

Calvary Academy Sunday (Hymns 505, 506, 500)

John 14:23-24 Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. 24) He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.”

A HOUSE OR A HOME?

- A. A family moved to a different city because the father’s company transferred him.
1. This meant a different school and a different teacher for little Susan.
 2. Her new teacher understood Susan’s situation.
 3. On her first day in class the teacher devoted some time to help Susan feel more at home and to help the other students get acquainted with her.
 4. She asked Susan about where she used to live and about the school she had attended.
 5. After a while she said, “I noticed that your address is the motel down the street. Don’t you have a home yet?”
 6. “Oh yes,” Susan replied. “We have a home; we just haven’t found a house to put it in.”
- B. The little girl was right. A house is not automatically a home.
1. There are people who live in large houses with beautiful furnishings and every convenience, but because they lack the warmth of love, all they have is a large house with beautiful furnishings and every convenience.
 2. On the other hand, there are families who own little of earthly value, but because of the love, the laughter, and the togetherness that they share, their dwelling is indeed a home.

I. Homes At Risk

- A. In American society today, because of the break down of the traditional family, the home is at risk.
1. In the majority of families, both mother and father work – and their children are cared for by others.
 2. In more than 50% of our nation’s families, it is single parents who are challenged to provide a home for themselves and their children.
 3. The task of providing a home that will keep their children safe from destructive influences seems almost beyond their reach.
 4. But even that is not the biggest challenge that confronts our homes today. The biggest challenge comes from within the home itself.

II. Tenting The Termites

- A. Dealing with the problem of termites in houses was a very real problem when we lived in Nebraska.
1. These little insects go undetected, but you certainly can see their handy work when you start checking the studs and floor joists of your home.

2. Some people would joke saying that the only thing that keeps some walls from falling is the fact that the termites are holding hands.
 3. But we know very well that, if allowed to do their thing unchecked, termites can accomplish from within the structure of a house what wind and rain and storm have not been able to do from the outside.
- B. In the same way, we know that the threat to our homes is not so much the negative factors outside the home like drugs, crime, violence, immorality, and greed.
1. Of greater concern is a lack of Christ and His Word inside our homes. For Christ and His Word give our homes the foundation that is needed to make them strong and secure.
 2. If we want our houses to be Christian homes, if we want our families to stand strong against the destructive forces that surround us, it is especially spiritual termites that we need to be wary of as they threaten to eat away the very structure of home and family from within.
- C. This morning, then, let's look at 3 ways in which we can build and maintain strong Christian homes and strong Christian families.
1. First and foremost, we need to concentrate on that which makes our homes truly Christian.
 2. We need to consciously fill our homes with the presence of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the One who kept God's law perfectly for us. Jesus Christ is the One who suffered, died and rose again guaranteeing that our sins are forgiven.
 3. So Jesus is the only One who can overcome and drive out the sin and evil that threaten to destroy our homes.
 4. What a tremendous promise Jesus gives us today in our text when He says: **“My Father will love you, and we will come to you and make our home with you.”**
 5. Jesus assures us that he will make our house truly a Christian home.
- D. Jesus' blessing of a truly Christian home comes from our loving him who loved us first and our obeying his teaching. For his very next words are, **“He who does not love me will not obey my teaching.”**
1. The clear implication is that Jesus and his Father will not come to make their home with people who do not love and obey them.
 2. The word “obey” may also be translated “guard” which says to us that when we love our Lord we will guard his Word as our dearest treasure.
 3. When we obey the teachings of Jesus and when we treasure the Gospel, then we will realize more and more each day that Jesus lives with us in our home.
- E. From my childhood I remember a plaque in our home. It read: **“Christ is the Head of this home; the unseen Guest at every meal; the silent Listener to every conversation.”**

