

9AM & 11:15 Notes Sunday (Father's Day) 6/16/19 – Jeff Lyle

“Father To Fathers” Psalms 78:1-11 9AM

Many challenges face the 21st Century father. He is called to provide through hard work and financial earning. He is called to sacrificially love his wife if he is married. Christian fathers are expected to serve God as those who have been saved by grace and empowered by Holy Spirit. There are a host of other smaller responsibilities that constantly cycle in and out of a man's daily life. Many men are weary, worn and discouraged. Sometimes, if we are honest, our children get only what is left over after all the other withdrawals on us are complete. This message sounds an awakening alarm for fathers to reengage their hearts with their children and grandchildren as concerns the Kingdom of God. Right underneath our call to love our wives is our call to love and invest in our children. This has always been the design of God and, when fathers will prioritize this privilege from Heaven, glorious things are able to be passed from one generation to the next.

I. The Desire of God for Fathers (1-3a)

A. For us to cultivate a listening heart (1a) - “Give ear, O My people, to My teaching...”

The Psalmist summons us to attention. Writing on behalf of God, we are called in verse number one to posture ourselves as intentional learners. We are to listen to what is about to be released.

B. For us to maintain a receptive heart (1b) - “...incline your ears to the words of My mouth.”

Beyond merely hearing the words, we are to incline ourselves to receive understanding. We must live with an intentional teachability, especially in the area of what the Psalmist is about to share with us. He plans to take us into a history journey with God. He wants us to learn from previous generations of fathers and what God empowered them to release into their children.

C. For us to prioritize a retaining heart (2-3a) - “...I will utter dark sayings from of old: things that we have heard and known...”

Subtly here, the Psalmist implies that he is about to tell us long-standing truths that have been at work since ancient times. Previous generations have stewarded these things well. As he writes them down in the following verses, the question which should arise in our hearts is the degree to which we ourselves are stewarding these truths and practices in our own

9AM & 11:15 Notes Sunday (Father's Day) 6/16/19 – Jeff Lyle

generation, specifically, on behalf of our children's need to know God's ways, words and works.

II. The Privilege God Offers Fathers (3b-5)

A. A long-standing pattern of influence (3b) - "...that our fathers have told us."

From the beginning, fathers have been called to impart the knowledge of God to their children. How blessed is the person who can testify that their dad taught them of God and made sure that they had opportunity to know Him, love Him, and trust Him.

B. A committed continuance (4a) - "...we will not hide them from their children..."

The Psalmist expresses here in writing his desire for his own generation of fathers to follow through on the long-standing pattern of paternal influence for the glory of God. Elsewhere in Scripture, in Deuteronomy 4:9 we read, *"Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children's children."* Our children deserve to hear, learn and understand from their earthly fathers the most important truths that can be known. They need to receive the Kingdom of God through the regular witness of their fathers. Should we keep silent through indifference or neglect, we hide the most important influence that we can possibly offer to our children.

C. A life-shaping witness (4b-5) - "...but tell them to the coming generation - the glorious deeds of the Lord, and His might, and the wonders that He has done. 5 He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers to teach to their children."

Here it is, dads! We have a command to tell the coming generations about the glorious deeds and might of God. We can father our children in the faith by boasting in God and releasing personal testimonies from how we have been encountered by Him. Our children need to hear of our salvation. They need to hear of our victories in the faith. Children deserve transparency from their fathers concerning sin, conviction and repentance. Not only should we impart the truths of the bible to our children, we should tell them of our

9AM & 11:15 Notes Sunday (Father's Day) 6/16/19 – Jeff Lyle

personal relationship with Jesus so that they may desire to have one of their own with Him.

III. How God Designs to Use Fathers (6-7)

A. Generational impartation (6) - **“That the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children.”**

It really is not too complex. God wants each generation to impart Kingdom vision and values to the next generation. Specifically, God calls fathers to proactively arise and speak God's ways and words into their offspring. We are not to settle down comfortably. We are to arise up in the Kingdom. Our children need our words. They need to hear from us that God is great. Whatever is greatest to earthly fathers is likely to become what their children consider to be great. Living intentionally to impart truth about God to our offspring is the design of God for human fathers.

B. Generational focus (7a) - **“So that they should set their hope in God...”**

The result of this passing of the kingdom from fathers to their children is that a hope in God is birthed in successive generations. When life's meaning is not anchored in God's ways, words and works, children will instinctually scramble looking for somewhere else to anchor their sense of hope and assurance. God wants every generation to hope in Him alone. Fathers are designed to intentionally point their children to God. We must not point them to success, money, beauty, sex or power as the place of their fulfillment and hope. We impart to them a high confidence in God and a deep trust in His truth.

C. Generational honor of His Word (7b) - **“...and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments.”**

It seems odd that this Psalm mentions more than once the possibility of us and our children forgetting God. This happens through incremental negligence. Most people will neglect God before they deny God. Distraction with more earthly things leads to indifference to God and all that pertains to Him. When we become indifferent to God, we neglect Him and eventually lose our focus from off of Him. We are to remember Him. We are to keep Him foremost in our thoughts. We are to so highly regard His written word that we read it, study it, allow it to frame up our beliefs and then we obey all

9AM & 11:15 Notes Sunday (Father's Day) 6/16/19 – Jeff Lyle

that we believe. God's Word is not an option or luxury to fathers. We need to be defined by what is said therein. Then, we must impart it to our children so they can become wise in what God says. In a distracted generation that is bored with God's book, the generational honoring of the Bible is imperative for today's fathers.

