

A Father's Perfect Model

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[0:00] I'm looking at the stage and realize that the decorations for VBS have been compromised a little bit.

! They were concerned that I would trip over the...so I appreciate whoever did that. Let's hope that I don't have a problem with props like I did with peanuts, you know, and we have a problem here. Okay.

One of the disadvantages of being a pastor is that you don't get to print retractions on page 9 of the Columbus Dispatch. Last Sunday in preaching, I made a statement that was inaccurate, worse than that, it was wrong, and I said if Jesus Christ were alive today, and one of the things that I am richly blessed by is that God's people here are in love with the Word of God enough that when I overstep the bounds...and by the way, just in case you are wondering, I know He's alive because it says in Hebrews that He ever liveth to do what?

Makes intercession for...I'm glad He's praying for me, even this morning. And so I made that statement about if Christ were alive today, He would. I probably should have said He could. He is alive today, and He could.

So that's cleared for, okay? Anytime I overstate something or you tell me, because I want us to have a reverence for the Word of God that holds it as the supreme authority and the final Word, and when I blow it...by the way, I was reading in 1 Samuel 3, verse 19, where it says this about Samuel, and I am quite jealous of the fact that it says this about him.

[1:44] It says, not a word that he spoke fell to the ground. Do you know what it's saying? He was spot on every time. I thought, I wish. Okay. So, having heard my, and I mean it, my retraction, I appreciate your admonition when I overstepped that, and so now what you have in front of you is the responsibility of prayer, that the Word of God would have free course, it would not be hindered, and that it would make a difference in your life. So let me tell you ahead of time, before we actually get to the sermon, what the takeaway is, what I want you to walk out of here saying in your heart. I want to grow to know Jesus, and I want to be like Jesus. Write that down.

I don't know. Can you see the top of this? Next year, we're going to have a flop down so that it goes...you know, I just got to preach so you can see the words, that kind of thing. Okay, forget it. But anyway, I want to grow to be like Jesus. I want to know Jesus. Write that down. Now, let me tell you something. This is something you can't do by yourself. If you're sitting here thinking, all right, all right, I got that. I know what I'm supposed to do, and I'm on it. You are dead wrong. But there's a little piece to that that I want you to understand. You don't have to do it by yourself. You can rely upon the Holy Spirit. In fact, if you don't rely upon the Holy Spirit, it won't happen. And this is one of those things that when you go to the Holy Spirit and pray and ask Him with all humility to help you grow to know Jesus and grow to be like Jesus, He's all over it. He's interested. How many of you as parents have had to work very hard to teach your children that there's some kind of things you won't answer immediately? In fact, you won't ever answer. How many of you are still in the process of teaching kids to say please and thank you? Come on, raise your hands.

Please and thank you. How do you do that? You do not backhand them godless when they say, I want a cookie now. What do you say? Can't hear you. Huh? What was that? Were you talking to me?

There are little things that you let your kids know are off page. And so I want to tell you that some of you going to the Holy Spirit, to the Lord and saying, listen, I'd like a Lamborghini or you know something. He's saying, huh? What were you talking to me? He's not interested in helping you with

those things. But when you go to Him with humility and say, I want to be like Jesus, He'll do that. Now, frankly, I wish He would do it, bang. Still working on me. But He'll do that.

[4:50] So I want you this morning, when you start to finish, to have one thing fixed in your mind, I want to grow to be like Jesus. I want to know Jesus. And I am dependent upon the Holy Spirit to help me in that process. Well, this is Father's Day. And I want you to know that towards the very end of the sermon, when Jack and his small group get up, they're not leaving prior to the invitation.

That's not what's going on. Okay? His group is going to be passing out little reminders to dads and young men. Is it 18 years and older or something like that? Okay. And so they're not walking out. They're just getting to the doors so they can be sure that everybody gets a little reminder of a part of our message this morning from the Scriptures. And so I want you to know that this is Father's Day, and I trust that all of you have said, Happy Father's Day. You've done that.

It's an appropriate thing. And I want you to understand that as we think this morning about Father's Day, we're going to focus our study in the Scriptures on a perfect model of what a father should be. Without question, to say that a father is important in a family is to make an understatement.

There really is no greater indicator of a culture's decline than the failure of fathers to play the role that they have been divinely appointed. I want you to fix that in your mind and understand it.

