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Lake Drummond June 15 97

"BLUNDERS OF ELI"

I Samuel 4:18

11/6
He fell from off of the seat backwards, by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy.

The story served as a good background for R. A. Focus Week - the time when we think about boys. We think about parents rearing boys in a proper way. Perhaps most of you today belong to the company of the committed. We live in a fast, jet-moving age. There doesn't seem to be hours enough in the day to accomplish what we want to get done. We are active, on the go, and caught up with the hustle and bustle of living. Perhaps, that is as it should be.

Dr. Carlyle Marney wrote "Dangerous Fathers, Problem Mothers and Terrible Teens"
No Book on Parental Care of Fathers.

But Eli was a man too busy. Yet there comes a time in our lives, situations creep in, upon us. And most of these situations render us unproductive. And spiritually powerless. By the time the smoke is cleared away, we realize what has happened. Our families are in trouble. Important relationships have suffered. And our service for Christ lacks the breath of the Spirit of God.

Our experience, parallels that of Eli, the priest. And judge of Israel for 40 years. The period in which he lived was chaotic one. The covenant people had become slaves. While they were in captivity. They were never responsible for their own affairs. Many decisions had to be made for them. And they never were really a strong people. One day, they were destined to become a great nation. And among the twelve tribes, there was a great deal of jealousy. Every man did that which was right in his own eyes!

V.10 It was then the will of God to give them judges for this critical time in history. And preceeding Samuel, who was a grand old man, Eli was a man that was too busy. He was occupied with many things of the world. And that was the flaw in his life. Eli, I would say, was not a real bad man. But he was a good man. But he let his two boys, Hophni and Phinehas, do as they pleased.

V.11 Through their over-indulgence they went on to ruin. And the blind old judge, 98 years old, is seated at the gate. He is waiting for the news of an important battle. In which his two sons were at the front. And someone is coming - with tidings from the battle. They put this in the language that he can understand. I think he puts his hand behind his ear and he listens. What meaneth the noise of this tumult. And excited messenger, all out of breath, said to him - our army is defeated. The sacred ark has been captured, your sons are dead on the field. No wonder the father fainted and died. The domestic tragedy in which these two sons were helped to shape - had finished the last act. He fell from off of his seat, backwards, his neck brakes, and he died. He was an old man and heavy.

Eli had made an awful mistake in regard to his children. The Bible distinctly says his sons made themselves vile, he restrained them not, and did you know there are 10,000 mistakes in rearing children. Mistakes of parents, mistakes of the teachers in the public schools, mistakes in the Sunday School Classes, there are mistakes which we make.

I think it would be useful for us to consider some of these because these two young men failed in life. Simply because of the blunders of Eli.

Let me say one other thing to you by way of introduction today - that this country is going to be conquered by a great army. And you might describe that army as that of Xerxes, or Alexander the Great, or General Grant, or Robert E. Lee. You put all of them together and you would have numbers. They will capture all of our storehouses, all of our factories, all of the halls of legislation, all of our wealthy, all of our pulpits, all of our homes. They will take all the authority for the United States Presidency, on down to the humblest Constable. Everything between the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean.

Another thing, let me tell you - they are on the march right now. And they are not halting day or night -- they will soon be there. This present population is very active in this country. And surrender will be given away.

Do you want to know what that army is - it is the army of children today. Boys and girls. Whether they shall take possession of everything for good or for bad, depends a great deal on the style of preparation they pass through.

Cicero acknowledges he kept in his desk a collection of prefaces for books which he could attach at any time, to anything he wanted, to publish for himself or others.

All parents and teachers have all prepared the preface of every young life under their charge. And not only the preface, but the closing remarks of the book. Whether the volume be a poem, families and schools in our busy day, are

engaged in discussing what is the best way of educating a child. What is the best mode.

Now before this question ever leaves and goes into insignificance, the matter of taking over will be an event.

If a parent, you will remember, when you were aroused to great responsibilities. And when you found that you had not done all required. You remember the day you admired those tiny hands. Glossy hair, and bright eyes that lay in the cradle.

You suddenly remembered that that hand would yet be raised to bless the world. With its benediction - or smite it with a curse.

I hope today that we can uncover something of the destiny of your child. About which you may have no special appreciation. He is of immortal nature.

I. SIN REPROACHES HIS HOME

2:12 I think you will notice here in I Sam. 2:12 - and verse 17, and verse 24. It says something about the sin of these boys being very great. V. 24 - it says that the old man Eli said to his boys, we have not received a good report about you. And if you were reading a story book - you would expect the person who has a Christian home, a Christian family, to live happily ever after. But the hard

Elie Neglected Bury Father

FATHERS DAY - small boy said ITS like
MOTHERS DAY - only you don't spend so m

A father is someone who carries picture
where his money use to be -

One man came in - wife was crying because
the dog ate some of the food she had
prepared for him - He consoled her by
promising to buy her another dog.

