

Father's Day 2018

Pastor James Foley – Sunday, June 18, 2018

Main Theme – A 'Father's Day' message centering upon life-lessons, etc., my father 'taught' me.

WORSHIP & PRAYER

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Upcoming Events (REGULAR)**
 - Potluck – Sunday AM, June 24 (Post-Service)
 - WM – Tuesday Night, July 10, from 6:30–8:30pm
 - Men's Breakfast – Saturday, July 14, from 9–10am

MORNING OFFERING

At this time, I want to call forth our ushers.

-Thank you for your faithfulness in giving to the Lord/His work
-Your giving fuels the work of Christ in and through this church

May the Lord bless you as you give! May you experience His faithfulness in kind!

BARRY FAMILY FUN DAY

Special THANKS to those who helped to make our participation in the Barre Family Fun Day such a success. We had the opportunity to engage the community in a meaningful way for a span of about six hours! TESTIMONIES (if applicable)?

CHILDREN'S CHURCH

With this being Father's Day, it has been decided that the children should REMAIN in Service. Ginger and I believe it appropriate—for missionaries and special occasions—to allow for the children to join us. CHILDREN – I anticipate you are able to give the Pastor—more importantly, the Lord—the best of your attention. Thank you in advance!

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HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

Allow me to wish you all a HAPPY FATHER'S DAY! Fathers – today, we celebrate you. Whether you are a father biologically, adoptively or spiritually, we pay tribute to you, your work and your ongoing influence! We say THANK YOU and HONOR you as creations that reveal the particular genius of the Lord God. May the Lord bless you all as we gather in His precious and holy Name!

CONNECTIONS

A few weeks ago—on Mother's Day—I took the time to share a message entitled: "Lessons I Learned from My Mother." During that session, I offered insights into life and living based upon the words and example of my mom—insights founded upon Scripture, of course! Allow me to reaffirm the lessons we touched upon:

The SEASONAL nature of life and living
The CONSEQUENCES of bad/poor choices
The need for godly RESPECT and reverence
The glory of sacrificial SERVICE & godly LOVE

In light of this, I feel that I would be remiss if I did NOT offer a parallel lesson entitled: "Lessons I Learned from My Father." During our time today, I want to offer insights into life and living based upon the words and example of my dad—insights founded upon Scripture, of course! May we have ears to hear what the Spirit of the Lord is saying in this hour!

LE'TS DELVE IN

LESSON 1

The first lesson I learned from my father is as follows: “The Value of Seeking & NOT Settling.” I’ll take some time to define what I mean by this.

NOTE – I don’t know about you, but it amazes me—as I reflect upon my childhood—the things that I can so clearly REMEMBER. I recall waiting as a young child waiting with my mother in the car outside of WPI. We were waiting for my dad to get out of some classes he was taking (business-related I believe).

A part of me remembers it like it was yesterday:

- The QUALITY time spent with mom
- The EXCITEMENT of seeing my dad again
- The JOY he’d express in seeing us at pickup

KEY – I didn’t know it at the time, but this was all part of my father’s ongoing education. He was working to ADVANCE himself in his work to make a better life for his family. You see, some years earlier my dad—who had been working for a decade+ in one company—began to desire more than he had attained.

-At the age of 29–30, he was faced with a DECISION. Settle for the level that he was at OR take the tougher road and open doors for advancement via education. Either way, it was up to him. If he wanted more, no one was going to give it to him. He had to put in the time and work hard!

NOTE – Ultimately, HE made the decision to improve himself.

Of course, the OBSTACLES he had to overcome were real. He had to attend classes, study and take exams while working a full-time job. He had to take away from his wife and children. He had to overcome his own insecurities. I’m sure the words of his own father loomed in the back of his mind: “You’re not smart enough for college – you’re a dummy like me.”

KEY – It would have been easy to stay put, BUT he decided the sacrifice was worth the end-result. And by the time I worked for his company in 197, he was one of the guys who RAN the place!

APP. His EXAMPLE communicated something to me. Of course, it taught me the value of hard work and education. It taught me that there are some doors that—regardless of talent and ability—will NEVER open without taking a chance and following a dream. But mainly it taught me the value of SEEKING and NOT SETTLING.

KEY – i.e., There will ALWAYS be obstacles to forward advancement and reasons to stay put/settle WHEN there is an opportunity to rise up and SHINE. Such things can/must be overcome to become what we can be!

