

The Little Big Things
Fathers Day 2024
June 16, 2024

Today we gather in this place to honor our father's. I would like to frame out today's gathering with this word. **"Reflection"**.

Definition of REFLECTION

- 1: an instance of reflecting; especially : the return of light or sound waves from a surface
- 2: **something produced by reflecting: as an image given back by a reflecting surface**

As we travel through our lives, you are going to find the image of your Father on the reflective surfaces of your world.

Show DVD: Fathers surprise

As we reflect on the times and events of our lives, a glint of light will often reflect off a memory of our fathers and remind of an event...and that event becomes part of our story...if you think about it, our heart is often exposed by the stories that we tell about our Father. In a sense those reflections often give our lives direction, and provides for us in our journey.

Those reflections remind us of times of joy, of when we were afraid, or lacked courage. And dad was there. Stories about what happened as we lived and interacted with someone that was larger than life. Stronger. Even mysterious.

When we leave home, I want you to know that our dads have just a hard of time letting us go as do moms. Its' just different. And no matter how far we go from home...it is the reflection of those memories, those stories about our dads that connect us through time and past the miles.

For each on of us the term "father" has different meanings and shades of variation. This is because our definition is based not on a dictionary, but what was and is seen through the eyes of a child. I want for us to draw near and see a fathers heart.

The One who can best speak of a father is his child. Jesus loves to brag on His Father. In fact in the gospels Jesus always refers to God as "abba". For us it is difficult to understand how revolutionary it was to call Jehovah "Abba". In fact in no place in the prayer literature of ancient Judaism is God referred as "Papa".

Jesus referred to God this way because that is who He is. Papa. Of all of God's names, I believe that "Father" is His favorite. In the gospel of John, Jesus repeats this name 156 times.

Jesus revealed the heart of our Father over and over again.

In Luke 15 Jesus tells the parable of the prodigal son. But within that portrait is a clear picture of the Father...it's the ending of that story that reveals a father's heart...

Down from the house the father runs...and up a narrow path the son has struggled.

The two meet at the gate.

You can't see the face of the son; it's buried in the chest of his father. What we can see mud and filth on his clothes, and an empty purse on the ground. When the boy left home he was full of pride...now both the purse and the pride are depleted. In his father's arms he offers all that he has left...

"Father, I have sinned against God and done wrong to you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son." Luke 15:21

Show the DVD: The Prodigal

He feels unworthy of his birthright. Demote me. Punish me.

The boy is content to a hired hand...

There is only one problem...though the boy is willing to stop being a son, the father is not willing to stop being a father.

Though we can't see the boy's face in this portrait, we see the father's clearly. Look at the tears glistening on the leathered cheeks, the smile shining through the silver beard. One arm holds the boy up so he won't fall, the other holds him close so he won't doubt...

Hurry...he shouts. "bring the best robe and put it on him, put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf so we can have a feast and celebrate. My son was dead, but now he is alive again...he was lost but now he is found.

Luke 15:22-24

The boy thought that he'd lost his place in the home. The boy assumed that he had forfeited his privilege to sonship. Jesus tells us with gladness that the father doesn't give up that easily. In the father's mind a son is still a son. The child may have been out of the house, but he was never out of his father's heart.

He may have left the table, but he never left the family.

Don't miss the treasure of a father's heart...you may be willing to stop being God's child...but God is not willing to stop being your Father...

Jesus told the disciples and us that God desires for us to live in Him. Jesus proclaimed with joy these words...

read Jn. 14:1-3

"Let not your heart be troubled...if you believe in God, believe also in me...in my Father's house are many rooms...

Let me ask you a question...why would God want you to share His home?

It's simple...that the heart of a father...what's a home without sons and daughters to share it with?

You were intended to live in your Father's house. Any place less than His house is insufficient...any place far from his is dangerous. Only the home that was built by His heart can protect your heart. Make no mistake about this your Father wants you to dwell in him.

You see our father doesn't just ask you to live with him, he asks you to live in him. As Paul wrote, "For in Him we live and move and have our being." (Acts 17:28)

This brings me to a statement that King David made so well. When it comes to finding a place of rest for your soul, there is no place better than to abide with the Father.

Read Psalm 27:4-5

The Message paraphrased these verses this way:

I'm asking Yahweh for one thing, only one thing; to live with Him in His house my whole life long. I'll contemplate His beauty, I'll study at His feet. That's the only secure place in a noisy world."

If you could ask God for one thing, what would you request? David tells us what he would ask for. He longs to live in the house of God. He longs to dwell in the Father's presence. You see David doesn't want to just sit and chat with God. He doesn't desire a cup of coffee and a nice quiet time with God on the porch. He doesn't ask for a meal or to spend an evening in God's house. He wants to move in with Him...forever.

He's asking for a place, a room, for his own room...forever. He seeks a lifelong residence in God's house.

At the end of Psalm 23 David declares this: "And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

David is declaring that he craves to remain in the atmosphere, and in the awareness of God's house, wherever he is and wherever he goes.

He wants to abide "in" God.

Just as our earthly house is a place of refuge, so God's house, His heart is a place for us to dwell.

Moses knew this. "Lord," he prayed, "you have been our home since the beginning." Ps. 90:1.

My father created a home within me with the things he did and said.

One of the things that I can hear as I remember being a little boy was the phrase "**I've got you!**"

As we were learning to swim...I remember my dad saying over and over "don't worry, I've got you". As I learned to ride a bike, I heard his voice behind me...keep peddling I've got you...as we would wade into the creek to fish...don't worry...I'm right here...I've got

you...these are words that spoke to a little boy and eased my fears. They speak to me still as a man and a father.

In 2004, me, my sons and my dad went fishing on the canal. We were climbing down the steep bank and my dad slipped...and instinctively I reached out and grabbed him...and I said these words...**don't worry...I've got you...**

Now as a grown son...with sons of my own, I say these words...thanks dad...for all that you have written on my heart...

I am a better man because of you...Don't worry about anything Dad...I've got you...

The heart of our father is a place where we can rest as sons and daughters...dads for all the times that you showed us glimpses of our heavenly father...we say thanks....

Selah