Adam + Eve had an ideal marriage -
He didn't have to hear about all the
men she could have married, & she
didn't have to hear about the way
his mother cooked it.

Some poor letter words which really shock
new brides - like - COOK - WASH - IRON, WA

MAN used for inventions produced part.
for the 1st loud speaker.
You husband shouldn't criticize your wife's
judgement, look who she married.

Kissable

Every night when Harry arrives home from
work he's met at the door by a woman who looks
like one of those scrub women on a TV floor clean-
ing ad. Her hair looks like it was combed with an
eggbeater; her clothing is shabby; she looks like
something left over from World War II. It's his
wife!

Yet, when the door swings open, she greets
him with open arms expecting a big hug and a kiss.
Sometimes he closes his eyes, aims toward her
lips, and kisses her out of sheer duty. She's as
kissable as the trunk of an elephant!

truth is, that there are some phrases that help us understand Eli's home and the problems that he faced. V. 2 - the text tells us that his sons knew not the Lord. The sons of Eli were worthless men. They did not know the Lord, they had no regard for the Lord, there was no instruction in Eli's home. There was sin.

V. 22-24

Eli was a Circuit Judge. His responsibilities carried him far and wide and he traveled a great deal all over Dothan, to Gilgal, to Bethel. In doing so, he carried the Word of the Lord, to broken homes. He brought comfort to many, many people. He helped the bereaved - he sympathized with them. He prayed with multitudes - he encouraged the sick and the weak.

There are many people who can identify with Eli. In their work they do it because God calls them. He calls them away from home. And Eli was not there when his children needed him the most. He was too busy. Might have been busy with the Lord's work. His children did not know the Lord or did not have this instruction. Many Christian ministers, businessmen, and parents are too busy sometimes about things - your careers, your jobs - that the great responsibility to your children. What kind of a father are you? What kind of a mother are you? What kind of instruction do you give. Are you careful to gather your children about in prayer and in instruction. Are you laying a foundation for these young people. One that will sustain them in later years. Are you trusting in the promises of the word. To train up the child in the way that he should go. So that when he is old, he will not depart from it. Read the word of God to him, lay the foundation.

28:9
Isaiah, the prophet, with a disturbed heart, admonished the people to instruct the little ones with the message. To whom will he teach knowledge, and to whom would he interpret the message. Just wean from milk, those just taken from the breast.

Isa. 28:9. So there was first of all a sin, and this brought a reproach. That was the first blunder.

II. LACK OF INSTRUCTION IN THIS HOME

I think this was another blunder of Eli - that he did ~~not~~ instruct his children. In other words, there was no good family government - which is all important. Now you can be too lenient, you can be too severe. There must be a medium. They say that John Howard was merciful to the prisoners. But he was merciless in the treatment of his children. John Milton knew everything but how to train his family. Severe and unreasonable - he made them read to him in four or five languages. But he would not allow them to learn too much about the language because he said that one tongue was enough for a woman. And reading was mechanical. No wonder the children despised him - even though he sent them out to sell his books. And they hoped for his death.

When Barbara was put to death by her father because he had changed his order, and had three widows put in a room instead of two, this cruel parent was a type of many who acted like Nero. The heart is sick really when you get into the family sometime that pretends to be Christian. There is so much perpetual scolding, hairpulling, ear-boxing, thumping, fault-finding, teasing - until the children are vexed beyond their bounds. They just rebel and vow within themselves - some day if I live, I am going to retaliate for this.

Man In talking to a child one day, a man said, "I wonder what makes that tree out there so crooked. The child replied, I suppose that it was trod on while it was young. Well, in some families, that is about right. If anything is done wrong, and if anything happens bad, there are some families in which they say immediately - George did that. He broke the latch, he left the gate open, he got cut on the banister. He left trash on the carpet. He is the scapegoat. And anything that happens, the suspicion goes to this one. And he curses the day he was born.

Let me illustrate this, a little girl was walking with her mother one day on the street. And her child was saying to her playmate - "you good for nothing little scamp. You come right into the house this minute, or I will beat you until the skin comes off."

The mother broke in saying, "Lizzie, I am surprised to hear you talk to anyone."

