Sermon Series: Modern Family

Worship Theme: Modern or Model Family? Draw the circle Wide!

Traci Hubbard          November 3rd 2013

Set up film clip: Modern Family Portrait Scene

Family – Familiar

Whether we live alone or in a house full of children, maybe with an in-law or out-law, we all experience family and because of our experiences, we understand what “family” means. However, here is where we trip on a “snag”, I prefer to say “difference”, in our historical global and familiar human carpet: Your Ministry Team serves 150 families, consisting of one or more people who attend or are in some way a part of Living Spirit
United Church. This means there are 150 different definitions and understandings around what constitutes being a family. No wonder family gatherings are passionate, full of conflict and possibilities.

But here is how we embrace one another and create a safe place for family to love...live...laugh...and learn, here is how we embrace the “differences – or snag” in the carpet: We do not have to agree with one another, or understand one another in order to support and love one another. All we have to do is learn the languages that our loved ones speak, and speak – become - their language, their understanding of what being loved looks and feels like. The languages of love exist in five basic forms: Time...Affirmation...Touch...Gifts...Service. Learning these
languages is how we draw the circle wide so we can celebrate our differences.

The language of love we need to speak into our family and loved ones depends on the nature of each person’s needs in the family. As most of you know, my favourite roles in my life are being a mother and grandmother. I spent intentional time with my girls one-on-one in the mornings, especially during their elementary school years, reading a story in the scripture. Then I lead them in a live three to five minute Lectio Divina around the 5 W’s and a How in the story so they could pack it in their soulful backpack and apply its lessons when needed.

Now, please understand that I have never been a part of a model family; however, like you, I have always been a part of a modern family, a now family, and sometimes
my best intentions were interpreted or applied in ways I could never have imagined.

Patience is a “virgin” (how Sarah heard “virtue”)

God wants us to share with others... “what are the others here for?”

CEX

Masterpiece: Masterpiss

Which Barbie should be the Mom and which one should be the daughter? “This one should be the Mom.” Why? “Because she looks worried?”

I watched my Great Aunt Daphine be escorted to a pew by the usher at a funeral. She slipped a $20 bill into his hand and whispered, “Just get me as close to the body as you can and go get yourself some Sinatra.” I thought this
was funny and quite normal for my Italian family until years later, my ex and I were presiding over a relative’s death and something happened while we were doing pastoral care at the viewing. Our four-year old Amy went missing when all of a sudden the crowd broke in half and it felt like Steven Spielberg was directing a scene as I glanced at the open casket of my Great Aunt Lottie to see Amy laying on top of her while my Great Aunt Daphine was saying, “It’s okay my child. Kiss Your Great Great Aunt and tell her you love her”. I did hear Sinatra singing, “Everything Happens To Me!”

Before Sarah went on her first date, I had a talk with her.

I said. "Darlin, sometimes, it’s easy to forget yourself and your beliefs when you’re with a boy. So, just keep
in mind that a brief moment of indiscretion could ruin your life."

"Don’t worry Mama," Sarah said. "I don’t plan on ruining my life until I get married."

The bottom line is, hopefully, our grand-parents and parents did their best modeling to us all they understood and we are doing our best modeling what we believe is life giving.

Our Historical context today begins inside a Roman prison. When Paul wrote this circular letter he was either in a Roman prison, locked in the barracks of the Praetorian Guard, or he is paying rent for quarters in the barracks of the guard. The letter to Ephesus does not
contain any personal salutations nor does it address a specific problem in the church. This letter is most likely connected to the same letter Paul sent to the Philippians, Colossians and to Philemon. The central theme of Paul’s letter to the church in Ephesus is an encouragement and reminder that God is the source of every person and every family and God has given us a holy purpose and living examples of how to live in loving relationships with one another, offering our spiritual and physical gifts to one another. This way of living leads to God’s ultimate purpose, which is for every family on the earth to become the kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven. In context, our scripture text begins in chapter 3:1, saying “For this reason”... and this is where our 5 W’s and the How begins: What reason is Paul referring to?
Ephesians chapter 2 is centered upon the unconditional and unmerited favour of God’s love and it ends with the historical scientific and faith-filled reality that everyone, all of us are united and equal in the family of eternity. There is no model family listed and so chapter 3 verse 15 reminds us that every human being and family derives its name from our Source for a very important reason that we discover in verse 17. This reason is so that EVERY family may experience the extravagant love of God, revealed through the ways of Christ, and that the ways of Christ may DWELL within and among us. This word “dwell” is key in this context and in our modern family context today because it means “TO BE COMPLETELY AT HOME WITH ONE ANOTHER.”
So here are some questions we need to ask ourselves, and we are responsible to find the answers if we wish to be a healthy part of a family where we play a life-giving role in the lives of people we love.

Who is my family today?

Where is my family today?

Why do I matter to this family and why do they matter to me?

Who am I and what gifts do I have to offer my family?

What is going on right now in my family?

How can I listen and learn, disagree with and still hold love for my family?
How can I stand in my truth and say goodbye to an unhealthy relationship or family system that wants to lay blame instead of own their parts and heal?

What does love look like?

The law of God’s love was revealed through Jesus Christ and that law exists inside an eternal hope and love that Paul says, and we know, will remain a mystery until we breathe our last physical breath. So, if at the end of the day, love and the love of God is a mystery, how do we know we are loving others the way God loves us?

We have come to the HOW! Or the How? How do we understand what we need to support one another
Verse 14: We bow our knees. We commit to a life of self-awareness instead of fear and projection. We bow our knees...we humble ourselves, to the point of death, even death upon a cross. In order to understand this mystery of how we can live in vibrant fun and peace with ourselves and one another, we MUST personally commit to learn how to love ourselves and hold ourselves accountable to living in honest self-awareness so we may reach outward from our alienated positions in our relationships and say out-loud, “I need you God. Interpose some of your love into me and loosen the scales on the eyes of my heart and help me understand WHY YOU LOVE ME SO I LOVE THESE PEOPLE!!!” Then we need to learn the languages of love each significant
person responds to in our lives and speak – be - those languages to them.

Some families don’t look like our family and that’s okay.

Being a family is not about who we love but how we love one another.

Being a healthy family means everyone in the system is willing to be responsible for their behaviour and for the credits and debits their behaviour places in the family emotional account.

Leo Tolstoy said, "All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way."
Whatever your way is of being family, my prayer is that your way is happy, which means “blessed”.

- Darrell Martindale Testimony -

We are family. May we learn that we do not need to agree or understand one another in order to love and support one another. Let us go and speak the languages our loved ones need, and when we do, we will be dwelling in the fullness of God. Namaste.

Video Clip