

FAITH, STORMS, AND FATHERS

TODAY IS FATHER'S DAY. SOME CLAIM IT CAN BE TRACED BACK TO RUINS IN BABYLON WHERE A YOUNG BOY WISHED HIS FATHER LONG LIFE AND GOOD HEALTH ON A CLAY TABLET – THE FIRST HALLMARK CARD, I GUESS. THOUGH MOST ACCEPT FATHER'S DAY AS STARTED WITH MS DODD IN SPOKANE, WA. AFTER HEARING A MOTHER'S DAY SERMON. WITH HELP FROM THE SPOKANE MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION AND THE YMCA THE FIRST FATHER'S DAY WAS OBSERVED IN 1910. TWO PRESIDENTS ACKNOWLEDGED THE DAY BUT IT WAS LYNDON JOHNSON IN 1966 THAT SET THE THIRD SUNDAY IN JUNE AS FATHER'S DAY AND NIXON IN 1972 FIXED THE DATE.

NOW IN TODAY'S READINGS NONE OF THE MEN – JONAH, PAUL OR JESUS WERE MARRIED. HOWEVER, THEY ALL HAD FATHERS AND REALLY HAD ONE FATHER IN COMMON – THE HEAVENLY FATHER. CAN WE ASSUME THEIR FATHER'S INFLUENCE ON THEIR LIVES AND THEIR FAITH? AMITTAI WAS JONAH'S FATHER, A PROPHET, PAUL'S FATHER WAS A PHARISEE, AND OF COURSE, JESUS' FATHER WAS JOSEPH, A MAN OF FAITH.

WE TOO ALL HAVE DIFFERENT FATHERS AND YET GOD IS OUR HEAVENLY FATHER. EARTHLY FATHERS NEED TO MODEL THEMSELVES AFTER THE HEAVENLY FATHER - AND THAT IS EXACTLY WHY WE HAVE GRACE AND THE POWER OF PRAYER. MEN, WE NEED TO BE PRAYING FOR THE CHURCH AND ESPECIALLY FOR FAMILIES! AND AS THE PHRASE GOES – “IT'S NOT WOMEN'S WORK” LIKE PRAYING IS SOMETHING ONLY FOR A WOMAN. TAKING THE TIME TO BE A SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER IS SOMETHING TO CONSIDER TOO. JUST THINK ALL THE EXPERIENCE AND WISDOM YOU HAVE GAINED AND COULD SHARE WITH YOUNG PEOPLE. I BELIEVE TORIE WOULD WELCOME A MALE ROLE MODEL FOR HER YOUTH GROUP!

BEING A ROLE MODEL DOES NOT MEAN YOU ARE PERFECT. NO YOUTH WILL LOOK UP TO SOMEONE WHO MAKES MISTAKES AND ADMITS WHEN THEY ARE WRONG AND LEARNS, AFTER ALL THAT IS WHAT LIFE IS ABOUT! IF A MAN, A WOMAN OR A YOUNG PERSON TRIES TO GO THROUGH LIFE EXPECTING PERFECTION OF THEMSELVES AND OTHERS, THEIR LIFE WILL GO DOWN A HARD PATH!

WHAT TRAITS OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER CAN WE AS EARTHLY FATHERS DISPLAY TO OUR FAMILIES AND OTHERS?

FROM WHAT I CAN GATHER AS A MODEL OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER WE MUST BE GROUNDED, **ROOTED IN LOVE.** AFTER ALL WE ONLY NEED BE REMINDED THAT *God So Loved The World That He Sent His Only Son...* AND 1 CORINTHIANS 13 - THE LOVE CHAPTER LAYS OUT THOSE TRAITS OF LOVE THAT GO A LONG, LONG WAY IN LOOKING LIKE OUR HEAVENLY FATHER. OUR HELPER, THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL MANIFEST IN THE **NINE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT OR ATTRIBUTES OF A DISCIPLE'S LIFE.**

WHEN WE ARE **ROOTED IN THESE “THINGS OF THE SPIRIT” ACTIONS WILL FOLLOW THAT SHOW TO THOSE AROUND US, OUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS THAT IT IS CHRIST WHO LIVES WITHIN ME.**

A FOUNDATION FOR FATHERS IS A BELIEF THAT HIS **CHILDREN ARE A BLESSING**. IT MAY SEEM AT TIMES WHEN A SON OR DAUGHTER IS HAVING A ROUGH PATCH IT DOES NOT SEEM SO BUT THEN COME THE REWARDING TIMES AND THE BAD TIMES FADE FROM MEMORY.