Oh, said the child, I was only playing. And he is my little boy. And I am scolding him as you did me this morning. Children are out to be echos of their parents. Did you know they echo exactly what you do. Lack of instruction. A surgeon would be unkind if he did not take a firm hand when operating on a faltering part of your body. The parent is no less affectionate because of firm discipline to cut off evil inclinations. The Bible says chasten thy son while there is hope - and let not his soul spare for his crying. Childish rage unchecked will after awhile become a hurricane.

From childish rebellion, we find developing lawlessness. If you would ruin the child, before you are aware of it, that boy of six years old. He will be going

down the street with a cigar in his mouth, hanging out on the corner, and grow up without ever learning the great beauty of obedience and submission. Eli's two boys remember that they lacked this instruction.

Ad in a Lawrence KAN. (Journal)
we will oil your Sewing Machine and
Adjust the Tension in your home,
for only 1\$.

III. HE DEPENDED ON THEORY

I think maybe this was something in Eli's situation - he was blind and timid. And he just worked everything by theory maybe. If a person is too miserly or too wasteful, and now the farmer who plants corn, wheat, turnips, and cabbage. And then he collects them - and he puts them in the same hopper and grinds them up into some kind of a meal. Well, you would say he is a fool. Did you know parents are just as chargeable when they do not attempt to discipline, their children in the same manner. It needs a skillful hand. It needs a check and a balance. Now God gives a disposition to each child. And he gives a hint on how he ought to be trained - training at best.

Do not ever write down that a child is dull, or that he may now be brilliant, or not as bright as the neighbor's child. Some of the brightest men and women in the past century were called stupid. Thomas Aquinas was called in school - the dumb ox. But he became a genius and they called him the angel of the school - the eagle of Britian. Kindness, patience, most Christ-like virtues.

John Wesley kissed a little child on the pulpit stairs, and turned Mathias Joyce from a juvenile into a evangel.

A theory may be one-sided in its development. Because a child needs physical

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and moral, and we need to be faithful and intellectual.

Edison - misfit in school
Ben Franklin failed Arithmetic!

In his early life, he was a poor speller - and he spelled "hat" - hatt.

And a ream of paper--rheam. But the thing about him is - he knew how to spell independence, of this country from foreign oppression.

Wright Brothers didn't Graduate from High School!
Winston Churchill - a slow starter.

Therefore, all knowledge is important.

Rembrandt had average or below average IQ's.

Mother in Army in Alaska wrote her friends she needed a play pen in Alaska - she had 3 small children Ask later how I did " Just fine Every afternoon I get in there for a nap and the children can't get to me!"

IV. LACK OF INFLUENCE

2:22-25 I think from 1 Sam. 2:22-25 suggests that there was no influence, Now Eli was very old and he heard that all of his sons were doing to Israel. How that they lay with the woman who serve at the doorway of the tent of meeting. And he said to them - why do you do such things. The evil things that I hear from all of the people, no my sons, for the report is not good which I hear the Lord's people circulating. If one man sins against another - God will mediate for him. If a man sins against the Lord, who can intercede for him? But they would not listen to the voice of their father. And the Lord said, they shall be put to death.

Eli, as far as we know, was busy with his work. He was a man to go and under go - and just too busy to influence his sons. But he was too late. For you will notice that he spoke against it. But he did not act against it. He showed that he knew of it - but he didn't act against it. He knew it was very wicked indeed, but he contented himself with words which were of no avail, at this stage of his sons development.

It is true, as an old man now, he was decreped. And there wasn't much vigor of action that Eli could take at this point.

You see, the evil began long before Eli became old and decreped. It was his fault that he did not influence and chastise his sons with the rod when he could have shaped them and influenced them, and instructed them.

Instead of the gate of the temple becoming the entrance to Heaven, it became the entrance to Hell.

3:13
Surely Eli must have known that God's actions against Aaron's sons in the wilderness. How could he forget. God smoked them, for offering strange fire. Yet Eli's sons were practicing open, daring wickedness, under the very shadow of the tabernacle. Eli did not take the necessary steps to stop it. The Bible says, 3:13 - he restrained them not. Shiloh was in the midst of a long period of internal and moral decay. And Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas were products of their time. But that is not true according to God's verdict. For the Lord put the blame squarely on Eli's shoulders. I Sam. 2:29. There Eli is accused of honoring his sons above his God.

Your children and mine today, live in an age of unrest that is unusual - and a day of delinquency. A time of temptation. Drug problems, alcoholism, immorality at a high rate, reverence to God declining, in all areas.

It is an age in which an atmosphere like this puts a big burden on the parents.

We excuse the behavior of the children by saying - they are just products of their time. But regardless of the era in which we live, whenever we honor our children above God, we will have to face the same kind of perils that Eli faced.

