

## Sermon - Church Without Walls - 15th June 2014

Good morning every one! Today is Fathers' Day.

Wikipedia defines it as a celebration honouring fathers and celebrating fatherhood, celebrating paternal bonds, and the influence of fathers in society. Fathers' Day it says, was created to complement Mothers' Day, a celebration that honours mothers and motherhood.

These days are fun, but we're clearly told in the Ten Commandments and later by Paul in his letter to the Ephesians to honour our parents day in and day out as a duty of love, not just on one day a year. Father's Day is a great idea as long as it's not seen as being the only day on which we need to honour our male parent.

**Ephesians 6:1-4** *Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour your father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with you, and you may live long on the earth. And, you fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*

Now in many families, and not only Christian ones, I'm sure it's the case that fathers are recognised as important

and given honour. Unfortunately in western societies in particular, the state of fatherhood has become somewhat degraded as a consequence of prolific sexual activity and subsequent pregnancies amongst teenagers and young people, easy no-blame divorces on demand, and the abandoning of any need to be married before having children, so that in too many families fathers are barely acknowledged to exist. In fact often they don't exist, they've simply disappeared and forsaken all responsibility for the children who are the fruit of their loins.

Some of you watching may have been deserted by your own fathers. Some of you watching may be wives and mothers discarded by your husbands. Some of you watching may be fathers dumped by your wives and your children. Deep down in you all there is hurt and heartbreak. Deep down in you all there is confusion and rejection. Deep down in you all there is a longing to be loved and accepted and for normal family life to be restored. I speak to all of you this morning. Everyone of you.

There is a Father Who will never desert you. There is a Father who will never discard you. There is a Father who will never dump you nor forsake you. He loves you so much, so purely and deeply, so individually and

so passionately, that He sent His Son to purchase each and every one of you out of your sin and iniquity so you'd be His in perpetuity, that you might dwell with Him from here to eternity, that you might bask in His love and in the absolute and total forgiveness of everything you have ever done, however bad, however despicable, however unspeakable, however foul. He knows what you have done and He still loves you but He has to forbid you from His Presence in such a state. He is a holy, righteous, wise and just God.

*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; He tells us in **Romans 3:23**.*

Elsewhere, in the light of this He says:

**Isaiah 1:18** *Come now, and let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*

He sent His Son to pay every debt we've each accumulated every time we fell short of His glory. This debt, whether made up of one or thousands of shortfalls, has the same price tag. It demands your death. *The wages of sin is death* says the scripture. The Law of God pronounces the same sentence on all unredeemed humankind, no matter whether they are king or queen, citizen or subject, male or female, celebrity or

unknown, religious or nonreligious, or a member or not of any self-professing, self-confessing group of any code or conduct or belief, however sincerely held. For each and every one of us *the payment for our sin is the death sentence.*

God is a holy God. His word is unchanging and forever settled in heaven. He cannot be divided against Himself, against His words. Such a thing would lead to the entire destruction of His entire creation - it's held together by the word of His power and if His word was uncertain then so too would be the stability of creation.

But our holy, righteous, just God is Love personified. He loves all men with such powerful, passionate, all-consuming jealous love that in His unfathomable wisdom He announced a plan in the Garden of Eden that would satisfy the most voracious demands of His law for the death of all defaulters, while also justly and righteously satisfying His heart's desire that all men should be saved.

At this point we'd better be sure we understand what we are being saved to and saved from.

Death in its most simplistic definition is the absence of life in this world as we know it. It is a state of decay and degradation. It's the removal from among us of someone or something we have known. It's the finite

irretrievable ending of something once begun. Death is all those things but much, much more important is what death is not.

Death is not the end of existence but a change of state from flesh to spirit. Death is the continuation of life in another existence, in another realm, but without God. It is to exist in eternal separation from the God who loved you so much that He created you in the first place. He knew you even before you were in your mother's womb the psalmist says and He chose the exact parents who would execute His blueprint. (That's a fundamental reason why it is so important to honour your parents. A sovereign God selected them to give birth to you.) You have the right genes, the right DNA, the right physical, emotional and mental characteristics and abilities to be exactly who He designed you to be. Even for those conceived under unfortunate circumstances, God still says that *we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.* - Romans 8:28

So the sentence of death, being the wages of sin, is to know for certain that when we die we will forever be separated from our Parent, from our God, from the source of all life, from the source of all light and blessing and that we'll spend eternity in a place of

darkness and loneliness and meaningless existence without love, without acceptance, without God. But the Good News is THIS is what we are being saved from.

