

Father's Day

Title: A Father's Heart

Text: Luke 15:11-32

Take your Bibles, please, and turn to Luke chapter 15. Luke chapter 15. Today is Father's day. And in this day and age it is not easy for Father's to come to Father's Day and to hear about it. Because we already sense a little frustration. Guys, today, are frustrated because it is hard to define ~~our~~ ^{their} role.

When I had my four kids at home, back in the 70's, we had this phrase that use to drive me bananas – "SPEND QUALITY TIME WITH YOUR KIDS!" We don't hear that too often in this day and age. (Praise God) But, just in case you do, Dads, forget it. Just spend time. O.K. Let your kids decide what to do with the time.

But, I think a lot of us are living under the pressure of people telling us that Dad's are not what they are suppose to be. I mean: look at T.V. programs about Dads. Not a single Dad is component. Not one Dad can do anything. ~~They are the joke of society.~~ And I think it is about time to back up and take another look at this whole thing.

So, I want to talk to you about the story of the Prodigal son. But I want to share this story in a different way than you are accustomed. Our Topic: A FATHER'S HEART.

Luke chapter 15 beginning with Vs 11 (Read Vs 11-32)

Prayer

Our Father in Heaven, I pray that you would help us to see your heart. Help us to see the Father's heart in this story. Help us to know what you are like. And Father, I pray that you would move in the hearts Dads and Moms. That we would come home to the Father. A lot of us have been running away for a long time. Help us to see how God really is. And to long to come home to Him. We thank you in Jesus name. Amen

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Now, in most message from this passage the emphases is on the Prodigal Son.

And that is important. But, I want to put the emphases on the Father. Because he is the real hero in this story *in my opinion*

me Prov. 17:6 says: "the glory of children is their Father." I am not sure as children we recognize that fact. The glory of children is their Father. *So*, I want to consider what this passage teaches us about "A FATHER'S HEART." I believe we need to clear up a lot of things that are confusing in society about what men, especially Dads, ought to be.

me And I want some of you ladies to really know what is on a Man's heart. *O.K*

O.K I want to give you 7 things about a Father's heart that I hope will be a blessing to you. And all of them tell us about our Heavenly Father.

(1) Number one, a Father's heart gives what he has to his children. What a simple point.

A Father's heart gives what he has to his children. I read in chapter 15 verse 12 that the younger child said to his Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.

Now, there is no discussion, here, about what the child will do with his share of the estate. You know, how will you invest it. Or, what will you spend it for. Or, where are you going. It simple says: "He divided his wealth between them."

Another interesting thing in the story is found down in vs 31. When he is talking with the older son, he said: "My child, you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours. Do you understand? A Father's heart gives what he has to his children. And I find that a lot of people beat up on Dads because that is so true. A Dad's heart wants to do things for his children. And we ought to thank God. Because on the other side of the coin there are some Dads *who* do not. Those Dads who are far from God and don't care about their children. A Dad with a Christian heart gives what he can give to his children. He does things that say "I love you." But sometimes it is not interpreted that

3-
way. Let's hear an "amen" for Dads who want to give to their children! (Especially from the kids).

Let me introduce you to this quality in my HEAVENLY FATHER. Turn to Luke chapter 11. Luke chapter 11. My Heavenly father, also, gives to his children.

I have not had an earthly Father since 1987. And I miss Him. But, I have a heavenly father who has been all that I needed. In Luke chapter 11 verse 11 it says:

(Read Vs 11-13)

Isn't it interesting that God is a God who gives? It is his nature that makes him that way. He constantly gives and gives and gives.

Hay! We are evil. And if we know how to give good gifts to our children, and by the way, this text assumes that is what a father does. A father does give to his children. He wants to provide for them. He wants to give them things. How much more will the heavenly Father give to us.

Let me tell you a story. This story comes from that column in the newspaper that is the height of theological soundness and good advice: DEAR ABBY. Hay! Sometimes it is pretty good stuff.

Listen to this: A young man from a wealthy family was about to graduate from High School. It was the custom in this neighborhood for the parents to give the graduate a car. Now, in the article the kid is named "Bill." Bill and his Father spent months looking at cars. And the week before graduation they found the perfect car. Bill was certain that the car would be his on graduation night.

Imagine his disappointment on the eve of his graduation when Bill's Father handed him a "gift wrapped" Bible. Bill was so angry. He threw the Bible down, stormed out of the house. And Bill and his Father never saw each other again.

