

# Father's Day

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[ 0 : 00 ] So good to see all of you here today. Praise the Lord. It's good to be back together in church again.

And it's Father's Day. If you had a father, would you raise your hand? If you didn't, I don't know what planet you're from.

But anyway, let's go to the Lord in prayer. Our Father. It's Father's Day and you are our ultimate Father.

Thank you, God, that we all have a perfect Father, you. Lord, none of us had a perfect human Father. They were all human.

Today we thank you for them and we forgive them as you help us to. We forgive them for where they were wrong. And Lord, those of us that are fathers, we confess our shortcomings and ask you to forgive us for where we have failed.

[ 1 : 03 ] And to bless our children and all who come after us. In spite of anything we have done that was not right. God, we all give you our lives again.

Speak to our hearts. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Today I want to tell you two true stories to kind of set the stage for my message.

And these are two true stories of two different men who grew up and lived in Chicago. And the first one is this guy right here.

His name was Butch O'Hare. Let me tell you about Butch. He was a World War II Navy pilot and a real American hero. Let me tell you his story of how he won the first ever Medal of Honor given to a Navy pilot.

It was the second year of World War II. He was in the Pacific Ocean fighting the Japanese. He was flying a small fighter plane off of an aircraft carrier.

[ 2 : 10 ] Now all that was new stuff. I mean aircraft carriers, airplanes that could take off from ships. You know that hadn't been done before really. And here it was World War II.

They were beginning to do it. These were not jets. These were propeller planes. And so anyway, he had been out on a typical mission, 1942. And he was on his way back to go back to the aircraft carrier.

He was down to almost no ammo. They estimate he had about 40 seconds of ammunition left in his .250 caliber machine guns that were mounted on his wings.

And his fuel was almost completely out. But, you know, they had planned it that way. Go do the mission. Use up your ammo. Enough fuel to get back.

So as he and his two or three guys he was with are coming back, they're totally out of ammo. All of them are running on empty. And they look below them.

[ 3 : 07 ] And heading directly toward their fleet were nine Japanese bomber aircraft going to bomb the fleet. And Butch O'Hare knew something had to be done.

Those were his friends on those ships. They were sitting ducks. They were going to get annihilated. And the other two guys didn't have any ammunition. He knew it was up to him if anything was going to happen.

They were down below him. He's almost out of fuel. And he said, well, I got to go for it. So he rolled out of the whatever the configuration, the flight group.

He just did this number. Then he goes, like, diving straight down on top of them. As he gets within range, he locked in on one of the aircraft and opened up his guns and fired some short bursts right at an engine.

He saw that engine burst into flames. He turned his plane quickly toward another bomber, opened up his machine guns. Another engine burst into flames. And right on his first run, he took down two

of those nine bombers.

[ 4 : 16 ] He cruised by them, you know, just. And they're like, where is that guy? Well, a bomber also has gunners on it. And so then they started looking for him.

And here he is now turning and coming back up toward him. So they start shooting at him. And he's doing all of his loop-de-loops and maneuvers. And his tank, his fuel tank is reading empty.

And he turns toward him again. And he opens up fire again. And this time he thinks, the best thing I can do is get in the middle of them and stay there. So then he's dodging in and out between them. The reason he thought that was best is they couldn't shoot at him too much without hitting each other. And so he was just right in the midst of them, circling around, diving, looping.

And every time one of them would get in his sights, he would open up his guns. He would open up his guns. He shot down in four minutes total five of those nine Japanese bombers.

[ 5 : 20 ] And then he was out of ammunition. And he thought, I'll crash into one more of them. I'll take one more of them down. And as he rose up in the air to do that, the four remaining decided, we've had enough.

At that moment, they didn't know he was out of ammunition. They turned around and headed back to Japan. He limped back, I mean, sputtering on fumes and got back to the aircraft carrier.

Bullet holes all in his airplane. He gets out. And so for that, understandably, they gave him a medal of honor, the first forever a Navy pilot.

