

Sermon Title: “A Father’s Love”

Series: Father’s Day 2023

Speaker: Pastor Damian Mericka

Text: Supporting Texts

Introduction



“While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.” -Acts 13:2-3. In Christ it is never goodbye but *see you later*. Transitions are hard, but at the Spirit’s leading, they can also be fruitful for the Kingdom and Glory of Jesus Christ. This world is not our home, we in Christ are here to take all of Jesus into all the world. Together, we **learn** from Jesus, **live** like Jesus, and **lead** to Jesus. **Foundations** is a final series of messages from my heart, as your Pastor, to you and the continuing ministry of Cornerstone

Chapel. May the lamppost shine brighter and stronger for the Glory of Jesus Christ, His Spirit pouring out in greater stride. *And above all, through fasting and prayer, let us be the Body we are purchased, resourced, and called to be- All of Jesus for all the world- beginning with each of us!*

I. Submission- Invitation for Orientation (Ephesians 6:1-4)

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” -Ephesians 6:1-4 ESV

Order. Our God is a God of order. Every facet of His creative action reveals the consistent agreement between what He creates and Himself along with what He creates in relationship to themselves. With God as the Head, blessing stands to be experienced by all. This blessing though is conditioned by a decision to submit oneself to this Creator. Sin has brought **disorder**. And because of this the creation is in this state of tension, enduring the life-giving fruit of submission along with the life taking consequence of rebellion. A *blessing* or a *curse* stands before us today- what we will receive is conditioned up what we will choose regarding God and His Word. Will we choose to orient our selves from the direction our wills are taking us to submit to the Will of our God who created and loves us?

This letter to the Ephesian believers was one of four that we have in our Bibles today written by the Apostle Paul while he was in Prison. This letter was meant to help the Timothy whom he

left as a teaching elder to counter some of the life taking directions some leaders were taking through their teaching. Some were forcing an unhealthy step back into the Old Testament system by observing traditions and commands as if Jesus had not come. Because of this, the church was buckling under unhealthy tension, and families were becoming frustrated and divided. Remember during the Easter weekend we looked at [Revelation 2:1-7](#), where the children of this letter's congregation had become the new leaders and were following rules but not in love with Jesus.

Chapters 4 through 6 of this Ephesian letter have to do with re-orienting their faith and therefore life, by coming into submission to Jesus Christ.

Remember, ***submission*** is ***positioning*** ourselves into alignment with God's channel of blessing into us to overflow through us out into the world.

When we as individual sons and daughter's bow the knee in submission to Christ as our Lord and Savior, we became spouses that submit to God's Will for our marriage. We then become parents who submit ourselves to God's Will for our children, and children toward our parents. This then leads into churches that submit to our Head, Jesus Christ and bring His Kingdom into our communities. Remember what Jesus taught us,

"Pray like this: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."
-Matthew 6:9-13

This prayer is a reorientation of our focus, and therefore redirection for our lives. When we align ourselves with God's Will, His Kingdom comes into us and overflows through us on earth as it is in heaven. We have our daily needs met that overflow into meeting the needs of others (orphan, widow, fatherless, stranger / displaced). As we are given great grace, grace flavors our words and actions. We are a forgiven, life given to live free people that lead others to know such freedom in our King, Jesus.

Beginning with our families. And this is so hard to do dads, when gathering with other believers on Sunday mornings happens when convenient, or we are not leading our children into God's presence because we ourselves are not modeling a value toward this in ourselves.

Are we ***honorable***? This term in the Greek deals with the *motive of the heart*, not the demand of the rule or action. Do we obey our parents because we love them or have to? Do we qualify or earn our children's love and respect, or do we demand it. None of us are perfect, and there are no perfect families. Yet, when we are pursuing being in alignment with Christ, we cannot but help lead through our example others- our own children or those we are parental figures in the lives of- to see the value of being in alignment with God through His Son. ***The best way for our children to see our love for Jesus is by seeing us with Jesus.***

When was the last time your children walked in on you reading your Bible or praying? When did they see you living out your faith in the life of another? These are questions I constantly ask myself.

