

November 22, 2015
Sermon for the Last Sunday of the Church Year
St Peter Lutheran Church
Bowie, TX
Larry Knobloch, Pastor
Faith@Home series
Colossians 3:12–21

J.J. - Jesu Juva—Help me, Jesus

Colossians 3:12-21 (ESV)

¹² Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³ bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴ And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. ¹⁸ Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. ¹⁹ Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. ²⁰ Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. ²¹ Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Amen.

We are in the third part of the series [Faith@Home](#). We've looked at "The Home as a Seminary" and "The Home as a Trauma Center."

Today's message is titled "The Home as a Filling Station."

God's plan is that the home functions as a filling station where empty tanks are filled. And we all know that there are countless people who are running on empty.

I won't bore you with a whole bunch of details, because you already know about the sweeping changes that have been taking place in the American family in the last 40 years. Since 1970 the number of single-parent families has increased by 150%;

50% of all children entering first grade this fall will now live in a single parent home by the time they are 18.

Births out of wedlock are up 450% in the last 40 years.

Adolescent suicides have tripled, so have divorces.

So many are running on empty.

Yet, if we follow God's plan here, this wouldn't be a problem, because He designed the home is a filling station where empty tanks are filled.

THE FUEL = AGAPE

The New Testament authors employ several words that may be translated "love."

Eros denotes emotional and romantic love. There is nothing wrong with romantic love but that can't fuel a marriage for very long.

We hear many popular songs and see movies about about eros , but a romantic love just cannot be sustained in a world of sin.

Philos is another Greek word and this means “brotherly love,” like Philadelphia, the city of brotherly love. We help each other out because it’s the right thing to do...or at least because it looks good on us to do so.

Agape is the word New Testament authors use to describe the kind of love that fuels family. Agape is not a syrupy, sentimental love, but a fierce, committed love. Agape is devotion, tenderness and loyalty and courage and openness and humility and servanthood and more.

Agape is an unconditional love that is there no matter the situation.

“And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony” (Colossians 3:14).

If the home is a filling station where empty tanks are filled and if “Agape” is the fuel that turns a house into a home, then here’s the rub.

Everyday individual family members separate to go their various ways and what happens?

Most fathers and many mothers go to a workplace that is often described as a “jungle” with a competitive atmosphere and hard-hitting, loveless interaction. Spending all day in competition with their peers and eight to ten hours of that tends to leave parents exhausted and empty at the end of the day.

Likewise, children go to school and interact with other students who are often cruel and insensitive and even violent. Competition and one-upmanship in school leaves the workplace in the dust.

A lot of schools are not the user-friendly institutions that they used to be. Many children are bullied or put down in person or even on social media, so they feel deflated and defeated and sometimes downright angry.

The most current trends indicate that growing up in the 21st century is decidedly more complicated than at any other time in American history.

So late in the day family members start to come home. Not surprisingly they all pull into the driveway with empty tanks, fresh out of love, and they all begin honking their horns. "I took the trash out last night!

It is your turn to do the dishes!
When is dinner going to be ready?"

The question is, if everyone is lined up at the pump honking his or her horn really loudly, who is going to fill the tanks?

Who is the attendant who will satisfy each person's longing for love? And don't anyone say, "That's Mom's job!" Do you know where there have been breakdowns in frightening proportions?

In mothers who are expected to be the sole attendant at the filling station.
OUR ATTENDANT = CHRIST

Jesus said to the woman at the well: *"Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life' "* (John 4:13–14).

This woman was running on empty.
She had been burned in family life, having been married and divorced five times.

Yet Jesus offers her living water.

This water is spoken of in John 3:5 when Jesus discusses baptism with Nicodemus.

Then, in John 7:38 it becomes a streaming river of life welling up in our hearts.

But then in the great irony of the ages, this Jesus, the sole source of living water, hangs on the cross and thirsts (John 19:28), only to finally have a Roman soldier pierce His side.

There was a sudden flow of blood and water (John 19:34). John later tells us that from the crucified Christ this blood and water point us to the sacraments of Holy Communion and Holy Baptism (1 John 5:6). And from these gifts God's love pours into our lives and our cups overflow (Psalm 23:5). From overflowing lives we then fill the tanks of people in our family who are running on empty

OUR WAY OF FILLING: A LOOK

"And Jesus, looking at him, loved him" (Mark 10:21).

Now a meaningful look can pump gallons of fuel into the empty tanks in your home. True, looks can kill. But looks can also replenish empty lives in a matter of minutes.

Years ago a man taught his children how to wink. At first, being little, they blinked; they didn't wink. Over the years when that man has been melancholy or just downright in the dumps, his children have walked up to him and winked.

Now that's a powerful thing for a dad. That man's tank went from empty to full, just like that!

Parents, how often have we been reading a magazine, newspaper, looking at our iPad or iPhone when children are trying to tell us something that we consider trivial? SIDE NOTE: Nothing is trivial!

At any rate, what would happen if we put those things down and picked up those little people and said, "You tell me everything you want to say and I'm going to look at you straight in the eye as you tell me"?

Emmie was about 3 years old when I started seminary. I would be studying, doing Greek flash cards or other things like that and she would talk to me and I would answer, often not looking up. She would take her little hands and physically turn my face towards hers so that she know I was listening.

How filling is the look when someone gives us their full attention?

OUR WAY OF FILLING: A WORD

"Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body" (Proverbs 16:24).

When their children were little, some parents I know used to put them to bed and say, "If all the little people in the world were lined up, just guess which one I'd pick to take home?" And even though they would go through this all the time, they would always ask, "Who?" And the parents blurt out, "YOU!"

At other times the parents would tell them, "If I could custom-design a child, I'd order a child with a face like yours, with hair just like yours, with eyes just like yours and with a smile just like yours."

And the whole time the children's eyes would be dancing.

OUR WAY OF FILLING: A TOUCH

“And he took the children in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them” (Mark 10:16).

An embrace; a pat on the back; a gentle hand on the cheek. All the studies show that fathers demonstrate physical affection one-sixth as often as mothers do; and the results are staggering when children reach adulthood.

I imagine that that is how many men were raised to interact with their children. That's how my father was raised, that's how I was raised and it's really hard to break that habit.

In the book *How to Really Love Your Child*, Dr. Ross Campbell emphasizes that giving children physical affection is crucial. For example, young boys up to age seven or eight need to be held and hugged. Then as a boy grows and becomes older his need for physical affection lessens but his need for physical contact does not. He needs playful wrestling, jostling, backslapping and high fives.

The average person needs eight hugs a day. *Eight!*

So many, though, are running on empty. So what is the solution?

We all need a fill-up!

Where do we look, where can we find it? In Christ.

As we center Christ in our lives and in our homes, we can't help but fill each other up. Not only with love but with forgiveness.

Show forgiveness to your spouse, to your children in everyday life. Sure, there are plenty of things that you could hold a grudge about. There are plenty of things that you could get mad about, but all of them could be forgiven whether you think they deserve it or not. After all...

How many times a day do you need forgiveness? How many times a day do you sin? Do you deserve forgiveness? Jesus forgives you all of your sins, so couldn't you...shouldn't you forgive your spouse and children too?

Forgiveness fills the tank too. When you forgive as you have been forgiven, the peace and joy in your home will multiply because it is contagious.

Rest secure in the forgiveness of Christ, and then spread it to the world around you, starting with your family.

Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus!

Amen.

S.D.G.—Soli Deo Gloria