



Sermon – October 24, 2021
Jimmy Scroggins

Verses Covered This Week

Colossians 3:12 – 13, 18 – 21

Psalm 127:5

Amen. Hey didn't our worship team just do such a great job this morning leading us? Fantastic! And my name is Jimmy Scroggins and it is my pleasure and privilege to get to be with you. I bring you greetings from south Florida. And I want to try something that I've heard several people do today. I don't know if it will work if I do it, but I want to try it. I heard some people get up and they said, Howdy. Man, we don't do that in Florida, but that is so cool!. I love that. I just think Texas is great. So I think Phillip and Cami Bethancourt are great. I just love them being my friends and I had the full Texas Aggie experience. I've had the full Bethancourt experience. And it just makes me want to, you know like, I don't think I can move to Texas because I'm a Florida guy, but I will say this. When you guys secede, I'm bringing Florida with you. So we're all going to be, I know, I know we always talk about that. Anyways, my name's Jimmy. I am from south Florida. I don't know if you've ever been to south Florida. I live in a place called West Palm Beach. West Palm Beach is about 50 miles north of Miami. So you have Miami and then just north of that is Ft. Lauderdale and just north of that, north of that is West Palm Beach and that's where I live. And I'm the pastor of a church called Family Church. And we're a multi-generational, multi-sight, multi-cultural church. And it's really fun to get to be the pastor there. It's, it's different, it's exciting. We're a network of neighborhood churches and we're helping people discover and pursue God's design.

I am married to my wife Kristin. We've been married for 27 years. We have 8 children: 6 boys and 2 girls. We have two grandchildren: a boy and a girl. And before I, before I continue, if you want to, you can get your Bibles out, yeah, there's our little family we have right there. And if you want to get your Bibles out and turn to Colossians chapter 3. But while you're turning, I will go ahead and answer a couple of questions that you may have. I know some of you may have more children than that or came from a family larger than that. But people always ask me. I'm going to go ahead and get it out of the way. So you don't have to ask me after. Are you ready? We have 8 children. All of them are our biological children. We did not adopt any children. I'm in favor of adoption. We have not adopted any yet. But my wife is always on my case. Every one of those children is homemade right there in Florida. And I also get asked, how many of them are twins. None of them. They're about 20 months apart. My oldest is 25. My

youngest is 12. So we have 2 that are out of school and married with kids. Two in college. Two in high school, and 2 in middle school. So we're every life stage which means we're broke perpetually. And people always ask me, are you one of those Christians, you have all those kids, are you one of those Christians that thinks that birth control is a sin? And we do not think it is a sin. We just never learned how to use it effectively. So that's, that's how we ended up. When I, I think when Kristin got pregnant with our fifth child, she said, "You call my dad. I'm not calling him again." And I called her dad, George, I said, "George, we're going to have another baby." And he said, "Jimmy, I don't know what it's going to take. I'll be glad to spring for cable." And so that's what happened when we had our 12 year old. We got cable and there we go. That was the end of that. So, a lot of fun.

I remember when Kristin and I brought our first son home from the hospital. His name's James. So my name's James. I'm James Harris Scroggins, the fourth. He is James Harris Scroggins, the fifth. He's had a son who's James Harris Scroggins, the sixth. Well, when I brought James home. That makes us sound like royalty, but we're just rednecks from lower Alabama, OK. It's not anything like that. When I brought James home from the hospital, I was 23 and my wife was 21. We were in graduate school and so we lived in a one bedroom apartment that I think was about 300 square feet. I don't know. We did not, I've been with people when they've decorated their nursery. We didn't have a nursery. The crib was next to my desk where I studied from school in the living room, if you want to call it that. We brought James home and I remember when we got James home, we had no idea what to do with him. We're so excited about having the baby, but then when the baby actually came, we got home and it took two of us to double-team him just to change the diaper. We didn't know what to do. We didn't know how much this was going to cost. We didn't know, we didn't know anything but we were so excited to have him. And I found out that the more kids you have the more complicated it can get. And it sure does. And the older your kids get, the more challenging it can be. I know in the book of Genesis when Adam and Eve fell to sin, the Bible says, God pronounced a curse and part of the curse was that the woman would bear, have a pain in childbearing. And, of course, I've been there for the birth of all 8 of our children and I did not personally feel anything but it looks very painful to me. And when I'm watching this, I was thinking about that verse. But you know what I've discovered, is I now have adult children with children of their own. The physical pain of childbearing is very temporary, but the pain never really stops, does it. You keep caring. You're concerned. When your children are disappointed, you're disappointed. When your children are joyful, you're joyful. It's amazing how much you just have invested into your children.

