

Today we are wrapping up our series on Family Matters. We hope it's been helpful to you to look at the family and understand again the importance that God places on the family and that even in 2018 family STILL matters. Here's the thing about families – they grow up and they change. **Show pictures.** Physically there are changes as babies grow into toddlers and children and teenagers and become adults and get married and become parents themselves and become grandparents and great-grandparents. Our families grow and expand and change. Our appearance changes as we age and grow. It's why little kids are shocked to hear that grandma was once a little girl. No way! I remember my little cousins asking my grandma (their great-grandma) about an old picture that was hanging in the hallway at their house. Who is in the picture with you? That's grandpa. No it isn't it doesn't look anything like grandpa. Well, it's what grandpa looked like 40 years ago. We change. But, families are supposed to grow up and they're supposed to change. It was part of God's plan from the beginning. In the Garden of Eden in Genesis 2, which has been our basis for all 4 weeks, we read that Adam was alone and this was not good.

“The Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.” Genesis 2:18 So the Lord God made a woman from the rib he took from the man. Adam, upon seeing Eve, proclaimed, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man.” Genesis 2:23 And then we're told what the natural God-ordained plan for families would be for all future generations, **“That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.” Genesis 2:24**

The plan was never for children to remain as children. Once a child, always a child –

you will live as an eight year old forever. No! A little boy grows to become a man and then eventually leaves that first home. As I've said before Adam and Eve have no parents to leave so this was meant to be an example for us that at some point we leave the family of origin to set out on our own and create a new family. We don't remain as infants or as children, but at some point we grow up and become men and women. It's what the Apostle Paul in the New Testament alludes to when he writes, **"When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me." 1**

Corinthians 13:11

Growing up is difficult! It means our role within the family changes. Tuesday I was in our staff meeting and got a text that a shelf had fallen in the kitchen. Myself and Sandi finally made our way down there and sure enough we walked into a large mess. Flour had fallen onto honey bottles and toothpicks had become a game of pick-up-sticks and sugar had dumped onto the floor and boxes were wedged in wherever they fell. I stood there surveying the damage and then started laughing telling Sandi that I was replaying my dad's sermon from last year about the church grown up. Truly, I was standing there thinking if I wait another minute surely a grown up will walk in here and say, honey, move out of the way I'll take care of it, and then I realized – I AM THE GROWN UP. No one was coming and Sandi couldn't lift those boxes. So she was on toothpick duty and I started moving stuff and Matt arrived to put things in a new spot and I called a real life grown up, Gordon, to come put the shelf back together and then Oksana restocked the shelf and 5 grown ups later we had fixed the problem. Adulting is hard!

Growing up is what is supposed to happen – we at some point have to stop acting like children because as grown ups we don't get to set around and play video games all day during the summer – someone is going to need to go to work so the bills can be paid. And, if you are a grown up who plays video games all day long – unless your job is developing video games – then you might need to rethink your life choices.

But, sometimes it's hard to make those role changes within the family. To no longer be thought of as children and looked at as an adult can be a difficult transition. We start off with only one title – son or daughter – and as we age we collect more titles – husband, wife, mom, dad, grandma, grandpa – we become known in different ways within the family. So, I want to look at the life of Jesus to help us navigate those changing roles.

God chose the family as the setting for how He would bring salvation to the world.

An angel appears to a young girl named Mary living in the town of Galilee and tells her that **She “will be with child and give birth to a son...He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end.” Luke 2:31-33** Familial language all through that as God talks

about His own son in terms of his earthly family – a mom and a dad whose ancestor was king David whose ancestor was Jacob. Matthew 1 gives us the whole family line into which Jesus will be born. God didn't choose a perfect family, rather He chose a family that looks similar to any of ours – some good, Godly people, a few embarrassing people, a couple I can't believe you even wrote their names people, some sinners, some saints, some ordinary folk. Jesus needed a family so God set him

into a real life family with real life problems. Although, again, if your real life problem is that you have 1,000 wives you're going to need to rethink your adult life choices. However, it was a real family. Mary and her fiancé, Joseph, end up traveling to Bethlehem and while there we find out that after 9 months of planning and preparing and worrying – just like any mother – that it was time to have the baby.

“She gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger.” Luke 2:7 Jesus was born and immediately needed caring for – needed a mother to look after him and swaddle him so he could sleep better, needed someone to rock him and feed him and change him when he was wet. At eight days old Mary and Joseph had Jesus circumcised and then following that they took him to the temple to be presented to the Lord. They dedicated him to God, knowing He already belonged to God and He was a gift given to them to raise. That's what we still do today when we bring our children to be dedicated to the Lord. Simeon, a devout and righteous man prayed over him, and **“The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him.” Luke 2:33** Normal parent stuff that they did following his birth. They were proud parents, marveling at their child. I knew our child was extraordinary. Here's me - They've done nothing but sleep and poop and are a week old – yes, but it's the way they sleep it's not like other babies. Ok, says the non mom, what are you talking about? But, it's what new parents do – they marvel. Then we read that **“The child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.” Luke 2:40** And here's where we see **Role change #1 as Jesus goes from baby to be marveled at, needing**

constant, round the clock care to growing into a child who is wise and strong and experiencing the grace of God.