KEY – Church, make no mistake. These LESSONS carry over into our walks with Christ:

- It will always be easier to settle when God calls us onward
- There will always be giants in the land of promise ahead of you
- There will always be a Pharaoh to oppose you or a Judas to betray
- There will always be a mountain to climb or a valley to pass through
- There will always be forces/circumstances that hinder and frighten

...But if you stay close to your Shepherd...

...But if you will pay heed to your King...

...But if you will rely upon the Savior...

...There is VICTORY, DEVELOPMENT & BREAKTHROUGH

Romans 8:31b, 35, 37–39 (NIV)

31 . . . If God is for us, who can be against us?

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

LESSON 2

The next lesson that my dad taught me is one that has served me well: The Value of Constancy.

NOTE – There are many WORDS that I would use to describe my dad. He is intelligent, kind, generous/giving, wise, just/fair, merciful, gracious, capable, etc. But the word that comes to mind when I think of Ken Foley is this: he is **CONSTANT**.

Constancy is **DEFINED** as the quality of being unwavering and invariable. A person who is constant is **NOTED** for their dependability, reliability, steadfastness, trustworthiness, and consistency. When I think of my father, these words all describe his character and nature.

- If my father says he will do something – it will be done
- If my father says he will be present – he will arrive (timely)
- If I hand my father money – I never have to worry (integrity)
- For years I knew where he'd be each Sunday: here to worship

NOTE – I recall a time Misty and I were having a **CONVERSATION** about the faithful people in our lives. i.e., We were noting the people who had proven themselves to be reliable/dependable and the blessing that they were to us and the kingdom of God. (FYI – There's not much room in our world for inconsistent and unreliable people – at the personal level).

It was at that point that Misty made an **INSIGHTFUL STATEMENT**. She said, "James, you want to know why God expects consistency in His people? It's because He is constant."

Malachi 3:6 (NIV, 1984)

I the LORD do not change.

Hebrews 13:8 (NIV)

8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

James 1:17 (NIV)

17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

NOTE – She continued: "When we are constant we closely resemble our heavenly Father."

Q. If we are being conformed to the image of Christ, **SHOULDN'T** this show up in our lives?

Q. If He is by nature reliable, faithful and steadfast, **SHOULDN'T** this manifest in our being?

NOTE – I think that the Lord is into this more than we think!

John 1:35–42 (NIV)

35 The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. 36 When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, “Look, the Lamb of God!”

37 When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. 38 Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, “What do you want?”

They said, “Rabbi” (which means “Teacher”), “where are you staying?”

39 “Come,” he replied, “and you will see.”

So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon.

40 Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. 41 The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, “We have found the Messiah” (that is, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus.

Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas” (which, when translated, is Peter).

NOTE – We see here the initial meeting of Jesus and the one who WOULD BE called Peter. Note that Jesus places great emphasis on his NAME (Simon – which many interpret as meaning ‘reed’) and renames him Peter (i.e., ‘rock’).

KEY – Assuming Simon means ‘reed’ ...it was—as the Gospels affirm—a fitting description of his nature. SIMON—by nature—was wavering and variable. He was blown about by everything! Look through the Gospel accounts and you will see someone that you couldn’t depend on or trust. He was unsteady in all of his ways and inconsistent on every level. He was ANYTHING but firm, fixed and constant.

BUT Jesus said he would be called Cephas/Peter (i.e., a rock)!

KEY – This indicates that by the time the Lord was done with Peter, he would be a man rooted in permanence, stability and steadfastness. The Book of Acts (FYI) bears this out and we see him operating as a very pillar in the Church of the Living God!

Simon was of MINIMAL use to the kingdom. Peter helped to change the world! The DIFFERENCE between the two? Constancy!

Q. How constant are you? Would people describe you as steadfast, firm, fixed, reliable, trustworthy, rock-like? Would the Lord? If you cannot be faithful in the here and now, don’t expect to hear, “Well done, good and faithful servant” in the there and then!

LESSON 3

Allow me to put forth another lesson learned from my father: The Power of a Father's Love.

NOTE – The year was 1988 (give or take a year). I was in the 4th Grade, and my classmates and I were excited for our annual element school production: The Wizard of Oz. All of the parts were assigned and the big day had come!

FYI – I did NOT have a speaking role. I was one of the kids who held a yellow piece of paper in the background to make the yellow-brick road! I showed hints of greatness even at a young age!

