“The Heart of a Father”

June 17, 2018

Deuteronomy 6:4-15

Please open your Bible with me to John chapter five.

How many of you know how Father’s Day began?

Who here thinks Father’s Day began on Mother’s Day?

When and why did Father’s Day begin? There are a number of accounts. But no one really know. Well, here’s one. Exactly one hundred and nine years ago today, in 1909, a woman was in Spokane, Washington sat Church listening to a sermon on Mother’s Day. Here’s the story.

Sonora Smart Dodd experienced tragedy early. While giving birth to one of her siblings, her Mom died. Sonora’s single father then faithfully raised all six of his children. So Sonora wanted to honor her dad on the following June 5th because it was her dad’s birthday. She mailed a letter to the Mayor of Spokane with a request to make a city-wide proclamation to honor dads. The mayor agreed, but had to push back the date to June 19th.

So, on Sunday June 19th, 1909 the young women in the Churches in Spokane, Washington handed out roses to all the fathers in Church that Sunday. Then, in 1924, President Calvin Coolidge promoted the idea that Congress to set aside one day each year to encourage dads to establish closer relationships with their children and make sure they were fulfilling their role as fathers. But it took another sixty-three years, until 1972, for Father’s Day became an official U.S. holiday on the third Sunday of June. [Info found on [www.livescience.com/10697-father-day-turns-100.html](http://www.livescience.com/10697-father-day-turns-100.html) by Remy Melina June 17, 2010].

So, for Father’s Day this year, I want you to look with me at the right Dad for their Example of Fatherhood. And that One is God, the Father. And here might be the reason why.

This is a true story. It comes from a book by Gordon Dalbey, who holds “Sons of the Fathers” conferences around the world.

A Catholic priest, Richard Rohn tells of a nun who worked in a men’s prison. One day, she said, a prisoner asked her to buy him a Mother’s Day card for his mother. She did, and the word traveled like wildfire around the prison. Deluged with requests, she called Hallmark Cards, who obliged with huge boxes of Mother’s Day cards as a donation. The warden arranged for each inmate to draw a number, and they lined up through the cell blocks to get their cards. Weeks later, the nun was looking ahead on her calendar, and decided to call Hallmark again and ask for as many Father’s Day cards, in order to avoid another rush. As Father’s Day approached, the warden announced free cards were again available at the chapel. To the nun’s surprise, not a single prisoner ever asked her for a Father’s Day card.”

Can you see the problem? To those in prison today they don’t and can’t connect with the kind of father they grew up with. Let’s ask this question today, “What is God, the Father like?” So Dads, today, for Father’s Day, I’ve titled today’s sermon “The Heart of a Father.” Shall we pray?

Those of you who had a good father should constantly be grateful for that father. Those of us who did not have a good father, we too are grateful for our fathers. Why? Because we know that there are no perfect human fathers. And even the best would say he falls short.

We believe that God is three Persons; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We don’t make any claim to understand *how* three Persons can be One God. Even a genius isn’t able to figure that out. But the Bible is clear. God is three Persons. Today I want to spend a few minutes with on the Father.

Out of the 258 times that the word “father” is found in the four Gospels; most of the time, it’s Jesus teaching people about a Father in Heaven, a Heavenly Father, His own Father. And in one Gospel, the Gospel written by John, I found Jesus teaching speaking about His Father 95 times. So, what does Jesus say about His Father’s heart?

For example, He’s a Father Who gives. Now that you have your Bible open to John five, look with me at the twentieth verse. John 5:20 *“For* ***the Father loveth the Son****, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.”*

And here’s John 15:9 *“As* ***the Father hath loved me****, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.”*

There is no real comprehension of fatherhood apart from love. The Father, Jesus says, loves the Son. *“The Father has loved Me.”* Imagine, if you can, God loving way back in eternity. Because God is three Persons, He showers His love on the Second Person of the Trinity. If God is love, as the Bible says, then, from eternity past, God loved Jesus.