The next thing we read is of a time when Jesus was traveling with his parents – vacations with young kids I hear are challenging and Mary and Joseph would give the hearty amen. You think your vacation was rough – did you lose your son? They had travelled to Jerusalem with a large group for the Feast of Passover and on the way back they assumed he was walking with some friends and didn't realize Jesus had stayed behind in Jerusalem. It took them 3 days – 3 nerve wracking, fear filled days – before they found him. Imagine, their panic - we lost God's son! Years ago, I had coordinated the children's programs for a missionary retreat and the very first night, very first session, I had a little girl who went running from the room and I followed her and tried to get her back into the classroom. Nothing doing, and eventually she eluded me and went running down the beach toward the woods and I had lost her. I had to go into the main service, to the front of the room, to get her mother, who along with her husband served as the directors for that area and were in charge of the entire retreat and the people who had invited me to come and bring a team to work with their kids and say – I'm so sorry, I've lost your daughter, in the woods in the dark. Panic ensues when you've lost an important child. I can only imagine Mary's conversation with God. They find him in the temple sitting among the teachers asking questions and giving insights that amazed all who heard him. Mary and Joseph realize they have a gifted child, but still do not fully see all that He will become. **Role change #2 as Jesus goes from needing hovering, parental care to a teenager who is testing his boundaries and is learning independence.**

He is still learning and needed parental guidance to shape and mold him throughout his teenage years. He needed that structure that Pastor Jeff talked about last week.

He didn't need his parents to be his best friends – he needed parents to question and instruct and make the rules and require something of him. Children thrive with structure and discipline that is for their good. They discipline him there in that moment – what were you thinking? We were frightened. You can't treat us this way.

“He went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.” Luke 2:51-52 Obedience to his parents

was still expected and required. I don't care if you are God's son while you're living under my roof.... But, they also began to realize they would only have him at home a while longer and Mary treasured these moments and pondered the new things she was learning about her son in her heart. This was something different. I'm seeing him grow up and seeing him in a new way. Mary and Joseph continued to help him grow in wisdom and delighted as he gained favor with others. That verse tells us he grew physically as well. It's what happens. We grow up.

The rest of Jesus teenage years are not recorded for us, but we find next an exchange with mom and son in John 2. It's the beginning of Jesus ministry and they're all at a wedding. Mary, so proud of her son, so eager for him to step into the plans God has for him that she pushes a little too hard. During the wedding they run out of wine so Mary goes to her son and says, “They have no more wine.” Jesus responds, “Dear woman, why do you involve me? My time has not yet come.” **Role change #3 as Jesus goes from teenager who needs parental involvement in his choices to a**

grown up who has to be allowed room to make his own choices and at his own pace. But, son, you can fix this. But, mom, it isn't time. And, we see this new parent/child relationship form. You can't always be with me, you have to trust me from here that I can hear from God on my own and follow His leading and His timing for my life. That's a hard thing. I remember being in a conversation years ago with a group of people including my father. Some remarks were made that were not exactly disparaging, but were less than humorous to me than to the person who made them about me. Afterwards I said to my dad – why didn't you say something or take up for me in that conversation? Sarah, when have you ever needed me to fight your battles for you? I raised you to fight for yourself. He was right. It was one of those moments where I realized I will always be his daughter, but I'm no longer a child. I'll need to fight my own grown up battles all the while knowing I have loving parents who believe in me standing in the background. Parents cannot hover over their children forever. It gets weird. You can't move into the college dorm with them. They don't need you to make their lunch for them – at some point they have to learn how to smear the peanut butter onto the bread for themselves. They are no longer children, they are grown ups that have to be allowed the freedom to make their own choices whether you agree with them or not. Mary had an idea of what she wanted to happen at that wedding, but it wasn't her place anymore to give the orders to her adult son.

Jesus begins to form his own identity apart from his family as he grows up and leaves his father and mother. Early on in his ministry we see people identifying him as his father's son – Isn't this Joseph's son? **“Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't**

his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas?" Matthew 13:55 I so identify with this. I've been trying for over 35 years to tell people my name is Sarah – this is our pastor's daughter. I give up. But, Jesus ceases to be known this way as he comes into his own. **Role change #4 happens as Jesus leaves his nuclear family and is no longer just a son but forms a clear adult identity.** It wasn't that Jesus no longer loved his family or honored them but he needed that independence as well. In Matthew 12, Jesus is teaching the crowd and someone comes to tell him that his mother and brothers were there wanting to speak with him. **Jesus says, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers? Pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother." Matthew 12:48-50** He had left his mother and father's home to find his own adult identity within a new family. Remember, weeks ago, I said that we aren't meant to do life alone but marriage isn't the only way that family is formed – the friendships of Jesus become that family for him. But the forming of that new family is a hard transition to make to realize that you as mom or dad aren't the sole influencer or the sole wisdom giver to your child – they have new people to speak into their lives and to care for them. But, Jesus and his family make that transition. Mary allows for him to leave and create the life he was intended to live from the beginning. Imagine the mother arriving at the door of her married sons house – your family is here to speak with you – well, actually, his family is inside the house. The family changes as they follow the biblical mandate to put away childish things, to grow up, and to leave their father and mother and create that new family identity.