Then Eli was ~~mocked~~ by his children. He had absolutely no influence over them. What a sad situation.

The mocking, the ~~back-talking~~ young people who are ~~hard-headed~~ and who are arrogant are headed straight for trouble. Because in many instances, they have not influenced them earlier.

Oh yes, I know, we are concerned about our business. We are concerned about P. T. A., that's important. Boy Scouts are important. Extra jobs are important. Golf matches are important. Bowling leagues are very important.

All of these things are very important and worthwhile. But when you sit down at the close of a day and evaluate - how much time have you given to your children, to your young people. How much have you influenced their lives. You discover, that you've done a great injustice to them and to yourself.

You see, taking time to play with the youngster, entering into the secrets of youth, when you get too busy to romp and run - and to listen to their imagination and their stories, you will have trouble like the little daughter who pressed her nose against the window and waved good-bye, to her Daddy.

She said, sometimes I feel as though I don't have a Daddy.

Well, do you have a moment. No son, I've got to do this, or do the other.
And I need this fixed - no, I haven't got time. What kind of influence are you
- how well do you influence your children. Is that your situation.

Now children are going to grow up to be just like you. There is a poem

There are little eyes upon you,
And they are watching night and day.
There are little ears that quickly
Take in every word you say.

There are little hands all eager
To do everything you do.
And a little boy is dreaming
Of the day he'll be like you.

You're the little fellow's idol;
You're the wisest of the wise.
In his little mind, about you
No suspicions ever rise.

He believes in you devoutly,
Holds that all you say and do,
He will say and do in your way
When he's grown to be like you.

There's a wide-eyed little girl
Who believes you're always right.
And her ears are always open,
And she watches day and night.

You are setting an example
Every day in all you do,
For the little boy or girl waiting
To grow up just like you.

Where are the strong and the powerful influences for truth, justice, and righteousness. There are too many like Eli and too few like Jesus.

3:1
The only way that I know how to influence our young people is through family devotions and personal dedications, and loving discipline. And Eli had his troubles no doubt. The root of his trouble was in his own heart. They made me a keeper of the vineyards - but my own vineyards I have not kept. This seems true of Eli. There were two things that were bad about his work. First, he had a closed haven in his life. And in the Bible it says, 3:1 - the Word precious - the word of God was scarce. But there was no open vision. The message to the nation communicating God's will, was not there as it had been in Moses day.

Eli rarely got a message from God and Eli was unfaithful that there was no vision.

Now --

V. LACK OF DEEP FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD.

I think this is the last thing that we will comment on - on the blunders made by Eli. It was that he was just out of fellowship with God, and he did not put the emphasis upon the immortal destiny. And when you are out of fellowship with God - the Heavens become as brass. And God's power wants to fill us a fresh with Holy Spirit. But here was a man that really did not bless anyone. There was not real

power there. Like Samson - he was not aware of it. Eli had a clumsy hand - he meant well but he was blundering. How many times are we like Eli. How many times do we misjudge others. How many times do we throw our weight around. How many times do we class other people as liberal or orthodox. And then we look deeper behind the exterior and we see the real need.

Let's look at the final truth about Eli. Here - he did have love for Samuel. 3:20. Samuel was very popular - and yet Eli loved him. Eli may not have had any time to pray, but Eli could have been something. And Samuel's message condemns Eli. The Lord said to Samuel, 'behold I am about to do a thing in Israel, in which everyone's ears who hear it will tingle. In that day, I will carry it out against Eli and against his house. V. 11-13, 18.

He faced the judgement squarely without excuse. And Eli realized that God's hand was upon Samuel, even though he had been busy.

I John 1:9 - If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sin, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Here is a great cleansing, a great forgiveness, and a great restorer. For Eli, for you, and for all.

Now it could have been that you have sons and daughters who have left home and they are happily married. But you have others who are just beginning. You may have some children that are small. And maybe teen-agers. It doesn't help much for you to say - I am glad my children are all grown, and they are out on their own. Or to say, I would hate to rear children today in this messed up world. That

doesn't help.

4:19-22 *Daughter-in-law - Phinehas son Eli -
Died Child Birth -
Named "Ichabod" The Glory is Departed!
Family - Church -*

Rather, every day we need to know - every day we ought to pray earnestly for those who have younger children. You see, it is not really important whether my child grows up to be rich and famous. But it really is important that he grows up to be righteous and faithful.

Eli's death is recorded in I Sam. 4:14-19. He wrote his own epitaph as the men carried him out in the graveyard and layed him to rest. And on his tombstone he might have said - here lies Eli - priest and judge of Israel for 40 years. And perhaps, we could add to it. A caption that Alan Redpath, at Moody Church one time had over his office door - beware the barrenness of a busy life.