I think kids are a lot of fun and we're pro-kids. But as time went on, I've discovered that parenting is not for wimps. Raise your hands if you agree with that. Parenting is not, it's not for wimps, it can be rewarding, but it can be difficult. And sometimes it hurts and sometimes it's confusing. And my children are all great. If I introduce you to them, you'd love them. They'd make a great first impression. But my kids, especially my boys, are a bunch of what I call bucking broncos, man. Those kids, I know you think, "Well, you're a preacher so you probably have magical preacher's kids." I do not. My kids are the only kids I've ever heard of that have been suspended multiple times from home school. And that's, those kids have gotten into more trouble. I remember my oldest son, James, when we used to send him to school, this Christian school that, our church had a Christian school. We sent him to Christian school and I remember when we, in the first grade, and the principal called me. I was the youth pastor at the church and the principal calls and says, "James is in trouble. I need you to come down here and talk to me

about it.” And I was kind of nervous because I was in my young 20’s. I’ve never been to the principal’s office as a parent before. And so I went to the principal’s office and it was a nerve-wracking deal and I was borderline mad at James for getting in trouble and mad at her for getting him in trouble. And it was just kind of a awkward experience. Over the years with all those children, I’ve had so much experience in the principal’s office, I don’t even get nervous anymore. The principal’s more nervous than I am. I’ve been in there a bunch of times. It’s no big deal. And that boy James, man, when he was in the kindergarten, we sent him to kid’s camp and he got sent home because he put toothpaste in everybody’s hair in his whole cabin. And that kid got in fights all the way growing up and he got in all kinds of trouble to the point that when he was a teenager, my son James, got in so much trouble and was in such a bad spot it literally broke our hearts. I thought I was losing my son, James. And some of you parents know what I’m talking about. We were in there losing our son. We were watching him walk away from his faith, maybe even walking away from his family. It was a battle and it was a struggle. My wife and I would get in the bedroom and get on the floor and pray to God and cry puddles of tears until the carpet was wet; crying out to God for our children. Have you been there? How many of you are there right now? As a parent, you can feel like you’re in a no man’s land. You can feel like you’re in a road trip with no map and no GPS. That’s why parenting isn’t for wimps.

And I also just want to say a word. So I know that some of you desperately want to be parents and you haven’t had that opportunity yet. And it’s a gut wrenching experience. And I know that some of you have experienced tremendous loss because you’ve lost children. There are parents in the room whose hearts are broken because your children are not with us anymore. And I’m sorry for that but here’s the thing. Not everyone in here has children. Some of you are college students and you’re like, “Great! I showed up. I showed up my one Sunday at church after an Aggie game and now we’re going to talk about parenting which I can care less about because I’m in college.” Having biological children is not a requirement to follow Jesus or to have a life of significance. We don’t think that parents are better than people who don’t have kids. But if you read the text of Scripture and you watch how history has unfolded, children should matter to everyone in the room whether you have your own or whether you’re influencing someone else’s. Because all of us are an influence on children. And if we don’t pass the faith on to the next generation, then we are failing in our duty towards God as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus was crucified and raised from the dead for our sins and those of the children in our community and in our families. And we’ve got to get that message on. So whether you’re a college student, whether you’re single, if you have kids and they’re grown, you don’t have kids; everybody in the room has a vested interest in children. I love the family stuff we’re going. That mom and dad getting baptized this morning. I mean, that was awesome. And then later on we’re going to see children dedicated to the Lord. As a church, man, that is awesome. That’s the real stuff. That’s what we’re talking about. And I also want to acknowledge that in a church like this, just like at my church in south Florida, all of our families look different, don’t they. I mean, some of y’all are in here and you’ve got, you’ve got kids, you’ve got your biological kids, and some of your kids are grown, some of your kids are babies, and some of you are expecting, some of you are trying, and in this room we’ve got people who have been divorced and remarried and divorced and remarried. You’ve got his kids and her kids and both of y’all’s kids and the adopted kids and the foster kids and maybe we shouldn’t have so many kids. You’ve got all of these kids and all of us have these families that look different. Well, Colossians chapter 3, St. Paul is writing this letter to this neighborhood church in the little town of Colossae. And that neighborhood church in Colossae has some similarities to this neighborhood church in Texas.