Provoking our children to anger is dealing with the *do as I say, not as I do* heart posture. Sadly, our children tend to be impressioned more by our *weaknesses* rather than our *strengths*. More by our *fear* than our *faith*. Who are we consistently, and does this lead children to see Jesus through us? Are they led to engage Him in all that He is? Remember, going to church doesn't save any of us. Following rules doesn't save any of us. The Ephesian audience here took their kids to church, and they knew their Bibles *religiously*, yet did not know and love Jesus. Many Jews know the Old Testament, yet never see Jesus. The devil knows God's Word but does not bow the knee (yet) to Jesus. ***Knowledge without love is as empty and destructive as love without knowledge.***

Yet, God promises life giving blessing when we align ourselves in submission to His Word and Will. What does this look like? *There is no better example to look toward than Jesus!*

II. Orientation of a Son toward His Father (Hebrews 12:1-11)

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

-Hebrews 12:1-2

Consistently living with Jesus is hard. We cannot do it without His Spirit, which is why He placed Him within us. ***(Note Joel's Message two weeks ago)*** There are times we will fail. Own this, and in transparency offer a cup of Grace to another as we drink richly of it for ourselves. Yet, persistent, consistent orientation of our lives toward Jesus is the key. There are times, such as in this example, when we grow fatigued with the tension life can bring us. Yet, as we look to Jesus we see where this road leads us. Into the Father and His Kingdom, now and forever.

Lay aside means to *put off or lead away*- this Greek is used when one is led out and stoned, a determination to not see it alive and walking in the city of our hearts ever again. What causes us to not pursue Jesus as strongly as we would like? (use example of running- rest, diet, hydration, focus)

“Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.”

-Hebrews 12:3-6

We naturally look toward those who have what we do not, yet desire. Or those who have accomplished what is a personal goal for our own lives. Growing up, my dad was my hero! He was smarter, stronger, braver than anyone else's dad. And I was his son, one day growing up to be just as smart, strong, and brave. What I came to realize is that I fell in love with the Jesus I saw through my dad; even in areas he struggled as a sinner, I saw the pursuing love of my Jesus grip and fight for him.

Discipline is never fun. Yet it is the fruit of genuine, fatherly love. You see this here, right? We are invited to embrace the correction from our earthly fathers as a reflection of the greater correction of our Heavenly Father. God has no other destination in mind for us than to be right there with Him and His Son. He is so committed to this that He placed His Spirit in us to do nothing but work to lead us home to Him. ***We are unsettled when we detour from this.***

*It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. **-Hewbrews 12:7-11***

Why is God doing this, allowing this, leading me into this?! All questions I've navigated with you these last 8 years. Because you are His Sons- sons and daughters inheriting the first born son's privileges, rights, and Kingdom. We are Jesus' Bride. Can you stand by and watch your children hurt themselves or others? How can we expect less of God? (expound as the Spirit leads)

Without sin, Jesus modeled submission to the Father. Sin is not the reason we submit to God. Please, hear this dear saints. Submission existed before sin and will exist after sin. Eternity is us in submission to God- and its pure joy. ***Love is the reason we submit.*** God's love toward us, and that love lived out in us back toward Him. To choose God over sin in our lives out of love for Him is the goal of the Spirit in our lives- none of us can say we are provoked to anger toward God as our Father, for His love is both declared and demonstrated toward us in the Person and Work of His Son, Jesus. It is perfect love.

III. Orientation of a King toward His God (Psalm 40:4-10)

"Blessed is the man who makes the Lord his trust, who does not turn to the proud, to those who go astray after a lie! You have multiplied, O Lord my God, your wondrous deeds and your thoughts toward us; none can compare with you! I will proclaim and tell of them, yet they are more than can be told. In sacrifice and offering you have not delighted, but you have given me an open ear. Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required. Then I said, "Behold, I have come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me: I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart." I have told the

glad news of deliverance in the great congregation; behold, I have not restrained my lips, as you know, O Lord. I have not hidden your deliverance within my heart; I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation; I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness from the great congregation.” -Psalm 40:4-10

In David’s life we see both the best and the worst of times. A man after God’s own heart, a man who gave in to sin, a man who through himself upon the mercy of God, a man who loved His God because His God chose to love him. Chose to love him. *Chose*.

