world. It is difficult for us to see how this influence could be so great.

Gen. 18:32, as many as 10 righteous people would have delivered that wicked city of Sodom, in answer to Abraham's prayer.

Judges 7:1-23, it was Gideons 300 not his 32,000 who gained the victory over Midian.

2 Kings 2:12, it was one Godly man, Elijah, compared to an Army of horsemen. In our day, the Christian home can exert power.

### III. The Church Needs Christian Homes

First, the home can support the church. It has been called the seed plot of the church.

Dr. Truett, God's citadel of an enduring social order above church or state. When homes are Christian, church has added power in its outreach.

When homes are Christian, the church can make the largest contribution, to the members of the family.

Every church needs the sympathetic interest of the homes represented in its membership.

The family must seek first the Kingdom of God. Every church needs homes that stand ready to always give of their best in energy and talent, and money, for the progress of the Kingdom through the church.



In a home where there is sympathetic interest in the church, next door, there will be a minimum of criticism. As the story of Dr. Roberts - the woman planted the dark seed. No church has infallible leaders. No church carries on a perfect program of activities. No church is without fault and weakness.

The sympathetic <sup>Home</sup> church will magnify the strong points of the church. The criticism will be made in the spirit of love. And rarely, if ever, made in the presence of children.

The home assists the church by its regular attendance of its members to the services. Such an attendance also strengthens the home.

Attendance on Sunday should be a must item on the family calendar. Only an emergency should prevent attendance. The habit should be maintained in the sunshine or rain. Such attendance should include Sundays, the weekday meetings and activities, woman's missionary, girls auxiliary, sunbeams, training union, Sunday School, visitation, revivals.

The church must look to the homes for its leaders. A functioning church requires the services of many people. Therefore, the members should share.

After the mid-week service, husband and wife paused in the vestibule of the church to talk with the Pastor. The husband said that he had to work occasionally but he added, that I want my wife to attend, whether I am there or not. Whenever she is at church, I have no complaint of not having a hot meal when I get home from work.

A reasonable portion of your time will pay rich dividends both to the church and to the home.

The first hopes of many parents for their new baby are that they should be able to rear the little one according God's will and guide him in the Lord's

A Pastor stood beside a young mother and her baby. As the minister spoke of the spiritual opportunity and the responsibility which this young couple now had, the heroic little mother said quietly, we hope that God will give us the grace to rear her to be a worker in the church.

A missionary appointee stood before the Southern Baptist Convention, and spoke of his life's decision. His mother, before he was born, said that his parents had prayed that he might be a missionary. It is such homes as this, that gives support to the work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The home can be a great help in financial support of the church. A good deal of the modern discussion is that a child is a misfortune. That mother takes a step toward the grave and father a step toward bankruptcy. I read of a Pastor who had a happy experience. He stopped in the business of one of the members. The layman said, our little boy plans to join church on Sunday. Last night after our family devotions, he climbed on my lap and told me of his desire. He spoke of his love for Jesus. And I believe that he is ready to become a Christian. Before the conversation ended, the father said, we have been observing family prayer. We have been tithing and we are convinced that we can get along as well on the 9/10 as we formerly did on the larger amount. And in addition, we feel mighty good about it.

Here was an average family in the church. It's members were regular in attendance. And they were determined that their home would be Christian. It is good for the family to learn to tithe. The children learn to give before they earn.

The home can support the church by being open to young people and activities. They are going to get invitations to objectional places, so open your home to them.



The other idea on this point is, that the church must help the home. The church must assist the home in the religious training of the members of the family. The home is God's institution for mankind. First in point of time and point of importance. The church therefore must assist the home. The church re-enforces what the home has been building. The church has the family for a few hours, to all the hours that are spent elsewhere.

Now, in conclusion, I would emphasize that every child, every individual, needs a home next to the church, on the boundary of the church. Every child has a right to be in a Christian home. There are people, we say, who were born with a silver spoon in their mouth. I don't know much about that, but fortunate is the child who has a Christian home.

A Christian mother, recalling her childhood, said Mother and Father didn't leave us much, in the way of worldly goods. But they left us something far better. The memory of the family gathered for prayer, before the old fireplace, and the Christian lives that our parents lived, are the greatest treasures they could have left us.

Every individual needs this security. A home where there is quarrelling. It puts a severe strain on all who live there.

Every individual needs a home where there is love.

A tough young killer died and prayed before his execution. The 18 year old boy said, guys like me go wrong because of the way we are brought up. I was guided in life by movies, the comics, and crime books. I always figured the easiest way out was trying to out smart the other guy. If I had been brought up by the right kind of parents, going to church and knowing God, I would not have gone wrong.



Should little children be taken to the worship services. The answer is YES. Many children are taken from the beginning, and never left in the nursery. Others are placed in the nursery at first, and when they are older, they are taken to the worship services. By the time a child begins public school, he should already be attending the church worship services. He will not understand at first, but he cannot fail to be impressed by the atmosphere.

James Metcalfe said, he is too young to understand the Gospel and prayer. But in his own way, he feels the presence of God in the air. He knows there is a border line between the right and wrong. And when temptation faces him, he will be brave and strong. He knows his parents smile with joy, when he's good all day. And surely as their hearts are sad, when he does not obey. He knows when he goes to church he will not speak out loud but should pray in silence. His head in reverence bowed. Thus, he learns the way of life. However, strange or odd, he begins to understand. He owes his life to God.

Some years ago, 750 married couples were asked, what in your judgement is the greatest element in making for happiness in home life. The largest number answered, religion lived daily in the home. The heart of religion is love. Is your home next door to the church.

A traveler through the North Seas will often inquire about the giant ice bergs. A woman noticed that a mountain of ice was flowing against the current. She inquired of the captain why this was so.

His reply, although you see a huge mass of ice, you see only about 1/5 of the ice berg. Down deep where the major portion of the ice berg is, the currents are moving opposite to the currents we observe. Why the ice berg is moving against the surface currents, it is moving with the deeper currents.

Love for God in the home is like that. It puts us in touch with the deep forces, which enables us to move against the surface currents of society.