People from different backgrounds and generations and genders. But Paul knew that their lives had been changed and were being changed by Jesus. Is that true about this church? Has your life been changed by Jesus? Is your life being changed by Jesus? That's how it ought to be. And Paul knew that when your life is changed, it means that your old life is supposed to be put away and your new life is supposed to be put on. In fact, in Colossians 3, St. Paul said, you should put off your old life and put on Christ like a suit of clothes. In Colossians 3, St. Paul said our lives are hidden with Christ in God. What a great phrase, so powerful. And the theme of this letter, Colossians, is that Christians should put Jesus at the center of our lives; every single thing that we're doing. And as he winds down his communication in this letter, St. Paul gives us some direct and practical instructions about family life and relationships and marriage and parenting.

So let's jump in here, Colossians chapter 3, starting in verse 12. We're going to read several verses and then I'm going to make just a few comments. Verse 12. St. Paul writes:

¹²Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts,

Everybody say, compassionate hearts.

Kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you must also forgive.

Let's just pause right there. We get into this family life and Paul's setting up his instructions, his practical instructions, about family. He's talking about a posture that we need to take towards one another if we're going to pass faith on to another generation. Compassionate hearts and kindness and humility and patience. Because parenting can be tough stuff and I'd like to say, if you want to talk to me about parenting, I've been doing this long enough, what I like to do is I like to draw a circle right here. And I call it the "No Judgment Parenting Circle". And if you want to talk to me about parenting, the only way I'm going to talk to you is if you'll get into the "no judgment parenting circle" with me. Because parenting is hard enough without being judged. Especially by Christian brothers and sisters when you need their help. Paul said that we need to be humble. Pretty much everybody in the room that's had children would agree that parenting can be humbling. Nod your head if you agree with that. But you know, humbling is good. Because the Bible says we ought to be humble. I actually think parenting's worse than that. I think sometimes it's humiliating. It takes another step and it's easiest, especially when your kids are small, to be secretly judgmental about other parents whose kids are having trouble, isn't it. It's easy in your hearts to secretly think, "You know, if those parents would just do the right stuff, their kids wouldn't be having all of these problems." It's easy to think that. That's probably what people were saying about me when James was getting into all of that trouble. But if that's you, you just wait. Because we've all been there. But as your little kids grow up and become bigger kids, you will have your turn. Just wait. Because you're going to be amazed at what your kids might get into and you're going to be tempted to beat yourself up and to call yourself a failure and to go home at night and just wonder if God's even going to use you or wonder where you've gone wrong. But that's why we need the "no judgment parenting circle" at church, don't we. We need some people that are going to pull us in and lift us up; not kick us when we're down. We need some people that are going to cry out to God with us and for us and people that are going to believe in us and advise us and help us without throwing judgment and

shade on us. That's what all of us need and that's what a church ought to be. Parenting in a church ought to be about other people pulling you in and lifting you up.

Let's get down to Colossians chapter 3, verse 18. Talks about marriage.

¹⁸Wives, submit to your husbands,

Phillip's going to talk about that another week.

As is fitting in the Lord. ¹⁹Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.

