



Parents are loved and respected in the Home Realigned by the Spirit

- Joseph's deep love and respect for his father is powerful in the Genesis text. He wept for his father!
- Children, have the injunction to love and respect their parents. What are some of the ills in the home that will cause disintegration between children and parents?
- Parents, do not so live that your children cannot call you 'blessed'.
- The Psalmist (Psalm 133) presents the theme of unity which is critical to the proper functioning of any home. Unity is elevated to the unction of anointing.

Genesis 45:1-15

Psalm 133

Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32

Matthew 15: (10-20), 21-28

- (UCJCI Preaching Themes – Sunday, August 20, 2023)

Please read Genesis 45:1-15

Last week we turned our focus on the book of Genesis, chapter 37 and the family of the patriarch Jacob. Through the story of Jacob's children, Joseph, and his brothers, we learned about the importance of the home as the primary environment for shaping and forming the development, growth, and life of family members. We also acknowledged that as an extension of that influence, the home can impact the events beyond the immediate family circle and society.

This week we stay with the topic of The Realigned Home as an expression of God's love, will, purpose, values, and standards and consider how the relationships among family members can promote a godly household.

Genesis 45:1-15 tells the story of how Joseph revealed his identity to his brothers, who had sold him into slavery thirteen years before. Those years were an existential roller coaster of highs and lows for Joseph, who eventually rose to a position of great power in Egypt. Then one day, unexpectedly, he encountered his brothers again when they appeared before him,

seeking to buy food during a famine. He recognized them, but they did not recognize him. Now it was the brothers' turn to have their own unpleasant existential roller coaster as Joseph tried to ascertain with much skill and finesse what was in their hearts and minds and if his father still alive. When he finally learned what he needed to know, he revealed not only his identity, but his own heart of love, compassion, forgiveness and concern for all of them.

In a Realigned Home there is an effort made by family members to pursue God's way in their relationships with one another. That includes the relationships between mother and father, between parents and their children, between children and their parents and between siblings. Human relationships, even those in a family environment, are prone to conflicts, hurt, stress and harms of many kinds. However, when family members make consistent and intentional effort to realign themselves with God, the effects will spill over into their relationships with each other in two ways, both as prevention and as intervention.

But first we must understand that realigning ourselves daily with God is about allowing God to shape and form our lives so that we may become more and more one with the nature and character of Jesus Christ. This process can be quite challenging and even unpleasant at times, as it is clearly evident in Joseph's case. Joseph did not know anything about Christ, but he was learning about God's nature and character through his own experiences that helped him realigning himself with God. Those thirteen years were far from easy, but as the result of Joseph's faith, diligence and steadfastness, they produced a man after God's heart whose actions brought reconciliation, peace and blessings to his family. As we consider the call to realign ourselves and our homes with God, maybe it would be a good starting point for us to see the events of our life as a training ground to produce a true Christlike nature and character.

One of the ways we contribute to the creation of Godly home as we realign ourselves daily with God is minimizing the chances of ourselves becoming a source of hurt and pain and allowing things get out of control. Joseph's intention, approach and actions in dealing with his brothers all aimed for something good and beneficial. He prevented his heart from becoming bitter, angry, vindictive and vengeful, which laid the foundation for healing and reconciliation instead of causing more misery and pain. This approach can also aid us in taking the right course of action or saying the right things in a situation to prevent something wrong or hurtful from happening. We certainly are familiar with the proverb attributed to Benjamin Franklin, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure",

suggesting that it is easier to prevent something undesirable from happening than trying to clean up, or fix the problem later.

The other way our daily realignment with God can contribute to positively impacting our family environment is intervention. Intervention, is when guided by God's Holy Spirit, we intentionally and creatively act to affect, control and bring to a favorable closure something harmful or wrong already in progress. Harms and wrongs could be caused by situations as well as individuals. The famine experienced by Egypt and Canaan were not caused by human errors. Thankfully, God could use Joseph to make a difference. Our family can experience a crisis caused by outside factors when we can make a difference if we are realigned with God. But it can also be interpersonal conflicts that raise their unpleasant head, and the way we intervene is critical to bring them to a positive outcome. Joseph's dealing with his brothers and father speaks volumes about the impacts of being realigned with God.

The story of Joseph is indeed a beautiful illustration of how faith, love, forgiveness, reconciliation and care can create a home after God's heart, where even when wrongs done in the past, it is possible to rebuild relationships through understanding, compassion, and a recognition of a higher purpose.

(Rev. Otto Menko)

ELMSLIE MEMORIAL VBS



Food Truck Party – On a Roll with God! was the theme of Elmslie Memorial United Church's Annual VBS which was held from July 31-August 4, (Monday – Friday) 2023. The week's activities concluded on

Sunday, August 6 with a special VBS Service. The daily activities took place in the evening, from 5:30pm to 8:30pm.



Mr. Roy McGregor, Youth Minister of Elmslie Memorial with the Food Truck.

Through the skillful work of congregants the sanctuary, church hall, church car park, and classrooms were beautifully transformed to give the participants complete immersion into the theme. At the center of the Sanctuary platform stood a food truck called "On a Roll", built by members, where the children

and youth learned about the Daily Specials (Daily Learnings), which were lines from the Lord's Prayer.



The daily activities included engaging Bible stories and lessons reflecting each day's theme, lots of singing, interactive crafts and games encouraging teamwork, creativity, learning, and, as expected from a food truck themed VBS, mouthwatering food. One hundred and eight (108) children and youth participated in the VBS led by a capable and well-experienced leadership team of thirty-seven (37). Special thanks to everyone who made the Elmslie Memorial 2023 VBS a success.



The Elmslie memorial VBS Leadership Team with Rev. L. Christopher Mason, Minister.



I ♥ VBS

Remember in your prayers!

All those God has placed on your heart and those brought to your attention in some way. Please include in your prayers especially the family of the late Mr. McFarlane Conolly (EEUC), also Mr. Mike Bowerman and his wife Mary (EMUC), Rev. Joe Crawford and Rev. Harry Bodden.



on Radio Cayman 89.9
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Rev. Otto Menko

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