Sermon: **Children, it is your Christian duty to obey your parents** (Ephesians 6.1)

One hard task of a minister is to relate the Bible to modern life, in a not unthinking way. eg TEXT.

To say “this is what the Bible says” does no service to God. After all, prophecies about Jesus were mostly referring to something else first eg Isaiah 9.7, refers to Hezekiah originally. God can speak afresh!

The Bible needs interpreting. Trouble is that one person’s interpretation is another’s misinterpretation!

Which is why on issues like abortion and homosexuality (mentioned last week) Christians differ.

TEXT. What does society say about the relationship between parents and children? What does Bible say? How can we sort out the tension?

[1] Society

Children are treasured, given opportunities, praised, and largely treated as children till they leave home.

Children’s wishes are granted where possible, they are encouraged to question.

It is basically a child-centred family life.

The result? Often children think life is all about them, that they can rebel against rules, and any authority which restricts them – be that from parents, teachers, police…

Rather than simply say ‘this is wrong’, we need to ask why has this happened?

Have not authorities too often been corrupt, brutal, and lying? This includes parents.

This is encouraged by social media, fake news, making any authority suspect especially when you disagree.

[2] Bible

Ephesians shows a basically parent-centred family life.

Authority is to be obeyed (6.1), and respected (2).

Why? It leads to things going well, and long life. (3)

But also note authority is not to be used to create anger. (4)

Christian discipline and instruction (4) sounds harsh, but need it be so?

Example of Jesus in Luke 2.41-52:

* v51 (**he was obedient to them**),
* v 52 (**Jesus grew both in body and in wisdom**)
* v 48 (**your father and I have been terribly worried trying to find you**)

[3] Resolving the tension between what society is saying and what God is saying.

* Children are to be respected, but they are not in charge.
* Parents have authority but must use it wisely and in love.
* Acknowledge that all those in authority can and do get it wrong; own up, forgive and move on.
* Above all, remember we are all children before God; remember how God treats us. TEXT.