ONE TRAIT WE SHOULD HAVE IS THAT OF A TEACHER. NOW THAT TAKES ON MANY FORMS. AFTER ALL DOESN'T OUR HEAVENLY FATHER ALWAYS DESIRE US TO LEARN? LIKE I SAID TEACHING CAN TAKE ON MANY FORMS AND CAN OCCUR ALMOST AT ANY TIME. (STORY OF DAUGHTER PLAYING GAME OF LIFE) NUMEROUS VERSES IN THE BIBLE PORTRAY THE FATHER AS A TEACHER FROM EXODUS AND DEUTERONOMY THROUGH THE PSALMS AND PROVERBS, IN THE GOSPELS AND VARIOUS EPISTLE LETTERS. A FATHER TEACHES BIBLICAL WISDOM SO THAT THE PROMISE OF PROVERBS 22:6 *"Teach a child the way they should go and even when they are old will not depart from it"*

FATHERS CAN TEACH BY EXAMPLE AND ADVICE. ACTIONS ARE THE THING YOUTH ARE LOOKING FOR. WE CAN TALK A POINT TO DEATH BUT THOSE ACTIONS SPEAK SO MUCH STRONGER. THIS IS NOT AN EASY TASK AS THE CULTURE TODAY FIGHTS AGAINST MANY OF THE BELIEFS WE HOLD BECAUSE RELIGION DOES NOT HOLD THE MORAL GROUND THAT IT ONCE DID.

THE JOB OF TEACHING HAS BEEN MADE HARDER BUT GOD IS ON YOUR SIDE - HE DOES NOT LEAVE YOU OUT THERE "TWISTING IN THE WIND". I BELIEVE THAT "FATHERING" IS A JOB WE NEVER RETIRE FROM EVEN WHEN THE GRANDKIDS COME ALONG. **MEN OF CENTENNIAL ANOTHER IMPORTANT POINT TO REMEMBER HERE IS JUST BECAUSE YOUR KIDS OR GRANDKIDS DON'T LIVE HERE OR YOU DON'T HAVE ANY YOU ARE AN EXAMPLE FOR THE KIDS AND YOUTH WE HAVE HERE AT CENTENNIAL.**

I HAVE SEEN SOME OF YOU TALKING TO YOUTH ABOUT THEIR ACTIVITIES OR PLAYING WITH THE LITTLE ONES. THOSE ARE ALL EXAMPLES OF BEING A FATHER IN THE FAMILY OF GOD. WHERE ON EARTH ARE OUR KIDS AND YOUTH GOING TO SEE GOOD EXAMPLES IF THEY DON'T SEE IT HERE AT CENTENNIAL? AFTER ALL I HAVE HEARD MANY TIMES PEOPLE EXPRESS THAT WE ARE ONE LARGE FAMILY, WELL MEN THAT MEANS ALL THESE KIDS AND YOUTH ARE YOUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS TOO!!!!

FATHERS CANNOT FORGET AN INGREDIENT THAT IS IMPORTANT AS A FATHER ALONG WITH THE LOVE – **TO DISCIPLINE OUT OF LOVE AND IN LOVE.** (STORY OF DAUGHTER AND CURFEW) IT IS IMPORTANT FOR YOUR CHILDREN TO UNDERSTAND THAT JUST LIKE OUR HEAVENLY FATHER DISCIPLINES US OUT OF LOVE WE ARE CALLED TO DO THE SAME. THE BIBLE GIVES MANY NUGGETS OF WISDOM FOR OUR BENEFIT OR WE WILL HAVE TO DEAL WITH THE CONSEQUENCES. ANY FATHER DOES NOT WANT THEIR CHILDREN TO HURT PHYSICALLY OR EMOTIONALLY AND WE WANT TO GIVE ADVICE FROM OUR OWN EXPERIENCES, BUT MANY TIMES CHILDREN MUST MAKE THEIR OWN MISTAKES AND LEARN FIRST HAND THE RESULTS OF THEIR ACTIONS!

FATHERS, YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR KIDS IS SOMETHING GOD REALLY CARES ABOUT. GOD KNOWS IT IS NOT AN EASY TASK, *BUT HE IS THERE FOR US.* IT IS WHEN WE "LET SELF GET IN THE WAY" THAT THE WHEELS CAN COME OFF AND WE WONDER WHY. *THAT IS WHY IT IS SO IMPORTANT FOR US AS "FATHERS" TO HAVE THAT LIVING RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST AND GOD THE FATHER!*

IN ALL OF TODAY'S READINGS FROM JONAH TO JESUS ALL THESE MEN HAD A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, THE FATHER. ALL TOOK RESPONSIBILITY IN THE SITUATION. LOOK AT JONAH HE TOLD THE CREW TO THROW HIM IN THE WATER BECAUSE HE WAS TRYING TO RUN AWAY FROM GOD. PAUL IN A SIMILAR

SITUATION ASSURED THE CREW THEY WOULD BE SAFE BECAUSE OF HIS FAITH IN GOD, UNLIKE JONAH WHO WAS RUNNING FROM GOD.