The daughter becomes a wife and a mother and that new life has to be respected by the parent.

However, throughout Jesus life he paid honor to his parents. In the Old Testament list of 10 commandments we read, **“Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.” Exodus 20:12** It was the first commandment with promise. Honor and obedience would result in long life. But, here’s the thing there is no time frame on honor. It isn’t just for children to honor or obey until age 18 or until they move out of the house. Honoring parents into old age seems to still fall under this commandment. Jesus wasn’t old when he died, yet even at that moment we see **Role change #5 as Jesus goes from child being parented to adult protector of his parent.** As Jesus hung upon the cross he looks down and in a final act sees his mother. **“Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother... When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, “Woman, here is your son,” and to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” John 19:25-27** He honors his mother by making plans for her care. Caring for parents is the responsibility of the child and Jesus sets this example for us. It was a pain filled moment and a pain filled decision, but Jesus honors her with this request.

Mary, Joseph, and Jesus set the bar pretty high for families. They weren’t perfect, but they model for us the changing roles within the family while still maintaining the importance of the family for a lifetime. The question, as we bring this towards an end is, what role are you in today? No one in here listening and fully comprehending is in that baby/young child role, but many of you are parenting them and identifying

with Mary and Joseph. In those early years of Jesus life as recorded in Luke's gospel it's always Mary and Joseph did this and did that with Jesus. Even in a time where gender roles were very specific we see Joseph present and part of the raising of Jesus. Dad's be present, you can change a diaper and help with homework. Show up and be involved in your kids lives.

Maybe you're a teenager or the parent of a teenager. A lot of grace is needed during those years on all sides. Children, obey your parents. Parents, don't provoke your kids. Teenagers, obey your parents. Parents, recognize the plans and purposes of God within your teenager and cultivate those purposes, encourage those gifts, pray for and with your teens. Those were formative years for Jesus where he grew in wisdom. May we all continue to grow in wisdom and knowledge and in the things of the Lord. Shameless plug for the relaunch of our Sunday School program that will take place on August 5th. As you know when we moved down to the gym we had to make some changes due to space and now we're relaunching and super excited about these classes that are going to be intentional in helping us to grow in wisdom and knowledge about the Lord and His Word. More information is coming so stay tuned, but our heart in this is that you will grow in your faith. Ok, back to the sermon. We want to continue to grow in wisdom and knowledge. That's what Jesus was doing during those teenage years – he was growing spiritually and physically. It's a season of growth.

Maybe you're entering that unknown territory and parenting adult children or you're in that 18-25 emerging adult stage yourself where you're learning how to relate to your parents in a new way. It's a time of finding your own identity and

coming into your own. It's okay, Jesus gave us a good example of how to do that with respect for his mother even while breaking away and beginning his career. New boundary lines get drawn in this stage and you'll have to work those out. Moving away for college helps with that. Forming that identity that's separate from your parents is important. Hopefully, they've given you a godly foundation on which to build. Keep building on Jesus as the rock of your life, keep honoring your parents, realize that you're going to make mistakes and that's ok.

Or maybe you're entering into that season of care giving for aging parents, which can be difficult to say the least. Keep honoring them because it's right and it's scriptural even if it's painful.

Regardless of the role you are currently playing the wisdom, knowledge and guidance you will need to grow and maneuver all the changes life brings will be found in scripture. I don't know how to parent – consult the word of God! I don't know how to be a young person on my own – read the word of God! I don't know how to face these final changes – look into the word of God. This is the point of today's message – the word of God is an example to all of us on the matters of family life.

Family and your role within it is still important even in 2018. Whatever role you're currently in within your family know that God is with you, God sees you, God cares for you. We've talked about these changing roles this morning, but as we close let me share one verse of scripture that sums up what doesn't change about the family in any generation. **“Listen to me, you descendants of Jacob, all the remnant of the people of Israel, you whom I have upheld since your birth, and have**

carried since you were born. Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you.” Isaiah 46:3-4 Through every season, every change, from infancy to retirement, from son to great-grandparent God is the sustainer of your family. God is the rescuer of you and your children and their children and the ones to come after that. God made you – as an individual, and set you into a family – and will carry you through all the ups and downs of life. You matter, your family matters and God will sustain you.