The fact of a father's importance in a home cannot be understated. Several weeks ago, as I was beginning the process of studying and praying about this, I went out on the web and Googled, you know, father's role and all kinds of hits come up. And I thought, well, I know what the Bible says about this, but I'd be curious, does our culture put any emphasis on the role and the importance of a father? I was surprised. In fact, did you know that the government keeps track of the declining position and significance or the presence of fathers in homes? It's not viewed by our government as a good thing. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, how many of you remember vaguely? This is kind of an age-based test. How many of you remember Daniel Patrick Moynihan? Now, raise your hands and wave at me.

[7:20] He was a politician, and he was also a very significant thinker. And about 50 years ago, he wrote a study, a research paper, about the role of fathers that was just absolutely blown out of the water by the liberal media, but it's dead on. Dead on. If you really want to understand how important fathers are to a community and a culture, we're not going to rely on Daniel Patrick Moynihan. We're really going to rely on Scripture. And I just want to make a reference to one particular...how do you know how Malachi closes out? What book is Malachi? It's the last book in the Old Testament. And Malachi chapter 4, verse 6, gives us a little thread, a little idea of how important fathers are in that it says this, and he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction. If you want to know how important fathers are to a people, here is God's Word, the prophet Malachi, saying that the preaching of the forerunner to the Messiah is going to end up having an effect on the culture through the impact that he has on fathers. Fathers are incredibly important, and we need good examples of fathers.

You see, a good example is essential to understanding really how it all plays out, and I'm reminded in part of what it says in 1 Corinthians chapter 11, verse 1, where the apostle says this. He says, you follow me, and does anybody know the remainder of it? Follow me as I, come on, am following Christ. You want to be a good example? Be sure you're following the right example.

That's important. You're following the wrong example, and it's going to end up being a disaster, not only to your life, but it's going to be a disaster to those who are following you. And so here's the apostle saying, I want you to follow me because I'm following Christ.

So, Dad, this Father's Day sermon is going to be a little different in that our focus is not going to be on one particular passage that talks about fathers, such as a passage in Ephesians chapter 6 or passage in Deuteronomy chapter 6, though we're going to make reference to a couple of those things.

But it's a sermon that is going to focus on the best possible example we can have of how to be a father and to do the job that you're called to do. And there is no better model to follow than Jesus.

[10:12] Agreed? And now you can kind of put it together already. Why would I say at the very beginning of the sermon that the thing to be praying about is, hey, listen, as I walk away from there, the thing I want to be praying about is that I grow to be like Jesus. Why? Because He's the perfect example, the model that we ought to pursue. And so I pick out in our study three different passages or three different characteristics of the Lord Jesus that I want us to focus on this morning. The first is this, He was a humble student for their sakes. He was a humble student for their sakes. Turn in your Bible to Isaiah chapter 50 verse 4. Go back to it. And it's not a bad passage to underline. It's probably fairly familiar to you because I have used this on a number of different occasions. I remember, how many of you read through the Bible on a regular basis? Raise your hand and wave at me.

Hello? You guys put your hands down. Put them down. How many of you think it'd be a good idea to start reading through the Bible on a regular basis? The rest of you raise your hands. Okay, now we got it.

We're there. Okay? Read through the Bible on a regular basis. And I got to tell you something. As I read through the Bible, I keep on finding new things that are there. They're already there. I remember last year or so, I was reading through Isaiah chapter 50 verse 4, and I hit this passage. Whoa! Man, that's significant. I'd never seen that before. And there it is. Let me read it to you. Isaiah 50 verse 4. It says, The Lord God has given me the tongue of those who are taught.

Ooh, wouldn't you like to have a tongue that was well taught? How many of you have a tongue that needs further teaching? Okay. Okay. How many of you are kind of brain dead and don't realize that your tongue needs further teaching?

[11:59] I mean, other people are trying to tell you, and you're just not listening. Anyway, for those who recognize that they need further teaching, I want you to recognize here is the Holy Spirit giving us a little bit of insight into something that is profound.

The Lord God has given me the tongue of those who are taught that I may know how to sustain with a word him who is weary. I want you to do a little mental computation.

How many of you know people that you love and care about that are wounded and frail because of the heartaches and the difficulties of life and sin? You know people? You see the wheels coming off.

You see the heartache. You see the difficulties, and you think, Man, oh, how do I help? Well, here it says, Now, let's mark the rest of it.

Morning by morning he awakens. He awakens my ear to hear as those who are taught. So when are you going to learn the product or the material whereby you are a comfort and an encouragement to other people?

[13:14] It is in your own personal devotional life where you, with humility and gladness, are on your face before God, saying, Listen, I need to learn and grow, and I want your word to be the thing that forms and shapes the heart and life that I have.

Now, here's part of the thing that's really stunning. Do you know who this passage is about? Does anybody know who this passage is talking about?

