

The Restoration of Christian Families

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Abstract—Families are the institutions which are based on God's initiation. It has been reflected since God created Adam and Eve. We have dreamed of having happy families which can be God's witnesses in the society. Families are God's image on earth but sins have destroyed the good image. Divorces and family's abuse are the proofs of the damage of God's plan. Those cases show that we need the restoration in families. Families restoration will be able to happen when every member in the families understands that Christian education and forgiveness are needed in the families.

Keywords—families, Christian education, restoration

I. INTRODUCTION

Family was the first and smallest institution on earth. It was God's plan when He created Adam from dust. Genesis 1:27-28 mentioned that "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

God has given His command to human beings to fill the earth and subdue it. However, sins have destroyed God's plan about the purpose of building a family. Marriage is a sacred and unique institution which has been planned by God since the creation of human being. Marriage must be based on God's eternal plan so that marriage can achieve its genuine purpose. Human beings must return to God and His words in order to understand the meaning of marriage [1].

In the old testament, we can find numerous sad stories of God's great people who were used incredibly to serve Him but were not able to maintain the unity of their families. They were called great leaders but not great fathers. We can see that from David who spoiled his children, the prophet Eli who respected his sons more than he respected God, and so on. Devil never stops attacking and destroying Christian families. We can see from what had happened to Job's family. It was destroyed by devil. Job lost all his children and his treasure. However, Job never left God and his righteousness and faith had made God restore and multiply his children and treasure. Job's godly character and God's grace had restored Job's family.

Indonesia has a strong fundamental regulation on family building. According to the regulation of marriage based on UU No.1 year 1974 marriage is a physical and psychology bond between a man and a woman as husband and wife with the purpose of building a happy and eternal family based on God [2]. It is clearly mentioned that the purpose of building a family is to create a happy life for the members of the family. However, the data in 2020 have revealed that the percentage of divorced families has risen to 6.4% from 72.9 million of families or about 4.7 million spouses [3]. In this case children are affected from the broken relationship in families. We can find that there are numerous of breakup families including Christian families and their children are in great despair and have lost the purposes of their lives.

II. METHOD

The journal uses method based on the theories in the bible, books and journals.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Restoration

According to the dictionary of Indonesian language, the definition of restoration is the process, way, and act of restore. Another definition is to return. The old testament was ended by a beautiful restoration promise from God before the coming of God's great and dreadful day. It was written in Malachi 4:5-6 "See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. He will return the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents; or else I will come and strike the land with total destruction". These verses mentioned that there would be a restoration between father and children, which means that there would be a restoration in families. After that there would be 400 years God remained silent until John the Baptist spoke in the wilderness in order to prepare the way for the Messiah, Jesus Christ, to come to the world.

God has opposed and rebuked the unfaithfulness in family. Malachi 2:14-16 stated that "You ask, 'Why?' It is because of the Lord is the witness between you and the wife of your youth. You have been unfaithful to her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant. Has not the one God made you? You belong to Him in body and spirit. And what does the one God seek? Godly offspring. So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful to the wife of your youth.

According to the above book, it is clear that the restoration of families is in God's heart. God yearns to bless each family to return to Godly purpose. God's plan for human beings is to make them abide in marriages and

o not have good foundation in educating their children. Parents are busy to make ends meet. Besides that, the temptation from the social media has also affected parents to give attention to their children. It is so sad if children do not have strong foundation in God. They are the future of families and the nation. Parents must aware not to let the devil use their children's potential lives for doing evil things.

The members of family do not have good roles in families.

Parents' Roles (Husband and Wife)

families. God has planned that husband and wife reach the agreement and conquer the power of devil to stop its work and to place the earth in the power of God [4].

B. The Cause of Family Breakup

There are several factors that can cause family breakup:

Parents do not have sound foundation of marriage.

Parents have not prepared themselves to build a family. There are numerous of Christian families who have failed to achieve the beauty and become God's witnesses because they have made mistake in setting the target and the direction of their families. They have been influenced by the world's format, like having children, becoming rich, and achieving good position in the society and do not walk according to God's will [1]. Most of the families do not receive marriage counseling that is very important for them to understand the marriage foundation.

The Christian education does not exist in families.

Parents as the people who have experienced God's grace should introduce God to their children. Their main responsibility is mentioned in Deuteronomy 6:4-9 that is to teach God's word to their children continuously. Deuteronomy 6: 6-7 mentioned that "These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up".

Nowadays, most parents have passed the responsibility of educating their children's spirituality to the teachers at school or church. They do not realize that it is their task as parents to teach God's word to their children. Parents do not become the good role models to their children in living according to God's word so that they d

The leader in the family is husband. Wife must submit to the decisions made by husband. Husband and wife are partners in life and must be able to communicate well. The submission of wife does not mean to make husband as 'Hitler' at home. Submission means that husband is a loving and attentive leader who loves wife the same as Christ loves His church [5].

