

“You Shall Honor Your Father and Mother”

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## Opening Prayer

Good Morning, and welcome here to Pleasant Corners United Methodist Church for our combined worship service. I am Pastor Jacob Hanson, and I am so thrilled to be in worship with you today for many reasons. It is always a joy to preach, teach, exhort, and be present with you. We often thank God for all of you, and we are so blessed by you, but today was extra joyful for my family and myself as we were blessed to baptize my daughter Irene. When we have a baptism I will often tweak the message for that Sunday to reflect the occasion, and today is no different. We skipped ahead in our study of the Ten Commandments by one, moving from talking about keeping the Sabbath holy (which we will study next week), to talk about the fifth of the Ten Commandments... “Honor Your Father and Mother.” As always to prepare us to get into the meat of the message we first will go through a little refresher on background and context.

The Ten Commandments are given as we recognize them in two places in scripture, in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. These commandments, which are given directly from God to the Israelites at Mount Sinai, are the foundation for morality. The first four commandments, written on one tablet deal with our relationship with the Lord. The second six, written on a second tablet, deal with our relationship with each other. The Ten Commandments are the standard by which we are measured, and in truth all of us fall short in some (and as we will see later, likely all) way. These rules that are given are only followed completely by one person in history, Jesus who is fully God and fully man, and it is He who pays the penalty we incur through our sins. As redeemed Christians, as people who are under God’s protection, we still sin. Beloved and you should be convicted as we continue to study these commands, but out of love for our Creator we are called to continue to work on these sins in our lives even though we have been redeemed. Today in talking about honoring our fathers and mothers, it is very likely that you will have a nerve touched. All of us at times struggle with this commandment, and all of us have different relationships with our parents, but this commandment is here for a reason as we will see. It also speaks to our relationship with our heavenly Father just as it does to our earthly parents.

Exodus 20:12 reads “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you.” On its face this is an easy commandment. We all, at least in part, get what the Lord is calling us to do. We are supposed to listen to our parents when we are young, take care of them when they are old, and in every way possible bring glory to God by the way we interact with two of the most important people in our lives. It makes sense that this commandment comes first in regards to our relationships with others, as the

first two people we encounter in life and have a relationship with are our parents. Even if you are one of those folks who was not blessed with the easiest of parents, there is still an argument to be made that they are extremely important to you in life... because without them you wouldn't exist. Parents have that unique role in our lives, in that God has given them the joy of taking part in our creation. No one but Steve and Sandra Hanson can claim to have helped create me, and no one but Rhianna and myself can claim that for our daughter Irene. We know that the commandment to honor our parents exists, but it is just as important that we understand WHY God put this commandment in the list.

Proverbs 6:20-23 helps us to understand why honoring our parents through listening to their (hopefully good) advice is essential. "My son, observe the commandment of your father and do not forsake the teaching of your mother; bind them continually on your heart; tie them around your neck. When you walk about, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you; and when you awake, they will talk to you. For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light; and reproofs for discipline are the way of life." It is from our parents that we learn many of the dos and don'ts in life. Do wash your hands. Do your homework. Do your best at work, school, in sports, in your marriage, in your faith life, etc. Don't give in to peer pressure. Don't believe everything you hear. Don't treat others poorly. Don't forget that God is in charge, that you have to work hard, that you are loved, etc. While many of us can potentially name a verse or two that has impacted us, I am certain that all of us can think of many teachings we learned from our parents that have profoundly affected our lives. This is what the Proverb writer is getting at. Our parents, more than anyone else in the world, want to see us succeed. (Note: If you were not blessed with good parents, or do not know your parents, the same teachings here would apply to good grandparents, a good mentor, etc.) Generally speaking, your mom's advice is really good! She doesn't/didn't want you to do dumb stuff, to do things that hurt you, to act in ways that are evil. It brings honor to your parents to listen to that good advice. No parent who is worth their salt, no matter how much sin they have in their own lives, wants to see their kids make those mistakes and sins. They want to see their children succeed, and that includes a moral life which includes following the Lord. Parents take note, if you want your kids to lead a moral, hardworking, and good life, then you should be doing everything to push them closer to Jesus. If you are not then you are missing the most important piece. You may have wonderful and amazing children, but don't forget that they need Christ just as we do.

