

SERMON NOTES - Fathers' Day

Fathers are very important. They represent God and they are vital in a home and in children's lives.

Jesus brought in the new idea of people relating to God as a Father.

Whenever Jesus prayed, He started with the word Father & the Jews wanted to kill Him because He called God His Father (Jn 5:18)

1. GOD AS OUR FATHER

Luke 15:11-32 - the "parable of the prodigal son", is the best picture Jesus gave of His Father.

Luk 15:18-20, 25-32 - "18 'I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, 19 "and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants." ' 20 "And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. ...25 "Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 "So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. 27 "And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.' 28 "But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. 29 "So he answered and said to his father, 'Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. 30 'But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.' 31 "And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. 32 'It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.' "

Some important points about God as our Father from this passage:

1. God's character - love, grace, provision and **SEARCHING** - is important to know and understand
2. God is our Father due to **RELATIONSHIP**, NOT biological origin. We are all **ADOPTED** by God, and it is in this relationship that He is our Father. (Rom 8:15)

2. EARTHLY FATHERS

Let's look at what the Bible says about earthly Fathers:

Eph 6:1-4 NKJV - "1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 "Honour your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: 3 "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth." 4 And you, **fathers**, do not **provoke** your children to **wrath**, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord."

Col 3:21 NKJV - "**Fathers**, do not **provoke** your children, lest they become **discouraged.**"

Some important points about us as earthly fathers from these passages:

1. Headship (parenthood) is a **GIFT** given by God to **REPRESENT** Him and in order to bring His **BLESSING** on the whole family.

Psa 133:1-3 NKJV - "1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brethren to dwell together in unity! 2 It is like the precious oil upon the head, Running down on the beard, The beard of Aaron, Running down on the edge of his garments. 3 It is like the dew of Hermon, Descending upon the mountains of Zion; For there the LORD commanded the blessing--Life forevermore."

Rom 13:1, 4 NKJV - "1 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For **there is no authority except from God**, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. ... 4 For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practises evil."

2. We must not PROVOKE our children through irrational or inconsistent rules and capricious power displays. If we do, they will act out in WRATH or in DISCOURAGEMENT.
3. We as fathers have 3 duties in order to NOT provoke our children:
 - a. BRING UP - translated "NOURISH" in the only other place this word appears in the Bible.
 - b. TRAIN - discipline with love and consequences respecting their choices, NOT with control or fear (see below regarding Moses)
 - c. ADMONISH - teach, train and warn

3. MOSES' EXAMPLE -

As children get older, we mustn't insist that our way is the only option or opinion. Let them grow. Discipline with love and respect by giving them choices with consequences rather than over-ruling or forcing them through fear or coercion...

After 40 years of guiding the children of Israel, Moses was tired and he failed to enter the promised land because he didn't represent God well in a moment of testing - he showed anger and judgement instead of grace and love:

In Num 16 & 17 there is a rebellion against Moses and God shows His approval of Moses by making his stick (rod) blossom and bud miraculously.

Later, the Children of Israel demanded water. God said "take the rod, and speak to the rock" but Moses hit the rock and showed anger and instilled fear instead:

Num 20:8, 10, 12 NKJV - 8 "Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water; thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals. 10 And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he said to them, "Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?" ...

God said Moses could not enter the promised land as a result:

Num 20:12 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them."

4. CONCLUSION:

God is a good Father - get to know Him and let His love flow through you. Be like Him as a father. He is:

- Consistent & True to His word
- Loving, Patient, Kind
- Approachable
- He has already provided acceptance and forgiveness even before we deserved it
- He instructs, warns, trains, & disciplines BUT He still gives you choices - He does not control or force you.

Small group discussion guidelines

Remember that the aim of the small group is to foster discussion and community, rather than for the leader or one individual to preach to everyone.

1 - Often an **Icebreaker question** is a great way to start discussion. You could ask a question like:

- What were the highs or lows of your week?
- What is your earliest memory?
- If you had to describe yourself as one animal, what would it be and why?
- What is your favourite type of holiday destination?

2 - Next, **read the passage**. You can ask various people in the group to help by each reading a portion of the passage.

3 - These are the **main questions** to ask to understand the passage:

- What is the main message of this talk / passage?
Allow discussion and even diverging from the main topic if it is helpful.
- What did you find particularly helpful or challenging?
- What did you not fully understand?
- What can we do PRACTICALLY in response to this teaching?

4 - Close by offering **prayer** for each person.

- Ask, "how can we pray for you / each other now?"
- Ask each person to pray or you, as leader, pray for each person's need

The blessing and opportunity in Small Groups is the possibility for...

- Each person to contribute and/or ask questions,
- People to pray for each other and to ask for prayer,
- People to learn to use and grow in their gifts,
- Community, friendship and intimacy in relationships.

God Bless you in this very important ministry.