

## **Life and Loving Kindness**

Father's Day Sermon - June 19, 2022

**Scripture Readings:** 1 Thessalonians 2:10-16 & Job 1:1-6

**Golden Verse:** "You gave me life and showed me kindness, and in your providence watched over my spirit." Job 10:12

It's Father's Day, and today we are focusing on fathers who, by God's grace, are with us, as well on those who have already gone forward into eternal glory.

We should reflect on those gifts that we take for granted. We have to truly notice, not only with our eyes but also with our hearts, those who are closest to us. Today, we should be especially grateful for the fathers, who have become the meaning of life and grace for us.

### **What is a caring good father like?**

Let's start with the word of Job, which we read as our golden verse: and I just read: *"You gave me life and showed me kindness, and in your providence watched over my spirit"* Job 10:12.

The suffering Job is obviously saying this sentence to God, the Father, but we can say this, borrowing his words and his thoughts to our fathers. God gave us life and love through our parents: our mothers and our fathers.

My hope is that, not only today on Father's Day but always, a lot of people look at their fathers with gratitude. My hope is that, not only today on Father's Day but always, fathers give thanks for their children as gifts from God. Family life is a huge resource. A happy childhood and a warm-hearted, loving home are irreplaceable for all of us.

### **I would like to address first a few thoughts to those who need healing in their hearts if they think of their fathers.**

It is never too late to face our feelings, rethink our lives, be grateful for good things, and forgive the bad and the painful memories related to our fathers. Someone said that nothing can be forgotten but only deactivated. Nothing can be forgotten, neither good nor bad.

*Honour your father and your mother*, says God in the Ten Commandments. To honour and respect is harder than to love. There are many fathers who have failed to achieve true fatherhood, even though they wanted to. They couldn't be a good parent, even though they wanted to. Most fathers wanted to give their best, but they

couldn't because they hadn't been loved by their own fathers with unconditional love.

I am asking today, from all the people, to help their fathers who feel hurt by themselves today because they were not able to accomplish their call as a father completely. Tell them that you still love them. If they are gone from this earth, tell them you forgive them. If you can forgive, all the joys of life are yours today. Then you are free: free from anger, free from disappointment, and free from anger-related stress.

Every parent makes mistakes. There is no perfect parent. There is no perfect father. I say this to children and grandchildren who today think they will be perfect. If you love and respect your parents, it will make you happy because you can forgive with love, and your old painful memories will relax and slowly will disappear. Children, heal your parents and you will be healed! You who are parents, heal your children and you will be healed.

There is a song that says: I only remember the beautiful times. When someone says I only remember the beautiful times, they deceive themselves, because nothing can be totally forgotten. But the great gift of God is that painful things can be neutralized so that they are no longer hurtful or bitter. If you had a difficult childhood because of your father, and it still hurts the way he made you feel, please remember, that only the child within us is hurt by childhood wounds. We have to recognize that today we are adults, and we have to release the wounded child and the wounded childhood memories to be healed. We must grow up to ourselves who we are today.

**There is a concerning big question:** Where do our children receive a healthy and irreplaceable resource today? Certainly only in families where there is a constant relationship with God, where they are aware that *"the blessing of the Lord brings wealth, without painful toil for it"* Proverbs 10:22.

Job was such a father, from whose example every father can still learn boldly. He was an impeccable, honest, godly, who hated sin, and was richly rewarded by God with ten children and all kinds of earthly riches that made his life beautiful, good, and happy father.

Job was a very caring father. He was able to raise his children with cohesion, love, and respect. We read, *"His sons went to one another"* - they were celebrating birthdays together in a fellowship of love. There was no argument, controversy, litigation, or unrest among them, even after they left the parental home.

He raised them to become such blessed, good children. He was a father who led them to God. His children feared God and their faith shaped their character. They were known as fair and honest children who carefully avoided all that God forbade and they tried to keep all that God was expecting from them. We could say that, by raising his children in faith, he raised his children to be examples for us even almost 3,000 years later.

He took great care to keep his children close to God. We read that when the days of their parties were over, Job presented for his children a gift to God's altar, that God would forgive them if they committed any sin. Job was a father who did not send his children to the church, but brought them to the church. Job did not tell them to pray but he prayed with them. Job even offered a sacrifice to God every week to get forgiveness for the hidden thoughts of his children. He was a loving father who thought not only of himself but also of his children. He cared not only for their physical needs but also for their spiritual needs. He prayed not just in general for their children but, individually, for all of them.

Today, on Father's Day, we gratefully remember the fathers and grandfathers who once carried our childhood in prayer.

Today, we need to ask ourselves: is there an example in our lives for our children to follow safely? Will we, as parents today, develop in our children the strength of character, self-discipline, commitment to truth, faith in work ethic, and unwavering love for God? Do our children get all these values from us? Is our life more important to us than their lives?

We have to remember that we will be able to raise responsible and fair men and mature women out of our children only if we are in the right place as parents: close to God and close to our children!

May the Lord give us wisdom, faith, love, patience, and perseverance on a daily basis. Amen.