“Father’s Day”

I Corinthians 13:1-13

June 19, 2016

Samuel Clemens [Mark Twain] once said, *“When I was a boy of fourteen, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be twenty-one, I was astonished at how much he had learned in seven years.”*

My father used to play with my brother and me in the yard. Mother would come out and say, “You're tearing up the grass. “We're not raising grass, Dad would reply. “We're raising boys. (Harmon Killebrew)

*“It is not flesh and blood but the heart which makes us fathers and sons.”* (Yohann Schiller).

Another wise writer says it this way. *“Oh, the comfort, the inexpressible comfort of feeling safe with a person, having neither to weigh thoughts nor measure words, but pouring them all out, just as they are, chaff and grain together, certain that a faithful hand will take and sift them, keep what is worth keeping, and with a breath of kindness blow the rest away.”* (Dinah Craik)

Just a few more wise words for Father’s Day. Proverbs 10:1 *“A wise son maketh a glad father:..”*

*“Small boys become big men through the influence of big men who care about small boys.”*

“It is a wise father that knows his own child.” (Shakespeare)

And here are the words of a son growing up. See if these words sound familiar to you.

4 years: My Daddy can do anything!
7 years: My Dad knows a lot…a whole lot.
8 years: My father does not know quite everything.
12 years: Oh well, naturally dad doesn’t know that either.
14 years: Oh, my Dad? He old-fashioned.
21 years: Oh, my father’s out of date!
25 years: He knows a little bit about it, but not much.
30 years: I wonder what Dad thinks about it.
35 years: Before we decide, we need to get Dad's idea first.
50 years: What would Dad have thought about that?
60 years: My Dad knew literally everything!
65 years: I wish I could talk it over with Dad once more.

Today’s message is for dads. So, dads, know that the

greatest dad in the world is behind everything I’m about to say. Do you remember these words from Jesus, Who said this over and over; “your Heavenly Father \_\_\_\_\_\_.”

Matthew 6:8 *“…****your Father*** *knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.” (14) “…* ***your heavenly Father*** *will also forgive you:…” (26) Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet* ***your heavenly Father*** *feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?”*

*(32) …****your heavenly Father*** *knoweth that ye have need of all these things.”* Matthew 7:11 *“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall* ***your Father*** *which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?”* Luke 6:36 *“Be ye therefore merciful, as* ***your Father*** *also is merciful.”*

“There is more comfort in knowing that God is your Father than in knowing the combined comfort of all your best friends.”

So, men, when I say a word to you today about fathers and your calling to be a godly father and your influence as a father, remember this. Your Heavenly Father knows that you have need of these things. And if you know and believe that He really does know, then you can be just as sure that He will provide you with all you need in order to be what He has called you to.

Please open your Bible with me to II Chronicles 10:1.

The main character of II Chronicles 10 is a man named Rehoboam. He’s the son of Great King Solomon. And he followed Solomon on the throne of Israel in the year 931 BC. And the name Rehoboam [רֵחַבְעָם](http://www.behindthename.com/support/transcribe.php?type=HB&target=Reh%5Ea%5Eb%3A%22am) means “He enlarges the people.” I often wonder why it was the Hebrew parents of the past named their children as they did.

Now, I realize that 931 BC was a long time ago. But don’t you think that what was true of fathers in 931 BC is the same thing that’s true of fathers in 2016. Don’t presume that because it’s an old story that it doesn’t apply to you today.

I’ve titled today’s sermon “Father’s Day.” Shall we pray?

The primary thing that’s on my heart today is this. Men, you have an influence; and probably the most important influence your children will ever have.

Rehoboam had grown up in a very ordinary home; well, not as ordinary as you think. He was the son of a man who became one of the most famous men in the world. He was the son of the very wise King Solomon. And so, just like you and me, Rehoboam learned how to live life from the man in whose home he lived.

Fathers are mainly one thing; fathers. Just because your dad is a President or a Prime Minister or a King, to you he’s still a dad. And every child needs his dad. And, when a child sees his father, he doesn’t see a king or a Prime Minister or a President. Instead, he sees his dad; with all his humanity.

Let’s begin with mistakes. This first lesson comes from Rehoboam’s father. Now, when I’ve read the life of Rehoboam, I’ve discovered a man who made a number of mistakes. Can any of you dads identify with a man who’s made mistakes? I sure can.

So, as I consider Rehoboam with you for Father’s Day this year, I want you to know this. God, the Holy Spirit wrote the life of Rehoboam for your learning. He’s not a great example, to be honest. But his life does teach us some lessons on the influence of a father.

First of all, even if you were the wisest father in the world, your children might mess up. Rehoboam made a very mistake, a large. In a nutshell, here’s what he did. He refused good counsel at a very critical time in his life. Instead, he chose to listen to those who were the same age as he was.

