



Sermon, Sunday June 18, 2023 “The True Heart of the Father”

SCRIPTURE: Luke 15:11-32 ¹¹ Then Jesus said, “There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the wealth that will belong to me.’ So he divided his assets between them. ¹³ A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant region, and there he squandered his wealth in dissolute living. ¹⁴ When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that region, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that region, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. ¹⁶ He would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷ But when he came to his senses he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! ¹⁸ I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.”’ ²⁰ So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. ²¹ Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ ²² But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate, ²⁴ for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate. ²⁵ “Now his elder son was in the field, and as he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. ²⁷ He replied, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf because he has got him back safe and sound.’ ²⁸ Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. ²⁹ But he answered his father, ‘Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command, yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your assets with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!’ ³¹ Then the father said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.’ ”

Introduction: Origin of Father's Day

Today is the third Sunday after Pentecost and Father's Day. Let us greet each other with "Happy Father's Day". By the way, do you know the origin of Father's Day?

The establishment of Father's Day began on July 5, 1908, when a West Virginia church sponsored the nation's first event explicitly in honor of fathers, a Sunday sermon in memory of the 362 men who had died in the previous December's explosions at the Fairmont Coal Company mines in Monongah, but it was a one-time commemoration and not an annual holiday.

The next year, a Spokane, Washington woman named Sonora Smart Dodd, one of six children raised by a widower, tried to establish an official equivalent to Mother's Day for male parents. She went to local churches, the YMCA, shopkeepers, and government officials to drum up support for her idea, and she was successful: Washington State celebrated the nation's first statewide Father's Day on June 19, 1910.



Slowly, the holiday spread. More than 40 years later, in 1966, President Lyndon B. Johnson proposed keeping 'Father's Day' on the third Sunday in June, and in 1972, President Richard Nixon signed a presidential proclamation designating it as a national holiday, making the day legally an official national holiday. This is the origin of Father's Day.

Compared to mother's love, father's love is not an emotionally easy word for many people. Perhaps it is because of the patriarchal or stubborn image of fathers that has been built up over a long period of time. Furthermore, drug, alcohol, domestic violence, and gambling addictions that some fathers showed also contributed to creating a negative image of fathers. Anyway, even though there are wonderful, responsible, and generous fathers in the world, there are many cases in which fathers' hard work and love are undervalued.

I hope that those who have a deep bond in their relationship with their father will have a deeper love and understanding of their father. I hope that there will be reconciliation with the father for those who are in a negative situation in their relationship with their father.

Body: The true heart of the father

As I prepared a sermon for Father's Day today, I thought about my father who passed away in December 2016. However, when I think of my father, I am reminded of a man who was different in every phase of my growing up. First, to me as a child, my father was the very reliable and best supporter in the world. For me as a teenager, my father was an imperfect man with flaws. Also, when I became a parent and father of a child, I could sympathize with the weight of life my father carried as the head of a family. And until my father retired from work and passed away, he was a person who evoked sorrow and gave me strength as a living being. I really miss my father like that.

As I thought about my deceased father, I thought about what kind of father I would be seen as by my children. Of course, I think that my image reflected by my children will be in progress. Like the change of my thinking I had about my father, I think my children will have many changes in their thinking about me.

For example, to my son, I was the best dad in the world until recently, but to my son who is now a 13-year-old junior high school student, I am a father with many shortcomings. Nevertheless, my sincerity in loving my son has not changed. However, fulfilling the role of a good husband and a good father is not an easy task.

However, the role of parents in their children's lives is important. And the father's role as one of the pillars of parenthood is very important. Fathers have a great influence on their children's job selection, spouse selection, life direction setting, and religious issues. What is also clear is that children are the objects of the Father's one-sided and boundless love and blessings.

The text we share today is known to us as **"The Parable of the Lost Son"**. This story features a father with two sons. Among them, the second son asks his father for his inheritance, and the father grants his son's request. However, the son squandered his estate with loose living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. Finally, he was unable to hold out any longer, repents, returns to his father, and asks to be accepted as a servant. The father does not criticize the returning second son and arranges a grand welcome festival for him. Jealous of this, the eldest son refuses to attend the welcome party for his brother. Then the father said to the older son; **"You are always with me, and everything I have is yours. And this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."**

Through this parable, Jesus tells us what God's love and sincerity are toward us. First, the father believes and waits for the return of his beloved son. Second, the relationship between father and son will never change if the son repents and returns despite his mistakes. The third is the father's love (embracing) for both sons. The



father says to the first son, **"You are always with me; everything that is mine is yours, but your brother was dead and is alive, and he was lost and was found, so we had to rejoice and rejoice."**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ! A father's love resembles the heart of the Lord who loves us. Of course, since all fathers in the world are beings with weak bodies, the love of our physical fathers cannot be the same as the perfect love of God. However, there is no change in the fact that parents' love and father's love are the love that most closely resembles the Lord's love in the world.

Fathers in the world trust and wait for their children. Also, the love of fathers for their children is unchanging. Furthermore, the love of fathers for their children is far greater and wider than the children think.

We are grateful to have such a physical father, and it is a very happy memory to have such a physical father. If we do not have these grateful and happy memories in our relationship to our father, I hope we can be reconciled with him through the eternal and perfect love of God.

Conclusion: I hope you will become parents who practice tolerance and love for your children.

Now let's summarize today's message. Good parents and fathers produce good children. Like God the Father, I hope that we too become parents who practice tolerance and love to reveal the sincerity of a father to our beloved children. If there is something we lack in being good parents and fathers, I hope that through the help of the Lord and the power of the Holy Spirit, we can make up for that deficiency. I bless every parent and every father in the world.

A Father's Prayer by General Douglas MacArthur

"Build me a son, O Lord, who will be strong enough to know when he is weak, and brave enough to face himself when he is afraid; one who will be proud and unbending in honest defeat, and humble and gentle in victory.

Build me a son whose wishbone will not be where his backbone should be; a son who will know Thee and that to know himself is the foundation stone of knowledge.

Lead him, I pray, not in the path of ease and comfort, but under the stress and spur of difficulties and challenge. Here let him learn to stand up in the storm; here let him learn compassion for those who fail.

Build me a son whose heart will be clean, whose goal will be high; a son who will master himself before he seeks to master other men; one who will learn to laugh, yet never forget how to weep; one who will reach into the future, yet never forget the past.

And after all these things are his, add, I pray, enough of a sense of humor, so that he may always be serious, yet never take himself too seriously. Give him humility, so that he may always remember the simplicity of greatness, the open mind of true wisdom, the meekness of true strength."