What a great man he was. A year later, he was out on another mission. And again, fighting for his fellow sailors, he was killed in action in the Pacific Ocean.

At the end of the war, his hometown wanted to do something to honor him. And you may have heard of the O'Hare International Airport.

[ 6 : 32 ] It's named after Butch O'Hare. So now you know where the name of that airport came from. Here was a guy who was willing to give his life for his friends and for his country.

Now, I want to tell you another story, and then I'm finally going to tie this into Father's Day. Any father should be willing to die for his family and for the things that he knows are right.

And I think Butch sets that example for us. But this is another story of a man who grew up in Chicago. A very different kind of story. Let me show you his picture.

His name was Easy Eddie. Easy Eddie worked for Al Capone. Al Capone was his boss, and Easy Eddie was Al Capone's lawyer.

Now, some of you might be too young, and you hadn't watched the Untouchables TV show that was in the 60s or whatever. So you might not know much about Al Capone. He was probably America's all-time most infamous gangster.

[ 7 : 44 ] He ruled Chicago all through the 1920s. The way he did that, there was a while in American history and then all the 1920s, the government made it illegal to sell, to buy or sell alcohol.

It was also illegal to gamble anywhere in those days. And prostitution, as it is in most places today, was also illegal. So how did Capone make his money?

He sold whiskey, and he ran gambling houses and prostitution houses. And he made lots and lots of money. And you might think, well, how did he get away with it?

I mean, it was against the law. He made so much money that in Chicago, he basically had all the police on his payroll. The mayor got regular money from Al Capone.

The governor got money from Al Capone. The congressman and the senators got money from Al Capone. There was just one guy that he couldn't bribe.

[ 8 : 47 ] The head of the FBI was a hard-nosed guy named J. Edgar Hoover. And you couldn't bribe J. Edgar Hoover. He was going to follow the law.

Then he was determined to bring down Al Capone. Every now and then, he would get enough evidence to take him to court. And Capone would call his attorney Easy Eddie.

Eddie, here's what's going down. Eddie only had one client. He worked only for Al Capone. And he was the smartest lawyer in the state.

Over and over, he would go into court, pull all kinds of legal maneuvers, make all kinds of motions, and get the cases dismissed on technicalities.

Over and over, frustrating the life out of the FBI. Al Capone had one other thing that he used to stay in control. He had his gang, his mob.

[ 9 : 44 ] It's estimated that they killed about 500 people during the 1920s. He had his gang, usually members of other mobs that were trying to steal their business.

So he was a ruthless guy. Meanwhile, Easy Eddie could care less. Al Capone paid him so well that he owned an entire block of Chicago with a big wall around it and his big mansion in the middle with his guards, his chauffeur, his cars, his servants.

He had everything. Now you see another picture there. That's Easy Eddie with his little boy. And although Easy Eddie cared nothing about the law, really, and he cared nothing about these people that he knew his boss was having murdered, he had a soft spot in his heart for that little boy.

You can almost see the difference in the picture, the hard face when he's with his boss, the tender face when he's holding that little boy. He would do anything with that little boy.

Bought him toys, took him to the circus, anything he could do for him. As he got older, he got in cars. He got in all the clothes he wanted, anything. But then when the boy was getting to be about 17 or so, he began to realize he's going wrong.

[ 11 : 03 ] He's starting to hang out with bad people. What have I done wrong here? And he began to realize there were two things his money could not get for his son because Easy Eddie had already sold these two things.

He couldn't give him an honorable family name. And he couldn't give him a good example of how to live.

He had already sold both of those. And it began to eat at his conscience. And so about six months before the boy graduated high school to go to college, he made the biggest decision of his life.

Easy Eddie called up J. Edgar Hoover and said, I want to meet with you. And they met secretly in a restaurant in another town. And he said, I'll help you bring Capone to justice.

