

The family

Part 1

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Place	Plumstead, London
Date	14.04.2004
Duration	00:49:30
Online version	https://www.audioteaching.org/en/sermons/hrg001/the-family

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[00:00:01] O God of grace, O Father of grace, we give to Thee, Till whose in Thy sovereign favor, All blessed beds we see, There on days of old, When slavery was a scorn, We thank the glorious Savior, Saving lives in our state o'er.

And thus thank Thou, Kings, for all those wronged o'er eternity, That Thy chosen love of heaven, Gives grace unto Thy heart.

[00:01:05] And when was God's love o'er us, The calling by Thy grace, Descending from the apostles, From His hiding place?

The life-blood Thine shall prevail, The sanctified by truth, Still leading all Thy children, With gentle hand they go.

And thus sing of our good Savior, O Lord, hear our prayers, [00:02:02] For near His feet and training, Father, to see Thy face.

Well, as I was asked whether I would address or bring an address tonight, I was thinking about what subject, and I thought of a very practical subject, and you wonder how it is related to what we had today.

I would like to say a few words about the family, the Christian family. And you know, when you look at Colossians, we have this wonderful truth in these first chapters, which we were privileged to study this morning, but then when you carry on a little further, in chapter 3, [00:03:01] we have very practical things about the family.

All of a sudden, we see that the Apostle Paul addresses the wife, Submit yourself unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord, 3, verse 18.

Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.

The Apostle Paul, who has addressed these wonderful truths, which we have covered this morning and today, is also coming down with very practical things. And in Ephesians, we have the same thing as well. In Ephesians, we find in chapters 4, 5, and 6, also very, very practical things.

[00:04:05] So I would like to cover tonight the Christian family in three aspects.

First of all, what is the character of a Christian family? Secondly, a word for the children.

And I'm glad I've seen some of the children here, which are amongst us. Then a word for the parents.

A word regarding the fathers. And finally, a word regarding the mothers.

But before we start with the topic of family, I would like to read from Matthew 19, what the Lord Jesus said about marriage.

And I think this is a very, very important portion for us today.

[00:05:01] We live in a world which has changed in so many ways. And you know the trouble is, as we see nothing else around us, we're getting affected by it. These thoughts coming in as being natural, and they are so contrary to the word of God. And so when the Lord Jesus was asked the question, he gave a very clear answer.

He says in chapter 19 from Matthew, verse 4, And then he answered and said unto them, Have you not read that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female? And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh. Wherefore, they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder.

[00:06:01] How many, how many marriages today are breaking up?

All around us.

So that the young people are even scared to get married. It's not in anymore to get married. And I'm talking about the world. And this is all around us. But he says, this was not from the beginning. What are God's thoughts about men and women?

And so we have to turn to Genesis chapter 1. And there we see in chapter 1 that first of all God has created us man, male and female.

Verse 26, And God said, Let us make man in our image after our likeness.

And verse 27, And so God created man in his own image.

In the image of God created him. Male and female created he them.

So we find in creation first of all [00:07:03] that God made us the same.

When we looked at the things today, all the blessings we have in Christ, there is no difference between men and women.

We are all sinners before God.

We all need to gospel. We all need to be saved and reconciled.

And all justified. And all these things we had today before us. There is no difference whatsoever.

Also when we talked about the hope which is ours, there will be no difference. We will inherit the same thing.

There is no difference between brother or sister, between man and wife.

But then in chapter 2 we find that God made us differently for this scene, for this earth. In verse 7, chapter 2 and verse 7, [00:08:01] And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and pressed into the nostril the breath of life and man became a living soul.

So here we find that he made Adam. He formed him, as it says here.

And in chapter, in verse 21, we read, And the Lord God caused the deep sleep to fall upon Adam and he slept and he took one of his ribs, closed up the flesh instead of.

And the rib which the Lord God has taken from man made he a woman and brought her unto the man.

So he formed Adam from the dust.

But he built a woman.

Here we find the word built, which is a different word as to the word formed. And this means that we have here [00:09:01] God made a perfect complement to man.