And the only comment I want to make about this is that God does have a design for marriage and how it's supposed to work. And the best, the most ideal context for passing faith onto the next generation is a mom who is married to a dad with the children that God has given them. And this mom and this dad modelling this healthy mutual submission to one another, this sacrificial love. Especially on the part of the husband and father. And if we do it in this design, it gives us a better chance to pass the faith on to the next generation. And then Paul says, verse 20:

²⁰Children, obey our parents in everything, why, for this pleases the Lord. ²¹Fathers,

How many dads are in here? Raise your hand if you're a dad. Put them really high. Keep them up there. Really high. Really high. Ok, so this is especially to us, dads:

²¹Fathers, direct address, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

Three thoughts I'd like to share. I don't know if you like to write things down or take notes, or any of you, I have three thoughts about God's design for parenting from this text. Number one, according to God's design, parenting is for training. Parenting is for training. If you look at this text, verse 20 is addressed; verse 20 is addressed, not to fathers and mothers. Verse 20 is really addressed to children, isn't it? Children, obey your parents. In Ephesians, it says, in the Lord, for this is right. In Colossians it says, this pleases the Lord. That's where the text starts. Children are addressed in the text as responsible persons in the home and in the church family. Children are not just the church of tomorrow; children are the church of today. They matter today. And children, once they're old enough to understand the instructions and once they develop a conscience, they should be expected, mom and dad, to obey their parents. Christian children should be expected. I think this command is binding as long as the child is living in the home of the parents and as long as the child is receiving their primary financial support from the parents. That can go a long time, couldn't it? So there's some college students who might think, "You know, I don't really have to obey and honor my parents anymore because I'm out of the house." Well, you're out of the house because your parents are paying for you to have a house somewhere else. It's still their house. And so you really ought to honor and obey. But there's a time when you are on your own, you are responsible for yourself and you no longer have to obey your parents in the same way as you did when you were a child. For instance, I'm 50 years old. My mother lives around the block from me, my mom and dad do. My mother came over to my house and it was 10 o'clock at night and she said, "Now, Jimmy, you got to work in the morning, you need to go to bed." I don't have to do what she says. I love her, I want to honor her, but I'm

like, “Mom, you’re in my house. I’m 50. I’ll go to bed when I want in my house.” But I do want to honor my mother. But I’m on my own so it’s different.

As parents, Kristin and I found it helpful to think about parenting in stages. You want to discipline them when they’re little. Because when they’re little, they’re just like Pavlov’s dogs. You have to teach them simple commands like: no, come here, don’t put your finger in the light socket, don’t touch the stove, don’t play in the street. So you’re disciplining them, to train them on simple commands so that they don’t kill themselves. As they get a little bit older, you shift into more of a training mode because now they can begin to understand why it is that you are telling them what you are telling them. That’s why at our house, my wife’s a genius at parenting, Kristin came up with, she just said, “We’re going to have 3 rules at our house for our kids.” I thought this was really smart. Because we were over at some people’s, you ever been to somebody’s house, they post the family rules on the refrigerator or something like that? And I’ve been to somebody, I went to this person’s house and they had like 32 rules for their children. And I could tell that basically every time something weird happened, they just made another rule for it. They just, you know, don’t steal your sister’s crayons and put them in your pocket and put them in the dryer. Alright, they had rules like that. Well Kristin decided we’re going to have 3 rules. This is really good. Number one, she said, respect authority. That covers a lot of things, doesn’t it. School, home, grandparents, coach, the police officer; respect authority. Two: tell the truth. That’s a tough one for kids and adults. Three: think of others. Think of others covers almost everything. Why did you leave your plate on the table without cleaning it up? So we don’t have a rule, clean up your plate. We have a rule, think of others. Somebody else has to do that. Why didn’t you pick up your, why didn’t you pick up your room? Well, we have a rule. The rule is not pick up your room. The rule is, think of others. If you don’t do it someone else is going to have to and they’re going to have to, all kinds of things. So she had these simple rules that made it easy to train.

And as they get older, you begin to coach them more. So, like, a lot of my kids now are in high school or college. I’m not exactly directing their daily lives, but I am coaching them when I can. And finally, ultimately, your goal is for your adult children to become your friends. Your adult children can be some of the best friends you’re ever going to have. You better hope they are. Because one day your adult children may need to help take care of you. And developing these friendships is so so vital. And so our job as parents is to help our kids move into the next stage of maturity and our job as children is to move into the next stage of maturity. So some of you are kids, you need to help your parents and help God and do God’s will by growing up as you should. If you’re a college student, you should be growing up as you should, high school, growing up as you should: following instructions and honoring your parents.