IS THERE A LESSON TO BE LEARNED HERE LIKE WE SHOULD BE RUNNING TO GOD NOT FROM GOD IN STORMY TIMES? IN THE READING OF JESUS IN THE BOAT AND THE STORM, BEING THE SON OF GOD HE STILLED THE WIND AND CALMED THE SEA AND CHALLENGED THE FAITH OF HIS DISCIPLES.

NOW THE QUESTION FOR FATHERS IS “HOW DO YOU HANDLE STORMY TIMES?” IT IS LIKE A JONAH, A PAUL, JESUS OR THE DISCIPLES? AFTER ALL THE VERSES FROM JAMES 1:2-4 – THE MESSAGE -*“Consider it a sheer gift, friends, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides. You know that under pressure, your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors. So don’t try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way.”*

WE MAY NOT BE ON A BOAT AND IN A LITERAL STORM BUT AS THE VERSES TELL US STORMY TIMES WILL COME IN OUR LIFE!!! HERE ARE SOME FACTS ABOUT STORMY TIMES.

1) THEY TEND TO COME AT INCONVENIENT TIMES LIKE THE CASE OF JESUS AND THE DISCIPLES AFTER A LONG DAY OF MINISTRY. SOUND FAMILIAR, A PROBLEM AT HOME AFTER A HARD DAY AT WORK? HOW DO YOU HANDLE THAT?

2) WE MAY BE FOLLOWING GOD’S WILL YET STORMS COME RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF IT. WE CAN ALL RECALL TIMES WHEN WE BEGAN TO TAKE STEPS ON OUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY AND SOMETHING HAPPENED. AFTER ALL JESUS HAD DIRECTED THE DISCIPLES TO GET IN THE BOAT AND GO TO THE OTHER SHORE. AS THE VERSES FROM JAMES POINT OUT THESE ARE THE TIMES WHEN OUR FAITH IS TESTED AND MAYBE THE DISCIPLES FAILED BUT THERE WAS STILL A LESSON TO BE LEARNED ABOUT WHO JESUS REALLY IS! THE SAME WITH PAUL HE WAS ON A MISSION FOR GOD TO SPREAD THE WORD.

3) RIGHT ALONG WITH THIS THOUGHT IS STORMS EVEN HAPPEN TO THOSE CLOSE TO GOD. JUST BECAUSE WE HAVE THAT RELATIONSHIP DOES NOT MEAN LIFE IS A “BOWL OF CHERRIES” OR “SUNSHINE AND LOLLIPOPS”. WE LIVE IN A FALLEN WORLD AND SUBJECT TO THE GOOD AND BAD OF THIS WORLD. BEING A DISCIPLE DOES NOT LIKE SOME GAME SHOWS CARRY WITH IT IMMUNITY FROM.

THIS FATHER’S DAY HOW IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER? COULD IT BE BETTER, RICHER AND WHAT WILL YOU DO TO IMPROVE IT? HAVE YOU USED THAT RELATIONSHIP AS AN EXAMPLE TO BE THE BEST EARTHLY FATHER YOU CAN BE NOT ONLY IN YOUR FAMILY, BUT IN THE FAMILY OF GOD?

IN TODAY’S READINGS A STORM CAME UPON THEIR BOATS FOR DIFFERENT REASONS BUT WITH THE FAITH OF THEIR FATHERS THEY HAD RESULTED IN ACTION AS THEY CALLED UPON THEIR HEAVENLY FATHER.

WIVES, PRAY FOR YOUR HUSBAND AND CHILDREN AND YOUTH PRAY FOR YOUR DAD BECAUSE GOD HAS MADE HIM, HIS HANDS, FEET, AND VOICE ON EARTH.

MAY OUR HOMES AND THIS CHURCH BE A CARING FAMILY OF DISCIPLES WHO KNOW CHRIST AND MAKE CHRIST KNOWN IN OUR COMMUNITY THAT INCLUDES OUR FAMILY AND AROUND THE WORLD BY ACTION, WORD AND EXAMPLE. AMEN.