I was speaking to a young man last week and this topic came up. He’s had a very difficult relationship with his father; so much so, that he isn’t allowed to live at home any more. For a time he was in the homeless shelter in New London. And I mentioned something about someone he knows, my son Dan. And here’s what he said; which surprised me; he said “He loves you.”

Men, fathers love. And the one loved reciprocates. There is no doubt in my love for my son. It’s built-in.

Now, turn back with me to Matthew’s Gospel at chapter six for a look at the Father.

Matthew 6:26 *“Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet* ***your heavenly Father*** *feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?”*

Matthew 6:31 *“Therefore take no thought, saying, what shall we eat? Or, what shall we drink? Or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (32) (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek :) for* ***your heavenly Father*** *knoweth that ye have need of all these things.”*

Now you might be able to do this; but I cannot. I cannot conceive of God as something and Someone apart from His being a Father. Here’s the kind of God God is. He’s a Father; a giving Father. He’s the Father in Heaven. And in the matter of your being a creature of this earth, Jesus teaches here us the One you need more than anyone else is your Heavenly Father.

Your Heavenly Father, says Jesus, feeds you. Your Heavenly knows exactly what your needs are. And if He, every single day, supplies the needs of the birds that fly around us, then He also supplies all of your needs.

Every child needs a dad. And every child needs the nurture of his dad; something I did not grow up. Someone has wisely written, *“When Dad doesn’t embrace, encourage, guide, and protect him, a boy grows up thinking, “Dad doesn’t value me. I must not be worth much.”* [From “Father Hunger” by Gordon Dalbey on www.abbafather.com].

Of all the gifts a dad has to offer to his child, this just might be the greatest. The Father loves His Son. And, by extension, He loves you. And He loves me. He loves me even though I had no true father in my house when I grew up. And, lest some of you think that adopted children aren’t aware of this, watch this fatherly connection from Compassion International.

I think you’ll enjoy this little Father’s Day clip from Compassion International.

<https://www.compassion.com/child-sponsorship/abba-father.htm>

First, God is a Father; Someone Who gives and gives and gives.

Second, He’s closer to you than anyone here on this earth. Find another “Father” verse with me from the Gospel of Mark at chapter fourteen and verse thirty-three.

Mark 14:33 says this *“And he [Jesus] taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy; (34) and saith unto them, my soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch.*

*(35) And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. (36) And he said,* ***Abba, Father****, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.”*

Jesus had a wonderful Father. He has a wonderful Father. And He has a wonderful relationship to Him to this very moment. His entire earthly ministry revolved around an announcement; “I’ve come to do My Father’s will.”

Now, note with me how Jesus spoke to His Father that final night in Gethsemane. Mark 14:36*“And he said,* ***Abba, Father****, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.”*

“Abba,” according to Bible scholars is untranslatable. Abba in every language is “Dad,” or “Daddy” or “Papa.” It’s very likely the most important word a child can use whenever he or she is in need.

And I think every Dad here loves to hear the words “Dad” or “Daddy.” Here I am sixty-five years old and I still love to hear the kids say “Dad” or “Daddy” when they are either speaking to me or speaking to Janet about me.

Men, here’s a lesson from Jesus on your calling your Heavenly Father Abba.

To see the LORD as Abba means that you see Him as the One Who is able to do the impossible. Mark 14:36*“And he said,* ***Abba, Father****, all things are possible unto thee; …”*

Every one of us has things that we find impossible in our lives. We live with impossibilities every day. Yet, Dads especially, see your Heavenly Father as the One you can go to with those impossible situations and people.

And we all suffer. But God never intended for you to suffer alone. So, men, and women, you never have to suffer alone again. You see, you can take you suffering to the One Who, not only knows all about it, He cares about it.

I think the people in this room who suffer alone suffer the most. But folks, that is not God’s will. God does not expect any of us to carry our burdens by ourselves.