And then why should we obey our parents? Simple. Because this pleases the Lord. Colossians 3:20 is loaded with all these implications. Now, all of us have been embarrassed by the actions of our kids in public or discouraged or dismayed because we told our kids to do something and then they didn’t do it and the other parents around us are kind of looking at us sideways like, “Ah, your kids don’t do what you say.” And I just want you to know, no judgment parenting circle, if you sometimes tell your kids to do something and they don’t do it in front of other people, come into my circle, no judgment on you. It’s called training. It’s called discipline. We’ve got to do it. And if you have your theology right, you’re not freaked out. Even as your kids get older, they might do something really bad and you shouldn’t freak out. You can’t go

into the fetal position emotionally when your kids are in a mess. Let me tell you why. Because the Bible tells you why you're kids are in a mess. Your kids are sinners. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. So when your kid messes up, you don't say, "That's a bad kid." You say, "That's a sinner." And you shouldn't be surprised by it. Look, when I got married when I was 23 years old, a single man sinner got married to a single woman sinner and then we started making a bunch of little sinners. And we've been sinning all over each other for the last 27 years. And so when your kids sin, you don't freak out. You go, "Hey! That's sin. I already knew that was going to happen. The Bible tells me all of these kids are sinners just like I'm a sinner." So the question is, how do we address sin, not is sin going to occur. Because of course it is. But how are we going to address it and how are going to approach it. And that's why the Gospel's so vital. Man, Jesus is crucified on the cross and raised from the dead to save sinners. Which means that your little children need to be saved by Jesus. Your adult children need to be saved by Jesus. Your teenagers need to be saved by Jesus. Even that prodigal that's wandered away and you think they're never going to come back, they can be saved by Jesus. That's what the cross is for. So we don't go into the fetal position when our kids get into stuff. Man, we just look to the Gospel, remind ourselves of the Gospel, remind our children of the Gospel. That's what Jesus is all, that's what Jesus is all, all about.

Number 2: according to God's design, parenting's not just for training. Parenting is for encouragement. Parenting is for encouragement. St. Paul said in verse 3, verse 21,

²¹Fathers, do not provoke your children,

What does that mean? Not to provoke our children. It means, the way that I respond to life, even the sin of my own children, the way that I respond to it can either provoke them, which is bad, or it can encourage them, which is good. God is an encouraging God. God is a forgiving God. God is a restoring God. When I fail to forgive easily and restore quickly, I make it more difficult for my children to believe that God forgives easily and restores quickly. But when I forgive easily and restore quickly, I make it easier for them to believe that God forgives easily and restores quickly. I make it easier for them to believe the Gospel. Now I'm not saying that it's all on me. I'm just saying the Scripture is telling me, don't provoke your children lest they become discouraged. Hey dads! You've got to be the most encouraging voice in the lives of your children. You have to do it. Well, you say, that's for my wife. Their mother encourages them, I bring the hammer. Well, sometimes you do have to bring the hammer. That's what men have to do. But you ought to do it in a way that doesn't break the relationship. Hey, I don't care, you have got to fight for the relationship with your children. You cannot draw lines in the sand and say, "If you cross this line, I won't have a relationship with you anymore." Dads, don't provoke your children; they'll get discouraged. Be an encourager. Psalm 127 is a great psalm about children. The last verse in Psalm 127 says that

⁵Blessed is the man whose children go to the gate with him!

You know what that picture is? This dad's done such a great job encouraging his children that when he's old and his sons are grown and he has to go to the gate and face down another family or face down an adversary, his sons say, "Dad, anywhere you go, we go." And you show up to the gate and the man's sons are going to the gate with him. I'll write my dad that when I write him a letter. My dad's such a good dad. I write him a letter and at the end of it I always say:

Dad, I just want you to know I'm willing to go to the gate with you anytime. Because my dad encouraged me and your children, your grandchildren need you to be encouraging. I have a pastor friend who's teaching a Bible study. At the end of his talk a lady came up and she said, "My daughter's become an atheist. I need you to pray for her." My friend said, "OK. But why are you whispering?" She said, "I don't want the other ladies in our church to hear about it. They'll judge me." Somehow that lady had figured out that the other parents in her church will think she's a terrible mom because her daughter is struggling. Could I invite you to make this church a big ol' non-judgment parenting circle? Could we make this church a place where when people come and connect, they never once feel the need to whisper about their struggles because they're afraid that someone's going to judge them? Could we be a church where when somebody says, here's what I'm going through, here's what my kids are going through, everybody just comes around and loves them and prays for them and encourages them. Man, our church has got to be encouraging.