Look with me at II Chronicles 10:1. *“And Rehoboam went to Shechem: for to Shechem were all Israel come to make him king. (2) And it came to pass, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who was in Egypt, whither he had fled from the presence of Solomon the king, heard it, that Jeroboam returned out of Egypt.*

*(3) And they sent and called him. So Jeroboam and all Israel came and spake to Rehoboam, saying, (4) Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore ease thou somewhat the grievous servitude of thy father, and his heavy yoke that he put upon us, and we will serve thee. (5) And he said unto them, come again unto me after three days. And the people departed.*

*(6) And king Rehoboam took counsel with the old men that had stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, saying, What counsel give ye me to return answer to this people? (7) And they spake unto him, saying, If thou be kind to this people, and please them, and speak good words to them, they will be thy servants for ever.*

*(8) But he forsook the counsel which the old men gave him, and took counsel with the young men that were brought up with him, that stood before him. (9) And he said unto them, what advice give ye that we may return answer to this people, which have spoken to me, saying, Ease somewhat the yoke that thy father did put upon us?*

*(10) And the young men that were brought up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou answer the people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it somewhat lighter for us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins.*

*(11) For whereas my father put a heavy yoke upon you, I will put more to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.”*

You are just as prone to mistakes as anyone else. I’m sure you’ve made some big mistakes. So, Rehoboam made a decision he thought was best and which resulted in a huge mistake.

Most of the time, most of us can’t see the effect of our decisions; especially the long-term effect which is so important. The result of Rehoboam’s listening to the advice of his younger friends over the counsel of wiser, older men was this. The entire nation of Israel was split apart. And then ten of the twelve tribes of nation of Israel turned against him.

From that one decision forward, there came to be two divisions of Jews in the Holy Land; something similar to what had happened in our country in the 1800’s with the matter of slavery. In the north, the Jews set aside a city for their capital; Samaria as their capital. In the south, Jerusalem was their capital.

Now wouldn’t you have thought that Rehoboam; the one who had grown up in the home of the wisest man in the world, the great King Solomon, would have been able to recognize good advice when he saw it? Couldn’t he see that the elders, the older men of Israel had a whole lot more wisdom that could have benefited him as he began his reign over the Jews?

Here’s the lesson. First, mistakes and poor decisions are part of life. Dads, don’t presume your children will make the wisest choices. You see, you can be the “wisest man on the planet” and raise a son who is able to make just one decision that affects many people for many, many years. Rehoboam’s deferring to his friends turns out to be not very wise.

Men, at some point in your child’s life, he takes responsibility for his decisions. And dads, the best thing you can do for your children is to love them and pray for them. Then, let them make their own way in life.

Second, do what is right. Turn the page of your Bible to II Chronicles 12:1. II Chronicles 12:1 *“And it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the kingdom, and had strengthened himself, he forsook the law of the LORD, and all Israel with him.”*

In a perfect world, we’d say this. “God speaks. We listen. We obey.” But, is that what you did with your life? Most of us, maybe all of us go our own way. And, when we do, we can be sure of this one thing. Your Heavenly Father cannot and will not forsake you even when you forsake Him.

In the NT, the Apostle Paul had a younger man as his protégé. And here’s what he once wrote to this protégé Timothy. II Timothy 2:13 *“If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.”* There is not one of us here today who can’t find comfort in these words.

A number of years ago I purchased a house. And, in the process, I lied on the application. Now, have you ever done anything similar? When I realized my sin, I went to the individuals involved and confessed it. One of those people was the lawyer who oversaw the transaction. I told him what I had done. He looks at me and he says “Do I look like a priest? You can tell me all day long what you’ve done. But none of it can be undone. Have a good day.”

Now, do you think that God is no longer faithful because of my sin? No way. God, in grace, always is on your side. He abides, remains, stays faithful – to you. And that situation has worked out well in spite of my sin.

But, sometimes some of us persist in our foolishness. We make one poor decision and we follow it with a few more. And what can the LORD do when go that route?

Turn the page and look with me at II Chronicles 12:2. II Chronicles 12:2 *“And it came to pass, that in the fifth year of king Rehoboam Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, because they had transgressed against the LORD, (3) With twelve hundred chariots, and threescore thousand horsemen: and the people were without number that came with him out of Egypt; the Lubims, the Sukkiims, and the Ethiopians.*

*(4) And he took the fenced cities which pertained to Judah, and came to Jerusalem. (5) Then came Shemaiah the prophet to Rehoboam, and to the princes of Judah, that were gathered together to Jerusalem because of Shishak, and said unto them, Thus saith the LORD, Ye have forsaken me, and therefore have I also left you in the hand of Shishak.”*

In Rehoboam’s case, he persisted in going his own way and departing from the LORD. Instead of humbling himself before the LORD, he, as we say today, “doubled down.”