And so he brought all kinds of evidence of all the crimes the man had committed in paper, evidence of everything he'd done wrong. And then he went to court and testified for hours against his boss sitting right there.

[ 12 : 19 ] And the judge, they found a judge that hadn't been bought off because Capone owned a lot of the judges too. And the judge said, okay, the jury says you're guilty.

I think it was 12 years in prison. The only thing that he could get him on was tax evasion. They couldn't get him on the other crimes. He had never pulled the trigger himself. He had always gotten others to do it.

So 11 years or so in prison. But once Capone got to jail, one of his men came to visit him. And he said, do what you have to do to take care of Easy Eddie.

And so they surrounded Eddie's car one night and shot him about 15 times. He died. But in his death, he died proving to his son that doing what's right is worth dying for.

The connection between these two is that the little boy that Easy Eddie is holding grew up to be none other than Butcher Hare.

[ 13 : 39 ] There are times in life when we can choose to do the right thing. And it will make a big difference for many people for generations to come.

Well, I think then what we need to look at today, especially as fathers, is how important are we, fathers and grandfathers, parents?

How important are we? Does it really make a difference what we do? And I think we need to look back at what Moses instructed parents to do, not just fathers.

Moses said in Deuteronomy chapter 11, 18 through 19, fix these words of mine, and these were the words of God.

This was the Ten Commandments, other commands given by God to Moses. Fix these words of mine in your hearts and in your minds. Teach them to your children.

[ 14 : 39 ] Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road and when you lie down and when you get up. That's what we need to be doing.

We need to be constantly telling our children about the words of God, about the ways of God, about our faith, about why we're Christians, about how that affects our life.

We need to be constantly doing that. Unfortunately, the Israelites were a lot like us. They didn't do that very well. And so the very next book after Deuteronomy, the next book is Joshua, and we see right at the, I'm sorry, the next book, two books later, Judges is right after Moses is gone, Joshua is gone.

And here's what we learn in the book of Judges in chapter 2, 10 and 11. After that whole generation, what generation? The generation that had known Moses and Joshua. After they had died, another generation grew up who knew neither the Lord nor what he had done for Israel. Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord.

[ 15 : 54 ] You know, the Christian faith is not something that is natural. It's not genetic. You're not born with it. It doesn't matter if your parents or grandparents were Christians.

You have to receive Christ for yourself. You have to make that decision. God has no grandchildren. He only has children. You must come to him yourself. So the responsibility of those of us that are older is to do everything we can to introduce the younger next generation to know the Lord. And the Israelites failed at that. They didn't follow Moses' instruction. And so their grandchildren and great-grandchildren forgot about the Lord.

We have to teach them. Now I want to tie this in a little bit. There's a big day coming up in America in two weeks. What is it? Anything special about this fourth? 250 years of this country. And I think a lot of people in America, I don't just think it, we've forgotten what the roots of this country were like.

[ 17 : 02 ] In fact, I don't know. I haven't been in public school classes recently. I'm not sure that they still teach how strong the Christian faith was at the beginning of this country.

And so I just want to remind you of some facts. And this is really interesting here. The first successful colonies in America, not counting the Lost Colony, which didn't succeed, the first successful colonies, in April of 1607, the British landed at Cape Henry. That is present-day Virginia Beach. And when they landed, they planted a cross and they prayed. And 13 years after that, the pilgrims landed in Massachusetts. And as they came ashore, they got on their knees and prayed. And both groups, you can go back and read the recorded prayers. They wrote them out what was their prayer. And both of them said, we are claiming this nation as a new Christian nation for the kingdom of God. We want this nation to be a lighthouse for the whole world.

[ 18 : 17 ] May we ever be that. And so our founding fathers very much wanted this nation to be a nation that followed the Lord. Well, it was almost like 150 years later before we finally got to the Revolutionary War, 1776, at the Declaration of Independence.