IV. The Cautions God Releases to Fathers (8-11)

A. Learn from previous generational mistakes (8a) - "And that they should not be like their fathers..."

All of us can learn from the mistakes of our parents. Specifically, men should never assume that all that their fathers were or did was perfect. Fathers are, at best, saved sinners who are in process of being sanctified. They will make mistakes, often big ones. In this way, we should not be like them. We must always obey the command to honor our fathers, but we do not need to always emulate them. Truthfully, there are elements about our earthly fathers to which God says, "Do not be like your dad." May we be wise not to pass to our children anything unhealthy that our father passed down to us.

B. Never quit fighting for your children's souls (8b-10) - "...a **stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God. 9 The Ephraimites, armed with the bow, turned back on the day of battle. 10 They did not keep God's covenant but refused to walk according to his law.**"

The Ephraimites had all that they needed to impart God's glory and Kingdom testimony to their children. What they lacked was heart to finish the fight. They, along with other tribes in Israel, proved to be stubborn and rebellious through their indifference to God's plan. They possessed fickle hearts and did not live steadfastly unto God. This simply means that sometimes they were in, sometimes they were not. The reason is because they had never embraced faithful commitment to God within their own spirits. The result is that the Ephraimites turned back and refused to continue the fight when the battles became too much for them. God had given them everything needed to win their battles so that their children could walk in victory. They had hands full of weapons but hearts empty of courage and commitment.

9AM & 11:15 Notes Sunday (Father's Day) 6/16/19 – Jeff Lyle

C. Keep God's ways, words & works central in your thoughts (11) - "They forgot his works and the wonders that he had shown them."

Much is gained by remembering the ways, words and works of God. If we centralize within us who God is, what He says and how He operates, it is assured that we will experience victory and breakthrough than we would if we forget God. Notice that the indictment is not that they overtly rebelled against God. It is more passive. They simply forgot Him. This can occur today when our lives become so dominated by work, school, athletics, hobbies, money and responsibilities. God can actually be squeezed out of His rightful place at the center of our lives. The caution from the Lord is to remember Him and to never lose our awareness of His great works. We all impart that which is most central to our thoughts and practices. Whatever is in our core comes out through our pores. When we refuse to forget God, He flows from us. If we become preoccupied with lesser things, our spiritual pores clog. Fathers must finish their lives fighting to keep God centermost, steadfastly battling for the souls of our children and grandchildren and ending our days better than we began.

11:15 Notes Below

9AM & 11:15 Notes Sunday (Father's Day) 6/16/19 – Jeff Lyle

“Abraham: Father of Faith” Genesis 22:1-14 11:15AM

It is the will of God that our faith continues to deepen throughout our entire faith-journey. Faith begins with our salvation, but it cannot terminate there. Faith is a spiritual muscle that must be stretched and exercised if it is to grow. Few people in the bible reveal a better response to these faith-stretching seasons better than Abraham. As God tested Abraham's faith, we are empowered and instructed to recognize the dynamics of what happens inside of us as God tests our own faith. How Abraham responded to the alarming plans of God proves him as a fit father to faith.

I. A Father's Faith Evaluated in Times of Testing (1-2)

Here is where we see Abraham's resilient faith on display.

A. An unexpected test (1) - “After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.”

After making the obedient decision at an old age to venture out into the unknown with God, for quite some time, Abraham had lived untroubled, unprovoked and untested. Promises had been fulfilled earlier which provided the son of promise, Isaac. Isaac was older now and Abraham had enjoyed him for many years in the father/son relationship. Abraham had proven himself in the arena of having faith that waits. God was about to raise the stakes to take Abraham to a higher level of trust.

B. An unbelievable test (2) - He said, “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.”

We cannot imagine what these words from God must have felt like to Abraham. God was calling Abraham from a waiting-faith unto a releasing-faith. God was telling Abraham to offer up his only son of promise as a sacrifice to God. This was a testing that Abraham never could have anticipated.

1. The test affected Abraham's emotions- “Take... your only son, Isaac, whom you love...”
2. The test affected Abraham's will - “...and go to the land of Moriah”

9AM & 11:15 Notes Sunday (Father's Day) 6/16/19 – Jeff Lyle

3. The test affected Abraham's faith - "...and offer him there as a burnt offering..."

Abraham had already given up his: homeland & father's house, his idols, his son of the flesh, and his trust in the physical. When God puts His finger on what is dearest to us, are we willing to give it up in sacrifice?