It was the news of his Father's death that brought Bill home. As he sat one night going through His Father's possessions, that he was to inherit, he came across that Bible that His Farther had given to him the night of His graduation.

He brushed away the dust and opened it. There in found, behind the front cover, a cashiers check dated the day of his graduation in the exact amount of the car they had chosen together.

Abby writes back: I hope Bill reads the Bible cover to cover for it contains much that he needs to hear. For example: Prov. 17:25, "A foolish son is a grief to his Father. And bitterness to her who bore him." Now, that was Dear Abby!.. WOW!

According to what I read in the Bible, "if we are evil and know how to give good gifts, how much more will our heavenly father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.:

God wants to bless us more than we want to receive it. God wants to give to us more than we want to take. Let me ask you something. Do you know who the heavenly Father is? Dear friends, he is almighty God. A Father's heart gives what he has to his children.

(2) Number two. In this story we read about the prodigal taking off. Do you want to know what a father's heart is? A father's heart grieves over his children.

Hay! I don't know if anyone has ever told you this, or, anyone has said it openly, I know we Dads try to hid this, but we grieve too. A Father's heart grieves over his children.

Did this man have cause for grief? You bet he did. I read in Vs 13 that the son "gathered everything together and went to a distant country." Dad doesn't know where he is. There he wasted his possessions with lose living, which we learn later in the chapter that it was with prostitutes. He lives it up. Who knows what kind of sexual desease the kid had. Who knows how he has been stripped of any chance of a good marriage and family. Who knows what his condition is other then he who sits in the pig pen, and his Heavenly father who knows what he is doing all along. His Dad didn't know. But, his Dad was grieving over his son's absence.

Hay! Let me tell you something. When our kids leave home, we Dads grieve over it. Oh, I know. We try to be cool. But, we grieve.

When our first son went off to college, I said to Shirley: "Honey, just think about it. More food in the old fridge. I remember one day walking into his room, and there she sat playing with his stuff. The room is all clean. I said: "Shirley, what are you doing in here?" "Oh, nothing, she said." I said: "Hay! He is gone. Don't worry, he will be back."

But, no matter what we Dad's do to sound cool, let me tell you, we grieve. I was in that room a lot. I built the room for my son. I would go into his room, look at the walls. Hay! I missed him. Any Dad here, know what I am talking about?

What do you think it means to a Dad to hear that their child is gone somewhere and he doesn't know where he/she is? Or, to hear that they have wasted everything and ruined their lives? What do you think we feel? Let's hear a good word for every Dad who grieves in his heart. It is O.K. dad, just in case someone tells you that that is not being a man. They are wrong. It is being a man. Thank god you still grieve. That God you still care. The Bible says in Proverbs 17:21 that he who begets a fool does so to his sorrow. And the father of a fool has no joy. Yes, we grieve. And yes it is a father's heart to grieve over his kids.

(3) Number three. In verse 20, I read that "He got up and came to his father. But, when he was still a long way off, his Father saw him." Isn't that great? His Dad was looking for him. Do you know what a Father's heart is? A father's heart longs for his children to come home. He longs for his children to come home.

Why, even after they get married, you love to have them come home. Just so they don't stay to long. But, a father's heart longs for his children to come home.

This father was looking down the road. He saw his son a long way off. And he ran out to meet him. The Bible says that the Lord sees all that the son's of men do. Though you are afar off and not giving God the time of day, the Lord know everything you are doing. We use to sing a little song, year ago in Sunday School: "He see all you do, He hears all you say. My Lord is watching all the time.

In the 70's a popular song said: God is watching you from a distance.

9-
He knows everything. You ~~haven't hid~~ ^{Cannot hid} from him. All things are naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to deal, ^{says the Bible}

But, the amazing thing to me is that God longs for his people to come home.. In a beautiful passage in Roman 10, the Lord has His arms out stretch. And the Bible says "all day long" waiting ~~for~~ ^{for} you to come home. Do you know who the heavenly Father is? He loves you. And a Father's heart wants his children to come home.. He ~~longs~~ ^{longs} for them.

I think I can understand that a little bit. Have any of you Dads ever stayed up waiting for your Kids to come home? How many of you have Teenagers? *(come on--raise you hands...Maybe you don't want people to know that you have teenagers)(Ha)....

I can still remember one night when my daughter got home a little late. She was only 30 minutes late. You know, this guy brings her home and I am trying to be cool....But, before she got home I am getting a little up tight. I said to Shirley.."I wonder where she is. Shirley said.."I don't know....

