

# The Clan & The Company

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[ 0 : 00 ] that we read in Ephesians chapter 5, or Ephesians chapter 6, sorry. Ephesians chapter 6. And if we read again from the beginning.

Ephesians 6 from the beginning. Where Paul writes, Children, obey your parents and the Lord, for this is right. Honour your father and mother. This is the first commandment with a promise that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. And so on.

I'm sure we've all heard of the phrase two's company, three's a crowd. Two's company, three's a crowd. And with the holidays now upon us and the children off for six long weeks.

Yes, six. One thing that can be said about children out of their regular routine of school is that in our house, two's company, three's a crowd, four is chaos.

[ 1 : 14 ] Two's company, three's a crowd, four is chaos. But to be fair to the four in our family, they're fun. But of course with boys, it's full on. And yet as parents and even as grandparents, we have a huge role.

We have a huge responsibility when it comes to telling and teaching and training our children and our grandchildren. Which is why Paul exhorts us here at the beginning of this, of his, as you could say, the conclusion of his letter, the beginning of the concluding chapter.

He exhorts us here in chapter six. He says, Now as you know, Paul's letter to the Ephesians, it's split into two sections.

It's a fascinating letter. There's two sections, chapters one to three and then four to six. In chapters one to three, Paul is teaching. Four to six, he's telling. One to three, he's giving us information. Chapters four to six, he's giving us application. Chapters one to three, they're full of indicatives. Chapters four to six are full of imperatives. Chapters one to three are full of encouragements.

[ 2 : 20 ] And chapters four to six are full of exhortations. And we saw that in chapters one to three. Paul has encouraged us. He's encouraged us as the Lord's people, as the church of Jesus Christ.

He's encouraged us about all the blessings and benefits that we've received in salvation. We have every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ. And Paul's message to us is, don't forget it.

Then in chapter two, Paul encouraged us. He reminded us that we've been saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, and our salvation, it's all to the glory of God alone.

Then in chapter three, Paul encouraged us again. He said that we are loved. So Christian, don't forget it. You're loved and you're loved. God has made known to you his love. He's made known to you the length and breadth and depth and height of his love towards you in Christ Jesus.

And so Paul, he's lovingly encouraged us throughout chapters one to three. He's boosted us. He's lifted us up, you could say, which is why he now lovingly exhorts us.

[ 3 : 24 ] He sort of brings us down a peg or two in chapters four to six. Because as we've seen and as we've said in chapters four to six, Paul uses a peripatetic illustration at the beginning of, throughout chapter four and then into the beginning of chapter five, he uses an illustration of walking.

Because our Christian walk is important and integral to our Christian witness. And Paul exhorts us at the beginning of chapter four, he tells us to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which we have been called.

Then halfway through chapter four, he tells us that we must not walk like the world or walk with the world. And with that, Paul, he gave to us eleven imperatives, eleven exhortations to put off the world and to put on Christ.

Then as Paul goes into chapter five, he gives us even more imperatives and more exhortations. He tells us that we're not to be imitators of what is graceless and godless, but we're to be imitators of God by walking in love.

That's what he says, chapter five, verse two, walk in love as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. But in order to prove his point, we saw at the beginning of chapter five, Paul gives us twenty and twenty.

[ 4 : 48 ] Twenty imperatives in twenty verses. Twenty exhortations in twenty verses, which shows us and stresses to us how highly Paul regards our Christian walk in this world.

because for Paul, as an apostle, he's telling us that our Christian character, our conduct, our conversation, our commitment to Jesus Christ, it is important and integral to our Christian witness. Why? Because the world is watching. The world is watching us. But then as Paul moved on into the second half of chapter five and now as we're going into the first half of chapter six, Paul focuses our attention away from what we are like as Christians in the public eye to what we are like as Christians in private, in the privacy of our own home.

Because for Paul, what we are in public must also be what we are in private. What we are in public must be what we are in private. We touched on this on Sunday night with Noah.

What we are in public must also be what we are in private. And Paul addresses three relationships here in our private life. Our relationship to our spouse, our relationship to our children, and our relationship to our boss.

