

Family Service

Woven Together: Faith, Forgiveness & Reconciliation

Speaker: Amanda

Families are funny, aren't they?

No matter where you come from, there are certain moments that almost every family can relate to. The child who falls asleep five minutes before you get home... the oldest who insists they had to follow all the rules... and the youngest who seems to have invented their own! We laugh because they're familiar—they remind us of our own homes, our own stories, and the people we love.

Every family has its own funny moments, its own quirks, and its own stories. But beneath all the laughter is something much deeper. God didn't just create families to make memories together—He created them to grow together, to pass on faith, and to keep coming back to Him and to one another. Let me show you what I mean...

Bring a **piece of rope or thick string** (or three strands braided together).

Hold up the rope.

"Who thinks they can snap this?"

Show an already braided rope.

"One piece is easy to break. But when the strands are woven together, they become much stronger."

Then explain:

"Deuteronomy 6 says our faith shouldn't only happen at church. God wants to be woven into everything we do—when we sit, when we walk, when we go to bed, and when we wake up. Faith isn't another activity. It's the thread that holds a family together."

"And when one strand becomes weak, the others don't throw it away—they hold it up."

This naturally leads into reconciliation.

Sermon

Introduction (1 minute)

When we think of strong families, we often picture smiling family photos.

Everyone getting along.

No arguments.

No hurt.

No mistakes.

But if you've ever lived in a family...

...you know that's not reality.

The Bible doesn't tell stories about perfect families.

It tells stories about families who needed God.

Joseph forgave his brothers – Genesis 50

The prodigal son came home – Luke 15:11-32

Even God's own people constantly wandered away—and yet God kept calling them back.

Because God's dream has never been perfect families.

His dream is **restored families**.

1. Love God First (2 minutes)

Deuteronomy 6 begins with something surprising.

Before God talks about children...

Before He talks about teaching...

Before He talks about family...

He speaks to the heart.

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul and all your strength." – Deut. 6:5

Why?

Because faith cannot be passed on if it hasn't first taken root in our hearts.

Verse 6 says,

⁶These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts.

Parents...

Grandparents...

Children...

Our greatest gift to the next generation isn't perfection.

It's a genuine love for Jesus.

Children learn far more from what we live than from what we say.

2. Make Faith Part of Everyday Life (3 minutes)

Then Moses says something beautiful in verse 7.

Teach these things...

When you sit.

When you walk.

When you lie down.

When you get up.

In other words...

Don't make faith something that only happens on Sundays.

Let it happen around the dinner table.

In the car.

Before school.

Before bedtime.

While washing dishes.

Faith grows through ordinary moments repeated over time.

Just like building a muscle.

Nobody becomes strong after one visit to the gym.

Strength comes through repetition.

Faith is exactly the same.

Tell God's stories.

Pray together.

Celebrate answered prayers.

Remember what God has done.

Israel was constantly reminded to tell the story of Egypt so they would never forget God's faithfulness.

Every family has stories.

"When we didn't know how we'd get through..."

"When Grandma prayed..."

"When God provided..."

"When God healed..."

Those stories become anchors for the next generation.

3. Strong Families Choose Reconciliation (3 minutes)

Here's something important.

Even families who love God still hurt each other.

That's why reconciliation matters.

The strongest families are not the ones who never fight.

They're the ones who know how to forgive.

Jesus taught us in Matthew 6:12

"Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us."

Paul echoes it in Colossians 3:13

"Forgive as the Lord forgave you."

Forgiveness doesn't pretend nothing happened.

It chooses not to let hurt have the final word.

Why?

Because reconciliation is at the heart of the Gospel.

God reconciled us to Himself through Jesus – 2 Cor. 5:18

Sometimes the most spiritual thing a family can do is simply say,

"I'm sorry."

"Will you forgive me?"

"I love you."

"Forgiveness doesn't change the past—but it changes the weight we carry."

Conclusion (1 minute)

Deuteronomy 6 isn't really giving us another checklist.

It's giving us a picture.

A family where:

God is loved first.

His Word fills everyday conversations.

His faithfulness is remembered.

Forgiveness is practised.

That kind of family doesn't depend on money...

Status...

A perfect home...

Or perfect parents.

It's available to every family that chooses to put God at the centre.

Because faith isn't built in one big moment.

It's woven together...

One conversation...

One prayer...

One act of forgiveness...

One ordinary day at a time.

Amen.

We've heard today that God doesn't call us to have perfect families—He calls us to be families that love Him, remember His faithfulness, and choose forgiveness and reconciliation.

But we also know that reconciliation isn't always easy. Sometimes the hurts are deep, the conversations are difficult, and we're not always sure where to begin.

That's why we're so grateful to have **Mimi** with us today. Mimi is a registered family counsellor who walks alongside families every day. She has the privilege of helping people navigate real-life challenges, restore broken relationships, and take practical steps towards healing.

Today she's going to offer some practical tools that can help all of us build healthier, stronger, and more connected families.

Speaker: Mimi

Before I start, I must just say this: This holiday we were away as a family, when I received the message from Oakhill, asking me to be a part of today's service – so obviously I shared the news with my family and asked their input and ideas around the topic of “the challenges families face these days”... so my teenage daughter rose to the occasion, because teenagers know everything... 😊 And she said: “how about talking about parents who don't admit when they are wrong... who won't humble themselves and apologise to their children.”