This message isn't just for the youngsters by the way. Most of us I am guessing when we hear this commandment think that it is for the youth. The kids, the teens, the young adults are all of course called to honor their father and mother... but so are we as mature adults. (Yes, I consider myself a mature adult at 30.) For the kids the task of bringing honor is easy to understand but hard to do. Do what your parents ask, keep far from sin, live a moral life, worship the Lord well and you will honor them. Do your homework and eat your vegetables! Easy as adults for us to say that to our kids and expect them to honor the request. For us adults

the task to honor our parents is harder to understand but perhaps sometimes easier to do. For those of us with living parents it is imperative that we look out for them. If you have elderly parents, bringing them honor is stopping by more than once in a blue moon. It means that we do those chores that are needed, that we put our own lives on hold sometimes to help take care of them. It means that if there is family drama that we put it aside to love our folks, that we as Christians become the bigger family member if for no other reason than it makes the lives of our folks better. Don't forget that they did all this for you first! Even if you don't get along the greatest with your mother or father, this commandment still applies. No one, the Lord included, will argue that you are a bad son or daughter for doing your best, for living a God-fearing life. Even if your parents are fully independent, for example mine are in their late fifties, this commandment still comes into play. How hard is it to honor your parents by telling them that you love them, by making time for them. Go fishing with your dad even though it is difficult to set up. Take your mom out for breakfast sometime, or surprise her on her birthday. Bring honor to your parents by treating them well, even if you don't always want to, knowing that it is commanded by the Lord. Even for those of you who have parents who have passed on, you can still honor your father and mother by sharing their memory. Take a walk by their graves and thank the Lord for them. Tell your kids, grandkids, friends, whoever about them, sharing the knowledge that they shared with you first. Live your life morally, trying to get closer to the Lord, trying to love your neighbor as yourself, knowing that by doing so you are honoring your folks even though they have passed into glory. Speaking personally to you this morning, if you feel a lump in your throat when you talk about making your parents proud like I do, then you will understand.

It is a part of how God created us that we want to live up to our parents' standards. We want to make them proud. Beloved, I like many of you have fought with those nagging doubts at times that I wasn't living up to the standard that my parents would have for me. Mom, Dad, I hope you are proud of the man you have raised... Irene I hope you too are proud of your father. Beloved, all you can do is push to live as God would have you live. Be hardworking, be right minded, be sober, live a life of discipline, live a life devoted to God... if you do those things, even if your parents don't recognize it (mine certainly do praise the Lord!) then know that you are honoring your heavenly Father well. Beyond bringing honor and glory to your earthly parents, we would be remiss if we didn't also mention that we have a heavenly Father who deserves that honor too.

Our reading from Matthew 7 is a beautiful reminder that our heavenly Father, more than anyone else desires good for us. We read from verses 9-12 "Of what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!" We all know as Christians that we are called to bring honor and glory to our heavenly Father. It is a main theme in scripture. It is He who we worship, it is He in whom we place our trust, it is He

who we praise... but here is a good reason why we should do so. Beloved, your good and holy heavenly Father has given you all that you could ask and more. I am not talking about an easy life, or a new boat, or even physical health... I am talking about salvation. No parent worth their salt would do anything less than give their all for their children. Even if that was not your experience with your earthly parents, it is definitely the reality with your heavenly Father. He came down, lived the perfect life obeying all these commandments that we so often break, went to the cross in our stead for our sins, and rose again on the third day promising us that we would as well. That is the essence of the Gospel, and if you do not yet call Christ as your Savior or if you have strayed away or if you are on the fence, then I would encourage you to accept Him into your heart this morning, knowing that you are always welcomed home by your Heavenly Father. He loves you Beloved! In that vein I wanted to end our sermon today with some scripture that speaks about our heavenly Father, and about how He watches over us. Beloved, this is the first scripture our beautiful daughter ever heard, it is a part of Psalm 139.

Psalm 139:13-18 reads "For you formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb. I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth; Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Your book were all written the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them. How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How vast is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would outnumber the sand. When I awake, I am still with You." That sounds like a heavenly Father worth honoring. Beloved, honor your earthly parents, bring them joy by living a Godly life, and honor your heavenly Father by doing the same. Let us pray.

### **Closing Prayer**