[ 6 : 08 ] Or as I said before, if you're addicted to a liberation like me, you have chapter five verses 22 to the end is the covenant. Then chapter six verses one to four, that is the clan.

And then verses five down to verse mark nine, that is the company. So the covenant, the clan, and the company. And last time, a couple of weeks ago, we considered the covenant of marriage. What is marriage? And that marriage requires commitment. So there was the covenant and the commitment that's required in marriage. But this evening, we're considering the next two, the clan and the company.

The clan and the company. So that's our two headings this evening. So first of all, we're looking at the clan. Look at chapter six of verse one.

Paul writes, children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother. This is the first commandment with a promise that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.

[ 7 : 10 ] Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Now, from a young age, I was always taught that I was from the clan Campbell and that the clan name is from Gaelic, as you probably all know, Count Bael, meaning squint mouth, very suitable for myself.

More than that, the squint mouth clan was also responsible for a massacre and a murder of none other than all the McDonald's in the snow of Glencoe.

So I was taught this as a child. The irony is that the motto of clan Campbell is forget not. The motto of clan Campbell is forget not and as many of you will know, as a Campbell, that is not my strong point and not a motto that I actually remember very often.

But you know, as the Apostle Paul, as he addresses the clan here in this section, he's not addressing massacres or murders or mottos. He's addressing our family rules and our family relationships.

But you know, what I think we often forget or even fail to remember, even as a whole denomination, I think we forget and fail to remember that children are part of the covenant community.

[ 8 : 34 ] Children are part of the covenant community. Children are not an addition. They're not an add-on to the members, minister, and office bearers of a congregation.

Children are not there to make up the numbers so that the congregation looks good and it looks like it's growing. They're not there just to be seen in Sunday school or YF or toddler group.

No, children, as the Bible emphasizes, children play a crucial role and a crucial part in the covenant community of the church. In fact, Paul would have expected and he would probably have even encouraged the children in the church at Ephesus to read this letter.

He would have expected them to read this letter to the Ephesians because at the beginning of chapter 6, that's who he's speaking to. He's not speaking to the elders. He's not speaking to the adults or the parents or grandparents.

He's speaking to the children. Paul addresses the children. He exhorts the children in the covenant community of the church. Paul disciplines the children directly and he says to them, children, obey your parents in the Lord for this is right.

[ 9 : 49 ] Now, when Paul says children, they are right there at verse 1, he's not addressing the church like Jesus did.

Remember, Jesus, he spoke to the disciples and Jesus said, children, how hard is it for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven? And Paul here is not following the example of the apostle John who often used the word children, where John said, my little children, I'm writing these things to you so that you do not sin.

Unlike Jesus and unlike John, Paul isn't addressing the church as children. Paul here is addressing children in the church. He's addressing the children in the covenant community of the church.

And as you'd expect by now, Paul's exhortation and Paul's encouragement comes in the form of an imperative. He uses an imperative. Children, obey.

Obey your parents in the Lord for this is right. And so by using an imperative, just like he's done speaking to the adults all the way through the letter, Paul addresses children and adults in exactly the same way.

[ 11 : 02 ] Because Paul sees children as much a part of the covenant community in the church of Jesus Christ as adults are. Therefore, as adults reading this this evening, as parents, as grandparents, as older folk in the congregation, we should see it too.

The children are as much a part of the covenant community in the church of Jesus Christ as adults are. And I emphasize the phrase covenant community in the church because that's what we are. We are a covenant community. That's a biblical picture of the church. We're a covenant community. As you know, we're familiar with the concept of covenant because we've been mentioning over the last few weeks that our Bible has a covenantal framework.

And we've been thinking about the theme of covenant and covenant theology. We touched on the theme of covenant last time when we were considering the previous section of marriage and the covenant of marriage.

But we also considered the theme of covenant theology in the narrative of Noah when we've been looking at it on the Lord's Day. And as we said throughout our study in Noah, we said about God's covenant of grace that as it was being revealed and repeated and reaffirmed to every subsequent generation, every generation received a different sign.