How many of you, and I remember the story of the little Sunday school kid that the teacher held up the picture and said, What is this a picture of? And it was a squirrel. And nobody wanted to say, because in Sunday school every answer is Jesus.

And they were all kind of, and it's like, you know, so yeah, that's a picture. And finally the little boy says, Well, it's a squirrel. You know, I was like, that's what. At the end of the day, the real picture of the scriptures is who?

Hello? John 539. Remember last week when I preached? John 539 says they testify of me, speaking about the scriptures. This passage is messianic. It's recited later in reference to the Lord Jesus.

[14:36] And one of the things that's kind of flummoxing, it's like, you know, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God, and the Word was with God. And Jesus, I was kind of reading this morning in Colossians chapter 1 where it says, In Him the fullness of the Godhead pleads to dwell.

I mean, He's it. He's all. And yet here it tells us that Jesus had morning devotions day by day, and it was in that morning time that He learned things in His humanness.

I want you to understand, it was Christ's grasp of the scriptures that was gleaned in His private time in the Word of God that enabled Him to comfort those who were wearied.

What is your most important contribution to the well-being of your family? Is it your paycheck? What is the most important contribution you make?

It is not your character in and of itself. Do you understand that? It is your fidelity in reflecting the character and the person of Christ as found and discovered in the Word of God.

[16:04] Does that make sense to you? And I've got to tell you, that's not going to happen. If you're doing the daily bread, kind of like a three-minute flyby, I grabbed a verse, I grabbed a thought, and I'm gone.

Some of you probably spend more time brushing your teeth because you have an electric toothbrush that kind of goes through these phases, and you're supposed to go, How many of you do that?

Lots of time brushing your teeth, morning and evening, and yet your time in the Word of God is far less than you use with an electric toothbrush trying to take care of dental hygiene. Jesus was all over the Word.

And as a result of His being all over the Word, His ministry to those that He ministered to was colored by what He learned.

You know, dads are family pathfinders. They're the ones that are appointed by God to carry the biblical load of headship.

[17:11] And I've got to tell you, when a father is disconnected from the Lord and his devotional life is an abysmal failure, it is a heartache for his family.

Can I tell you that if you have seven minutes of devotions every single day, that you are guaranteed to get a new car and a new house and a new family?

I mean, do you follow what I'm saying? That's not the deal. But here's what I can tell you. If the Word of God is not the foundational thing that is governing the way you think and how you play out life, and you won't have the Word of God influence you that way if you don't connect with it on a regular basis.

When a father has his own heart established in the Word, and he finds the promises of God and the counsel of God to be sufficient for the challenges of life, he then carries that forward and ministers to his wife, ministers to his children, ministers to the people that he's around.

Furthermore, it's a man's love for God and his willingness to obey the Word that really allows him to teach with conviction in the flow of life.

[18:24] I want you to look at Deuteronomy chapter 6 just for a moment. We're going to reference it briefly. But Deuteronomy chapter 6, verse 4 through 9, very interesting that this is a passage that was given principally to the heads of homes, to men.

It doesn't mean that it doesn't apply to all the rest of us, but its bearing in particular was given to those that were responsible. How many of you work at a place where the supervisors get called into the office and given direct, explicit marching orders?

Hey, you guys be doing this today? I want this, this, this. You walk out, yes, sir, I'll get it. That's what was happening here. Moses was speaking to the heads of households, and he said, guys, I want you to get together.

We're going to get this thing errant out and understand it. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Bang! The one talking to you is God. And these words that I command you, he says, you'll love the Lord.

This is the thing. You'll love the Lord. You'll love the Lord. And as a result of that, out of that flows an obedience to the Word and a willingness to apply it in the life that He gives to you.

[19:32] So, we find here that before you teach the Word, you have to love the Word. And understand this, one of the principal reasons you see so little actual teaching of the Word in the family construct today in many homes is because Dad really doesn't believe it's sufficient.

He's not invested in it. I have to tell you, one of the things that I greatly appreciate about my dad and my mom, dad with the Lord right now, but I will remember dad was up far earlier than we were, and I would walk out in the morning after I'd gotten up, and he had gone to work, but there sitting on the veranda was his Bible and his journal where he kept his personal notes of things that God was teaching him.

And I watched my dad grow in tenderness and kindness and humility as a result of the impact of the Word of God in his life. So, if there's nothing you take home other than this, here's what I want.

Take this home. Christ's life and His ministry flowed out of His personal time in the Word of God.

Remember the prayer that we're going to pray? What is it? I want to grow to know Jesus.