Last thing, according to God's design, number three. Parenting is for life. Parenting is for life. And I don't know where you are in your parenting journey, you're just starting out or you're trying to have kids or maybe your kids are grown, you have grandkids now, I don't know what it is. Some of you may feel a little bit bad because you may feel like it's too late. My kids are too far gone. I can't, they won't come back. Maybe you feel like you should've taught your kids in a better way about God's word or God's Gospel when you were younger. Maybe you should've been there more as a mom or been there more as a dad, or maybe you were too harsh. I've got, you cannot change your past. You cannot change your past. God doesn't change your past. He will never, God doesn't change your past. Somebody told me that parenting isn't a sprint, it's a marathon. But that's not true either. Because after you run 26.2 miles, the marathon's over. Parenting is for life, baby, you just keep doing it. Don't ever give up on your kids. Hey, God never gives up on His people, don't give up on your people. Keep praying, keep fighting for that relationship, keep working, keep encouraging, encouraging, encouraging. I don't care if everybody else gives up on your kids or your grandkids, you don't do it. Stay right there. Stay right there in that relationship. Don't draw those red lines. Don't push them out and push them down. Pull them in and lift them up and let them see Jesus every time they see you. Let them believe that even if they don't believe what you believe, let them believe that you believe what you believe and look at the power of God. Our firstborn son, James, was crying in the carpet, begging God to do something. I'm looking at boarding schools, I'm taking him to the Marines, I mean all kinds of stuff. And one day James came into my office, 17 years old, he said, "Dad, I just want you to know I'm sorry for everything I've put you and mom through. I love you guys." And he goes, "I just want you to know I'm repenting right now. I've got myself in a mess." And boy he had. He said, "But, dad, if you'll just coach me and tell me what to do right now, I will do it. I don't care what it is." We start laying some things out. James started making some things right. And you know, God let him turn his life around. He ended up going to West Point, graduating, marrying a beautiful Christian girl, he's an infantry officer in the 10th Mountain Division. They have a beautiful little boy. And the reason I tell you that story is not because every story ends up good, and their story's still being written. But there's always hope, isn't there? There's always hope because Jesus is crucified on the cross for us and raised from the dead. And a God who can raise His own Son from the dead and bring your son or your daughter home. A God who can raise His own Son from the dead can, can, can raise up your children in the nurturing admonition of God. Man, a God like that. Yeah, I'm a grandpa. I'm showing you a picture of my grandchildren. You know what I like about a church? In this room there's so

much sorrow and so much hurt and some heavy burdens. But in this room simultaneously so much joy, so much promise, so many good things and wonderful things. A mom and a dad getting baptized together. Children about to be on the platform. We're going to pray over them, dedicating them to the Lord. Hard things happen but God made the son come up again today. Hard things happen but babies are still being born. People are getting married. God's still on His throne. Jesus is still raised from the dead. The blood of Jesus still washes us from our sins. And the reason we keep going is because there is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins. Sinners plunge beneath that flood. Lose, say it with me, all their guilty stains. They lose all their guilty stains. They lose all their guilty stains. Sinners plunge beneath that flood. They lose all their guilty stains.

Father in heaven, thank You for moms and dads and children in the room. Thank you for singles in the room, grandparents in the room. God I pray your blessings on this church as they pass the faith onto the next generation. In the name of Jesus Christ, crucified and raised from the dead, I pray for some parents whose hearts are broken right now. Would you help them and heal them and comfort them? And I pray for some who are so thankful and excited about what You're doing, would You encourage them and would You teach us to train and encourage and keep us in the game. I pray these things in Jesus name. Amen.