

“Show Us the Father”

Like Father...

Happy belated Father’s Day to you. Yesterday was Father’ Day so I thought that today we could talk about our Heavenly Father. But before I do first let me say thank you to all the godly fathers, grandfather’s and men who have been a father figure in the lives of our children. Although the world would say otherwise, godly fathers who bless their families and are faithful to their calling as husbands are essential to the health and well-being of our communities. So, thank you to the godly men who honor the Lord as good dads.

Most people know that I have a love for woodworking, fixing things, and doing things hands on. That only means I know enough to get in trouble most of the time. My wife will tell you I have many unfinished projects that need attention. While I was working last week for VBS I had a member ask me where I learned to do all of this. Well, that’s easy. Dad inspired most of it. I just happened to like doing the same things he likes to do. Growing up I can fondly remember many days working on our house. It was also the best time to go out to the house and help dad work on something. And something stuck. I’ve always enjoyed it. Dad taught me a lot and I am grateful for all of it. So, getting to know me you might get a good sense of who my dad is because of it.

Jesus and the Father are One

Jesus talks pretty regularly about Our Father in Heaven. Some of the most familiar passage in the Gospels speak to the Father and the Son. John 3:16-17 is perhaps the most famous. “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son so that whoever believes in Him may not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the World to condemn the world but to save the world through Him.”

Another very familiar Gospel passage is John 14 Jesus talks about preparing a place in the Father’s House for His followers. He tells His disciples to trust in Him—literally put their eternal lives into His hands. He also promises that He will come back to take all believers to Himself so that we may live with Jesus for eternal life. This passage is usually read at funerals up to verse 7 because it provides so much comfort. However, Jesus is also laying a strong emphasis on the Father and the Son being of one mind about our salvation. So, I invite you to consider verses 8-11.

⁸ Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.” ⁹ Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰ Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. ¹¹ Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves.

So, to see Jesus is to see the Father. To know Jesus is to know the Father. They are never in disagreement. In fact, they are of one will when it comes to our salvation. It is the Father’s love that sends the Son. It is the Son who willingly dies for our sins and rises in the resurrection. They are of one will. This is comforting but this is also challenging.

Jesus Illustrates the Father

Consider another very familiar Gospel passage from Luke 15:11-32. It is often called the Parable of the Prodigal Son. However, it is really about the Father. The younger son goes to his father and says, effectively, “Dad I want you to be dead so that I can have my share of the inheritance.”

Listeners of this parable would have been amazed at the boldness of the younger son. We too are amazed that the Father gives a very rebellious younger son his share of the inheritance and then lets him go. But then again, the Father is gracious with all of His gifts. For example, He didn’t take Samson’s strength from him even though He was rebellious—at least until he went to Delilah’s hair salon. Another example: Jesus

reminds Pilate that His authority was given from on high but does not pull rank on Pilate. And the Father's love and grace are never withdrawn from us even when we demand His gifts like the Younger Son, and then ignore Him. The Father, like the Son, is a bigger giver to us than we are a receiver to receive His gifts. He gives to us not because of our goodness, nor because we deserve anything, but because of who He is—a loving Father who gives good things to His children.

And then the part of the Parable we love most. When the Younger Son comes to His senses and comes home the Father welcomes him back. The Father isn't finger wagging and chewing him out or even reducing his son to a life of slavery. The Father runs out to his Son, grateful that he has him home. And to remove all doubt that the Father has welcomed him home as a son, he puts clothes from dad's closet on him, a family ring on his finger, and sandals on his feet. Then he celebrates with a great feast letting the son know that He is most welcome. This too amazes us and gives us a sense that our Heavenly Father really loves us. All of Heaven rejoices over one sinner who repents rather than the 99 others who do not need to repent. The son who was dead is alive. That's all that mattered to that father in the parable. And this is all that matters to our Heavenly Father as well.

Something Worth Celebrating

Father's Day is worth celebrating because we have our Heavenly Father. Even if some of us do not have a good example for a father—and many do. We still have our Heavenly Father. And in Him we children have something to show. We have one who loves us, even when we go prodigal on Him, so we can love others. We have one who is generous with us and forgives us so that we can forgive others. We have one that is patient with us, which is good because kids like us demand lots of patience. We have a Heavenly Father who is worth celebrating for these and many other reasons. We have a Father who will never leave us nor forsake us, who pursues us, knows us, and opens His home to us. We have a lot to celebrate in and through Jesus who tells us, "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father as well."

Now the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look on you with His favor and forever and always give you His peace in Jesus. Amen.

Pastor Matthew Woods
John 3:30