

A Centered Home
Deuteronomy 6:5

Good morning. How is everyone doing today? I have to tell you that I am so excited to share this last message in the series “For Our Kids”. This topic is so exciting to me because God clearly called me to focus my life and ministry on kids of all ages...33 years with teenagers of course with my own children and now grandchildren and now the last 7 years with younger elementary children and their families.

We are talking about what it means to be **“For Our Kids.”** Well...the people of Israel talked about that a long time ago. In fact, the most important prayer in the Jewish world is a prayer that is prayed every morning and night...and it has to do with how to raise their kids in the Lord. Our text this morning is this very important prayer that is called the **Shema**. We will explore why in a bit.

So let’s read today’s text. It is found in Deuteronomy chapter 6. We’re going to start in verse 4. ⁴**“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ⁵You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. ⁸You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. - This is the word of the Lord...Thanks be to God.**

So why is this called the Shema? Moses says, “Hear, O Israel.” Or in the Hebrew language it would be **“Sh’ma Yisrael”** The word hear is the Hebrew word shema. A Jewish person says that they recite the Shema every day because it is very important. When Moses says, “Sh’ma Yisrael’...“Hear, O Israel.” He essentially says...**PAY ATTENTION!...LISTEN UP!...HEAR ME!** nation of Israel...people of God...God’s chosen ones. This word “Shema” or “hear” carries this idea of, “Obey”... “Take hold of this” ...“Look at it”... “Grab it”... “Heed it” ... “You have to get this”. Who needs to get it? It is Israel, the people of God.

For us today God’s word is saying **PAY ATTENTION!...LISTEN UP!...HEAR ME** O Church...People who are followers of Jesus. Hear, O Parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings, everybody that is a follower of Jesus...Hear this.

What is so important that we hear? Two things. First, Moses lays out who God is. He says, in verse 4 **“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.”** When Moses is writing this, he’s writing into a context and into a culture where there are all of these false religions and false gods. These false gods were competing against each other. The people of the day were asking each other... “Is this god

happy? Is that god happy? How do I please this god? How do I please that god?" There was all of this confusion. It was called polytheism, meaning there were multiple gods. So they weren't quite sure which god they should follow. Then here comes the LORD...Yahweh...the God of Israel who here reveals himself through Moses in Deuteronomy 6... "...The Lord our God, the Lord is one."

So God has been revealed to be the one true God in verse 4. Then Moses tells us how we're to respond to this one true God in verses 5-6. **"You shall love the Lord your God..."** This God, this unique God, this all-sufficient God, this God who has revealed himself. "You shall love Him with your entire being... read with me what it says... **with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all of your might.**"

This sounds familiar doesn't it? Somebody asks Jesus once, "Hey, what's the greatest commandment?" and Jesus says, "The greatest commandment is this: that you should love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength." He says it in Matthew, in Mark, and in Luke. So Jesus is saying that the Shema is the greatest commandment.

Then our text goes on to say in verse 6... **And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.** Biblically the "heart" is what we center our lives on...which drives us. What we center our lives on or have prioritized over all else. It also tends to be what we most pass on to the next generation. So because of that...Parents, grandparents, people of God, before you ever spiritually lead others, you need to have your heart daily centered on the one true God...on Jesus. It starts with this personal and daily confession...The Lord our God is one. Daily pray that you would love God with all of your being...but let it start in your heart. Before investing in the children that God has placed in your life...ask yourself...Is my life...my heart centered on this one true God? Do I love him more than anything else? God is telling us today that this is where to start each and every day...centered on Him.

So, first there is one God. We then love Him with all of our being. Then Moses says this is our response. Picking it up in verse 7: **"You shall teach them diligently to your children."** Teach what? These two truths: (1) There is one God, (2) love him with all of you starting with your heart. These words "teach them diligently" is one Greek word "sha-nan". It is a term used when talking about sharpening a sword or knife. It means to intentionally or intensively pierce or sharpen. Essentially, what Moses is saying is that we should continuously and constantly teach children what it means to re-center your lives back on God... and this is like a re-sharpening process. When a knife gets dull...we should sharpen it. When children lose track of who is most important in the universe remind them of the one true God and how to love him with their entire beings.