And I thought...sloe, ok, So glad you are definitely not talking about me!!! Because I never do that... I'm obviously perfect!! Right? But seriously...Ouch!!

But then I started thinking and praying about it a bit more... and letting my mind go over the many families and individuals I've seen over the 22 years that I've been doing counselling.

There are so many children (regardless of their age) walking around with wounds from the past... caused by their parents... often times without the parents even realising that they've done something wrong.

So I've come to this conclusion:

One of the biggest causes of these wounds I see in families in my practice on a daily basis is what I'd like to label as: **“Prideful Parents”...**

Believe me, I am the first to admit that I am guilty as charged... I really struggle to apologise. My husband on the other hand, is way better at this, than me... Hy se sommer vinnig, van die begin af SORRY!! Nog voordat hy weet wat hy verkeerd gedoen het!!

Us South Africans, we are a proud nation... we are proud of how proud we are! You see it in our culture, in our work, in our sport...!! **Afrikaners is nie net plesierig nie... ons is Trots!!**

We don't show our weaknesses by being vulnerable... we don't ask for help (or directions!! 😊)

We don't show our real emotions and we don't admit when we were wrong... and we **certainly** don't humble ourselves and apologise... especially to our children!!

If we admit that we failed at something; if we show our weakness; our kids will walk all over us!! ... Right??

They won't respect us; they won't listen to us... Right??

WRONG!!

I have a saying at my practice: "Our kids don't do what we **tell** them to do... they do what we **do!!**" – **They are watching us... all the time!! And they copy us.**

If we want reconciliation, unity and healing to happen in our families, we as the adults in the room, need to **teach by example** and show our kids how we **respect them first**, before we can expect them to respect us.

And what is the best way to show **respect** to your children?

For us as parents to **humble** ourselves first, to admit when we've done wrong, to apologise to our kids and to ask them for forgiveness!!

Teaching:

Lets see: What does the Bible say about this?

- **2 Chronicles 7:14 NIV**

"If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

- **James 4:6 NKJV – Says it so beautifully:**

Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

Children do not need perfect parents.

They need parents who are **humble enough to**

- ✓ **admit when they fail,**
- ✓ ask for forgiveness,
- ✓ and point their children to the grace of Jesus.

A sincere apology teaches children that making mistakes is not the end of the story—repentance, forgiveness, and restoration are.

- **James 5:16**

“Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.”

~ Healing begins with confession.

Practical application:

So, practically, what does this look like – in our every day lives?

What Does an UnHealthy Apology Sound Like?

(And again, just to clarify and confess... I've done all of these myself, many times...)

- ✗ “I’m sorry **but** you made me angry.”
- ✗ “I’m sorry that you are so sensitive, that you can’t take a joke.”
- ✗ “I’m sorry you feel like that... **but** I didn’t mean it like that. “
- ✗ “I’m sorry I am such a bad parent and that I can’t do anything right.”

What does a Healthy Apology sound like:

- ✓ “I spoke harshly to you. That was wrong. Will you forgive me?”

A biblical apology:

- Takes responsibility.

- Doesn't make excuses.
- Asks for forgiveness.
- Seeks to change.

Here are Five Practical Habits or Steps we can all follow:

1. Apologise quickly. Don't let days pass before making things right.

2. Be specific. Name exactly what you did wrong.

3. Don't justify yourself. Own your actions without shifting the blame.

4. Pray together. Let your children hear you ask God for forgiveness and help.

5. Make grace part of your family culture. Let these words become common in your home:

"I was wrong."

"Please forgive me."

"I forgive you."

"Let's pray together."

Conclusion:

If what I am saying to you sounds a bit like an attack or judgement, or if you are feeling offended by what I said... just keep in mind:

The enemy likes to **accuse** and **condemn** us and make us feel **guilty and ashamed...** because that will usually keep us **quiet... and allow the moment to apologise pass us by.**

But the Holy spirit is gentle and kind and will convict us when we need to say something - to bring it to the light and to allow healing to start.

Sometimes healing takes time - it's almost never a quick fix - a simple "sorry" doesn't make everything go away miraculously.

But it's amazing what a small step of obedience can do, in starting the process of healing and restoration and reconciliation.

Remember: an apology and forgiveness is not a transaction... one does not always follow straight after the other one.... Both are processes and sometimes it takes time to perfect.

Speaker: Ronel

One of the greatest places we learn about God's grace is in our own homes. None of us gets it right all the time.

Today, let's allow the Holy Spirit to search our hearts. If there is someone in your family you need to ask forgiveness from, or someone you need to forgive, take this opportunity to do that together.

As we come to communion, we remember that Jesus gave His life so that we could be reconciled to God. Because we have received His forgiveness, we can extend that same grace to one another and start the healing process.

Let's pray.

Father, thank You that because of Jesus we are forgiven and made new. Thank You that Your grace is greater than our failures. Help our homes be places of love, forgiveness, and reconciliation. As we come to Your table, remind us of the grace You have shown us and help us extend that grace to one another. In Jesus' name, Amen.