The submission means that we understand and love God. If we submit to God we will submit to His authority, obey His word and please Him by living according to His will. Obedience is motivated by a loving heart not by force [6].

There are numerous husbands who do not have responsibility and strong leadership in performing their roles as the leaders in families. These things have caused children to lose their respect to their fathers. John Hagee has mentioned that women are getting bored of having husbands who are coward, do not have good spiritual lives, and do not want to lead their families in spiritual ways. They want to have husbands who are able to finance the families, protect them emotionally, and lead them spiritually [5].

the leaders in the new testament who concerned about the Christian education, had written several letters to churches about how Christian education should have implemented in families. Colossians 3:18, 19, 21 mentioned that “Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged”.

Then, Paul wrote letters about the foundation of Christian education to the church in Ephesians. Ephesians 6:4 mentioned that “Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord”. Parents should support each other in transferring the sound doctrine of Christian education to their children. By doing that hopefully their children will grow up in Christ and become the source of joy to their parents. It was mentioned in Proverbs 29:17 “Discipline your children, and they will give you peace; they will bring you the delights you desire”.

Children’s roles

Human beings would like to have joyful lives when they live. It was mentioned in the bible how we can enjoy good and long life. Ephesians 6:1-3 mentioned that “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother – which is the first commandment with a promise – so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth”.

God has promised that as long as we love and respect our parents, we will have joyful lives. The differences in age, way of thinking, knowledge, and many other things can be the causes of why children underestimate their parents. There are disobedient children who insult, hurt, or even kill their parents. God has emphasized that children must respect and take care of their parents and it was stated in the fifth rule of Ten Commandments. Colossians 3:20 stated that “Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord”. People who do not respect their parents can receive bad consequences in their lives.

God wants us to respect our parents even though we do not have good parents. If we are saved first in our family, we should pray for our parents in order to be saved. We must love and respect our parents and God will do His part in changing their lives.

C. Forgiveness is the key of restoration

There is no perfect person in this world. Only God is perfect. We often make mistakes. The differences in background, attitude, education, character, economy, and so many things can cause the differences in point of views and the way of thinking in families. It is not easy to unite all the differences. However, it is not the reason to have continual conflicts in families.

We can learn from the story of the lost son in Luke 15:11-32. The youngest son decided to leave his family and squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, he returned to his father and begged for forgiveness. His father was very happy to see his son and made a big party to welcome him. We learn from the love of the father that our Father in heaven will forgive all of our sins if we really want to humble ourselves and repent from our sins. The forgiveness from the father would change the son to become a better person.

There was a prominent figure in the bible that was stated in Genesis 37-50. We can learn from this inspirational figure about the unity in family. Joseph was loved more than his brothers by his father, Jacob (Genesis 37:3). Joseph’s brothers were jealous of him because their father treated Joseph in a special way. Their jealousy had made them want to kill Joseph.

We can learn from this story to have the same portion of love to our children. We should not compare our children. Joseph experienced a lot of bitter things for years. He was sold as a slave, imprisoned because of false accusation by Potiphar’s wife, and was badly treated when he was in prison. When there was a severe famine, Joseph’s brothers came to Joseph to ask for food. As human beings we think that Joseph’s brothers did not deserve forgiveness from Joseph but Joseph forgave them.

Joseph did not do any bad things to them. The story of Joseph and his brothers ended beautifully. God raised the level of Joseph’s life to become the blessing for his nation.

Forgiveness is a beautiful thing. There will be problems in our relationship, like problems between husband and wife, parents and children. “Husbands and wives can solve conflicts together when they understand their spouses. They are willing to understand their spouses’ weaknesses, have empathy, willing to learn that men and women are different.

Moreover, they need to learn their spouses' lives in the past like traumatic events, the broken family trees, and how they were raised in families. By understanding all of these things, they do not ask their spouses to change but they change themselves. They need to pray to God to change themselves so that their spouses can change" [7]. Let's turn our vision to the cross in Calvary as Jesus has forgiven our sins so that we can go to heaven.

We do not have any reason not to forgive our family. We all miss to see our family can gather in heaven so that we need to get ready for the families restoration.

IV. CONCLUSION

Families are the institutions which are based on God's initiation. God has given commandment to human beings to fill and subdue the earth. However, sins have destroyed God's plan about the purpose of building a family. The concept of marriage must be based on God's word if we want to restore our families.

The restoration in families can happen when the members of the families are willing to take roles and responsibility in implementing God's word. They need to pay attention to apply Christian education in family. Moreover, the restoration in families can also happen when all members of the families are willing to forgive one another.

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