Have you been too busy with the legitimate things to practice the presence of God. Could it be said that you have not prayed. God forbid that I should sin against the love in ceasing to pray for you. Perhaps your children are married and have moved away from your home. But there is a sense of guilt. They don't want anything to do with Christianity, your Christ, or your church. And there is a great tug of war at the center of your heart. And you feel some guilt there.

I'm sure today, many of you have done your best - the best you could. You tried to rear your children or young people alone. Some have, without the help of a father or a husband. Or without even their presence in the home. You are in a situation like that. But you can, and we can, talk to God about your children.

I think often the first seven years of a child's life decides whether or not he will be false, a hypocrite, or obedient, honest, and Christian. I think as a general rule sometimes that drunkards die drunkards, thieves die thieves, and I think it is a false thing that people say - you ought to sow wild oats. When they are young. They need to sow wheat.

It is glorious Alfred Cookman was converted at 10 years of age in Carlyle, Pa. During the process of a Methodist meeting. In the church, while others were kneeling at the foot of the altar, this boy knelt in the corner of the church all by himself. And he said, precious Saviour, Thou art saving others, oh wilt Thou save me. A Presbyterian elder knelt beside him, and led him into the light. And Cookman became a great power for God. He was converted early.

There are other people who say, they ought not to be converted very early. But I can hear this young man's testimony, at age 10, even today in Heaven. He would say - God brought me into his ministry. Isaac Watts, the great Christian poet was converted at 9. Robert Hall, the great Baptist evangelist, at 12. Jonathan Edwards, the great preacher, at age 7. Oh, for one generation of holy men and women shall be the text. Fathers and mothers, you are under God to decide whether your family goes forth as counterfeiter, blasphemers, drunkards, because you may not have a family altar. They may be reformers, teachers, ministers, comforters of the trouble, heelers of the sick, actors of the law. Charitable institutions.

You cannot shirk as parents your responsibility. Now we teach our children by what we are in their presence. Some of our thoughts, which we consider small and

X insignificant. If we do not put an end to them - they will be copied in a large scale in the lives of our children. They will be exaggerated.

The first thing of importance in the education of your children, is to make yourself, by the grace of God - a fit example. Make for them a copy.

From your side, that son or daughter - bone of your bone, heart of your heart. They shall go forth to an eternal destiny. What will be your joy if at last you hear their feet in the same golden highway, and hear their voices in the same wonderful song of redemption.

We would challenge on this day that every parent, consider the blunders of Eli. Children learn more of religion by what they observe in parents than by any other means. The life they see lived - is their daily book of lessons. If it is selfish, worldly, the child will despise all religion. And if he sees the insincerity in the professions of a parent, real character will come, a clear view of Christ will be realized.

Let me tell you about a dying mother who had all of her children about her. She took each one by the hand. And asked them to meet her in Heaven. With her tears and sobs - those who stood by knew that she was good. They all promised - but there was a young man, 19, who had been wild and reckless, hard and proud. And when she took him by the hand she said, now, my boy - I want you to promise me before I die, that you will become a Christian and meet me in Heaven. The young man made no answer. It was so much for him to give up if he made and kept such a promise.

X
But the aged mother persisted in saying, you won't deny me - that before I go, would you? This parting must not be forever. Tell me now, that you will serve God and meet me in the land where there is no parting. Quaking with emotion, making up his mind, hesitating, and at last his stubbornness yielded, he threw his arms around his mother's neck and said, yes mother, I will, I will! With the last word of his promise - her spirit ascended.

I thank God that the young man kept his promise. May God give all mothers and fathers the gladness of their children's salvation.

For all who are trying to do their duty as parents, train up the child in the way that he should go, and when he is old - he will not depart from it. If through good discipline and prayer and Godly example, you are acting upon that - you have a right to expect the child to grow up virtuous.

And how many tears of joy you will shed when you see your child, just truthful, Christian, and successful. A holy man in the midst of a world of dishonesty. A Godly woman in a world of glamour. When you come to die, they will gather to bless you at that last hour. They will push back your locks on that cold forehead and say -- what a good father he was always to me! They will fold your hands peacefully and say, dear mother, she is gone - her troubles are over. Doesn't she look beautiful!

Now considering the blunders of Eli - and the lessons we have gained this morning, would not you like to have God at the center of your life, your home, and would you not today say "yes" I am going to be concerned about the things that I ought to be concerned about. Will you not now make your decision to become the

individual that God would have you to be.