I said "Honey, we have to trust the soverityn of the Lord. You need peace in your heart. Just don't worry about it. Just go on to bed, and I will wait up." You know how it goes.

Do you know wht bothers me, today, is that she did go to bed.....I was out there in the living room waiting. I would look out the window. ANY OF YOU DADS KNOW WHAT I AM DOING? Sure you do.

and I would go back to my chair and try to read something. I remember on another occasion, she was really late and I went out and got in my car and drove around the neighbor^{hood} It dawned on me.. This is stupid, I don't know where she is.-She went on a date to Bakersfied. That is about 35 miles away from where we lived in Taft....

And then when she finally came in that door. And; the surprise on her face when she sees you waiting up for her. You tell me..I have heard all the storyies as to why my daughter was late and couldn't call me.And when she was done, I felt quilty for not trusting her...

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But, I will tell you something. When a Dad tells me how He watches for his kids to see if they are going to come home..I Know what that is all about..

And my heavenly Father, He cares a lot more than me. I don't know wheer you are. You might be running around doing your own thing. Thinking you can get away with it. but, listen, Y^{our} heavenly Father is waiting for you to come home. He loves you, Sir. He loves you, mamum.. He wants you to come home.

(4)The Forth thing I point out to you about a Father's heart is that A Fathers heart cares deeply ABOUT HIS CHILDREN. Vs 20 says that "his father saw him, and felt compassion for him."

Do Dad's care deeply? You bet they do. We might not always cry or show it. We may seem hard nose at times. But, we care. *And our Heavenly Father Care*

Do you know what compassion is? Compassion is very heavy in that word "pity" that we kind off put down today. We talk about "pity parties" and all of that. But, the word "pity" is a wonderful word.

Do you know what pity is? It means that you understand if someone is going through a tough time and it doesn't matter.

Can y^{our} kids fail in a sport or something and it doesn't matter? You know they will blow it, you hope they will not,, but if they do --it doesn't matter because you still love them. Nothing changes. You have compassion.

Do you want to know about compassion? Turn to Psalm 103..Psalms 103. Here we find some beautiful words about the compassion of our heavenly father. When you have compassion, your children don't have to live up to y^{our} expectations. when y^{ou} have compassion, you love your kids even though they may not do everything ,the way you desire. When you have copassion you let your kids be all that God wants them to be. And you don't inforce your opinions on them. You just say. "Hay! you do what God wants you to do and you will be all right."

Psalm 103 verse 8 says ...(Read Vs 8-14)

How could Jesu fellowship with tax-collector who were traitors and sinners or prosatutes of the street? How could he even be with them, let alone care for them? Because he knows we are but dust. He has compassion. And that is what a fathers heart is all about. A father cares deeply for his children.

Now, we have said so far that a Father's heart GIVES WHAT HE HAS TO HIS Children. A Father's heart grieves over his children.. A Father's heart longs for his Children to come home..A Father's heart cares deeply for his children. (5)AND NUMBER FIVE, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, A FATHER'S HEART SHOWS AFFECTION

TOWARDS HIS CHILDREN. Look at Vs 20. When the Father saw his son and had compassion, he RAN....He wasn't worried about embarasment or what the neighbors mi;ght think , or anything else. HE RAN AND EMBRACED HIM:, AND KISSED HIM.

The Greek say he did this over and over. He smothered the boy with kisses.

Every time I read this story I feel motivated to talk to my Heaven Father. How about you? He loves me like that. ~~If I would just come back to him..~~ ~~No~~ matter how I might have offended Him, or ignored him in my life. ~~If~~ I would just come back, he would throw His arms around me and kisses the fire out of me and say, "BILL, WELCOME BACK."

Let me throw some facts your way.....

Death row..federal penatentary..prison pychologist..92% of all the men never had a father show them any physial affection.

From the gay community...guy rights advocates --not those attacking them---but coming from those within the guy community---number one reason--~~lack~~ ^{lack} of affection from a Father.

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You tell me it is not important for a Fther to show affection? And I have ~~man~~ all the time tell me: "Hay! I am just not like that." REALLY? Then start learning. I pray that every day you are home ..that your kids cann't help but be touched and kisses and huged, or whatever, by you.

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Hay! There is something really wrong. There is a lot of us right now that has pain in our hearts because our Fathers never did show us any affection. And we are still suffering from it whether we realize it or not.