So we have to realize, and this is what the Lord says, this is what God has created.

If you want to know something about marriage, you have to go back to the beginning and see what has God actually instituted. Because here in chapter 2, verse 24, we find the same verse as we read also in the New Testament. Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave unto his wife and they shall be one flesh. So that's the way God has made us.

And therefore God has, in his wisdom, made us different.

And he has given us a different position. He said to the wife, subject to your husband.

And to your husband he said, love your wife. Dwell with your wife.

[00:10:01] Because she is a weaker vessel.

And so God has given us instructions for a happy marriage.

If each one of us recognize how God has made us. That God has made us differently and given us a different position. Today subjection is out.

We know in this world every effort is made to make things equal.

To have no differentiation between man and woman.

But you know one thing.

Subjection is the principle of healing.

While rejection or rebellion is the principle of destruction. And so I would say to you, consider these things.

You want to follow what God's words say.

[00:11:01] You will encounter a way of blessing.

You will then, with your attitude, show something of Christ and his church.

And otherwise, if you have a rebellious spirit.

You let the world infiltrate your thinking.

Your whole attitude.

What will the result be? It will be destruction.

You will destroy your marriage, perhaps your family. And these are very severe things.

And they happen all around us. We can see it at every hand.

And you know there are a lot of young people here tonight. Think about these things now before you're getting engaged. Before you're getting involved. Before you get married.

These are principles which you should consider [00:12:03] what the Lord has told us how we should be.

Now let's come to the Christian family.

What is the character of a Christian family?

Let us look at John chapter 14.

If you want to understand the character of a Christian family, we have to look at the Father's house.

In chapter 14, verse 1, it says, Let not your heart be troubled.

You believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself that where I am, there you may be also.

You know the Christian family is a gift from the hand of God.

[00:13:04] I wonder how many of us have been brought up in a Christian family. Have you realized what a blessing this is?

Some might not have been privileged.

And they know something about it. They have to struggle and have been taught all other things but the things of God and have tried to live a life according to God's word.

The Christian family is first of all a home.

Is your family a home for your parents and children?

Do you like to go home?

Do you like to be at home? You know there are people which never are at home. And I wonder sometimes is it because they don't feel at home. When they come home it's always strife and all sorts of problems [00:14:01] and they just think about when they can leave again. But here if you look at the Father's house, there are many mansions and when we get there, we're going to be home.

Here we are strangers and pilgrims.

We have no remaining city here. We're on the pathway but once we get to heaven we're going to be home. Why? Because the Father is there and the Lord Jesus is there. That's going to be home for us.

Are you looking forward to that? And you know this is a picture of what our family should be. A home.

You know if the parents are never home, do you think the children love to get home? They know when they come home from school there's nobody there. Father is at work, mother is at work. Is that a home for the children?

You know these are serious things which we should think about. The second thing is, a Christian home, a Christian family [00:15:02] should be a place of security, a place of shelter.

Is your family, your home, a sheltered place?

And you know I don't mean burglars and robberies. We don't have many perhaps here in these countries. But you know, sheltered from the world.

Or are our homes open to let everything come in? It's so easy, I tell you, to let the world come right into our homes, into the middle of our living rooms. There's TV, there's internet.

If you allow the children to do whatever they want with that PC, don't be surprised when they take the whole world right into their homes. And even you young people, you know what you can be exposed to. [00:16:04] The new place is no longer a place of security, it's no longer a place where you are sheltered from the world. And so we as parents have a big responsibility to shelter our homes from the world so that when the children come home and they are exposed enough in this world by all sorts of things, and when they come home they are secure, they are sheltered.

You see here, in chapter 14, the world has no access. Satan has no access to the Father's house.

It will be a secure place.

And the third thing is, we find in 1 John chapter 3, Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us [00:17:04] that we should be called the sons of God, or the children of God.

You see, a Christian family should be a place where unconditional love reigns.

How do you love your children? There is one you like very much because he always behaves and the other one you always have trouble with. So you love him more than you love the other one. You know, the children sense this very quickly. And we have examples in the Word of God where the father loved the one and the mother loved the other, and what was the result of it? It was big trouble.

