

Father's Day 2026

Scars That Teach

Fairview Missionary Church | Angola, IN

Scripture: Assorted

Speaker: Joel Greenwood

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Honest with you. All right, now my notes say top five, but in reality, it's probably top three of my least favorite Sundays to preach. And you may not even be aware that pastors have least favorite Sundays to preach, all right? But it is true. And here, it's not because I think I should have the day off because I am a father, all right? So that's not the reason that I don't like preaching. It's not because I'm nervous about preaching on Father's Day, and it's not because I didn't have a good father figure in my life.

I actually have a great dad who provided for our family and actually brought our family into the faith. I like to share the story about my dad's faith. When he was growing up, he grew up Catholic, and his parents took him to a Catholic church where the priest spoke in Latin. The entire message was in Latin, and so nobody had any clue what he was even saying. And so his idea of church was if he wasn't good during the first service, his punishment was that he had to stay the second service, all right?

So it was a little skewed idea of what church was, and my dad actually came to know Jesus, because while he was working at a tool and die shop in Michigan, one of his coworkers invited him to church and talked to him about Jesus, and he received Jesus. And so that is how my family came into the faith. And so, I had a great dad who taught our family about faith. The reason why I don't like teaching on Father's Day is because it's hard to create a different message every year about Father's, right?

So I've been doing this for long enough now that it's like, okay, I'm out of ideas. What else do we talk about? So it's difficult. It's not like just opening the Bible and saying, "Okay, let's talk about this chapter." It's also common. I know growing up in church that pastors on Mother's Day do all of the encouraging of moms and how great they are and how wonderful they are, and that's great because moms are, but then you come on Father's Day and you hear about how bad of a job dads do, right?

And how we need to step up and do better. And so, because of that, and it didn't seem fair, and of course, I'm sure we can all do better, dads, but so for the first few years, my goal for Father's Day was simply to encourage dads, to say, "Hey, you know what? I see you. I recognize you. You're doing a good job. Keep up the good work.

I know that much of what you do is taken for granted, much of what you do is done behind the scenes, and so I just wanted to recognize you." And so I would talk about dads that would go to their job day after day, and some of them don't even like their job, but they know it's their responsibility to provide for their family, and so they would go to work, and they would do what needed to be done.

I would talk to many dads that gave up what they wanted to do personally so that someone else in the family could do what they wanted to do. And so, dads that would go on vacations, places they would never want to go on vacation, dads that would do things on the weekends that they didn't really want to do because their kids wanted to do it. I also would talk with many dads that would go without so their kids didn't have to.

Maybe they wanted the new golf club or the new tool or the new whatever, but they would say no to themselves so that their children could have that new piece of sports equipment for the sport that they are doing at school,

and so they would go without. I definitely know many dads whose responsibility it is to take care of the vehicles, to do the yard work. When a toy breaks, it's the dad's responsibility to fix it. And for whatever reason, I'm not sure why this is the case, but dads are supposed to know how to fix anything with an engine or a motor in it, right?

It's just go to dad, he'll figure it out. We are always responding to the call of, "Dad, blank is not working. We need you to fix it." Whether it's a washing machine or a dryer, a fridge, an oven, a dishwasher. You've got to love the comments from your spouse or your kids as they start driving and just say, "Well, the car's making a funny noise. You know, well, what kind of noise?" And they'll make it, and you're like, "you know Dads, we just open the hood and we look inside and we're like, it looks good to me.

I don't know what's going on." You know, you got to bring it somewhere to get it fixed, but that's your responsibility, of course. Or water is leaking somewhere, that's the worst. Men, aren't you afraid when it's like water is leaking somewhere and you don't know where or how to fix it? But that is our responsibility. Or they say, "Dad, can you open this? Can you move this? Can you carry this?" Or, "Dad, the door won't close.

I need you to figure it out." Of course, for dads, often people don't see or hear the silent prayers that they are offering at night before bed for their spouse and for their children. The Father is often the one that carries the burden of the family's needs, and he often does so silently because he knows that even in sharing that burden that he is carrying, if he shares that, that then that burden is going to need to be shared by somebody else.

And so, today, and every Father's Day, I do like to appreciate and encourage dads. And so I did that for a couple of years. Then I had a few years where I liked to take Father's Day to talk about our heavenly Father. And this idea that our heavenly Father is this perfect example that we are trying to live up to, but I like to look at the traits that as earthly fathers we have because of our heavenly Father and recognizing as dads that everything that is good in us is because of Him.

He is our example, and so we try to allow Him to live through us and to shine through us. And so it was fun to look at some of those character traits that dads seem to naturally have because they came from God, and I did the same with mothers as well. I like to teach during this time that our number one responsibility as dads is to point our children to Jesus.