The 3 lessons of the Shema are: (1) Listen to the one true God - "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one." (2) Center your life on Him. - "You shall love the Lord your God..." These two truths lead to activity. (3) Be diligent in teaching your children these two truths - "You shall teach them diligently to your children"

I want you to start some discussions among yourselves as parents, grandparents or people of God about the next section of our text this morning. There are 4 rhythms or spaces in our lives each and every day where God asks us to diligently teach our children. Notice the four rhythms listed in verse 7... **and shall talk of them (1) when you sit in your house, and (2) when you walk by the way, and (3) when you lie down, and (4) when you rise.**

God purposely lays out four spaces of each day to consider passing on faith to the next generation. We need to discuss ways we can TAKE INTENTIONAL TIME to teach kids what it means to Love and have faith in this one true God?

Let's explore some ways... First rhythm: **talk of them when you sit in your house.** Maybe it is meal time. If you don't have regular meal times...consider having one. Great conversation can happen around the table with a meal. Another idea come monthly in a Chapel Hill email where you will find resources for parenting all ages of children. It is called Parent Cue. You put your children or grandchildren in the app, put in their birthday and it has cues for diligently teaching each of the children in your life. It has some things you can say each week. It has some things you can do at home to build their faith. It then has some questions and things that can get your kids thinking.

Second rhythm: **when you walk by the way...** Well our culture really doesn't do as much walking by the way as this time Moses was writing this. We do more driving by the way. Maybe you choose when you are in the car driving...talk about God. Ask what they learned in Sunday School last Sunday. Talk about what happened when they got angry in the game they were just in. Always asking for what God is wanting to teach in that moment.

Maybe you decide to do some walking along the way. Our daughters that have children have decided to walk regularly with their kids. I started waking with them since we have moved closer and are at their houses to give them a break. I have asked some great questions of our older grandchildren as we walk in the woods together. As I walked with my kids and now grandkids my aim is to imitate God and what Jesus did for me.

Third rhythm: **when you lie down.** This is probably our most consistent time. Most of us take time to read. Maybe look for ways to make this a spiritual time using a Bible to read to them. There is a great one for little ones called The Jesus Storybook Bible. It's a great one you might consider using for your littlest ones.

Fourth rhythm: **when you rise.** Our daughters saw that their mom had devotion times at home. My time was often out of their eyesight but hers was in the home where they watched it.

In the first chapter of the Gospel of Mark we read about an entire day of Jesus. In verse 35 Mark records what Jesus did the next morning after this very busy day. **...It was very early in the morning and still dark. Jesus got up and left the house. He went to a place where he could be alone. There he prayed.** If Jesus needed time with His father, how much more do we?

Last week Pastor Mark talked about the importance of your words. In the morning times use words that build up the children. Maybe in the morning you give each of your kids as my wife did a blessing before they go out the door to school. She did this almost every day all the way through there last day of High School. In your blessing you might use the words Pastor Mark suggested...You belong to me | I love you | I am proud of you

My wife and I are facilitating a series called **Confident Parenting on Wednesday nights at 6:00 PM starting February 26th**. We will explore more ideas for centering your home on the one true God. I also want you to consider **signing up to help with Chapel Hill Kids** any services you choose to. A sign-up sheet will be by the wood wall.

At this stage of our lives Gina and I look back, and realize the importance of centering our lives on the one true God. We see how the investment of time for each of our three daughters and praying for them regularly has made a huge impact in their adult faith. Continue in this journey with me and center your individual lives and your homes on this one true God. So seize these daily moments. Seize these opportunities. Invest time with all of the younger ones that God has put in our lives. Join with us in centering our lives back on Jesus each and every day. Let's be "For our Kids" by building this younger generation of the kingdom of God.

To remember this series, we have a gift for each of you...

- Grownups, as you leave the Sanctuary, the ushers will have adult-sized wristbands that you can take for yourself.
- If you have children who attended the Chapel Hill Kids program in the family wing today, they are getting their own kids-sized wristbands already.
- If you have children or grandchildren who aren't here today, just go to the Connect Center right outside the Sanctuary where the big wood wall is and you'll see more kids-sized wristbands there. Just take one.

Let's pray. Father, thank you for your grace, and thank you even now that we have the opportunity to share in Communion, the opportunity to be reminded in the Lord's Supper that you have covered us in our failure to constantly center our hearts on you. You have covered us in our shortcomings. You have washed over us in those areas where we have blown it and missed it. I thank you that when we have been separated from you that you are the God who restores and redeems. Help us to daily center our lives on you, Jesus...the one true God. For it is in His name that we pray. Amen.