



Parenting & Discipling in God's Plan

Sermon Outline

A one-off sermon connected to Mother's Day. The sermon traced God's plan for humans to "be fruitful and multiply" through the Scriptures. It is about spread the rule of God by filling the world with his image. That was the plan in Genesis 1:26-28, but of course after the Fall that didn't work anymore (Gen 6:11-12). Now instead we are to fill the world with disciples of Jesus (Matt 28:18-20), the true image of God, which is the fulfilment of Genesis 1 (e.g. Acts 6:7, 12:24 echoing Gen 1 as the gospel spreads). It means that this is no longer just a job for fathers and mothers, but for all disciples of Jesus. At the same time, discipling is a lot like parenting, and so a great thing for parents to do.

Reading: Genesis 1:26-28, Genesis 6:11-12, Deuteronomy 6:4-7, Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 6:7, 12:24.

Questions

1. From the passages read, what is God's plan for the world? How do you feel about it? (Imagine if we stayed in Genesis 6...) And how do parenting & discipling fit in?

See above - bringing the whole world under his loving rule, originally through having and teaching children, but now through making disciples of all nations.

It doesn't seem attractive - spreading the rule of God. But hopefully from Gen 6:11-12 we can see that a world where everyone lives for themselves is terrible. If everyone followed God's way and loved their neighbours as themselves, the world would be perfect. We should feel this is a great thing...

2. How does it challenge some of our ideas about 1) having and raising children and 2) discipling those around us?

Don't know if people have ever thought about why we have children. Maybe it's just normal, or it's a joy, or it fits our image... but we don't think of it as something that is part of God's plan. With discipleship we might also not think of God's rule. We think of people knowing God more, which is great. But do we think of it as changing this sinful world by bringing people under God's rule, transforming them so they will obey everything Jesus commanded?



3. What comes into your mind when you think of “discipling others”? How do you feel about the description “spiritual parenting”? How is it helpful or challenging?

Second part of the sermon - discipling is like parenting (e.g. 1 Thess 2:7-8, 11-12). It is older people investing in younger people (e.g. Titus 2:3-5). It is about all of life, walking with people, being an example, all those things. So a lot like parenting.

This is helpful so we know what to expect. And maybe it's not as difficult as it seems. However, it is slow and time-consuming. It should be much more than just reading the Bible together for half an hour once a week. That is a challenge to our busy lives.

4. Think of people who have spiritually invested in you. How did they do this? How have you grown through it?

Sharing good examples from the past. This will make it practical and will also hopefully motivate people - as people did to me, so I can do to others.

5. Is there anyone younger you could invest in? Or an older person you could ask to invest in you? Imagine if everyone at WM did this, what would our church be like in a few years' time?

Putting it into practice - can you think of anyone to invest in, or who could invest in you? Plus a bit of envisioning how great it would be if everyone did this?