

Sermon Series: "A believer's family album"—Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Westfield, IN 6/15/2003

Title: "Earning the Right to Be Called Dad"

Text: Luke 15: 11-32

Intro.: *Ills.: Who's your Daddy?*

Theme: As our Heavenly Father has shown grace and mercy to each one of our dads in Jesus, so now they have been transformed to imitate the Heavenly Father in the parenting of their children.

"Imitate God, since you are the children he loves. Live in love as Christ also loved us. He gave his life for us as an offering and sacrifice, a soothing aroma to God." Ephesians 5: 1-2

Giving grace in a grace-less world (vss. 11-17)

- When your family doesn't deserve it
 1. Because neither do you—that is what grace is all about—it is not a points system like your world/work teach you
 2. Put up with each other, and forgive each other if anyone has a complaint. Forgive as the Lord forgave you." Col. 3:13
- When selfish demands are made of you
 3. They will come at you all the time—in terms of financial assumptions; time consumptions; issue presumptions
 4. The youngest son "*violently took*" what he falsely presumed to be his (estate=inheritance=gift=not his right)
 5. "*Be sure to give to them without any hesitation. When you do this, the LORD your God will bless you in everything you work for and set out to do.*" Deut. 15: 10
- When your another takes advantage of you and won't acknowledge it
 6. Prodigal son's father could have said, "*Could of told you he would do it!*"—but he didn't
 7. Prodigal son did not even turn back to his father as his first response— *attached himself to a foreigner*
 8. **Ills.: Hunger and hatred**
 9. "*Surrender yourself to the LORD, and wait patiently for him. Do not be preoccupied with an evildoer who succeeds in his way when he carries out his schemes. Let go of anger, and leave rage behind. Do not be preoccupied. It only leads to evil. Evildoers will be cut off from their inheritance, but those who wait with hope for the LORD will inherit the land.*" Ps. 37: 7-9

Encourage a home of confession and forgiveness (vss. 18-24)

- Practice makes perfect
 1. The prodigal son rehearsed his confession — not to make contrived repentance but to get himself out of the way
 2. Dads/children practice confessing/forgiving so when the "***big crash of sin***" happens, they naturally know what to do
 3. "*Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.*" James 5:16
- Let mercy be your first response
 4. Rejecting selective memory— by being humble enough to admit your sin, Heavenly Father doesn't but earthly need to
 5. The prodigal fathers had ***compassion*** (gut feeling = because he had walk in his sons shoes earlier in life)
 6. "*The LORD God is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.*" Exod.34:6
- Celebrate resurrections and returns
 7. The awkward silence of hurt stifles any chance for Jesus' forgiveness to breath new life into a broken relationship
 8. The prodigal's father celebrated a resurrection and a finding rather than rehashing a death and a loss
 9. **Ills.: Prisoner invited to a party**
 10. "*I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.*" Luke 15:10

Be a patient teacher (vss. 25-32)

- Remember they are “*my child*”
 1. Father parented without favoritism— youngest got what oldest would have—oldest reminded that all father’s was his
 2. *Practice your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ by not favoring one person over another. James 2: 1*
 3. **Live the purpose-driven life**—Dads are always in teaching mode — sometimes teaching when don’t even realize it
- Seize the teachable moment
 4. Father used prodigal’s return as the teachable moment on grace for an older son who had not yet caught it
 5. *“Be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth.” 2 Tim. 2:24-25*

Who’s Your Daddy?