As a Father, God has revealed His heart for His children and for the whole world. He's revealed a plan that doesn't compromise His word. The righteous demands of the Law MUST be satisfied. He's shown a way that doesn't infringe the justice of the death sentence passed on each of us since the beginning of time.

The redemption of man can only be secured by someone willing to die in his place, not only for each of us but for all people who have ever lived and ever will live. In order for the substitution to be both effective eternally and legal it must be performed by someone who has never sinned and is every way, in all ways, a man like us. And His blood must be offered to God as the payment. The scripture tells us that the life is in the blood. Blood must be poured out before God as a redemption for life. Before blood can be poured out a sacrificial death must take place.

How then will this be possible? How can it be? Who could possibly fulfil this role for *we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God*? But God has revealed His perfect plan:

**John 3:16** *For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

**Romans 5:15-18** *So also is the free gift not like the offense. For if through the offense of one (that is Adam) many are dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, has abounded unto many. So is the gift not like it was by Adam that sinned: for the judgment was by Adam to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offenses unto justification. For if by Adam's offense death reigned by Adam; much more they who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by Jesus Christ.) Therefore as by the offense of Adam, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of Jesus Christ the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.*

What a gift! This is the ultimate Father's Day gift! A free gift from our Father in Heaven to His children on earth.

Perhaps you have given your father a gift today. As a father of three girls I know how it melts the heart - that they care; that they bother; that they do it because they love you. It's the love that stirs you to tears. Despite all the aggravation you've caused them through life they

still love you, and today they are reminding you about that.

And today on this Fathers Day I'm reminding you of how much your heavenly Father loves each and every one of you despite all the aggravation you've caused Him! His gift to you today and every day is that of His only begotten Son who willingly gave Himself to the cruellest and most humiliating of deaths so that he could redeem you from eternal separation from Him. He poured out His own blood before the Father in heaven that He might fulfil the demands of the law and having done that to clothe you personally dear viewer in a robe of His righteousness if you'll let Him.

All He asks is that you will believe Him. That you will believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that He died in place of you for Your own sins and iniquities, that in Him you might have eternal life.

In Christ death is not separation from God but eternal life with total forgiveness, love, joy and peace in the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said in those famous words recorded in the Gospel of John and which now form such a profound opening proclamation at a Church of England funeral service:



*I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever lives and believes in me shall never die.*

Will you go to the cross at Calvary today and say to Him, "Lord, I believe, help my unbelief. Please forgive my sin and become my Saviour."

The scripture says - *Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love him.*

**Romans 6:23** *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

I would like to close now by reading the words from one of Charles Wesley's famous hymns:

And can it be that I should gain  
an interest in the Saviour's blood!  
Died he for me? who caused his pain!  
For me? who him to death pursued?  
Amazing love! How can it be  
that thou, my God, shouldst die for me?  
Amazing love! How can it be  
that thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

'Tis mystery all: the Immortal dies!  
Who can explore his strange design?  
In vain the firstborn seraph tries  
to sound the depths of love divine.

'Tis mercy all! Let earth adore;  
let angel minds inquire no more.  
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He left his Father's throne above  
(so free, so infinite his grace!),  
emptied himself of all but love,  
and bled for Adam's helpless race.  
'Tis mercy all, immense and free,  
for O my God, it found out me!  
'Tis mercy all, immense and free,  
for O my God, it found out me!

Long my imprisoned spirit lay,  
fast bound in sin and nature's night;  
thine eye diffused a quickening ray;  
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;  
my chains fell off, my heart was free,  
I rose, went forth, and followed thee.  
my chains fell off, my heart was free,  
I rose, went forth, and followed thee.

No condemnation now I dread;  
Jesus, and all in him, is mine;  
alive in him, my living Head,  
and clothed in righteousness divine,  
bold I approach the eternal throne,  
and claim the crown, through Christ my own.

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**Thank you and God bless you all this Fathers Day.  
Amen.**