

Fathers

Introduction:

- Tell about the 5th Grade advertising assignment – to adapt well known commercial slogans to reflect/comment on God
- They were all good. –(Share a few here)-
- However, not surprisingly there was one stood struck be as being the best (anything you have a lost or collections of things one will be better than the rest and one will be the bottom of the list)
- Perhaps it was because I had heard it or something like it before and liked it then and it now had an added sense of familiarity.
- Perhaps it was because to me it is right on target and so clearly illuminates one of, in not God’s most distinguishing characteristics.
- It was an adoption of the Hallmark greeting card company’s slogan, “When you care enough to send the very best.” It may be that the Hallmark people were thinking of God when they came up with their slogan, and whether they were or not doesn’t change anything – since God so loved the world that he sent the very best – his son.

P1 ()::

- Lets take a few minutes to compare how God treats us to how we treat each other
- Jacob and Esau – when Jacob was returning to make things right with his brother he sent his family and all his employees ahead – as a buffer while he stayed behind.
- There was that time when Jesus and his mother were attending a wedding.
 - It was a casual thing this turning water into wine – but even in such a simple thing Jesus offered the best, not just enough to get by
 - We tend to serve the best first- saving the ordinary and less appealing for later. As we read in the scriptures they did that at the weddings, we do in when we are dating or meeting someone new (putting our best foot forward, My grandparents had a formal living room where they entertained company, and the list goes on and on. But not God. Not Jesus. Start with the best and then stay with the best
 - Jesus didn’t make cheap wine, and God does not offer cheap grace
- Then there was the matter of God’s sending Jesus for our salvation
 - The question inevitably comes up about why God sent Jesus and why Jesus had to die that we might be redeemed.
 - Some say that it just had to be that way – that there was a wrong, that there was a debt and that it had to be paid. No arguing the fact that there was a wrong committed, and more wrongs committed every day. There is no arguing the point that there is a debt to be paid,
 - And maybe Jesus’ death on the cross is the only way. However, a case can be made that God being God can just decide to forgive the debt. There are certainly examples pointing to a solution like that in scripture (The king who forgave the man the vast debt, Esau forgiving his brother Jacob, Joseph forgiving his brothers.
 - Whatever the actual legal, theological, and practical answer may be, the simple fact that God chose to send Jesus and Jesus accepted the mission and the cross stand as incontrovertible prove that God clearly cared enough to send the very best

P2 (Some thoughts on fathers)::

- In some cases I know more than others but in reality I don’t know where you stand with your (earthly) father or what kind of man he was. I hope that he was a good man and a good father. I hope that good or bad, you take some time this afternoon to think about your fathers.
- There were times when my father was the center of my world.
- There were times when I thought my father (and mother) had to be two of the dumbest, meanest, people that had ever lived.
- There were times when I thought of my father as a pillar of strength a man able to do anything.
- Then there were the times when I had to offer him my support just to walk across the room.

- The simple fact of the matter is that my dad was an ordinary man doing the best that he could to love and provide for his family. I rather suspect that Dad didn't change all that much over the years – It was my perception of him that changed.

P3 Psalm 9:9-20 ():

- V-9 (*The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.*)
 - Dad and my first car. Several times it broke down and stranded me. Dad was always there to rescue me and to fix the car
 - God answers our prayers when we are in need
- V-10 (*Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you*)
 - Dad and the quarters. All I knew/thought about was that they bought a lot of candy. It wasn't until I was much older that I realized what Dad had to do to get that quarter (He was probably earning \$1.25 or maybe a little more) and how many other places that quarter was needed
 - We humans tend to forget (deliberately or intentionally) how much it cost god to love us
- V-11 (*Sing praises to the LORD, enthroned in Zion; proclaim among the nations what he has done*)
 - I didn't do all that well on this one with my father. There were many times that I deeply disappointed him and mom. I am ashamed to admit it, but there were times when I was ashamed of them.
 - We treat God the same way. Jesus even mentioned it. Mark 8:38 (*If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels.*)
- V-16 (*The LORD is known by his justice; the wicked are ensnared by the work of their hands. Higgsion. Selah*)
 - I grew up in a time when fathers were generally more like the vision of God we get from the Old Testament than like the vision of a loving God revealed through Jesus in the New Testament. Handing down laws and punishing those who break them. Even allowing them to be sent into exile. (I was frequently exiled to a corner or to my room for some transgression or other)
 - Even so, looking back at those days I see clearly now what I did not see or understand then – How truly and profoundly loved I was

Conclusion:

- There is something else about Dads and God – and that is our tendency to ignore them and their advice
- It is clear to even the most casual observer that we are in over our heads. If our lives were like a boat on the sea, then we are certainly in the boat as the disciples (Mark 4:35-41)
- There is a storm blowing and we are taking on water fast.
- We are bailing like crazy but it just isn't working
- Even so we are unwilling to jettison the unnecessary things that are weighing us down
- We are so focused on our situation, our danger, and our failed efforts to fight and control the storm that we forget that we have Jesus there with us. We try to handle it ourselves instead of seeking his help.
- We forget to turn to God and ask for his help.
- The good news is that God is right there in the boat with us, ready, willing, and absolutely able to help.