Why do you love your children? Because they are well behaved? No, because they are your children.

Why does the father love me or you?

[00:18:02] No, because we are his children.

He loved us before the world was.

He loved us with an everlasting love. Not because we had anything lovable in us. He loved us because he is love.

And so our family, the Christian family, should be a place where unconditional love reigns.

And a word for the children.

Ephesians chapter 6.

Ephesians chapter 6, it says, Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

Honor thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise, that it may be well with thee, and you mayest live long on the earth. Children, obey your parents.

[00:19:01] Do you children who are here realize that God is speaking to you personally?

Children, he doesn't say, Parents, please tell your children. No, he, God himself, talks to us, to you children, in a personal way.

And so the question is, even if you're young, do you read the Bible?

Do you take it serious that you realize God wants to talk to me? Not through the parents to me now. He wants to talk to me directly.

And so I would like to encourage the children amongst us to start early. Take your Bible.

If you don't have one, ask your parents to get one and start reading, because God wants to talk to you personally. And you know, he has only one thing to say to you [00:20:02] in regards to the family.

He doesn't give you a whole long list of things which you have to do now. He says one thing, Obey your children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

There are three ways in which we should obey.

Voluntarily, immediately, and fully or totally.

You see, we can, we can say, yes, mom, but we don't do it.

She says, please wash up the dishes and we do the, you know, some of it and leave the rest for somebody else to do it. This is not total obedience.

You know, what always impressed me is Joseph.

What an example he was for us.

You know, he had a very difficult mission. [00:21:01] The father said to him, Go and look after your brother, my sons, your brethren.

And he knew what sort of brethren they were.

They were those who hated him.

Do you think he liked to go and do that mission? But he immediately went. Like Abraham, when God told him the next morning, early in the morning, he got up and did it, what God said. And so Joseph too, he was obedient immediately. He was also completely obedient because once he didn't find them, in the first place he could have said, Well, I go home again.

I said, Well, I looked for them. I didn't find them. I go home.

No, he asked around. He said, Has anybody seen them? And he went on till he found them.

He did a whole job.

You see, this is what God wants us to do. And you know who is our best example? [00:22:02] It is the

Lord Jesus himself. In Luke chapter 2, we read of him.

He, the Son of God, was become man and he went down in verse 51 with them and came to Nazareth and was subject unto them.

But his mother kept all these things in her heart and Jesus increased in wisdom and said, You are in favor with God and man. So we find the Lord Jesus, our great example.

He was obedient to his parents.

He was already 12.

He didn't say, Well, my mother has failed. My father has failed.

They certainly had.

He had no failure whatsoever. But he was subject to his parents.

And you know, such a pathway is a pathway of blessing.

[00:23:04] You see it here.

And Jesus increased in wisdom and preached at you.

In favor with God and man. So it is your choice, dear children. It can be a way of blessing or it can be a way of giving much sorrow to your parents.

Then a word for the parents. In Luke chapter 1, we find a wonderful example. We find there in verse 6 an example of Zacharias and Elizabeth.

Verse 6 it says, And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

These parents, [00:24:02] they pulled on the same string and they did the same thing. They did three things.

First of all, they did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord. And you know, when do you start doing this? When do you start practicing this? Once you are a father? Once you are a mother?

Shouldn't you already now get engaged as you are a young person to start learning to do these things which finally will lead to be a good example for your children?

First of all, they did that.

We talk much about righteousness, the righteousness of God. They were both righteous. They did that which was right in the eyes of God. There are so many things in our lives. And you know, if you really question ourselves, do we do that which is right? Not in the eyes of man.

We get away with many things. [00:25:01] But do we do the things which are right in the eyes of God?

His standard is the one who counts.

Secondly, they walked according to the scripture. And it says walking in all the commandments. You know, before you can do that, you have to know them. So the question is, when do you as parents start learning what the scripture says? You see, if we want to be an example for our children, we have to study the word. We have to apply to ourselves and not just the few verses which we love and like, but all the commandments, all the things which is written in this book, we should apply to ourselves.