I want to grow to be like Jesus. Christ's life was influenced by what happened in His personal devotional life in the morning. And some of you are sitting here saying, well, that's good for Him.

[20:53] No, I want you to grow out of here saying, that's how I'm going to be. Second, a student, submissive.

The second thing that I want to draw to your attention this morning is the submissive heart that the Lord Jesus Christ had. I don't know how deeply affected you are by our culture, but I do want to tell you that our culture just can hardly stand hearing the word submission.

Do you follow that? It's not just a woman thing. All of us, what, you mean submit to you? Listen to what Jesus has to say. I just kind of rattle off a couple different passages.

John chapter 4, verse 34, He says this. He says, my food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to accomplish His work. What am I doing? I'm doing what my Father wants.

In fact, it's more important to me than having a Big Mac and being fed. And when we get to be around 1230 and I'm preaching still, and you guys are sitting here thinking about, it's time for lunch.

[21:59] I want you to know, hey, the Word's more important than, and Jesus is my food. The thing that sustains me is the Word, my Father's will.

John chapter 5, verse 30. I can do nothing on my own. What? I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not mine own will, but the will of Him who sent me.

John 6, 38. Some of you are thinking, I'm preaching ahead through John, and we won't come back and cover these verses. Relax. Relax. For I have come down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of Him who sent me.

I could keep on going, and I've got more, but watch in the time. Here's what I want you to understand. Christ saw His submission to the Father as the only right and reasonable thing to do.

Why? Because submission to the Father was nothing other than a wholesome reflection of true love for the Father and complete confidence in His wisdom and His character and will.

[23:12] So, dads, understand that Christ's life was lived in loving obedience to what His Father wanted.

Your children's lives will be marked by your willingness to obey the explicit Word of God. And by the way, if you're not sure what the will of God is, is there anything wrong with asking Him?

Huh? Huh? Huh? Can I say that again slowly? It says in James, if any man lacked wisdom, what do you want? If anybody lacks wisdom, what do we do?

Ask! Nothing doubting. And by the way, what's the nothing doubting? It's the, I didn't want to hear you say that anyway. I knew what you thought. I just didn't want to hear it.

So, don't ask if you're not willing to follow. I want you to understand this morning that your model of loving and willing dependence on Him is essential to your family.

[24:15] How can you bless the children and the family that God has made you head over? It's this. By, first of all, being a student of the Word. Study, study, study the Word that it radiates into the lives of those that you minister to.

Second, be submissive to the Father. Be submissive to Him. Third, be a sacrifice for their sake. When we think about the Lord Jesus, I think there's one thing that we should never miss.

It is that He was a sacrifice. He willingly sacrificed His will to serve those that He loved. Turn over in your Bible, if you will, just for a moment to Luke chapter 22, verse 24 through 27.

Luke chapter 22, verse 24 through 27. And if you've ever kind of, how many of you every now and then get a little discouraged with just how brain dead you are spiritually? Out there?

Some of you, how many of you feel like you've arrived and it's like, I just showed up to get points? I mean, you know, I'm there. I'm good. I really don't have anything to learn. In fact, I'm a little miffed that I'm here because, you know, the guy is, he's 66 and I wanted someone who was a little younger.

[25:20] You know, something like that. How many of you say, no, I still have things to learn. I've got to grow. Luke chapter 22, we find that the disciples didn't get the first pass or the second pass.

That's a little comfort to us. But here we have on the other side of the Last Supper, you have verse 24. It says, Luke 22, 24.

A dispute also arose among them to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. Now, what had the context to do with this? Remember, here's what had happened.

They had come together for the Last Supper, right? And Jesus in the Last Supper had told them, I'm going to die for you. This is my body, which is for you.

This cup is the cup in the New Testament, my blood, which is shed for you for the remission of sins. Jesus made his coming sacrifice clear to his disciples.

[26:18] Then to top that off, now the supper being ended, what did he do? I'm out of here. I'm going to the cross. No, what he did was he grabbed a basin, he grabbed a towel. And what happened next? He washed their feet, right?

They're stunned. They're stunned. But in case you're a little frustrated with just how slow you are in making spiritual progress, take some rare comfort from the frailty of the disciples.

Immediately after this absolute knockout, smashing Bible lesson and illustration, as they are trucking towards Gethsemane, right?

Hey, guys, we're going, and the cross is just around the corner. Yeah, we're with you, Jesus. And they're walking away from the meal and the lesson, and what are they arguing about? They're bickering with each other about who's going to be first.

Jesus stops and he says, let's go at this again. The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But it's not so with you.