1. These words made an impression on me. I now have those words on a plaque in my home.
 2. Does it describe the presence of Christ in your home?
 3. Does the atmosphere of your home reflect this?
 4. Do pictures and plaques provide reminders of Christ's presence with you?
 5. Do you invite Christ to be your Guest at every meal?
 6. Are you aware of him, not only as the silent Listener to your conversations, but also as the One who talks to you as you read the Bible together?
 7. Jesus promises, **"My Father and I will come to you and make our home with you."**
 8. Count on it! Live in daily awareness of it as you keep his Word!
- F. If we want our house to be a Christian home we will also work to keep bad influences out.
1. Having cable television offers many opportunities for entertainment and information as well as educational opportunities.
 2. TV can bring the world into our homes!
 3. Unfortunately, that can be a mixed blessing.
 4. TV's entertainment is often slanted toward the violent and the immoral and sometimes it directly attacks the Christian faith.
 5. Recently a talk show was discussing the rise of drive-by shootings and senseless violence.
 6. The question was asked: "Why is this happening to our young people?"
 7. One participant responded: "Remember, by the time our children get to be 13 they have probably seen 250,000 acts of violence of one form or another on TV."
 8. Needless to say our young people are being influenced by what they watch on TV.
 9. They also are devoting a lot of time to watching TV. Students spend 900 hours per year in school but nearly 1,500 hours in front of a TV set.
 10. Isn't it essential then that we monitor and control how our children's minds are being programmed by what they watch on TV?
 11. What about music? Have you noticed how many young people today use headsets and listen to music? A record 785.1 million music albums were sold in 2000, up 4 percent from the previous year. Alan Weed, president of the Christian music organization Interline says, "Christian kids listen to four hours of music a day – most of it mainstream – not Christian."
 - Have you ever listened to the music that our young people are listening to? Much of the music that is popular and "in" with the young people today is violent and immoral. It glamorizes rape, murder and drugs.
 - Again isn't it essential that we monitor and control how our children's minds are being programmed by what they hear in the form of music?
 12. What about the internet? Here too, the internet can be a valuable tool and resource.
 - But it also can be the source of much evil.

- Pornography abounds on the internet. 60% of all web sites on the internet today are pornographic in nature. It is so easy for our children to frequent web sites that they shouldn't. Are you keeping track of what your children are viewing on the internet?
- Again isn't it essential that we monitor and control how our children use the internet?

13. As Christian parents it is our responsibility to teach our children the way of the Lord and help them to fight against the many temptations of Satan and the world. We need to set definite boundaries for our children in regard to what they may watch on TV, what kind of music they may listen to, and what types of things they may view on the internet. In doing this we will help keep evil influences out of our homes.

- G. Finally if our houses are to be Christian homes, we need to work at keeping our problems that happen outside the home from affecting our relationship with our family.
1. One pastor tells of a neighbor who usually got home from work about the same time that he came home for dinner.
 2. He noticed a curious thing.
 3. Often, before going into his house his neighbor would walk to a willow tree in his yard and stand by it, holding the branches.
 4. Then he would go into his house with a smile, and hug and kiss his wife and children.
 5. The pastor asked him about the ritual.
 6. He explained, "That's my trouble tree. I can't avoid problems at work, but I don't want them upsetting my family. So I hang them on the tree when I come home – and pick them up again in the morning. And the funny thing is: they aren't as many or as heavy as I remember them being the night before."
 7. A trouble tree, what an interesting concept. As Christians we already have a trouble tree, a place where we can take our problems and troubles. It is the tree of the cross. Jesus invites us each day to bring our problems and cares to him at the foot of the cross and give them to Him. Jesus promises to hear our troubles and help. We need to use our trouble tree, that is the tree of the cross each day.

III. Putting The Family Together

- A. One day a little boy asked his mother for something to do. She took a magazine and cut out a page with a large map of the United States on it.
1. She cut it up into small pieces like a jigsaw puzzle and gave him the pieces and some tape and told him to put it together.
 2. He was back sooner than she expected with the map taped together.
 3. When she asked how he had done it so quickly he said, "There was a picture of a family on the other side, so I turned it over. Once I got the family together the country turned out right too."
- B. As citizens of the United States we want our country to be put together right.
1. We want a military strong enough to defend us and to discourage any attacks.

2. We want a justice system that will be fair and impartial.
3. We want an economy that will provide a living for all.
4. We want social programs that will care for the truly needy.
5. In most of these concerns we are dependent on the efforts of others “out there.”
6. But we need to remember that more important than any of these factors in building a healthy nation is the health of our homes and families.
7. We will help our country turn out right by working to put our families together as well as we can.
8. When we work to make the houses we live in Christian homes, then our gracious God lives with us, not only to bless US, but to make us a blessing to others.

C. That really is the mission of CA – to restore Christian homes so that parents and children can live together once again in Christian love and harmony.

1. Our motto or theme at CA is “Hope for hurting families.”
2. That hope can only be realized through Jesus Christ and His Word.
3. So do you have a house or a Christian home?
 - Is Christ present in your home?
 - Are you working at keeping bad influences out?
 - Are you leaving your problems at your trouble tree?
4. Remember Jesus promised, **“If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.”**
AMEN.