

Sunday Morning Message

June 18, 2023

Observations About Fatherhood from the Life of Job

Text – Job 1:1 - 22

Congregational Reading – Job 1:1 - 5

Introduction

I enjoy Father's Day today as a grandfather much more than I did as just a father.

In a book entitled *Fatherhood*, the author writes: Now that my father is a grandfather, he just can't wait to give money to my kids. But when I was his kid and I asked him for fifty cents, he would tell me the story of his life. How he got up at 5 A.M. when he was seven years old and walked twenty-three miles to milk ninety cows. And the farmer for whom he worked had no bucket, so he had to squirt the milk into his little hand and then walk eight miles to the nearest can. All for 5 cents a month. The result was that I never got my 50 cents.

But now he tells my children every time he comes into the house: "Well, lets see how much money old Granddad has got for his wonderful kids." And the minute they take money out of his hands I call them over to me and I snatch it away from them. Because that is MY money.

Last week, we examined this story of Job through the lens of his suffering, and we learned some things that we can do when going through the trials, tribulations, and tragedies of life. Today, we will examine Job as a father to his ten children.

Read the text

In our text today, we read about Job, a man who has ten children who are grown, and though the Scripture does not specifically reveal it, he very possibly may have been a grandfather as well.

Though the story of Job is very familiar to us and we have heard many messages preached from this Book, especially from the perspective of personal tragedy and suffering, I think there are also some great principles from Job's life that will help us understand what being a great father is all about.

Observations About Fatherhood from Job

I. Job Loved and Served His God (v. 1)

- A. He had his priorities right – God first and then family. His relationship with God governed all other relationships in his life. He was a good example to his children. He demonstrated godliness in front of his children.
- B. While his kids were home with him, they had boundaries. Job eschewed evil, which means that he would not allow evil in his home. He knew how to say no to his children. He didn't give into their desires if their desires were against the will of God.

Illustrate

God expects us to be able to say no to our children. There was another man in the Bible named Eli. He was a good man himself, but he was a permissive parent. He didn't know how to say no to his kids.

"For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not." (1 Samuel 3:13)

His kids ended up dying very young.

C. If the kids crossed those boundaries, Job would not be afraid to discipline them.

"Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying." (Proverbs 19:18)

D. Job would also ensure that his children learned about God.

E. When God took his children away, Job did not get bitter with God. He understood that those children ultimately belonged to God, not him.

II. Job Loved and Served His Family

A. He had ten children. I wish I had ten children.

"Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate."

(Psalm 127:3-5)

B. He provided for his family. He was a man of great wealth because God blessed him, but he was blessed of God because he worked hard, and was a good steward of what God blessed him with. He did not waste his wealth. He made sure that his family had what they needed.

C. His children seemed to be happy and well adjusted. They are grown, but they are still together as a family. They go to each other's houses to eat and fellowship.

Illustrate – A few years back on the fourth of July, all our kids travelled down to be with us in South Carolina.

Illustrate – Sam and Ashley travelled down to South Carolina to be with Melissa when she had her baby.

III. He Continued to Love and Serve His Family After They Were Grown (v. 5)

Notice in verse 5, Job is offering sacrifices on behalf of his children. He is interceding for them.

When our children grow up and leave our homes, our role as parents will change. We no longer dictate what they will and won't do, but we can still advise when appropriate; and we can and should still pray for them.

Practical Thoughts:

To Dad:

Get your life prioritized:

God comes first:

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." (Colossians 3:1-2)

"But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the LORD charged you, to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul." (Joshua 22:5)

If you put God first in your life, He will give you more love in your hearts to love the people in your life.

Your wife comes second:

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;" (Ephesians 5:25)

Your children come next:

1. You are to be an example to your children.

Someone once said regarding his father: "He didn't tell me how to live: he lived; and let me watch him do it."

2. You are to provide for your children:

"But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." (1 Timothy 5:8)

3. You are to have rule over your children (Abraham "commanded" his children)

4. You are to teach your children:

"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."

(Deuteronomy 6:6-7)

Illustration – Unknown author

He teaches kindness by being thoughtful and gracious even at home.

He teaches patience by being gentle and understanding over and over.

He teaches honesty by keeping his promises to his family even when it costs.

He teaches courage by living unafraid with faith, in all circumstances.

He teaches justice by being fair and dealing equally with everyone.

He teaches obedience to God's Word by precept and example as he reads and prays daily with his family.

He teaches love for God and His Church as he takes his family regularly to all the services.

His steps are important because others follow.

3. You are to love your children:

"And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." (Ephesians 6:4)

To Mom:

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord." (Ephesians 5:22)

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord." (Colossians 3:18)

"Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband." (Ephesians 5:33)

"Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement." (1 Peter 3:1-6)

To Children:

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right." (Ephesians 6:1)

"Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord." (Colossians 3:20)

Conclusion

Erma Bombeck, the famous newspaper columnist of yesteryear who entertained America for three decades with her humorous stories of suburban home life, had this to say about fatherhood.

I received a letter from a single mother who had raised a son who was about to become a dad. Since he had no recollection of his own father, her question to me was "What do I tell him a father does?"

When my dad died in my ninth year, I, too, was raised by my mother, giving rise to the same question, "What do fathers do?" As far as I could observe, they brought around the car when it rained so everyone else could stay dry.

They always took the family pictures, which is why they were never in them. They carved turkeys on Thanksgiving, kept the car gassed up, weren't afraid to go into the basement, mowed the lawn, and tightened the clothesline to keep it from sagging.

It wasn't until my husband and I had children that I was able to observe firsthand what a father contributed to a child's life. What did he do to deserve his children's respect? He rarely fed them, did anything about their sagging diapers, wiped their noses or fannies, played ball, or bonded with them under the hoods of their cars.

What did he do?

He threw them higher than his head until they were weak from laughter. He cast the deciding vote on the puppy debate. He listened more than he talked. He let them make mistakes. He allowed them to fall from their first two-wheeler without having a heart attack. He read a newspaper while they were trying to parallel park a car for the first time in preparation for their driving test.

If I had to tell someone's son what a father really does that is important, it would be that he shows up for the job in good times and bad times. He's a man who is constantly being observed by his children. They learn from him how to handle adversity, anger, disappointment and success.

He won't laugh at their dreams no matter how impossible they might seem. He will dig out at 1 a.m. when one of his children runs out of gas. He will make unpopular decisions and stand by them. When he is wrong and makes a mistake, he will admit it. He sets the tone for how family members treat one another, members of the opposite sex and people who are different than they are. By example, he can instill a desire to give something back to the community when its needs are greater than theirs.

But mostly, a good father involves himself in his kids' lives. The more responsibility he has for a child, the harder it is to walk out of his life.

A father has the potential to be a powerful force in the life of a child. Grab it! Maybe you'll get a greeting card for your efforts. Maybe not. But it's steady work.