

**Sermon Topic:** Family Foundations by Mrs Margaret Chan

**Sermon Text:** Matthew 7:24-27, 1 Corinthians 13:1-8

### **Introduction**

Happy Mother's Day. The ministry and work of mothers do not exist alone. Mothers exist in the context of families. Hence today's topic for mothers must be addressed to families and to the congregation.

**Question:** What kind of house would you want your family to stay in? What kind of foundation do you want your physical house to be built on?

The foundation of rock, and not sand, seems a logical choice. Though people may invest in dream homes along the coastal areas (for various reasons), they don't usually envisage any problems to their homes. But what happens if unforeseen circumstances befall: eg. tidal waves, tsunami due climate change?

(YouTube Clip: [Recent HK typhoon demonstrates that the window panes of a sound, structural hotel can still suffer great damage caused by strong winds and waves.](#))

The same principle applies to our family foundation. Families are not exempted from winds and waves that seek to destroy its foundation. BUT sadly, most families don't take time to understand or examine the quality of their family foundation.

### **Most Families Build Their Foundation On These Common Family Priorities:**

- Wealth (to finance the family's needs and desires)
- Good paying jobs (to bring in the wealth that we want)
- Outsourcing childcare (to work for wealth means help is needed from maids, childcare centers, retired parents)
- Educational enhancement (to send children to tuition, enrichment programs, extra-curriculum activities so they can land in good universities and good paying jobs in future)
- Latest gadgets (handphones, tablets, laptops)

- Enjoyment (holidays, home entertainment system, play stations)

If these priorities are not wrong by themselves, then what may be wrong?

**1 Corinthians 13:1-3:** Paul exhorts us that gifts are from God and good works are not bad. But if we don't have love as foundation in the expression of these gifts and good works, what we do amount to nothing.

Similarly, this principle of love applies to family foundation. It is convenient to substitute love with easy gifts for our family. But all that we do for the sake of the family comes to nothing if love is not the foundation. Without love, the foundation we built in the family is sandy foundation. Human beings are created by God to enjoy loving relationships with Him and one another. Yet we have become human machines who struggle to be in relationship with one another.

(YouTube Clip: [Even a dog knows a fish will die without water. Fishes need water like humans need love. Are we humans aware of the tragedy of our loved ones dying inside of them due to a lack of love?](#))

### **What Does Love Look And Feel Like? (I Corinthians 13: 4-8)**

Paul exhorts us that love is not an abstract subject. It can be lived out in practical ways. The characteristics of love are listed in groups :

#### **1. Love Is Patient And Kind**

To be patient is to pace and walk with one another. Patience recognises that everyone in the family has a different stride in their journey of life. To be kind is to face problems with one another rather than let individuals fight their battles alone.

#### **2. Love Does Not Envy, Does Not Boast, Is Not Proud**

Do we as parents envy other kids who outdo our children? Do we fall into a trap of a constant need to push our children to compete against a crowd so as to make us proud? Or do we quietly and joyfully enjoy our children, without having them out-perform against others?

### **3. Love Is Not Rude, Not Self-Seeking, Not Easily Angered And Keeps No Record Of Wrongs**

Anger and finger pointing in front of our children is unhealthy. It raises frightened and insecure children. Though anger as an emotion is not wrong (Eph 4:26), we need to ask if we are handling anger in a healthy way in front of our family? Are we guilty of dishonouring one another when we shout at one another in anger, and bring up past records of wrong against each other?

(Book Recommendation: "Kids in Danger" by Ross Campbell)

### **4. Love Does Not Delight In Evil But Rejoices With The Truth**

The struggle between good and bad is real within us.

**The Wolf Diagram:** Illustrates that there are 2 wolves inside each of us. One wolf is EVIL: It is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority and ego. One wolf is GOOD: It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith. Which wolf wins? The one we feed the most.

Point? What we pay attention to will act out in life. If our love towards our family is to be good and truthful, we have to rely on the leadership of the Holy Spirit, walk in step with God's values and put priority on loving God and others.

### **5. Love Always Protects**

Do our family find us trustworthy at all times? A love that doesn't protect cannot be trusted. In our Asian culture and by our upbringing, we oft' confuse discipline with abuse (esp done out of anger). Abuse is opposite of protection. To protect is to walk and persevere with one another through thick and thin. A love that protects is proactive to help family members face challenges in different situations (like a breakup), face challenges in different seasons...coming alongside to protect in their times of self-doubt, failures and losses.

## **Conclusion**

It is never too late to inject love into your family. It is never too late to be prepared for the storms of life by intentionally building a solid foundation of love, NOW. Our hope is in God, not our circumstances. As the Lord speaks to us today, let's resist from simply hearing but not obeying. Go and do as the Lord commands. For love is the greatest commandment of God.

## **Discussion Questions**

1. Whether you are a mom or not, everyone has a role and part to play in the family. What do you usually do to express love to your family? Is expressing love in your family difficult?
2. Is there one thing you can improve this week to strengthen your family foundation? What is it?
3. One question I have about this sermon is....