[ 12 : 33 ] So whether it was the Noahic covenant that was the sign of the rainbow, whenever you see a rainbow, remember God is love. Then there was the Abrahamic covenant, it was the sign of circumcision. The Mosaic covenant was the law, the Davidic covenant was the promised seed to sit upon the throne.

And then there's the new covenant promised and personified with the sign of the blood of Jesus Christ. So we're familiar with the concept of covenant and that our Bible is held together by this framework of covenant where God has entered into a relationship with us.

He's revealed himself to us in the form of covenants. But you know the concept of the covenant community of God's people, it began when God's covenant of grace was revealed and repeated and reaffirmed to Abraham with the covenant sign of circumcision.

Whereas you know every male member in the covenant community, they bore the sign of the covenant. Thankfully, gents, the sign of circumcision has changed under the new covenant. But the concept of the covenant community has continued, the idea has continued under the new covenant in the church of Jesus Christ. Where we're still a covenant community, we're still a covenant community, but what has changed is that every member, every member of the new covenant community of the church, whether male or female, they are to receive the new covenant sign of baptism.

[ 14 : 11 ] So there's a moving over from circumcision to baptism. And as our catechism teaches us, baptism doth signify and seal our engrafting into Christ, and the partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace and our engagement to be the Lord's.

Now of course, when we baptise a child, we don't believe in the Roman Catholic heresy of baptismal regeneration, where you're born again at your baptism. But it does mean that everyone who receives the covenant sign of baptism, whether a man, a woman, a boy or a girl, they become a member of the covenant community of the church of Jesus Christ.

But like it was in Old Testament Israel, and the covenant community of Israel, under the covenant sign of circumcision, in the new covenant community of the church with the sign of baptism, receiving the sign of the covenant does not gift you your salvation.

It does not guarantee your salvation. It does mean that, as the catechism teaches us, that every member within the covenant community, they are privileged.

So everyone in our congregation who's in the covenant community is privileged, privileged to experience and enjoy all the promises of God, and that they are engaged to be the lords.

[15:44] That doesn't mean that they are the lords, because as you know, an engagement can be broken off. But the breaking off of the engagement is not the Lord's doing.

It is the willful desertion of a member within the covenant community of the church. And you know, I highlight that everyone who receives the covenant, the new covenant sign of baptism is a member. They're a member of the covenant community of the church. And I use the word member specifically, not just because there are some other ministers who believe our covenant children are members in the church, but because that is the biblical principle that is set before us in scripture. They are members of our covenant community. But of course I want to qualify that by saying that although they're covenant members in the church, they are not communicant members in the church.

they're only communicant members once they have personally professed their faith in Jesus Christ and that they are enjoying all the privileges and that they're experiencing all the promises of God's covenant of grace as a child of God.

[17:00] And you know, I think this is important for us to remember and I hope we see it because and it's so important to remember because it's certainly something that's stressed more in other denominations like in the Dutch Reformed Church.

They view every covenant child as a member of the church. And there is a huge thing to leave the church because to be brought up in the church is such a privilege to be brought up under all the promises of God's covenant of grace.

And you know, when we see the importance of it, it should impact us and see that our children as members of the covenant community of the church, they're not an add-on, they're not an addition. As adults and parents and grandparents and as older ones, they are in with us. They are part of this great covenant community. And when we see that, we will instinctively, I hope, take our role of teaching our covenant children as adults or parents or grandparents or anyone in the congregation. Anyone in the congregation is part of the covenant community. That we will instinctively take our role of teaching our covenant children more seriously and take our responsibility more solemnly.

[18:28] Because as the covenant community, we are to be committed not only to pray for every member of the covenant community, but also to pastor every member of the covenant community.

Because the privilege, the privilege and the promises of God's covenant of grace, as the New Testament reminds us, all these privileges, all these promises of God's covenant of grace, they're to us as the adults.

But they're also to our children. They're to us and to our children as members of the covenant community of the church. church. And you know, this is why Paul stresses the importance and the integrity of our relationship with our children.

Because when it comes to our children, we have put and we have placed upon our children the sign and seal of the covenant. We have presented them to the Lord. And we've all promised.