I recall, once the production started, looking out into the crowd. I found the place where my mom was sitting. Who was sitting with her? My Dad! I FELT valued and loved by the one man I desired it the most from! Word cannot tell you the impact this can make in the heart of a child, working to FASHION the person they will become!

KEY – Looking back, I honestly can't recall a play or a recital the man didn't make. I can't recall a Parent's Night he missed. I can't recall one birthday party or special moment he bailed on. And remember, he was a man thoroughly committed to his work (i.e., important job). But he had a sense of priority that DEMONSTRATED that I was a priority/beloved! TRANSFORMATIVE!

APP. When I came to Christ at age 19, I began to learn about my heavenly Father. I wasn't raised in a Christian home, so I had to discover the truths of who/what He is like a newborn babe in Christ. I had a Father who said things in His Word like the following:

My Child...

You may not know me, but I know everything about you ...Psalm 139:1

I know when you sit down and when you rise up ...Psalm 139:2

I am familiar with all your ways ...Psalm 139:3

Even the very hairs on your head are numbered ...Matthew 10:29-31

For you were made in my image ...Genesis 1:27

In me you live and move and have your being ...Acts 17:28

For you are my offspring ...Acts 17:28

I knew you even before you were conceived ...Jeremiah 1:4-5

I chose you when I planned creation ...Ephesians 1:11-12

You were not a mistake, for all your days are written in my book ...Psalm 139:15-16

I determined the exact time of your birth and where you would live ...Acts 17:26

You are fearfully and wonderfully made ...Psalm 139:14

I knit you together in your mother's womb ...Psalm 139:13

And brought you forth on the day you were born ...Psalm 71:6

I have been misrepresented by those who don't know me ...John 8:41-44

I am not distant and angry, but am the complete expression of love ...1 John 4:16

And it is my desire to lavish my love on you ...1 John 3:1
 Simply because you are my child and I am your father ...1 John 3:1
 I offer you more than your earthly father ever could ...Matthew 7:11
 For I am the perfect father ...Matthew 5:48
 Every good gift that you receive comes from my hand ...James 1:17
 For I am your provider and I meet all your needs ...Matthew 6:31-33
 My plan for your future has always been filled with hope ...Jeremiah 29:11
 Because I love you with an everlasting love ...Jeremiah 31:3
 My thoughts toward you are countless as the sand on the seashore ...Psalms 139:17-18
 And I rejoice over you with singing ...Zephaniah 3:17
 I will never stop doing good to you ...Jeremiah 32:40
 For you are my treasured possession ...Exodus 19:5
 I desire to establish you with all my heart and all my soul ...Jeremiah 32:41
 And I want to show you great and marvelous things ...Jeremiah 33:3
 If you seek me with all your heart, you will find me ...Deuteronomy 4:29
 Delight in me and I will give you the desires of your heart ...Psalm 37:4
 For it is I who gave you those desires ...Philippians 2:13
 I am able to do more for you than you could possibly imagine ...Ephesians 3:20
 For I am your greatest encourager ...2 Thessalonians 2:16-17
 I am also the Father who comforts you in all your troubles ...2 Corinthians 1:3-4
 When you are brokenhearted, I am close to you ...Psalm 34:18
 As a shepherd carries a lamb, I have carried you close to my heart ...Isaiah 40:11
 One day I will wipe away every tear from your eyes ...Revelation 21:3-4
 And I'll take away all the pain you have suffered on this earth ...Revelation 21:3-4
 I am your Father, and I love you even as I love my son, Jesus ...John 17:23
 For in Jesus, my love for you is revealed ...John 17:26
 He is the exact representation of my being ...Hebrews 1:3
 He came to demonstrate that I am for you, not against you ...Romans 8:31
 And to tell you that I am not counting your sins ...2 Corinthians 5:18-19
 Jesus died so that you and I could be reconciled ...2 Corinthians 5:18-19
 His death was the ultimate expression of my love for you ...1 John 4:10
 I gave up everything I loved that I might gain your love ...Romans 8:31-32
 If you receive the gift of my son Jesus, you receive me ...1 John 2:23
 And nothing will ever separate you from my love again ...Romans 8:38-39
 Come home and I'll throw the biggest party heaven has ever seen ...Luke 15:7
 I have always been Father, and will always be Father ...Ephesians 3:14-15
 My question is...Will you be my child? ...John 1:12-13
 I am waiting for you ...Luke 15:11-32

Love, Your Father.
 Almighty God

KEY – It was NOT hard for me to embrace or understand these sentiments reflecting God’s love because I had so long experienced and known the earthly counterpart in my dad. My father’s love and value in his boy HELPED me to understand—to a small degree, of course—God’s love and sense of value He places on me!