Haven’t you heard the words “I can’t take it anymore”? You know what that implies? It implies that you aren’t taking your suffering to Abba. You’re on your own. And I believe those who suffer alone suffer the most. And it might just be because you don’t understand it.

Here’s a word for you who are suffering today.

For all the hills I’ve had to climb;

For all the stones that hurt my feet;

For all the blood and dirt and grime,

For the blinding storms and the burning heat

My heart still sings a grateful song

Those were the things that made me strong.

For all the heartache and the tears

For all the anguish and pain;

For gloomy days and fruitless years;

For all the hopes that lived in vain;

I do give thanks for now I know

These are the things that made me grow.

Abba and Dad and Papa imply a very close relationship between a father and his child. You see, Dad is a companion. But he’s also a Protector and a Provider. He closer than anyone on earth. And He’s the One Who is worthy of your trust. So, in the moments when we need our Heavenly Father the most, we call Him Abba, Dad.

First, God is a Giving Father.

Second, He closer than anyone on earth.

Third, Surrender everything to Him.

Here’s Jesus on His last night before His arrest and subsequent crucifixion. And He’s with His Father and even though He knows He must go through to the death of the Cross, He’s asking His Dad to remove the cup of suffering away because He’s the Only One Who can do so.

And what does Jesus say in that last hour while on the Cross? Luke 23:34 *“Then said Jesus,* ***Father, forgive them****; for they know not what they do.”*

And in His final moments, what does He say?

Luke 23:46 *“And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said,* ***Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit****: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.”*

Men, we all suffer. But what we do with our suffering determines our success. And the best thing you will ever do is to raise the flag of surrender; surrendering all you have to Him.

And folks, if Jesus lived a life of surrender, we should too.

One of the great preachers of days gone by puts it this way. *“In that day, when I surrendered myself to my Savior, I gave him my body, my soul, my spirit; I gave Him all I had, and I shall have for time and eternity.*

*I gave Him all my talents, my power, my faculties, my eyes, my ears, my conscience, my limbs, my emotions, my judgment, my whole manhood, and all that could come from it, whatever fresh capacity or new capability I might be endowed with.”* (Charles Spurgeon) [One Day at a Time, p.297].

Jesus, the Son of God and the Son of man walked a life of personal surrender to His Father. And as He faced a Cross just hours away, He placed Himself again into the arms of His Dad.

Oswald Chambers once said this about surrender. *“One of the dangers of modern evangelism is that it lays too much emphasis on decision for Christ instead of on surrender to Jesus Christ.”* (O. Chambers).

And what does it mean to surrender all? Andrew Murray, one of the great saints of days gone by taught surrender from this verse I Kings 20:4 *“And the king of Israel answered and said, My lord, O king, according to thy saying, I am thine, and all that I have.”*

So, today is Father’s Day here in the United States. Well, who here is going to take the heart of a Father? Who here will see the LORD as He really is; a Giving Father? Who here is finding that He is closer to you than anyone on earth? And who here is willing to surrender all to Him?

“All to Jesus I Surrender” by Judson Van deVenter

1. All to Jesus I surrender,  
   All to Him I freely give;  
   I will ever love and trust Him,  
   In His presence daily live.
   * *Refrain:*  
     I surrender all,  
     I surrender all;  
     All to Thee, my blessed Savior,  
     I surrender all.
2. All to Jesus I surrender,  
   Humbly at His feet I bow;  
   Worldly pleasures all forsaken,  
   Take me, Jesus, take me now.
3. All to Jesus I surrender,  
   Make me, Savior, wholly Thine;  
   Let me feel the Holy Spirit,  
   Truly know that Thou art mine.
4. All to Jesus I surrender,  
   Lord, I give myself to Thee;  
   Fill me with Thy love and power,  
   Let Thy blessing fall on me.
5. All to Jesus I surrender,  
   Now I feel the sacred flame;  
   Oh, the joy of full salvation!  
   Glory, glory, to His Name!

Prayer

Hymn # 139 “Great Is Thy Faithfulness”