We've all promised, not just the parents. We've all promised as the covenant community. we've promised before our covenant God that by his grace, we will pray for them.

[19:38] We will pastor them. We'll provide for them. For all our children, whether they live in our home or not, we will provide for our children because we are members of this covenant community of the church of Jesus Christ.

Christ. Now you might be thinking, man, murder, that's a lot to ask. But this is what Scripture asks of us. And I know that's not easy.

But this is what we are as a covenant community of God's people. This is why the Bible describes us as the family of God. And it's not easy, especially when there are so many difficulties, so many demands on children in their day and generation.

And sometimes we feel so detached from them because they're involved in things that we never even thought of. But you know, the best thing we can do for our covenant children is tell them and

teach them about God's covenant of grace.

We can tell them and teach them about all their privileges, of being brought up in the church. We can tell them and teach them about all of God's promises. And that these promises are not only for the adults, they're also for them.

[ 20 : 51 ] They're to them and for them. And you know, we need to teach our children, not only by emphasising that, as Paul says there in verse 2, that they must honour their father and their mother.

But we need to bring them up in the discipline, the instruction of the Lord, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. By being an example to them. Whether we're their parents or their grandparents or adults in the congregation or someone in the covenant community, we are to be an example to them.

And we're to be an example to them because the sad reality is they have plenty examples on screens. They have all the examples they need on a screen.

In fact, nowadays, I don't know if you know this, I only found this out recently. YouTube has what they call influencers. That's what they're called. That's how they describe themselves.

That's how they define themselves. They call themselves influencers. And their whole purpose, their whole mantra is to influence children and anyone else who wants to watch them.

[ 22 : 01 ] So our children are being impacted and influenced by what they see. Our role, our responsibility as a covenant community, with our covenant God, is what we need to teach and tell our children that Jesus should be the greatest influencer in their lives.

He should be the greatest influencer in their lives. And so as Paul exhorts us to be in private where we are in public, he addresses our relationship with our children.

And when it comes to children, it's always hard hitting. But it's so important. But then he addresses our relationship with the company, so those whom we work with.

So then we've looked at the clan. And secondly, and more briefly, the company. So look at verse 5. Paul talks here about the company.

Bond servants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart as you would Christ. Not by the way of eye service as people pleasers, but as bond servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man.

[ 23 : 17 ] Knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bond servant or is free. Masters, do the same to them and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both our master and yours is in heaven and that there is no partiality with him.

You know, first and foremost, what we ought to notice is the order. The order the way Paul sets it out. Notice the order. Because when it comes to this section of our relationships, he sets before us the covenant, the clan, and then the company.

He has a specific and a set order, an order of priority. The covenant, the clan, and then the company. Meaning that the company shouldn't take priority over the covenant we have with our spouse.

or the clan which the Lord has provided as part of our home and also our covenant community.

That shouldn't be second to our company.

Paul is clear on the order, the covenant, the clan, and the company. Of course, we need the company. We need work to be able to provide for the covenant, for our spouse, and we need work to provide for the clan.

[ 24 : 41 ] But the company is not the priority. God has given us an order. The Bible sets before us an order. The covenant, the clan, and the company.

In fact, our Christian character, conduct, conversation, and commitment to Christ is priority. That's what Paul is emphasizing. It's all about your commitment to Christ.

That's your priority. Whether you are, as Paul says in this section, whether you're an employee or an employer. It's all about your commitment to Jesus Christ.

Because as Paul has repeatedly emphasized and explained to us, the world is watching. So whether you're an employee or an employer, the world is watching. What you are in public must also be what you are in private.

And so what Paul is emphasizing to us here, he says, you know, what we are in worship on Sunday must also be what we are at work on Monday.

[ 25 : 42 ] What we are as we worship on Sunday must also be what we are as we work on Monday. Because, you know, and I remember it as well, being an electrician, there is nothing that puts people off Christ.

More than a contradictory Christian. There is nothing that puts people off Christ and church and anything to do with Christianity more than a contradictory Christian.

Because a contradictory Christian, they're holy on Sunday, hypocrite on Monday. Contradictory Christian, good on Sunday, grumpy on Monday.

