

THE FAMILY UNDER SIEGE

Matthew 5:1-16

Zatec, 9th September 2018

אלהים מושיב יחידים ביתה	Ps 68:6 God sets the solitary in <u>families</u>
πρὸς τὸν πατέρα, ¹⁵ ἐξ οὗ πάντα πατριά ἐν οὐρανοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς ὀνομάζεται	Eph 3:14-15 the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every <u>family</u> in heaven and on earth is named
וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדְמוּתֵנוּ וְיִרְדּוּ בְרִגְתְּ הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבְבְהֵמָה וּבְכָל-הָרֶמֶשׂ וּבְכָל-הָאָרֶץ הָרֶמֶשׂ עַל-הָאָרֶץ וַיְבָרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם	Gn 1:26-27 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him ; male and female he created them .
וַיֹּאמֶר הָאָדָם זֹאת הַפֶּעַם עָצָם מֵעֲצָמֵי וּבָשָׂר מִבָּשָׂרִי יִקְרָא אִשָּׁה כִּי מֵאִישׁ לְקָחָהּ זֹאת עַל-כֵּן יַעֲזֹב אִישׁ אֶת-אָבִיו וְאֶת-אִמּוֹ וְדָבַק בְּאִשְׁתּוֹ וְהָיוּ לְבָשָׂר אֶחָד	Gn 2:23-24 the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." ²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh

OUTLINE

0. INTRODUCTION

- 0.1. WHAT ARE OUR FIRST QUESTIONS?
- 0.2. PRACTICAL "MODUS VIVENDI"

1. ATTACKS ON THE FAMILY

- 1.1. ROMANTICISM
- 1.2. NATURALISM
- 1.3. LITERATURE, ARTS (ESP. VISUAL), MEDIA
- 1.4. STRESS

2. A THEOLOGY OF THE FAMILY

- 2.1. THE CREATION
- 2.2. THE BASIC FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

3. FAMILY AS A HIDING PLACE

- 3.1. BELONGING
- 3.2. UNCONDITIONAL ACCEPTANCE
- 3.3. DEEP RELATIONSHIPS
- 3.4. DAILY LIFE IN A CHRISTIAN FAMILY

4. TO REMEMBER**0. INTRODUCTION****0.1. WHAT ARE OUR FIRST QUESTIONS?**

- sexual normality?
- divorce rate?
- economic prosperity?
- raising children?

0.2. PRACTICAL "MODUS VIVENDI"

- has to be based on a *Biblical theology* of the family

1. ATTACKS ON THE FAMILY

1.1. ROMANTICISM

- → dreaming; partner-idolatry;
ROUGEMONT: Tristan and Iseult: these two lovers, he writes, don't really love each other, they love being in love
- C.S. LEWIS: (M. Denis de Rougemont) that "love ceases to be a demon only when he ceases to be a god"; which of course can be re-stated in the form "begins to be a demon the moment he begins to be a god." (*The Four Loves*)
- GOETHE *The Sorrows of Young Werther*;

1.2. NATURALISM

- → surrender to lust
- Darwinism → power of sexual instinct
- psychology; sociology; economics; politics; feminism...

1.3. LITERATURE, ARTS (ESP. VISUAL), MEDIA

- → living life of a stranger;
- visual temptations; stories;
- Hollywood love-triangles; → "role playing"

1.4. STRESS

- living standards; comparing; achieving personal goals...
- fear; anxiety; uncertainty; achievement goals...; inferiority complexes...
- politics; world future; work/unemployment/business (economy); health; relationships in the family – toward neighbors; church members;

2. A THEOLOGY OF THE FAMILY

2.1. THE CREATION

- Gn 1 & Gn 2 → hierarchy: vertical and horizontal – the latter is dependent on the former! → (1) image of God; (2) creation management; (3) reproduction; (4) social unit of love
- Gn 5:1-3 the basic relationship – father–son; Lk 3:38
- **Mk 12:25** when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven

2.2. THE BASIC FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

(1) Toward God

- **1Cor 7:14** For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. **1Cor 11:3** ...the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.

(2) Toward the partner

- **Mal 2:14-15** ...the LORD was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant.¹⁵ Did he not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union? And what was the one God seeking? Godly offspring. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth.

In contemporary Western culture this idea appears altogether false. Love is supposed to be the outcome of a spontaneous, emotional reaction, of suddenly being gripped by an irresistible feeling. In this view, one sees only the peculiarities of the two individuals involved — and not the fact that all men are part of Adam, and all women part of Eve. One neglects to see an important factor in erotic love, that of will. To love somebody is not just a strong feeling — it is a decision, it is a judgment, it is a promise. If love were only a feeling, there would be no basis for the promise to love each other forever. (FROMM *The Art of Loving*)

(3) Toward one's own family

- **1Tim 5:8** But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever

(4) Toward the church

- **1Tim 3:5** if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?

3. FAMILY AS A HIDING PLACE

3.1. BELONGING

The Environment of Identity (*Spiritual Parenting*)

- Personal presence (no digital mediation)
- availability; friendship; interest;
- common activities marking “our brand” (sport; art; holidays...)

3.2. UNCONDITIONAL ACCEPTANCE

- creativity/encouragement;
- forgiveness; freedom of expression;

3.3. DEEP RELATIONSHIPS

- “endless” talks; patient study;
- discipline; responsibility

3.4. DAILY LIFE IN A CHRISTIAN FAMILY

3.4.1. WORSHIP

- Bible reading – plan;
- prayer – based on immediate problems
- discussion – meal times

3.4.2. COMMUNICATION

- (1) respect → listen; understand; see the meaning and positive sides...
- (2) truth → courage; build up; (**Ephsians 4:15** speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up ...into Christ)
- (3) sensitivity → timing; word choice...

4. TO REMEMBER

- Thinking about family has to begin with creation and the purposes of God.
- The critically important factor in the family “quality” is worship.
- The relationship of the husband and the wife is founded on the obedience to God and faithfulness to the partner.