GOD'S COMMAND TO ABRAHAM TO SACRIFICE ISAAC:

1. Seemed excruciatingly cold hearted
2. Appeared contradictory to His previously revealed will that Isaac would be the son of blessing
3. Made Abraham feel absolutely powerless within the context of what God was doing with him
4. Came with no explanations, reassurance, or any new promises
5. Would cause Abraham to turn loose of what was dearest to him, namely Isaac
6. Caused Abraham to rely exclusively and at a new level on what he had previously learned about his God
7. WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN SUPPORTED BY A SOUL IF ABRAHAM HAD SHARED IT WITH THEM.
8. Tested Abraham on who was REALLY in control of Abraham's life
9. Would permanently affect the future of Abraham's family, no matter what he decided
10. Was an invisible test that Abraham would have to approach by pure faith alone

II. A Father's Faith Displayed in Times of Obedience (3-5)

As a father of faith, we now see Abraham displaying reverent faith.

9AM & 11:15 Notes Sunday (Father's Day) 6/16/19 – Jeff Lyle

A. Abraham obeyed without hesitation (3) - “So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.”

This verse reads so matter-of-factly. I assure you that it was excruciating for Abraham, alone in his knowledge of what God was calling him to do, to obey during these initial moments of obedience. Every action he took pointed toward the baffling assignment to sacrifice Isaac. Abraham revered the assignment and honored God by obeying quickly what He had been told.

B. Abraham obeyed in the face of uncertainty (4) - “On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar.”

Three days of journeying toward Mount Moriah would have been heavy as Abraham walked with his son and servants. He had not told a soul that we know of. In his mind he likely kept waiting for God to remove the test and reverse the course. Three days with no intervention from God led Abraham to the place where he would have to sacrifice his son. *What could he have been feeling as the mountain came into view?* We are not told. We are simply told that he continued his march in reverent faith, obeying God more than he obeyed his emotions.

C. Abraham obeyed by trusting God's word (5) - “Then Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you.”

Further evidence that Abraham revered God is seen in his words here. In Genesis 21:12, God had promised Abraham that his descendants would be through Isaac. He believed God's promise. When he instructs the servants that they were to wait for him and Isaac to go to the mountain and return to them, it is clear that he believed God would work accordingly to the promise He made Abraham so many years before. Abraham did not know how, but he knew that God would not break His promise concerning Isaac.

III. A Father's Faith Applied in Times of Uncertainty (6-10)

Now we see Abraham's relentless faith on display.

9AM & 11:15 Notes Sunday (Father's Day) 6/16/19 – Jeff Lyle

A. Our uncertainty should never interfere with our obedience (6) - "And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together."

Abraham was acting in faith: He (1) took the wood, (2) laid it upon Isaac, (3) took the fire in his hand, & (4) Abraham and Isaac went up the mountain. Each progressive step was more difficult than the previous, and served as a potential opportunity for Abraham to bail out of the test and save his son.

B. Our uncertainty wants to grow when tough questions are asked (7) - "And Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." He said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"

Now things start to become painfully uncomfortable. Isaac may have been sensing that something was off because there was no animal to sacrifice. He asks his dad for an explanation that Abraham had no capacity to give. Abraham must have been thinking, "I don't know what God is doing, but what He will do will be right." He expressed relentless faith in his God, even as the unavoidable moment was getting closer.

C. Our uncertainty must kneel at the feet of faith (8-10) - " Abraham said, "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So they went both of them together. 9 When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. 10 Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son."

Relentless faith was expressed in Abraham's words when he said, "God will provide for Himself the lamb..." Relentless faith was also displayed in Abraham's works as we are told that he built an altar, bound his son, and brandished the knife to kill Isaac in obedient faith to God's command.

IV. A Father's Faith Matured in Times of Understanding (11-14)

As the end of the test arrives, we will see Abraham's rewarded faith.

A. God intervenes (11-12) - 11 But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 12 He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that

9AM & 11:15 Notes Sunday (Father's Day) 6/16/19 – Jeff Lyle

you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.”

It was all a test. God didn't want Isaac. He just wanted more of Abraham! The angel of the lord was none other than a pre-incarnate vision of God. Remember that Abraham did not know this was going to occur. His faith was so radical that he was willing to release the thing he loved most to the plans of God. He would have killed Isaac if God had not stopped him. The Lord stepped up and intervened, bringing the long and painful text to an end in dramatic, last-minute fashion.

B. God illuminates (13) - "And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son."

Abraham saw what had been there all along: God's provision of the ram. Obedience produces vision for what God is doing. In the moment where his faith was fully validated as being genuine and obedient, Abraham saw what God had provided for the sacrifice. As with Abraham, *the how* of God's plan does not materialize until we obey *the what* of God's plan. Sometimes God will give clear instructions to us without providing any of the details of how he or we will see things come to pass. We obey anyway. Courage is more valuable than clarity.

C. God instructs (14) - " So Abraham called the name of that place, "The Lord will provide"; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided."

God's lesson taught Abraham that his Lord was completely trustworthy. Abraham's amazing faith and obedience taught Isaac, the son, to trust his God no matter the difficulty! We all have to allow faith to take us through its full course in order to understand what God is like. We have to let the tests become complete in order to grasp the full benefits that are attached to faith. Abraham's story reveals to us the power of trusting God in the most intense testings. In this, Abraham proves to be the father of faith.