And therefore, again, I say we have to start early. We can't get started once we have a handful of children because they will take up our time.

[00:26:03] But as a young person, you might have more time to study the word of God. I'd like to encourage you to do it and so to be prepared for the day. And then, thirdly, they were blameless. They walked in the fear of the Lord. They were afraid of doing anything which was displeasing to God. This means blameless. What an example. You see, they didn't talk so much. We don't hear them talking. They didn't say, well, they had a whole big sermon ready for John the Baptist. No, they just walked. And it's no wonder that God has selected this couple to have that promised child. You know, and he would like us to learn from this, that our children, they live and grow up in a home where the parents, both of them, [00:27:03] walk according to the Scriptures. They walk in the fear of the Lord and they work and they do what is right before God. And secondly, the parents have to do one other important task. Really, one task which is of extreme importance. And we find this in Hebrews 11, chapter 11, verse 23. By faith, Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents because they saw he was a proper child and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. You know, the parents of Moses, they lived in a very, very difficult time. Extremely difficult. Since none of us is living in such a condition. And they had a boy. [00:28:04] You know what our task as parents is? The first and the primary task in regards to our children is to make it as difficult as possible for the world to get hold of them. And you see, this is what they did here. They knew if the world knows that this boy has been born, they will go and get him and they're going to kill him. So what did they do? They hid him. They did hide him from the world.

But you know, to hide him is not enough. They also had to care for him because if they didn't care for him, he would have started screaming, the world would have heard him and would have gotten him and would have taken him. So it is one thing to hide your children from the world. It's another thing to also care for them, to feed them, [00:29:01] to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. But then the day came when they could no longer hold him at home and so this is the case in our families too. You see, some of the families I've seen, they couldn't wait to get the children out in some of the children's caretaker center, whatever thing, long before they had to go to any schools. They couldn't wait to get them out. And you know, you expose them to things in this world which is not necessary, which is dangerous for them. We should make it as difficult as possible for the world to get hold of our children. And so once they couldn't keep him at home anymore, they prepared a basket and put him out in that basket. The basket is a picture of the Lord Jesus. We can commend and commit our children to our Lord and Savior and he is faithful. [00:30:02] He's able to keep them.

But don't give your children voluntarily to the world. I know many who have done that, to their great regret. Then a word for the fathers in Ephesians. We are back in Ephesians chapter 6, verse 4, And

you fathers provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Now ye fathers, now he talks to the fathers. And he says here, well first of all the question is, what is a father? Again we have to look at God our Father. He's our example. And in 1 Peter 1 and verse 7, [00:31:02] 1 Peter 1 and verse 17, And if you call on the Father, who without respect of person judges according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear. A father is characterized by two things.

He is a father, and he is a father. Thus he is characterized by two things. First of all he obtains the respect of his family.

The father who without respect of person judges according to every man's work. Have you as a father the respect of your children?

You cannot demand this. You have to obtain this. You know, if you behave, if you talk to your children, you know, [00:32:02] and you tell them how they should behave, but you don't do it yourself, you will lose all the respect. They will not respect you. You say, do what I say, not what I do. In other words, we have to obtain the respect of our family. But then there are those fathers who are so rigid with their children that the children are almost afraid of the father. You see, if they don't behave, there is trouble. And the children are sort of under the thumb of the fathers. And therefore there is a second aspect. It says that we should call on the father. That means the father should maintain an atmosphere of trust and confidence so that the children, when they have a problem, they come to the father and say, Dad, I've got a problem, can we discuss it? You see, if you don't have any confidence, [00:33:03] if you don't have an atmosphere of trust, well, the children will never come. They are afraid of you. So on one side there should be respect, but on the other hand you should have this confidence that the children are ready to come and to share with you whatever may bother them. And then it says here, in Ephesians, it says here, do not provoke.

Do not provoke your children to wrath. I suggest three things which can cause to provoke the children to wrath.

First of all, a selfish attitude.