And apparently, nobody knows for sure, but apparently most of the people of the United States in 1776 were professing to be Christians.

For example, here you have a picture of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. This is a famous painting. Somebody went back, and if you were a historian, I guess you could name every guy in that picture and say who he is.

I only recognized a couple of them. That's obviously George Washington standing up on the far right, and that's obviously Ben Franklin sitting down right in the dead center.

And I could pick out somewhere in there I saw Thomas Jefferson. But guys like James Madison were there. John Adams is there. James Monroe. I mean, there's all those famous early fathers, the founding fathers of our nation.

[ 19 : 34 ] Now, here is maybe, I don't know if they're still teaching this in school or not. They should be. I went straight to Britannica Encyclopedia. I guess that's a pretty safe group to read, you know, Britannica, online.

So it's supposed to be up to date. And I asked it, what were the church affiliations and religions of the signers of the Declaration of Independence?

And they gave me this chart. Out of 56 people that signed that document, 30 of them were Episcopalians or Anglicans. 12 were Presbyterians. Five were Congregationalists. Three were Quakers. Two were Dutch Reform. One was a Lutheran. One Roman Catholic. I was hoping George would be here.

George says he's the Roman Catholic Baptist. He's at the Catholic Church singing this morning and couldn't be with us. Only two of them had no church affiliation.

[ 20 : 37 ] Think about that. 56 guys who signed the Declaration of Independence. Four of them. Fifty-four of them were active, involved in church, members of churches, men of faith.

And then 11 years later, 52, no, 55 delegates ended up going to Pennsylvania to write the Constitution. And I looked up what was the religion of those 55 delegates.

And I won't show you another chart. It's similar to this one. But only three of them were not members of Christian churches, of the guys who wrote the Constitution. And I've noticed in modern history readings that they take guys like Ben Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, and they like to say, you know, they were not Christians. They were deists. They believed there was a God, but they didn't really know if Jesus was his son. Was he divine? Did he die for us? They weren't sure about it.

[ 21 : 41 ] I don't know about that. That's between them and the Lord. But I do know that at the Constitutional Convention, when Ben Franklin was back again, and he was a delegate there, and he was 81 years old, he stood up on the floor of that convention one day and made a speech, and these were some of the words in his speech.

He said, I have lived, sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth that God governs the affairs of man.

And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid? We have been assured, sir, in the sacred writings that except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.

I don't know if he was a Christian or not, but he knew the Bible, and he believed that God was in control of the affairs of mankind.

Now, I would not, I don't know what Christian nationalism is, but if Christian nationalism means that there ought to be laws to make everybody be a Christian, I don't believe in that.

[ 23 : 06 ] This is the United States of America, and if you want to worship however you want to worship, or if you want to be like the two guys I passed crossing the river down here this morning that were out there in their fishing boat worshipping Neptune or something, well, it's America.

They can do that. But I really do believe that it is also a part of our heritage that every Christian should be able to pray freely, worship freely, practice their faith in public places.

If you want to put a cross on your desk, if you want to wear a cross to school, if you want to pray at your mealtime, whatever, this is America, and we have these freedoms that God has given us.

And so I do believe very much in that. But my main question that I'm wanting to ask, just as Easy Eddie wanted to be sure to influence his son for the good, and just as Moses said, you've got to teach these things, my real question today is, are we passing on our faith?

And are you doing your part, and am I doing my part to pass our faith on to the next generations? Now, we don't know exactly how many people went to church in 1776.

[ 24 : 27 ] It was a bunch of them. But they started keeping polls and stuff about 100 years ago. You know, they gallop and people like that. They began to poll people.

And here's what the records show. 100 years ago, 65% of Americans said they attended church regularly. 100 years ago. 25 years ago, it was down to 45% said they attended church regularly. Today, according to what I was able to find, Googling and looking at Pew Research, Gallup polls, etc., Today, 30% of Americans are attending church regularly.

