

## Happy Father's Day

**Mark 5:21 ESV (Pg 490)** And when Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered about him, and he was beside the sea. **22** Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, and seeing him, he fell at his feet **23** and implored him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well and live." **24** And he went with him. And a great crowd followed him and thronged about him. **25** And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, **26** and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse. **27** She had heard the reports about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. **28** For she said, "If I touch even his garments, I will be made well." **29** And immediately the flow of blood dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. **30** And Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone out from him, immediately turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my garments?" **31** And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, 'Who touched me?'" **32** And he looked around to see who had done it. **33** But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before him and told him the whole truth. **34** And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease." **35** While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" **36** But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe." **37** And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James and John the brother of James. **38** They came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. **39** And when he had entered, he said to them, "Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but sleeping." **40** And they laughed at him. But he put them all outside and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him and went in where the child was. **41** Taking her by the hand he said to her, "Talitha cumi," which means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." **42** And immediately the girl got up and began walking (for she was twelve years of age), and they were immediately overcome with amazement. **43** And he strictly charged them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

- I. Today is Father's Day. It's been my great privilege to be a dad to 4 amazing boys, all of whom have become men while I wasn't looking. I am grateful for the opportunity to love, and teach, and correct, and encourage, and tease, and wrestle, and learn from these guys. As a common greeting in our home, I tell them that I'm glad I am their dad...and they respond, "I'm glad I'm your son." My heart smiles.
  - A. Even before they were born, I remember thinking about what I would do as a dad. I thought about what I would do differently than my own father. I had dreams for my as yet unborn children that I hoped to see accomplished.
    1. Because of this, I read books by James Dobson, Kevin Leman and the like. I listened to "Focus on the Family" on the radio, and went to seminars like

- “Growing Kids God’s Way”. There were things I learned that were helpful, and some that were not so helpful.
2. But oddly, no matter how much I tried to learn, there was always a situation arising, or problem occurring that my books, programs and seminars had not prepared me for. I learned that fathering, despite my efforts, was hard!
- B. Have some of you have had a similar experience? Perhaps your children are young and you’re wanting to know how to serve them sacrificially as their dad.
1. So I’d like to share two fundamental things from the scriptures I’ve learned about being a dad. These two things will not answer every specific question you have about how to encourage, discipline, or inspire your kids.
  2. It’s true that there may be other, more specific things that must be done, but without the foundation of these two things, your parenting will be difficult, with a decreased chance of success. They apply to all stages of fathering.
- II. We just read the story of Jairus from the book of Acts. He had received terrible news: his beloved 12-year-old girl was dying. But he had heard about a miracle worker named Jesus who had healed the blind, deaf, lame and leper. He determined to go find this man and bring him to his daughter, hoping he could help.
- A. This is the first fundamental truth for dads...**Be determined to bring Jesus to your home.** Because of the terrible curse of sin, all of our children’s loves are in jeopardy. But have you heard about the man who heals the sick and exercises authority over all the power of the devil? Has his grace delivered you from all of the power of sin, from purposeless living and and despair?
1. If you know of him, go and find him! Get him! Bring him to your home! No doubt he will come! Tell him about your children, your wife, your own needs and he will come with compassion. **John 14:23 ESV Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.**
  2. Jairus made up his mind that Jesus was his only hope, and so he insisted that he come into his home. We must also determine that Christ is our only hope; not only for our lives, but for those of our families as well.
    - a) This is more difficult than it sounds because there are many things in the world of a man that offer themselves up as potential saviors.
    - b) Like success for example, with all the comforts and conveniences that it brings with it (things like prestige, better material things, better healthcare and education, a more honorable reputation). We’ve convinced ourselves that our kids will be blessed by our pursuit of these things.
    - c) **Mark 8:36 ESV “For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?”** Our children need us to provide an environment where Christ is exalted in our sacrificial love and our patient attitude when they falter. But more than that, they need to see a dad who is shamelessly clinging to Christ as their only hope in life, and living under his lordship.
- B. Do our children see that Christ is everything to us? Or does he just appear to be an accessory in our already crowded life? Do we delegate the discipleship and spiritual formation of our kids only to the church? To Sunday School teachers and Youth Group Leader? Or do take it as our duty to invite Christ into our homes and lives in tangible, visible ways?