[27:21] Rather, let the greatest among you become the youngest and the leader as one who serves. Now, I don't know if you have it underlined in your Bible, but it's well worth a pen stroke.

Look at verse 27. I am among you as the one who what? I am among you as the one who serves. Jesus sacrificed his will to serve.

And I want you to understand that it was love for the Father and for others that drove Jesus to be the servant of all. He found pleasure in meeting the needs of other people.

He was incredibly attentive to those needs. And his care and interest in other people meant that he was tuned to the heartaches and the difficulties that were going on in people's lives.

He saw them, and he picked up on them, and he met them. I've got to tell you, watching what's been going on here this last two weeks in VBS has just been such a pleasure to me as I've watched our people working behind the scenes.

[28:27] So many of the people that put their time and energy into what you see here, this is just a small part of it, are never going to have public attaboys. It's not like I'm going to say next Sunday, I want all the people who painted on that to come forward.

We're going to give them a little plastic token, you know, best painter in the church. We're not going to do that. But I watched these people putting their heart into this, and their servanthood and their example, what a blessing.

They're like Jesus, serving other people. Jesus was a servant to all, and he was willing to step into the hardship of life to serve you and to serve me.

And if you're going to grow to be like Christ, then you are going to grow in being a servant. There's a second thing I want you to note this morning. Jesus sacrificed his life to save.

How is it that you and I have eternal life? Let's get this clear. There are really only two propositions about how a person gets to heaven. Two.

[29:35] Now, they have all kinds of varieties on it, but it really boils down to one is a works-based religion that if I'm good enough and I do enough and I'm kind enough and I sacrifice enough, I can kind of climb my way on up to heaven.

My brother, Mark, who's an archaeologist in the University of Wisconsin, just spent probably the last three months in China and Tibet.

And he had literally hundreds of pictures of Lhasa. And in Lhasa, the Tibetans, in order to get merit with God, what they will do is they prostrate themselves and kind of go around.

There's an outer ring and a middle ring and an inner ring. And the really spiritual do the outer ring first and then the middle ring and then the inner ring. And there are people who have enough money that they don't make the outer ring and the inner ring and what they do is they hire people to prostrate.

Instead of just walking around, you have to kind of flop yourself down on the ground and then pick yourself up and go another five and a half feet if you're a Tibetan. You know, you're shorter than Americans. So, yeah, five and a half feet, five and a half feet, five and a half feet, five and a half feet, five and a half feet, take a break, five and a half feet.

[30:54] Do you follow that? That's how you earn points. You didn't know that, did you? That's the way to go about it. Well, there are people in America that get points different ways. Only two systems of religion.

I can work my way to heaven or I understand that I am a broken, ruined sinner and God sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to die for my sins.

And the Bible makes it clear that whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Jesus was willing to sacrifice His life for you.

He died your death. Does that get you excited? Huh? Come on. Hey, look at me. Look at me. Some of you out here have a cramp in your face right now.

It's like, it's all right. Maybe you're having some troubles. But I want to tell you something. There is no thought, there's no thought that puts a shadow on life when you're thinking about the reality that Jesus took your place.

[32:07] Am I right? I don't know, I fire you up. Not only that, you go to skipping out of church saying, believe this, He saved me. He died for me. He died for me.

This is Father's Day. I got to tell you, I think in our country we are coming to a day and an age when professing believers are going to get winnowed out from real believers.

How many of you understand what I just said? I got to tell you, in the middle of what is coming one of the critical pieces is going to be godly dads.

Godly dads. Can you be a godly dad on your own and what's the answer? I can't. But I can hear the Word of God this morning tell me about the supremacy and the glory of Christ and I can say thank you Jesus for being my Savior and the best thing I can do with my life is make you look good by acting like you.

And so I want to grow to know you and I want to grow to be like you. And that is a prayer that the Holy Spirit hears.

[33:29] Let's close. Father God, this morning as we lift up the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ we are thankful that He is supremely worthy.

We're thankful that He is the perfect and complete revelation of the Godhead to us. We're thankful that the Holy Spirit is actively engaged in helping us who are your children learn and grow to love Him and to know Him.

And help us to be humble enough this morning Lord those of us who know Christ that as we sit here we say I want to grow to be more like Jesus. I want that to be a consuming prayer that is evident in the life that I live moving forward from this day.

Holy Father those that are here that do not know Christ it is our prayer this morning that even as we sing this song together that you would convict their hearts of the bankruptcy and the terror of their sin and that they would cry out to the Lord Jesus Christ asking for forgiveness and salvation.

We ask this in Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Let's Amen.