But, thank God for a heavenly father who can make all the difference in the world. A Heavenly Father can show us his love. And we learn. And some of us need to change about giving affection to our children.

Hay! I know the problem when the kids get a little older..especiall the boys...And they come to you and say..Dad, I am a little old for that...

I remember when I was first told by ^{my} the oldest son to shake his hand. I grasped his hand and pulled him to me and kissed him anyway. (ha)

Our kids show us affection. And we ^{show} them affection. And it is wonderful even long after ^{they} you are married

Let me tell you something. This society is hurting because Dads are not showing affection. Oh, let me tell you..there are enough problems without added to it by lack of affection...by lack of showing love.

The Father ran towards that boy. He embraced him; and repeatedly kissed Him. He didn't wait for that boy to beg forgiveness. Oh, know. He ran down the road and embraced him, and kissed him; ,

And there maybe some one ^{here} here today. You are away from God. And you know it.. And you feel empty inside. Listen, one step towards our heavenly Father and He is down that road throwing His arms around you saying..."WELCOME HOME..I MISSED YOU..I LOVE YOU..."

A FATHER'S HEART SHOWS AFFECTION.

(6) The sixth thing I would share with you is that a Father's heart honors his children. He honors them. Look at Vs 22.."Bring out the best robe and put it on him, put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this son of mine was dead, and has come too life agains. And they began to be merry."

The father honored his son. (LIFE SAVORS)

Interesting how in the parablss that were told previous to this --the emphasises is on rejoying when something is found. In chapter 15 verse 5, concerning the lost sheep, it says ...(READ Vs 5-7)

I read in the lost coin parable Vs 9....(Read Vs 9-10)

Even though no one else cares, God does. And God honors us. ~~And will honor us.~~ The Bible says in I John 3."Beloved, behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God." "And it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as He is..."

My friends, we haven't begun to see how God is going to honor us. Listen, a Father, knowing what his children ^{are} like, still honors them. That is what a Father's heart is all about. ^(Life grows)

(7) AND ONE LAST THING. ^{when} ~~What~~ you say, WHAT IS A FATHER'S HEART? I draw your attention to the end of this story with the older brother. Vs 28 says that this older brother became angry and would not go into the party and the Father came out and pleaded with him. And tried to get him to understand.

And I put down for my own benefit. And I hope it will be a blessing for you.. A FATHER'S HEART PLEADS WITH HIS CHILDREN TO UNDERSTAND HIS WAYS.

All of a sudden the whole Bible became something different in my heart. It just became a new blessing. I saw this whole Book as a Father's heart pleading with His children to understand his reasons ^{and His Ways}

A lot of us are suffering because we don't know the Father. We don't understand his ways or his reasons.

I will give you an example and then we are finished. Turn to Isa. chapter 55..I hope this will bless you as it did my heart. Isa chp. 55. A FATHER'S HEART PLEADS WITH HIS CHILDREN TO UNDERSTAND HIS WAYS. And our heavenly Father wants us to know his ways. And a lot of us don't understand at all.

~~*~~ I read in Isa 55 verse 6 these words....(READ Vs 6-9)

We don't know the Father's heart. We don't ^{know} His ways. And isn't it interesting that a lot of people who know the Bible and have quoted this. ^{Verse} God's way are not our ways, and God's thoughts are not our thoughts!!..... apply it in ^{a different way} ~~other context~~ then the one that is here? ^{in the text}

Because the context, here, is that it is saying that God is forgiving people who don't ^{deserve} ~~deserve~~ it. His ways are not our ways. ^{He Forgives U} ARN'T YOU THANKFUL FOR THAT? Aren't you glad that God doesn't punish you according to what you deserve? WHAT A WONDERFUL LORD WE HAVE.

His ways are not our ways. We need the father's heart. If you are listening to me, now, and you know that you are away from Him. ^{The Lord} ~~Our Heavenly Father~~

You are drifting away from your heavenly Father and you know it. There is one motive that I give to you for coming back. And it is this: who He is. Come home to the Father. He loves you.

And a lot of us who claim to be Christians have drifted away from the Father's heart. You are doing what you want to do instead of committing your heart and life to Jesus. Let me tell you something. The Father still loves you and want you to come home to Him.

A man came to see his pastor. He said: "Pastor, I just can't seem to love God. I don't think I am good enough to love the Lord."

The pastor said, "Don't worry about it. God loves you just like you are." And God loves you just like you are. I invite you to come home to the Father's heart.

Let's close in prayer

Just as I am