A contradictory Christian is godly on Sunday, a gossip on Monday. Contradictory Christian, friendly on Sunday to everyone, fierce on Monday morning.

A contradictory Christian, missional on Sunday, moaning on Monday. Contradictory Christian, lively on Sunday, full of the Lord, lazy on Monday.

[ 26 : 46 ] The world is watching though. That's what Paul is challenging us with. Which means that what we are as we worship on Sunday must also be what we are as we work on Monday.

Because there's nothing that puts people off, Christians, Christ and the church, than a contradictory Christian. Therefore, we must be consistent. That's what Paul is emphasizing to us.

It's hard-hitting stuff. We must be consistent Christians. We must be Christ-centered Christians. In fact, Paul says that whether you're an employee or an employer, to summarize what he's saying there in that section, Paul says you are to work, not to be seen by your boss, but to serve your Savior.

You're to work, not to be seen by your boss, but to serve your Savior. Because as a Christian, whether you're the employee or the employer, and whatever your job is, you're to do your job as if you are working for Christ himself.

You're to do your job, whatever it is, you're to do it as if you are working for Christ himself. And so as Paul addresses us, this is what we are to be like as Christians in the privacy of the covenant of marriage, the clan with our children, and the company we work for.

[ 28 : 17 ] And Paul is very direct. Remember what we are in public must also be what we are in private. Challenging.

But may the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. O Lord, help us to be faithful Christian witnesses. Not only in our marriages and with our children, but also in the workplace.

We confess, O Lord, how often we get it wrong. And we do get it wrong. But Lord, teach us to be more like Jesus. To be more Christ-centered. To be more focused upon him.

And that ultimately we would seek to live lives for his glory. Guard us, Lord, we pray. Keep the evil one from us. And Lord, when we read the way even the letter to the Ephesians is written, we see why Paul went on to speak about the whole armor of God.

When we consider our home and our children and even our workplace, that we need to have that armor on. because we know that there is an enemy that goes around like a roaring lion seeking to destroy our marriages, seeking to divert our children's attention and seeking to influence even us in the workplace.

[ 29 : 43 ] But Lord, help us, we pray, as thy people ought to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which we have been called. And Lord, we know that we faint and we fail. We let the Lord down.

But Lord, we pray that thou wouldst lift us up and teach us and train us and show us the way that we should go. That we would live lives that are bringing glory to thy name.

That wherever we go, whatever we do, wherever we work, oh Lord, that we would bear with us a fragrance of Christ. That we would be a savor of life unto life to those around us.

That we would be able to tell it to them that this God is our God and that he will be our guide even unto death. Lord, keep us in, we pray. Bless us in our being together.

Watch over us in our parting. That thou wouldst keep our going out and our coming in from this time forth and even forevermore. Take away our iniquities. Receive us graciously.

[ 30 : 42 ] For Jesus' sake. Amen. Amen. We're going to bring our service to a conclusion this evening.

We're going to sing the following psalm. Psalm 128. So we sang Psalm 127 a wee while ago. So this time we're going to sing Psalm 128.

Another family psalm that emphasizes the clan. Blessed is each one that fears the Lord and walketh in his ways.

For off thy labour thou shalt eat and happy be always. Thy wife shall as a fruitful vine by thy house sides be found. Thy children like to olive plants about thy table round.

Behold the man that fears the Lord thus blessed shall he be. The Lord shall out of Zion give his blessing unto thee. And we're singing down to the end of the psalm of Psalm 128 to God's praise.

[ 31 : 44 ] Amen. For off thy labour thou shalt eat and happy be always.

Thy eyes shall as a fruitful Shrine and Rolex by thy heart melancholy by thy lighthi my life by thy heart the risquent by thy heart by thy luck by thy heart by thy wild WOOD by thy children by thy by thy heart I take the run.

Behold the man, the dear child, the Lord.

Thus blessed shall he be. The Lord shall unto Zion give his blessing unto thee.

Thou shalt Jerusalem's good behold what star on earth doth dwell.

[ 34 : 07 ] Thou shalt thy children's children see and peace on Israel.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forevermore. Amen.