Now, sometimes we think God isn’t fair or that He shouldn’t allow great difficulties to come our way. But that’s not the way life works. What the Bible teaches and what we are all still learning is that -- God does care. That’s *why* He allows these things. And really, what would you rather God have; your will or His?

Obviously God knew that what Rehoboam really needed was pressure on his life. So, He sent people in his life much stronger than him; Shishak, King of Egypt, for example.

Now dads, the LORD is a kind and loving and gentle Father. Yet, He knows that we need His hand of correction and discipline just like you know when your son or daughter needs it.

So, yes, we might forsake the LORD. But you can be sure of this when you do. The LORD will not forsake you. He will provide just what is necessary to bring you to your senses, so to speak; to draw you back to Him. Going your own way is never the right way.

First, then, even the wisest father can’t stop his child from making some large mistakes.

Second, do what’s right.

Third, humble yourself before the LORD.

I really don’t think that we modern day fathers are much different than the ones from the ninth century BC. Would you like to see what Rehoboam did when the LORD sent King Shishak to put pressure upon his life?

Look with me at II Chronicles 12:6. *“Whereupon the princes of Israel and the king humbled themselves; and they said, The LORD is righteous. (7) And when the LORD saw that they humbled themselves, the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah, saying, They have humbled themselves; therefore I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance; and my wrath shall not be poured out upon Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak.*

*(8) Nevertheless they shall be his servants; that they may know my service, and the service of the kingdoms of the countries. (9) So Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house; he took all: he carried away also the shields of gold which Solomon had made.*

*(10) Instead of which king Rehoboam made shields of brass, and committed them to the hands of the chief of the guard, that kept the entrance of the king's house. (11) And when the king entered into the house of the LORD, the guard came and fetched them, and brought them again into the guard chamber.*

*(12) And when he humbled himself, the wrath of the LORD turned from him, that he would not destroy him altogether: and also in Judah things went well.”*

Maybe the key to success in this world is found in the term humility. Fathers and sons and mothers and daughters who are humbled by the circumstances God sends their way are those who see God at work. When we change our hearts, God provides exactly what we need to deal with things. No, He doesn’t always change our circumstances. But, we become men and women and children who are able to be taught of God.

And as you already know, whenever we humble ourselves before God, He pours out His grace upon us. Here’s what we read in the NT. James 4:6 *“But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.” (10) Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.”*

And here’s I Peter 5:5 *“Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. (6) Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:”*

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These are three large lessons from the life of Rehoboam. But I’ve got to show you just one more. And this one might bring you the most comfort of all. It’s found in chapter twelve and verse thirteen.

II Chronicles 12:13 *“So king Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem, and reigned: for Rehoboam was one and forty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there. And his mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess. (14) And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the LORD.”*

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Fourth, Seek the LORD. I think one of the simplest and yet most neglected things in the world is right here in verse fourteen. When you prepare your heart to seek the LORD, He *will* be found.

Men, we need to prepare ourselves to seek the LORD. Why? Because apart from Him we’ll not only make a mess of our own lives, but we’ll affect all those around us, families included.

Rehoboam’s story is given to us in Scripture so that we’ll learn, not from his genius or his abilities, but from his character and his mistakes. What God is doing with each of us is this. He’s working on our inner man. And, for every Christian, He’s conforming your character into the likeness of His own Son. Your largest and most precious possession in life is letting God do His conforming work in you.

Yes, it is often painful and it’s usually unsettling. Yet, God cannot forsake you. He will not forsake His own. He loves you too much with His Fatherly love to leave you to yourself.

Why is it, do you think, that He would go to the extent He did in sending Jesus to die on the Cross? He did it because He cares for us. He did it for people like Rehoboam. He did it for people like you and me. He did it because we needed something we could gain no other way. He did it in order to shower us with His free salvation and joy.

Today, you’ll make a choice on this matter of being conformed to Christ’s image. Today, you will leave this Church service a different person; if you respond to God. So, what will you do?

Here’s the prayer that will enable you to walk with the LORD this week with a right attitude towards learning to be the man God has called your to be. I call it the “Prayer of Surrender.”

*“LORD, I submit all I am to you, my spirit, my soul, and my body. Do with me what is most pleasing to you. Work out Your will upon me today.”* This one prayer will put you on the road to success in life; father, mother, or child.

And, of course, don’t forget these words from the lips of the Son of God. *“But he said, yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.”* (Luke 11:28). Shall we pray?

Now turn with me to Hymn # 404 “Faith Of Our Fathers” Sing it with me to the LORD.