**Family of families Sept 2024 dkm**

Our focus today is on the family, and on fathers especially. I am not a big fan of Father’s Day; I once gave a gift to my mother on Mother’s Day and she said, ‘I don’t want anything, just your love and obedience every day’! We all have God-given roles in the family. Fathers have a specific role in the family according to the Bible. We must encourage and allow men to fulfil their role in the family. ‘Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church’ (Eph 5:25). ‘Wives submit to your own husband in the Lord’ (Eph 5:22). ‘Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right’ (Eph 6:1). Husband, wife, and child, all have God-given roles in the family- so simple but so very hard to do! But note each is ‘in the Lord’. The family is God’s design for us, and he will enable us to fulfil his purpose if we listen to him and prayerfully accept his help.

God created the family. He created the family when he created the heavens and the earth and everything in them. God created human beings in his own image, both male and female. He blessed them saying, ‘Be fruitful and multiply’ (Gen 1:27,28). In the second chapter of the Bible we read in more detail how God made man and woman, and brought them together in marriage in order to fulfil this command to multiply and manage his creation. A man is to leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife in a holy union we call marriage. This is a family, a man united to his wife and bearing children. This is the basic unit of society as ordained by God.

In chapter 3 of Genesis, we read of how sin entered the world and corrupted everything that God made good. Man’s relationship to God himself was corrupted or broken. Human relationships, including marriage, were corrupted by sin that infected the heart of Adam and Eve, and every one of their descendants. Sin came from, and continues to be, rebellion against God and rebellion against what God made good.

Have you noticed how such rebellion continues today? Sinful people keep attacking the truths of Genesis 1 and 2. The truth that God created the heavens and the earth was attacked by man making other gods and saying these created and control the world. Modern man, led by Charles Darwin, made the god called ‘evolution’. Since 1859 the theory of evolution has been used to explain the origin of the world and all creatures. We were not created by God but evolved from monkeys over millions of years, according to this theory.

We referred to marriage and family as a creation ordinance, but before coming to this we have the seventh-day ordinance in Genesis 2:3: ‘God rested from all his work on the seventh day and made it holy’. Sinful man, rejecting all that God made good, rejects this ordinance. It was back in 1617 that the king of England issued the ‘Book of Sports’, declaring what sports were permissible on the Sabbath day. This book was burned by order of the Parliament in 1643, but disregard for God’s holy day continues, along with disregard for God as creator.

Creation itself, the Sabbath day, and the family, have been attacked in our society in our day. In 1975 the civil law made divorce much easier, leading to many breaking their marriage vows. At the same time marriage itself was becoming unpopular, with men and women becoming ‘partners’ for a time. God’s creation ordinance for marriage and family is widely abandoned. Speaking of family being redefined in our society, we see single mothers applauded and rewarded. Some actually want to raise a family alone, without a father! I recently heard that husbands and fathers may soon be put in prison if the ‘partner’ says she does not consent to his behaviour. There are abusive husbands and fathers no doubt, who must be punished, but many are being sidelined and even prevented from fulfilling their God-given role in the family.

Today we see further attack upon God’s creation, with calls to reject the categories of male and female that God created and calls to redefine the family. We have seen attempts by communists and others at raising children in institutions rather than families. Are we becoming too eager to remove old people from families and from society? What next of God’s good creation ordinances will sinners attack?