

Pentecost 18
“Parenting is HEART Work”
Matthew 22:34-40

Jesus said, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

One of the primary reasons we are having tomorrows/todays service up at our school is because so many of us have amazing memories of Trinity: either when we attended, when our kids or grandkids attended. It’s good to get up here/there and see the ministry taking place today.

My family has been her almost 17 years, our kids are long gone from these hallways. But I remember after we accepted the call to Trinity, my 5 year old son was having a meltdown, everything was changing, he was picking up on our vibe. Finally we said, “Sammy, are you OK with moving to Cape Girardeau?” He said, “Yeah, I just hope that they have pizza down there.” (Those were days when life’s problems could be solved with pizza.)

The first day of school I had Sammy in the back of our minivan. I pulled into south parking lot. He wouldn’t get out of the car. Other parents were walking in, watching the new pastor trying to beg his kid to get out of the car. I think he was late for school that day. When he finally went into the school, we had dressed him in a Pokemon shirt, which of course was against the dress code. And the first thing he heard from the class, “You’re not supposed to wear that. It’s wrong.” That night, more pizza.

Parenting is hard work sometimes, isn’t it? We want to do as much as we can for our kids, help them as much as we can, give them a good faith foundation.

There was a Bible character named David, and the Bible describes David as a man after God's own heart. And David had a dream. David wanted to build God a temple. A beautiful, extravagant temple, in which the Lord could dwell and God's people could worship. He already had a vision and dream of what it should look like.

But God came to David through a prophet and said, "No, you are not the one who going to build that temple for me. You are a man of war. I'm going to have your Son Solomon build that temple someday, after you have died, and Solomon is king."

And David said, "OK. But even if I can't build the temple, I can get things prepared and ready so that my son can build a beautiful temple for the Lord." And David spent the rest of his life collecting enough gold and silver and cedar wood and all of the resources needed for that temple.

David is kind of like us and our parenting skills. We are going to provide a foundation for the kids (one centered in Jesus Christ crucified and risen). We going to give them the tools and resources they need. We're going to raise them in grace and knowledge. We are going to shape and lead.

But, eventually, we have to let go. It's their job to apply this foundation, these resources, in their own lives. What our congregation wants to provide is as many resources as possible in order for parents to provide the Christian foundation that Children need. (AND THAT IS A PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY OF TRINITY SCHOOL)

That's hard. Parenting is HARD WORK. Better yet, PARENTING IS HEART WORK. Parenting is all about loving them, not just changing behavior but changing hearts. That what Jesus said, First, showing our children how to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. But also, to show them how to love their

neighbor as themselves. That everyone is our neighbor. It begins with baptismal grace, teaching them to pray, reading the Bible. AND IT continues as the children grow and become contributing members in society. Parenting is HEART WORK.

Parenting, Grandparenting, Uncle-ing, Aunt-ing, Neighbor-int, Teaching, or student.... **For all of us, Faith in Christ matters, and Do You Know What Our Mission is? Our mission is to prevent Congestive Heart Failure by touching lives for Christ.** In our world, there is a lot of heart failure... people's hearts are often not with the Lord. We are marred and scarred and imperfect. We give in. We give up. We do things we deeply regret. But in Christ, there is always a loving heart to receive us.

(THIS IS A SCHOOL.) Let's have a test. A True/False test.

True or False. The most commonly used tools of indoctrination and influence in the lives of kids are internet and other media. True. Kids have devices 24/7. Content on internet is never neutral.

True or False. 60% of Christian Children will fall away from the faith by age 30. False. 75-80% of kids will fall away from faith.

True or False. The top faith-producing factors are centered in the home.

True. Talking with parents about faith.

Prayer and devotions at home.

Fewer than 1/3 of American homes pray or read Bible.

True or False. Family prayer time is the most powerful tool in teaching faith to kids. True.

We are here to support what you do as parents, to support your Christian traditions at home. We promise that our faculty believes, teaches and confesses our Crucified and Risen Savior. So many children, parents, families have congestive heart failure. Every single day the name of Jesus is taught, prayers are offered, faith is lived. We don't want Congestive Heart Failure to affect the spiritual lives of these kids entrusted to us a Trinity Lutheran School.

You might say, the Lord's in the business of Defibrillating our hearts and lives. A while back, both at our church and our school, we installed AED, Automated external defibrillators. And the staff was trained to use them, in the case someone experiences heart failure. (I told DCE Leah to really pay attention because she may have to save my life. But she graduated top of her CPR / Defibrillation class! Me, not so much!) More importantly, our God is all about the defibrillation of our heart... spiritually speaking.

You know, the Bible says that in our natural condition, we are spiritually dead, spiritually blind, and enemies of God. That's tragic, and it is a result of our sin. No one is exempt. But our God comes to us in the water of Holy Baptism, and He calls, gathers us into His family. In Baptism, You might say that God gives us CPR and restores us to life.. Our Sins are washed away, the Holy Spirit works faith in our hearts, and eternal life is open to all who believe in Jesus.

Baptism takes us from death to life. This summer, we have had 14 baptisms take place. Every one of them is a celebration and bestowal of new life in Christ! It's so exciting! Over half of these baptisms are for people who have come to us through the ministry of our school. So often, the students came home and there was a family discussion. "I want to be baptized!" "Let's go to church!" Wow. That's our mission! Touching lives for Christ is what we are called to do. In confirmation class, one of the students wrote an essay saying that he might want to become a Lutheran teacher someday, telling the kids about Jesus and growing in his faith. Wow! Those are Jesus moments! Those are heart-warming moments.

Parenting, in whatever way you participate, Parenting is hard work. More importantly, **Parenting Is Heart Work**. No matter who we are, no matter what relationship we are talking about, parenting or otherwise, we must **Cross Our Heart**. **When I was a kid, if I wanted to prove that I was telling the truth, I would say, "Cross my heart, hope to die, stick a needle in my eye."** At least part of it is right. Jesus called each of us to Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. Jesus came to us and made a relationship with God possible because of His death and resurrection.

And loving our neighbor, parenting our children, teaching children, being a loving friend, we can't do it apart from the cross. We're sinners. We break the rules. We drop the ball. We misspeak. How important it is to teach repentance and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. He showed us how to love, sacrificially, on the cross. He empowers us to go and do likewise, because,

Parenting Is Heart Work, and I speak for everyone here at Trinity Church and School, It is a privilege to be a part of this ministry.