You know, if you demand things from your children constantly, bring me this and bring me this, and do this for me quickly and so forth, it's only as a selfish attitude you're using your children [00:34:01] as a sort of slave master, they will be provoked.

They will really get discouraged and they will give up. So a selfish attitude can be a big problem.

The second thing is that we have an uncontrolled temper.

You know, as a father we should be mature enough to control our temper. For instance, there is a hard day at work and everything goes wrong and you are so totally stressed and then you come home and that little boy here, he just does a little stupid thing and you explode and you tell him off and you hit him left, right and center and the boy doesn't know what hits him. Why? Because you are not able to control your temper. The boy senses this.

[00:35:01] He knows when he should be punished, I know, but he says, what did I do wrong, you know? It's only because you cannot really control your temper.

So that's another thing which we have to learn. And thirdly, if you ask unreasonable things from your children. You see, every age, different ages, if I ask a two-year-old boy to do something which really a five-year-old can only do, he tries to do it. He might want to please me and wants to try to do it and he can't do it and he gets frustrated and so he is provoked to anger. And if I ask a five-year-old to do something which a ten-year-old should do, then the same thing happens. The same as we have in the Scripture. We have fathers, we have young men, we have children and they are not addressed in the same way. There are differences for each age, for each group. [00:36:02] We find that God's Word differentiates. And the same thing is we also should not expect from a little child something which he cannot do. He gets only frustrated and therefore we provoke him to anger, to wrath.

And so, let us be wise that we apply the bringing up to the level of the child according to its maturity.

And then, dear fathers, to bring up the children is your responsibility.

Here it says, father, bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

You see, father, you cannot sort of say, well, my wife can do it better, you know. Let her do it. I've seen families like that. [00:37:02] The father has never ever done anything with the children. He left the whole burden with his wife, but here the Word of God says, dear fathers, and therefore I want to say, dear father, be a father and take your responsibilities in bringing up your children. And there it says, we have to do it in two ways. In nurture or here in a footnote it says in discipline.

We should discipline our children. What is that? Discipline means to discover the wrongdoing of your child and to stop it.

How many times I've seen that the parents or the father has seen that he did wrong things and he didn't say anything. Now your responsibility is not only to discover it, but to stop it. And again I would say, not with every child the same method will be used. You have to adjust to the person, to the personality of your child.

[00:38:05] What works in one case might not work in another. Again, we need wisdom from the Lord. But it means that you should discipline your children, but on the other hand also by exhortation or admonition. And that is something different.

This is to show the good and the right way, the right path and to help the child to follow it. Now this is a whole different ballgame. You show them how they should behave. And you assist, you help the child to walk in this way.

So we need a balanced life. The fathers have a big responsibility. Some emphasize the discipline and forget about the exhortation.

[00:39:02] And others, they always exhort, you know, say, well, well, look, you shouldn't do that anymore, you know. And you know, this is really what you should do. So we need a balanced life. And to emphasize one or the other is no good. So we should try to look at these things, but it says here, in the Lord.

You know, the Lord is our help. We have to do it with His help.

And so we have to be dependent day after day on His strength, on His wisdom. And then we will be able to perform what God wanted us and has set up in such a way.

And then finally, with regards to the mothers, in 2 Timothy, no, 1 Timothy 5, sorry. [00:40:04] 1 Timothy 5, it talks there about a widow in verse 10.

And there it talks about some of the qualities of such a person, well reported for good works. If she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work. What a list. Many mothers say, well, I've got nothing to do. You know, I'd rather go out and work somewhere. But when you look at this sort of list here, which he addressed here as a quality of a widow who had children, who had no more support of a husband, so she had to do the bringing up of the children. [00:41:02] But there were many other things she was able to do. She lodged strangers, she washed the saints' feet, and so on. Where are these mothers today? Do we have still sisters like this? If we don't, we have Titus, where the older aged women are encouraged in chapter 2, verse 3, that they should, in verse 4, that they may teach the younger women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. There are a few sisters here which would qualify for this.

