

Fatherhood – The Glue

Herb Rutley, 4 Sept 2022

Fatherhood is so important. It is the glue that holds society together. We have seen the role of fathers diminish over the last sixty years.

It started in America in 1962 when prayer was removed from the school system and the idea spread all over the world. I remember when we got our first TV the back in 1960. The programs were very different back then. There was a TV show called "FATHER KNOWS BEST". The dad was honoured and looked up to in the show. Since then, it has spiralled down to where the kids are the "all wise characters" in the sitcoms and the dad is the idiot. And that was only the TV shows in the 1980's!

God calls it a curse. Did you know the last word in the Old Testament is "CURSE"

Malachi 4:5-6 (NKJ)

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet. Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD, and he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers. Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.

God warns us but he also makes a way of escape. It is His desire to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers. Our hope is found in the pages of the New Testament and more than that it is found in the resurrected Person of Jesus Christ.

I don't know how many of you are into Country and Western music. I haven't listened to much since moving to New Zealand. But when I visit my family in Canada there is no escaping it!

Anyway, there is a Singer/Song writer from Mississippi, his name is Paul Overstreet. I would call him the Isaac Watts of country music. He has written songs that place great importance on Fatherhood and Christian family values.

Paul Overstreet had **Malachi 4: 5& 6** in mind when he composed this song.

I'd like to play one of his songs as a tribute to fathers.

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q-u_yhQtSzg

I'm seein' my father in me

Last night we brought the children by to visit their Grandpa
And it's plain to see they're truly part of him

While we were there
Their Grandma took out some old photographs
Man, he sure looked a lot like me back then

I'm seein' my father in me
I guess that's how it's meant to be
And I find I'm more and more like him each day
I notice I walk the way he walks
I notice I talk the way he talks
I'm startin' to see my father in me

And today I took my wife for a walk
Down that old dirt road
Where my Daddy took my Mom so many times
And we found the time
To mention things we never had before
And we shared some thoughts about the family life

Yeah, I'm seein' my father in me
I guess that's how it's meant to be
And I find I'm more and more like him each day
I notice I walk the way he walks
I notice I talk the way he talks
I'm startin' to see my father in me

And now lookin' back I can recall the times we disagreed
When I could not take hold of his old fashioned ways
And the more I tried to prove him wrong
The more I proved him right
Now I know why he still stood by me
When I went through that stage

Fathers (Our earthly fathers)

A few years ago, a friend from Canada came to New Zealand on a holiday. While he and his wife were here, they contacted Jillian and I and said they would like to meet up, and they suggested we should go out to dinner. We picked them up from their Bed & Breakfast and went to a restaurant. As the menus arrived at our table and our friends sat opposite us, my friend looked up from the menu and said, "Herb you sure look like your dad" and I replied, "and you sure look like your dad". And then we both laughed.

Jillian has often commented that I have the same mannerisms as my dad. I walk the same, I hold my arms the same and I can fall asleep in a chair as the world is crashing around me while the grandchildren play.

My dad liked poetry. He would recite poetry to us, I have memorised some of the poems simply because I have heard them so often and my dad had my

attention and was imparting his values to me. Dad would tell us stories about our family history. Our family had an oral tradition I suppose.

I know hundreds of stories about my family history, but I can sum it up this way.....

A few weeks ago, my son Andrew and I were driving on the motorway and Andrew had my iPhone and he was looking at some pictures that I had taken of old photographs of relatives. One was even a photo of a "tin type" photograph. He would scroll through and ask, "Who is this person?" I would tell him and then on to the next photo.

Andrew was talking about his little boy Jack who is three and a half months old as we were travelling along. So, I took the opportunity to say to Andrew, this is the family line of little Jack....

He is Jack, the son of Andrew, the son of Herb, the son of James, the son of John, the son of Alexander, the son of John, the son of Peter, the son of Joseph.

I'm a storyteller like my dad.

One time a few years ago I was receiving prayer and this guy who was praying for me looked at me and said, "you tell stories don't you,.....I said yes,.....he said, don't stop, keep telling your stories."

I believe it is the responsibility of every father to bore your children to tears and tell them the same stories over and over again. They will roll their eyes and moan about it now. But I guarantee that they will make those stories a part of their roots.

It is important to tell your stories to your kids. It makes memories for them. If you have stories of how God provided for you tell that to your children. Tell them how you met the Lord. Tell them how God gave you opportunities to share Christ during your day at work. And in your prayer closet or even openly.... Proclaim the Word of God over your family.

Deuteronomy 6:4-7

"Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. "These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. "You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.

So as earthly fathers take every opportunity to plant seeds of Truth into your children. Tell your stories and weave within them your love for your God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Fathers in the Church

Today the church needs fathers. Fathers who are like the sons of Issachar. Fathers who can discern the times and seasons. Fathers who love the Truth. Spiritual fathers who are growing in their faith who believe the Word of God. Many of you here today very likely fit that description.

God led you here because you were hungry and thirsty. You came here because the Word of God is proclaimed. Some of you came and found a refuge from the storm of the last three years.

I want to proclaim these words over the fathers

John 7:37-38

If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water'".

Jeremiah 17:7-8

Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord,

Whose confidence is in him.

He will be like a tree planted by the water

That sends out its roots by the stream.

It does not fear when heat comes;

Its leaves are always green.

It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.

We have so many fatherless people in our world. But these are the days of Elijah. I pray that the Lord will raise up more fathers in our congregations to minister to the needs of our youth and young adults. We who are fathers need to hang out with our young people and let iron sharpen iron. Create deep roots in good fertile ground.

Reflecting on our Heavenly Father

We often assume that home life and fatherhood began with humanity, but it did not. Fatherhood and family are modelled after Our Heavenly Father's House. When Jesus carried out His ministry on earth, He told stories and he talked about His Father a lot. And He promised.....

John 14: 2-3 "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also."

I believe The Lord delights in us telling our stories especially the stories that include Him in them.

As we fellowship today and enjoy some food together. Tell each other stories. Let's make some memories today.