It appears to me that we're not doing the best job of passing the faith on to our children and our grandchildren and our communities, our neighborhood.

It's so important. We have to do it. And I think this also is part of why our schools are no longer as safe as they used to be.

[ 25 : 37 ] And it's part of why there's drugs everywhere. And it's part of why there are just as many illegitimate births, maybe more in America, than legitimate births. It's a part of what's gone wrong in our culture.

We have not been passing the values and the truths that God created us to follow, to have a good society. We haven't been doing a good job of passing that to the next generation.

Now, it's hard. The competition's stiff. It's hard to compete with Hollywood and Disney and social media. But we've got to. We don't just give up and say, well, there's nothing we can do.

It's all going to go downhill. We've got to keep doing our part in every way we can, prayerfully, pleading with the almighty God to bring revival to our nation, to save and rescue our youth, to prolong the faith in our country.

Now, our children are studying us every day. And I firmly believe it's never too late to be what you might have been. And I think the life of Easy Eddie speaks that well.

[ 26 : 52 ] It was never too late for him to make a change that influenced his son for good. And it's never too late for us, whether we have really passed the faith as well as we should up till now or

not.

It's never too late to say, I am going to live the right example with God's help. And I am going to teach my children and grandchildren with God's help. And I'm going to teach my neighbors' kids and my nephews and nieces.

And I'm going with God's help to be a good influence in every way. And the fact is, our kids really are watching us. And now, if technology will cooperate, I'm going to play a song for you out of 1974. It's not a Christian song, but it's a lot of truth in it. And it's a song that, well, it'll speak for itself. And if a commercial comes up, just give it a minute and I'll skip the commercial.

Here we go. Yep. Here we go.

[ 28 : 48 ] Here we go.

Here we go.

Here we go. Here we go. We'll meet you guys.

We'll meet you guys. You know we'll have a good time. How long since you died?

My son has moved away. I called him up just the other day. I said I'd like to see you if you don't mind. He said I'd love you, Dad, if I could find the place.

[ 30 : 54 ] You see, my new job's a hassle in the kitchen. But it's sure nice talking to you, Dad. It's sure nice talking to you. And as I hung up the phone, it occurred to me.

He'd grown up just like me. My boy was just like me. And the cats and the mail and the suits.

They were going to move them there. Many from the homes on the door and nowhere. We'll get to your land. And we're going to have a good time there.

Boy, if that doesn't get to you, something's wrong with you.

All of us that are fathers, I think that we realize we missed a lot of opportunities. But then finally, I think that the great message today is to remember that no matter what we've done right or wrong to this point, it's never too late.

[ 32 : 09 ] Because we all have a great father. God, our father. And just like Butch O'Hare was willing to give his life for his friends.

And his daddy was willing to die to teach his son to do what's right. God, our father, was willing to let his only son die for us so that we could be forgiven.

So that we could learn to walk with God. And so that we could let him work through us to bring others to Christ. To influence our society.

So fathers, our task is big. But this is the message for all of us. Fathers and mothers. Grandfathers and grandmothers.

Uncles, aunts. And just good neighbors. All of us. We have many eyes watching us of the next generation.

[ 33 : 09 ] And how will we live? What will our life tell them is important? That will be even more important than our words. What will our life, how we live, tell them?

Let's pray together as the musicians come to lead us in a closing song. Lord, we know that we have sometimes, not just sometimes, we have often fallen short in living what we know is true.

And in sharing our faith, we have so often fallen short. But today we want to start again. Because it is never too late. We can always turn to you.

The thief on the cross only had minutes left, hours left to live. And it was not too late for him to make things right with God by faith in Jesus.

So Lord, today by our faith in you, we ask you to give us another chance. Forgive us our sins. Help us to live as we should.

[ 34 : 12 ] Help us to redeem the time. And I pray a special blessing on every father and grandfather and uncle and every person who influences children.

We thank you for hearing our prayers in Jesus' name. Amen.