

Defining Moments:
Defined by Becoming a Parent
Miscellaneous Texts

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Text Introduction: We are in a series of messages that we are calling “Defining Moments.” Our lives are sprinkled with defining moments—moments that shape the rest of our lives, moments that are so important that the rest of our lives hang in the balance of these moments.

We have talked about such topics as our births—both our physical births and spiritual births, baptism, and marriage. We even talked about how historical moments are defining moments (wars, hurricanes, etc.) On Easter Sunday we talked about “The Most Defining Moment of all of History”—the resurrection of Jesus. We have since been trying to isolate other defining moments.

Before I finalized the topics for this series, I sent out an e-mail to our staff asking them for defining moments in their lives. I wanted to make sure that I was not forgetting about the obvious. Everyone who is a parent indicated “having children” as a defining moment in life. Now, as on the day when we talked about marriage, I am well aware that not everyone has children. For some of you this is incredibly painful for you. However, I hope that you will forgive me this morning for addressing this as a defining moment because for those who do have children, it is a defining moment. As a defining moment, we must make sure we get it right.

I know that becoming a parent was defining for me. Leaving the hospital with Josh is a memory that Linett and I often revisit. We were a little bit down the road when she said, “Why are you driving so slowly?” I admit I was going slowly. Having this little 7 pound baby in the backseat for the first time was life changing. There has never been in our lives a time like the 40 hours after the birth of Dru. For those of you unaware, Dru came to us through the miracle of adoption. After we arrived at the hospital where Dru was born, (some 10 hours after he had been born) we were told that his birth mother was not quite ready for us to have him. We spent the next 24 hours (about 6 p.m. to 6 p.m.) wondering and waiting. That kind of moment will define the rest of your life. Our lives have been defined by both of our boys.

Becoming a parent is defining for a family, but parenting is defining for our culture—our society.

God uses the family as a means to pass along faith.

Once we understand this, we understand that parenting is not only defining for us—parents, but parenting is defining for all of our society. The history of Israel in the Old Testament provides us a great case study on this subject.

A Quick Survey of Israel’s History:

A Charge to the Family

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

⁴ “Listen, Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵ Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. ⁶ These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart. ⁷ Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸ Bind them as a sign on your hand and let them be a symbol on your forehead. ⁹ Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

God commanded the family to teach the ways and words of God. We learn in these verses that this teaching is supposed to be scheduled and spontaneous, planned and impromptu, organized and in the ordinary times of life.

A Choice for the Family

Joshua 24:14-28

¹⁴ “Therefore, fear the LORD and worship Him in sincerity and truth. Get rid of the gods your fathers worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and worship Yahweh. ¹⁵ But if it doesn’t please you to worship Yahweh, choose for yourselves today the one you will worship: the gods your fathers worshiped beyond the Euphrates River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living. As for me and my family, we will worship Yahweh.”

¹⁶ The people replied, “We will certainly not abandon the LORD to worship other gods! ¹⁷ For the LORD our God brought us and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery, and performed these great signs before our eyes. He also protected us all along the way we went and among all the peoples whose lands we traveled through. ¹⁸ The LORD drove out before us all the peoples, including the Amorites who lived in the land. We too will worship the LORD, because He is our God.”

¹⁹ But Joshua told the people, “You will not be able to worship Yahweh, because He is a holy God. He is a jealous God; He will not remove your transgressions and sins. ²⁰ If you abandon the LORD and worship foreign gods, He will turn against you, harm you, and completely destroy you, after He has been good to you.”

²¹ “No!” the people answered Joshua. “We will worship the LORD.”

²² Joshua then told the people, “You are witnesses against yourselves that you yourselves have chosen to worship Yahweh.”

“We are witnesses,” they said.

²³ “Then get rid of the foreign gods that are among you and offer your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel.”

²⁴ So the people said to Joshua, “We will worship the LORD our God and obey Him.”

²⁵ On that day Joshua made a covenant for the people at Shechem and established a statute and ordinance for them. ²⁶ Joshua recorded these things in the book of the law of God; he also took a large stone and set it up there under the oak next to the sanctuary of the LORD. ²⁷ And Joshua said to all the people, “You see this stone—it will be a witness against us, for it has heard all the words the LORD said to us, and it will be a witness against you, so that you will not deny your God.” ²⁸ Then Joshua sent the people away, each to his own inheritance.

The choice is clear and the consequences of not making the right choice are serious. The response of the people is overwhelming that they desired to follow God.

A Crisis in the Family and for Society

Judges 2:10

¹⁰ That whole generation was also gathered to their ancestors. After them another generation rose up who did not know the LORD or the works He had done for Israel.

Failure in the home becomes a crisis for the nation.

A Change in Society

1 Kings 18:18-22

¹⁸ He replied, “I have not destroyed Israel, but you and your father’s house have, because you have abandoned the LORD’s commands and followed the Baals. ¹⁹ Now summon all Israel to meet me at Mount Carmel, along with the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah who eat at Jezebel’s table.”

²⁰ So Ahab summoned all the Israelites and gathered the prophets at Mount Carmel. ²¹ Then Elijah approached all the people and said, “How long will you hesitate between two opinions? If Yahweh is God, follow Him. But if Baal, follow him.” But the people didn’t answer him a word.

²² Then Elijah said to the people, “I am the only remaining prophet of the LORD, but Baal’s prophets are 450 men.

In Joshua’s day, they answered, “We will serve the Lord.” Even when challenged in their ability to do this, they insist that they will serve the Lord. Now in Elijah’s day, they answered not a word.

So What?

We are living in the Days of Elijah! I have always liked that song, but struggled with the meaning of it really. I had an epiphany moment this week. That’s why I asked John Frank to lead us to sing this song.

“These are the days of Elijah.” I would love to have lived in the days of Joshua, but we don’t. We live in the days of Elijah. So, living in the days of Elijah we must answer several questions.

- Whom will your family serve?
- Will your family stand if no one else stands?
- Will you stand if no one else around you stands?

Is there any hope?

Malachi 4:4-6

⁴“Remember the instruction of Moses My servant, the statutes and ordinances I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel. ⁵Look, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome Day of the LORD comes. ⁶And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers. Otherwise, I will come and strike the land with a curse.”

A resounding hope! Revival in the home is the precursor to revival!