

Father's Day 2016

Message: The Father's Love

Scriptures: 1 John 3:1-2 / Luke 15: 1-2

Introduction: Father's Day for many is a time to celebrate, remember, and express gratitude for the gift of a father. More and more people, however in our culture today are growing up without a father or grandfather. Many who do have this father role have a negative concept. This father role is very critical and was created by God. God has created us to need the love, care, discipline, guidance, and leadership which a father should provide. God has created us to need the blessing of our fathers.

God intends for us to be able to begin to understand His role as our Heavenly Father through our experience with our fathers. Knowing that so many do not have this opportunity we as God's people must step in to support, to mentor, to provide role models. Fathers need to remember how critical they are to their families and commit fully to the task.

By God's grace can have a relationship with God, who is our Heavenly father. This ultimate reality is available to us no matter what your earthly father experience turned out to be. The greatest joy and the foundation for experiencing purpose and meaning are found in receiving God's blessing through a relationship. A relationship with God is possible only through Jesus Christ.

Today we want to be reminded of the simple yet life changing truths concerning the love our Heavenly Father has for each of us.

1) The Father's Love is an Unconditional Love- 1 John 3:1

- "Bestowed upon us" - A gift freely given-offered without condition
- God's love for you is already given & demonstrated in Jesus
- Romans 5:8

2) The Father's Love is an Identifying Love-1 John 3:1

- God calls us His children- we belong to Him.
- Illustration- any pride & joy over my children & grandchildren(daddy/paw paw)
- Illustration- my children identifying with me-missions-what do we say?
- When someone ask of you; "who you belong to?", the answer is you belong to God's family. You are identified as a child of God.

3) The Father's love is a Transforming Love- 1 John 3:1

- "And such we are"-John says we are not only called God's children, we are made to be God's children-we are spiritually born again into His family when we trust in Jesus.
- John 1:12- believe & become
- As God's child the more we know our Father & experience His Love the more we begin to reflect His image

4) The Father's Love is a Modeling Love-Luke 15:1-2

- As we experience the full relationship with our Heavenly Father we are able to model His love & traits to others. We may be Fathers, Grandfathers, Mothers, Grandmothers, friends, mentors, etc. and whatever role God has given us to relate to others we can model our Father's Love.

From the story of the father with two sons told by Jesus we see God's love modeled. Jesus point in the story is that God receives all people. All are sinners in need of forgiveness & love. God not only welcomes each one, He is searching for them. Although the two sons represent different kinds of people they both had the same need-to truly know the Father's Love. They both were exposed to His Love but only one son accepted the Father's Love. The oldest son who represents the moral or religious person tried to earn His Father's Love. **You cannot earn a gift.** He rejected the gift when He saw his brother receive it unconditionally. The younger brother knew He was a sinner and embraced fully this role. Once he admitted the emptiness of pursuing sin he remembered his Father's Love. He came humbly to simply serve & found his Father searching for him to make Him truly a son. The Father's Love is already given to Jesus. Each person must accept it or reject it.

The Father's Love is modeled or seen as...

- Unceasing Love & Acceptance
- Allowing Choice & Consequences
- Patiently waiting & searching
- Willing to Forgive
- Compassion & Caring
- Joyful & Celebrating
- Restoring & Healing

The more we accept & experience this love the more we can give it away.

Application:

- 1) Sometimes as God's child we can still hold on to some of our previous mindsets. We can find ourselves responding like the elder brother.
 - Resentment while serving God-no joy-focused on what is unfair, our expectations
 - Chronic complaints- no contentment, focus on circumstances, blaming attitude
 - Judgmental Spirit- comparing, disapproving
 - All of these are signs of our not understanding, embracing and walking in God's Love. We need to seek the Father's forgiveness & then seek His love to flow through us. Many times these symptoms are a result of our having neglected the relationship with God. Is it time to come back towards the Father?

- 2) How are you responding to the Father's Love?
Are you rejecting His Love & Gift of Salvation?
What is keeping you from accepting his love?
He will keep seeking you. Will you open your heart to God?
Will you trust in Jesus today?

- 3) How would the Father have you model His love in the roles & relationships He has given you? What commitment would He have you make today?