

6/15/08

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON Exodus 19:2-8a page

(God promises that His chosen people will be His treasured possession.)

2 After they set out from Rephidim, they entered the Desert of Sinai, and Israel camped there in the desert in front of the mountain. 3 Then Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain and said, "This is what you are to say to the house of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: 4 'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. 5 Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, 6 you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites."

7 So Moses went back and summoned the elders of the people and set before them all the words the LORD had commanded him to speak. 8 The people all responded together, "We will do everything the LORD has said."

THE EPISTLE LESSON Romans 5:6-11 page

(Through Jesus' death and resurrection we are reconciled to God.)

6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. 7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! 10 For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! 11 Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

THE GOSPEL LESSON Matthew 9:35--10:8 page

(Jesus sends His disciples to the chosen people, to proclaim that the kingdom of heaven is near.)

35 Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. 36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. 38 Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

1 He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. 2 These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; 3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; 4 Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. 5 These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions:

"Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. 6 Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. 7 As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.' 8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.

SERMON TEXT - Matthew 7:9-12

9 "Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake?

11 If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

12 So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

INTRO - A friend of mine is a pastor who was teaching one time when Kathy and I were present, and he told a sad story about his wife's childhood. "For a long time she had trouble saying the Lord's Prayer. Her father was abusive. Saying 'Our Father' hurt."

All one has to do is scan the newspapers to see examples of abusive parents, and abusive fathers.

What really hurts is when we as parents know we have failed our children. I know that when I get stressed I can have a short temper. My family has seen it. My kids have seen it. How about you? Can you think of things you did as a parent you now regret. On Fathers' Day, before we talk about Fathers, I want to be realistic. All earthly parents have failed at times.

But, abuse makes the news. Fatherly love is something that is often expected, and we sometimes take for granted. So, today, I want you to think of a time you were blessed by your father, or by someone God put in your life as a father figure. Think of something your father did, or your grandfather, a pastor, teacher, neighbor that has blessed you with fatherly love.

As you think I want you to know, parents and children, the standards God has for fathers. So I want you to take your bulletins and turn to the blank back page and write down 4 Bible verses about Fathers. You can look them up in the Bible if you want.

Write down Psalm 103:13. Here God says, **As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him;** God intends for fathers to be loving and compassionate to their children.

Now write down Proverbs 22:6 God tells parents, and fathers, **Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.** You will see that the primary role God has for parents and fathers is to teach children, especially about God.

Write down Ephesians 6:4 **Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.** Fathers are not to be overbearing, but instead to train and instruct children, PRIMARILY about the Lord. This verse doesn't say mothers, it says Fathers, though this is the job of all parents. Fathers, have you worked to teach your children about God?

Finally, write down Hebrews 12 12:7-10 . Here God says, **Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? 8 If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. 9 Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! 10 Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness.** Fathers are to discipline their children. This means teaching, and maybe punishing to do so. Ultimately this teaches us about our heavenly Father.

So, parents, Fathers, in God's plan are to love and instruct their children, especially about God. The best way to teach, by the way, is by example. And a dad is a dad as long as his children live.

I spent last week with my mom and dad. My mom has been ill, and was the worst I had seen her when I got to FL. My dad is really in pretty good shape. Most mornings between 3:30 and 4:30 a.m. he goes to the gym and works out. So he is able to care for my mom, and he does. He gives her medicine, feeds her, gets her to the doctor, stays home to care for her. It is not easy for my dad. He could be out doing other things since he is healthy. He spends his time loving and caring for his wife of 56 years. Last week, my dad taught me another lesson, about marriage, about love, and about father hood.

I went to church with my dad last Sunday. We sat, uncharacteristically in the back, because he wanted to leave early and get home to my mom. He knew I would want to stay and visit with friends, so he told me, "You can stay, I'm going to go to the first table of communion and get home (he didn't say, to take care of mom.)" So, my dad who seemingly always obeys the rules cut in the communion line and was up at the first table. Others were up there with family and friends. He was by himself, head bowed, waiting for the Lord's forgiveness and strength in communion. He reminded me of the picture of the older man at a table alone praying over a loaf of bread. The humble sincere faith of this man who is my father shone through. His example taught me about God, about love, and about faithfulness.

Our sermon text for today tells us that, to a certain extent, we can expect fathers, even in their sin and failures, to seek to love their children. **9 "Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? 11 If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"**

Dads do provide for children, and love them, and give them gifts. I hope you can think of ways your father, or someone in his place has blessed you.

Now think of what this verse is really saying. **11 If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in**

heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! No matter how loving or faithful our earthly fathers have been, our heavenly Father is even more loving and generous. He gives good!!!

The ultimate gift he gave was, his own divine son, Jesus our Savior. Fathers love their sons, but God loved us enough to send Jesus to suffer, and die, and rise for us. The love of God can help today's fathers to be better fathers. When fathers fail today, our Heavenly Father does not.

I got a story this week about a young girl on a plane. It seems that a plane was making a trip and it flew through some thunder storms and hit some terrible turbulence. Most looked worried. A pastor on board looked around and saw others praying as he was. All were worried except this girl, who was reading a book and had a smile on her face. At the end of the trip the Pastor asked the girl why she wasn't scared. She said, 'I didn't need to be scared. My dad's the pilot, and he's taking me home.'

God wants you to know that through life's trials, he is in charge, and your heavenly Father is taking you home. One way he does that is with faithful, Christian, earthly Fathers.