We tend to forget this when we look at someone like David. We know more about his *failures* than his *victories*. His adulterous relationship with Bathsheba, his murdering of her husband who was one of his mighty warriors, and the deception resulting in the conceived child’s death-tends to be right up there or further ahead than his faith in God to defeat the giant Goliath. Yet of David as a King, he overflowed God’s heart to the nation,

*“So David reigned over all Israel, and he administered justice and equity to all his people.”
-1 Chronicles 18:14*

For me personally, one of the more striking illustrations from David’s life came from the fruit of his heart toward one of his sons. Though David was a king, he was also a father. The best father ever? No more than I am. Yet, even when one of his son’s named Absalom tried to take his throne- driving him out from his home, forcing him to flee for his life- yet this was David’s heart when he found out that his son was dead,

“And the king was deeply moved and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept. And as he went, he said, ‘O my son Absalom, my son my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son...So the victory that day was turned into mourning for all the people, for the people head that day, ‘The King is grieving for his son.’ -2 Samuel 18:33; 19:2

David, your son was an insurrectionist! To David, this insurrectionist was his son. A father broken over where the life of his son led to – perhaps grieving how he failed as a dad. Despite the victory for the Nation in Absalom’s death, it was a sense of defeat for David as a father. This invites us to see that before David was a king, he was a father. And before he was a father, he was God’s son. This same heart is found in the Apostle Paul,

“I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit— that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh. They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.”

-Romans 9:1-5

Before all that God is doing, is His love as a Father. I wonder if we forget this sometimes, dads, as we get lost in our work thinking paying and providing things is our greatest asset as a dad?

*“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” **-Revelation 21:4-5***

Remember, God’s Spirit is leading us in no other direction than toward His Son, at His Right Hand, to inherit His Kingdom. There will be tears along the way. Above all that God does, He is a Father. *Our Father.* And He loves us and is grieved over what seeks to separate us from Himself. That is why and how David, in the best and worst of times, oriented himself to God. His love alone would heal his heart. *What David did in serving God as king came from who he was with God as his son, which came from who God was toward Him as His Father.*

IV. A Legacy that Invites (2 Samuel 7:1-17)

“Now when the king lived in his house and the Lord had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, the king said to Nathan the prophet, “See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent.” And Nathan said to the king, “Go, do all that is in your heart, for the Lord is with you.” But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan, “Go and tell my servant David, ‘Thus says the Lord: Would you build me a house to dwell in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent for my dwelling. In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?”’” Now, therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel. And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies.

*Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.” In accordance with all these words, and in accordance with all this vision, Nathan spoke to David.” **-2 Samuel 7:1-17***

This brings us full circle with Paul’s words to Ephesian fathers. More than leaving a legacy of stuff for our kids, it’s about the overall invitation we instill in our children to submit their lives to Jesus. To grow in knowledge and love in Him. To hear Jesus through our words, feel Jesus

through our touch, see Jesus through our actions. David knew that he would not be used of God to build the Temple, but his son would be. David invested in his son, resourcing him with all they he could, so that his son would have what he needed to give God his YES!

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” -Ephesians 6:1-4 ESV

And in this, when we lead our children to submit to God, constantly taking His invitation to embrace His Spirit and Word’s work to orient our lives in a direction that leads us to Himself, we will know true joy not sourced of anything in this world, but that which is to come.

We see this example modeled to us in Jesus, who as The Son submitted to The Father.

We see this example modeled to us in David, who in his profession as a King, was in submission to the Will of God.

Submission is positioning ourselves to be blessed by God. It is a lifelong orientation to walk in the steps of Christ. It is here that their love and affection will be focused, for it is here that their true treasure does lie- *at the Right Hand of the Father who is making all things new.*

A Father’s love will always lead into the presence of Jesus.

Our Savior, Healer, Sanctifier, and King.