A seminary professor (Fred Craddock) was vacationing with his wife in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. One morning, they were eating breakfast at a little restaurant, hoping to enjoy a quiet meal. While they were waiting for their food, they noticed a distinguished looking, white-haired man moving from table to table, visiting with the guests. The professor leaned over and whispered to his wife, "I hope he doesn't come over here." But sure enough, the man did come over to their table. "Where are you folks from?" he asked in a friendly voice. "Oklahoma," they answered. "Great to have you here in Tennessee," the stranger said. "What do you do for a living?" "I teach at a seminary," he replied. "Oh, so you teach preachers how to preach, do you? Well, I've got a really great story for you." And with that, the gentleman sat down at the table with the couple. The professor groaned and thought to himself, *Great ¼ Just what I need ¼* another preacher story! The man pointed out the window and said, "See that mountain over there? Not far from the base of that mountain, there was a boy born to an unwed mother. He had a hard time growing up, because every place he went, he was always asked the same question, 'Hey, boy, Who's your daddy?' "Whether he was at school, in the grocery store or drug store, people would ask the same question, 'Who's your daddy?' He would hide at recess and lunchtime from other students. He would avoid going into stores because that question hurt him so bad. "When he was about 12 years old, a new preacher came to his church. The boy would always go in late and slip out early to avoid hearing the question, 'Who's your daddy?' But one day, the new preacher said the benediction so fast he had to walk out with the crowd. "Just about the time he got to the back door, the new preacher, not knowing anything about him, put his hand on his shoulder and asked him, 'Son, who's your daddy?' "The people around them got deathly quiet. Now everyone would finally know the answer to the question, 'Who's your daddy?' This new preacher, though, sensed the situation around him and used discernment that only the Holy Spirit could give. "'Wait a minute' he said. 'I know who you are. I see the family resemblance now. You are a child of God.' With that he patted the boy on his shoulder and said, 'Boy, you've got a great inheritance. Go and claim it.' The boy smiled for the first time in a long time and walked out the door a changed person. Whenever anybody asked him, 'Who's your Daddy?' he'd just tell them, 'I'm a child of God.'" The distinguished gentleman got up from the table and said, "Isn't that a great story?" The professor responded that it really was a great story. As the man turned to leave, he said, "You know, if that new preacher hadn't told me that I was one of God's children, I probably never would have amounted to anything!" And he walked away. The seminary professor and his wife were stunned. He called the waitress over and asked her, "Do you know who that man was who was sitting at our table?" The waitress grinned and said, "Of course. Everybody here knows him. That's Ben Hooper. He's the former governor of Tennessee!"

Hunger and hatred

Two boys had discovered a new word to use when upset with each other. Their mother was shopping with them when suddenly they became angry with each other. "I hate you!" and "I hate you, too!" they yelled back and forth. "That's not very nice," their mother said. "I'm certainly not going to take two little boys who hate each other to McDonald's for lunch." Five-year-old Jamie quickly backed down. "I don't really hate you, Billy. "But Billy, with the clear logic of three years, responded, "I still hate you! I'm not hungry."

Prisoner invited to a party

The Republican Party mistakenly invited an Ohio prisoner to a \$2,500-a-plate fundraising dinner in Washington with President Bush. The invitation and a letter from Vice President Cheney were sent to Robert Kirkpatrick at the Belmont Correctional Institution in eastern Ohio. Kirkpatrick, 35, was sentenced last year to nearly three years for drug possession and escape. "I'm going to tell him that I'd be happy to attend," said Kirkpatrick, "but he's going to have to pull some strings to get me there."

Luke 15:11-32

¹¹And He said, "A certain man had two sons; ¹²and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.' And he divided his wealth between them. ¹³"And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate with loose living. ¹⁴"Now when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵"And he went and attached himself to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. ¹⁶"And he was longing to fill his stomach with the pods that the swine were eating, and no one was giving *anything* to him. ¹⁷"But when he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger! ¹⁸I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; ¹⁹"I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men." ' ²⁰"And he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him, and felt compassion *for him*, and ran and embraced him, and kissed him. ²¹"And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²²"But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; ²³and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and be merry; ²⁴for this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.' And they began to be merry. ²⁵"Now his older son was in the field, and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶"And he summoned one of the servants and *began* inquiring what these things might be. ²⁷"And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.' ²⁸"But he became angry, and was not willing to go in; and his father came out and *began* entreating him. ²⁹"But he answered and said to his father, 'Look! For so many years I have been serving you, and I have never neglected a command of yours; and *yet* you have never given me a kid, that I might be merry with my friends; ³⁰but when this son of yours came, who has devoured your wealth with harlots, you killed the fattened calf for him.' ³¹"And he said to him, 'My child, you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³²But we had to be merry and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and lives, and *was* lost and has been found.'"