The aged woman, the one who has gone through life, has brought up a family. They have a lot of experience. [00:42:02] Are we taking our responsibility to sit down with the younger generation and talk these things over? But it could also be that the younger sisters, they don't want to sit down and listen. But this is really the godly way. Why should we make the same mistakes again as others have done before us? Wouldn't it be wiser to actually sit down and listen to some of the advice they can give in a godly way? And you know here it says that they teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands and love their children. You see, it's a very important sequence here, to love their husbands first and then their children. This is an important sequence. You know, if the children take such an important role, come between father and mother, that is never good. No, first the love to your husband, then the love to your children. [00:43:05] Same applies for the husbands, of course. And then it says that they should be keepers at home.

Is this an old-fashioned thing?

When I look around, I see so many women who say, this doesn't satisfy me. Why should I be keeping at home? There's work to do, there's my career out there. Why should I give up all these things which the world offers me? This is the spirit in which we live. The question is, is this an old-fashioned thing which applied for that time then? Or is it a principle of God which applies today? This is the question. You know, in Genesis, we already have an example.

[00:44:02] In Genesis, the book of the beginning, we find in chapter 18 that Abraham, he was the one who was outside the tent. Verse 6, we find Sarah, she was within the tent. That was her place. Or the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31.

Verse 27.

It says, and she looked as well to the ways of her household. How can you look well after the ways of your household if you're never at home?

There are four different ways. First of all, with your eyes. You know, you see what is going on in your home. You see what time the children come home from school. [00:45:01] You know, they are off school at 4 o'clock and they appear at 6 o'clock. Now, if you're not home, you don't even know that they're not coming home. Or secondly, you see who they're bringing home.

What type of friends are they bringing home? These are things you can see, you can notice. You see what they do. Or with your ears. You hear what language they bring home.

You hear what language they bring home. It says, listen, my son. This sort of language stays outside. You might hear it all day at school, on the street. But this is not a language I tolerate in my home. Now, if you're not at home, how can you hear? Or have you ever been in the room of your daughter or your son and listened to what music they listen to? [00:46:02] Well, it's their business, isn't it? No, I think you're responsible in your home. What is going on in your home? Do you know what's going on? Do you know what type of music they're bringing home? There's only a little disc. And they put it in, I've got the earphones in, you don't hear a thing. They hear, they say, well, I can't do my homework without music. But it would be good, for instance, to listen to what type of music they listen to. Say, now listen, this type of music is not for our homes. Or what books they bring home. What books they read. And so on.

So there's things you hear, things you see. But what is also very important is, your own conduct as a mother speaks much louder than all the words you say to them. You see, they watch you all day. The little children already, they watch you, they follow you. They see what you're doing. [00:47:03] So with your conduct, you can be a tremendous influence on your children. And fourthly, by prayer. By prayer.

Think about, the children come home and they have a real problem, they're crying their eyes out, and it was a bad day at school. And you listen to them, and you know what would be nice? Say, let's sit down and pray together. And so you teach them in a very practical way, that you can bring all things before the Lord. With supplication, with prayer. You teach them through your own behavior, how they should resolve their own problems. You sit down, you pray about it, and afterwards they find out, half the trouble is gone. But you know, mothers, if you're not at home, none of these four things you can do. Somebody else might do it, or might not do it. And therefore I think, it is not an old-fashioned thing here, [00:48:03] which God has told us. I think it is something which still applies for our days. It will be for the blessing of the children. You know, to bring up the children in a godly way is not easy. Many times when you look back, you say, well, I've been too hard, I've been too soft. I have done many mistakes, we all know that. But you know, don't forget, the Lord is our help. He can follow, keep you, He can help you.

And you know, that's why I encourage you young people to learn these things early. Not when you're in the middle of distress, with a lot of work, and all the children, and what else. We should learn these things beforehand. So that we can apply them when we need them. And we should not forget, a Christian family is a home.

[00:49:05] A Christian family is a place of security. A Christian family is a place where unconditional love reigns.

And as such, it is the best bulwark against Satan and against the world. May God bless you and your families.