Q. If my earthly father’s love worked to shape me, how much more the love of God!

-Catalyzes LOVE...

1 John 4:19 (NIV)

19 We love him, because he first loved us.

-Catalyzes OBEDIENCE...

John 14:15a (ESV)

15 If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

NOTE – IF you did NOT have the privilege of having a good earthly father, please try not to see the Lord through the lens of your negative experience(s). Maybe your father was absentee, belittling, abusive, detached, etc. Please don’t project these vices onto the Lord who is all virtue! Allow Him to bring healing to your heart and perspective that TRANSCENDS what you’ve known down here!

Psalms 27:10 (NIV)

Though my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will receive me.

LESSON 4

The final lesson (for the sake of time) I want to put forth is this: Even 'Good Men' Need Jesus.

NOTE – I have spent the majority of our time together today holding up my dad as a man of virtue and character. i.e., Someone WORTHY of emulation, etc. In my estimation (and I know I'm biased), he's the greatest man I've ever known.

KEY – BUT please do NOT think I'm holding him up as someone without flaw and defect...

The year was 2002. I was recently engaged to Misty and about to conclude Bible school in Florida when my dad and mom pulled into Pensacola, FL for my graduation. A wonderful season of my life was ending and it was time to hop in the car with my folks and Misty to launch into a whole new season (which would be just as/if not more wonderful).

It was on the RIDE HOME that my future wife and I noticed something strange about my dad. He was—in an unprecedented way—incredibly open about the Lord. You have to realize He was—for years—resistant to the Lord/Gospel! We even called him Pharaoh for a time! He stubbornly held on to the belief that—if there was a heaven—he could get there by being a 'good' man. But now he was talking about the Lord, etc., in a whole new way! STRANGE!

One the way home from FL, we paid a visit to Misty's mom and step-dada in N. Alabama. It was on a Sunday during a service at the Rock Church that I saw my father (without coercion) take a knee in respond to the preacher's invitation.

KEY – It was at that moment that I saw the greatest man I have ever known bow in submission to a much-needed Savior: Jesus Christ.

-In an INSTANT I understood and recognized something that I had known theologically: being a great man ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH. We are all in need of the grace/pardon found in Christ alone.

1) We must realize that we are sinners in need of forgiveness.

[Romans 3:23](#) – “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”

2) We must realize that there is a penalty for sin.

[Romans 6:23](#) – “For the wages of sin is death”

3) We must realize that Jesus gave His life for us, bearing the penalty of our sin.

[Romans 5:8](#) – “God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

4) Through faith in and surrender to Christ, we find forgiveness and receive eternal life.

[Romans 10:9–10](#) – “If you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.”

[John 3:16](#) – “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

- Do you want to be pardoned for your sin?
- Do you want to receive God’s gift of eternal life?
- Do you want to begin a whole new life in Jesus Christ?

You must be willing to look to Him and to Him alone. Trust NOT in yourself!

CONCLUSION PT. 1

I have shared with you an array of principles/lessons I learned from my father:

- The Value of Seeking & NOT Settling
- The Value of Constancy (i.e., Consistency)
- The Transformative Power of a Father's Love
- The Truth that Even Great Men Need Jesus Christ

I can only pray that these lessons—instilled by my father and affirmed by the Word—would speak to your hearts today. May his wisdom and example somehow inform and impact the life you are living in the Lord!

I CLOSE WITH THIS...

- Everything wonderful and dear to me about my father...
- Everything wonderful and dear to me about you fathers...

...Is wonderful and dear because they reflect the wonder of the God we serve. The fatherly characteristics that we see in you are but SHADOWS of the PERFECTION found in the Lord.

So, on this Father's Day as we celebrate you, WE CELEBRATE HIM.

CONCLUSION PT. 2

Thank you for taking the time to worship with us today. May the Lord bless you all on this Father's Day! As a small token of our love and appreciation, EVERY dad here will receive a small token of our affection. It's not much – just a loving gesture.

NOTE – The Ushers will stand at the stairwells (1x/person until all have been served).

CLOSING PRAYER