1. What priority does prayer and worship have in your home? If they are practiced, are they practiced mostly by you or your wife? When stress, affliction, or disappointment occur, how do your kids see you respond?
  2. I don't need my kids to see me as flawless, sinless or perfect, but I do hope that they see me as dependently clinging to Christ; not just at church, but also in the heat of my daily life.
- C. Notice also how Jairus handled distractions. While he was almost dragging Jesus to his house, a woman shows up with a need that seems to slow Jesus down. There will always be distractions in our lives. Times when we have to work more than normal, or when our kids seem to blow us off, or there is tension between us and our spouse. But like Jairus, will we keep on task and bring Jesus home in good times and bad; times of need and plenty?
- D. It is when Christ is invited and escorted into our homes that our children have the greatest opportunity to be made alive from sin, and raised to follow Christ.
- III. For the second fundamental step in great fathering, let's take a look at **Mark 9:17 ESV (Pg 493)** And someone from the crowd answered him, "Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute. **18** And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able." **19** And he answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me." **20** And they brought the boy to him. And when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. **21** And Jesus asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. **22** And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." **23** And Jesus said to him, "If you can! All things are possible for one who believes." **24** Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" **25** And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again." **26** And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, "He is dead." **27** But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.
- A. While we must first resolve to bring Christ into our homes, it is also always appropriate to **Bring our children to Jesus**. Just as the influence of setting up a Christ-centered home cannot be overstated, it means nothing if we don't also constantly deliver our children up to the Lord. The dad in Mark 9 was not able to help his son. The disciples were not able to help his son. Only Christ could help.
1. Some of us see our children gravitating toward behaviors that we might tell ourselves are just "phases". We may not see our child's spiritual condition to be as desperate as a man whose son is demon possessed, but the fact of the matter is that the natural drift of our children's hearts is away from Jesus.
  2. How are we going to carry them back to the safety of his arms? Jesus has already commanded that we clear a path so our little ones can have access to him. **Matthew 19:14 ESV** Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven."

- B. So how do we practically bring our kids to Jesus? First, recognize that it is hard to bring a kid to Jesus who is not coming from a home where Jesus has not been welcomed, prioritized and submitted to. That is why I began there.
1. Assuming that is what you've done, start by having them in places where their hearts can be influenced by the word of God, the power of the Spirit, and the fellowship of the saints; this means church, Sunday school, Youth groups, camps, LIFE groups, and so forth.
    - a) There is an epidemic of young people going to college, away from mom and dad, and leaving the church and even their Christianity behind. This cannot be to surprising if we have taught them that the Body of Christ is important if it's convenient.
    - b) This should not surprise us when we have shown them that gathering with the saints to worship and hear the word takes a much lower priority than little league, work, sleeping in or a night of television. Bringing them to Jesus cannot be separated from bringing them to church.
  2. Next, learn to listen to your children's questions. Sometimes they will be subtle, sometimes direct. But answer directly their questions about God, life, sin, death, heaven, hell, judgement and salvation. Learn to seek answers from the scriptures, the Spirit and the saints (in that order) together with your children. Get help from a more mature believer if necessary, but don't shirk your role as your child's spiritual guide and Bible instructor. That is your job.
  3. Last, bring your kids to Jesus by praying for your kids. I didn't say to say "God is great, God is good" or "Now I lay me down to sleep" type prayers. Do war with God for your kids!
    - a) Abraham prayed, "O that my son, Ishmael may live before you!" and God heard him. Job prayed for his children everyday just incase they had committed some wickedness. Jacob laid hands and prayed for all his children and grandchildren.
    - b) And don't just pray for your kids, pray with them! Find out what the anxieties and fears of their little hearts are and cry out to God with them for peace and miracles.
- C. Admittedly, all of this might seem like a daunting task, especially if you don't think of yourself as particularly spiritual. But when you feel overwhelmed, cry out to Jesus for yourself like the man in Mark 9 did. "I believe; help my unbelief!" In that moment, you will find that God is just the kind of tender, patient Father that we all want, the kind we all need. He wants to help you.
1. In our home we have had many times when what our children needed from God was way beyond our parental skill or ability. It was way beyond what any man could do. We have seen our children caught up in sin, in despair and depression. Many of you know about when Cameron told us that he was an atheist. There is nothing that we could do to convince him to believe.
  2. So what did we do? We cried out to their true Father, night after night, day after day; in days of encouragement and faith and in nights of darkness, fear and desperation. We brought our kids (and still do) to Jesus. He has never let us down.

- IV. Men, we must never forget that we have been called to lead our homes. We are the authorized head. And being the head means that we will be held accountable for the kind of husband we are to our wives as well as the kind of fathers we are to our children.
  - A. There is no way that any of us can stand up under what is required of us. That's why we need Christ to be welcomed into our homes. That is why we must bring our children daily to Jesus. He is their only hope. Do you believe that?
  - B. I want to pray for you all this morning that God will show you what to do in your unique situation, that he will give you the courage to repent of apathy or laziness in your fathering, and that he will give you the power to obey him. Bring Jesus home starting today. Bring your children to Christ everyday. He is all they need.