That even if you failed at everything else, you could fail at everything else in your life, but if you pointed your children to Jesus, you were successful. And so we would talk about that and the importance of that. And all of those things are true. But this year, I came across something that was a little different, and it offered a different perspective, and it got me to thinking. It was out of the ordinary, it was an interesting idea, and so today I'm not going to make you wait for the main point.

I want to share with you the main point of what we're going to talk about, and then spend the rest of the time unpacking this statement. And the statement is this, "The scars that you wish your children would never see may become the evidence that teaches them how God heals." I thought about that, and it was enlightening for a moment to think through that, that the scars that you wish your children would never see may become the evidence that teaches them how God heals.

So, let me pray, and then we're going to unpack that statement a little more this morning. Heavenly Father, we come before You. We thank You for a day that is set aside for us to honor dads. But we also know that with the many people that are here and the people that are joining online or maybe listening on the radio, that there are plenty that today is a difficult day, again, because maybe they lost their dad this year, or maybe they want to be a dad and can't be a dad for whatever reason, or maybe they had a father figure that caused a lot of pain in their lives.

And so, to think about dad or to think about fathers brings up hurt. And so, Lord, for all of those different situations that only you understand and only you see, I pray that you would give peace today, I pray that you

would give comfort today, and that all of us would feel the love that You have for us as our heavenly Father. Thank You for Your grace and for Your mercy in our lives, and thank You, God, that You can even use our scars to point people towards You.

We come before You in Jesus' name, Amen. Scars are reminders in our lives. Sometimes scars can bring back good memories. It's not as common, but I was trying to think through some ways that maybe scars can bring back a good memory. And I think of maybe a woman who has a C-section, and she has that scar for the rest of her life, and it reminds her of the birth of a child.

And so, that can be a good memory because it reminds you of your child. Maybe you have a scar that is on your body from an accident, but even though it might have been a bad day when the accident happened, maybe that scar is a reminder of God's protection, because whatever happened that day should have taken your life, but for whatever reason, you're still here. And so when you see that scar, you are reminded of God's goodness. Maybe you have a scar on your body somewhere from a surgery.

And although the surgery wasn't fun, and certainly the recovery wasn't fun, now your life is greatly improved because whatever was fixed from that surgery has allowed you to do things that maybe you couldn't do before. But truthfully, as we think about scars and the reminders that they are for us, they're often a reminder of tragedy, of something that happened that wasn't supposed to happen.

Maybe it was a painful surgery and recovery process that something went wrong with your body, and even after the surgery, things still aren't the ways that they should be, and so you see that scar and it's just a reminder of something that's wrong. Maybe it was a bad accident that either you caused or that happened to you that had life-altering consequences. And so every time you see that scar, you're reminded of that day, which was a bad day.

Maybe it was an injury from a sport or something else that made it so that you could never play that sport again and all of your hopes and dreams were lost, and so when you see that scar, you are reminded of that injury. And of course, these are only visible scars. Not all scars are visible. And actually, I would believe and say that sometimes the emotional, the mental, the internal scars are worse than the external scars.

At least with an external scar, you can see it and point to it and something obviously happened, but sometimes the internal scars that we have that no one ever sees are the ones that impact us the most. I wish that I had some cool story to share about one of my scars, but I don't. I have lots of scars on my body, but they are all because of my own stupidity, not because of something great.

It was only a couple of months ago that I shared with you about my largest scar on my body, which is on my hand, where I accidentally cut my hand with a hooked razor on a Swiss army knife because of something stupid I did, I won't share that story again, all right? One of my scars on my hand, the same hand, is because I was trying to impress a girl in elementary school by picking up a snake and the snake bit me. And so I have that scar.

One of my scars is on my arm from being cut by a wire shelf while working in college because I didn't see it. And my last scar on my other hand is where I impaled myself on a copper pipe while I was trying to build and install a bathroom in my basement. And I had just cut the pipe and I was pulling something off and my hand slipped and went right on top of that copper pipe. And so again, all of my scars are because of my own accidents. I don't have any cool stories, but here is the truth.

Some scars can become testimonies that teach the next generation something important. Some of our scars that we bear or that we have in our lives, not just visible scars, but even internal scars can teach the next generation something that is very important. And I want to share one such scar with you. In the Gospel of John chapter 20, starting in verse 24, we read this.

Now Thomas, also known as Didymus, which I think is why he went by Thomas, right? Have you ever thought about that? One of the twelve was not with the disciples when Jesus came in speaking about the resurrection.

So the other disciples told Thomas, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands, and I put my fingers where the nails were, and I put my hand in his side where he was struck with the spear, I will not believe." So John tells us a week later, the disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them this time, and though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them, and He said, "Peace be with you." Then He said to Thomas, "Thomas, come here.

Put your finger here. See my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." And so Thomas, of course, touched the scars and put his hand on the side and he said, "My Lord and my God." And then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believed." Have you ever thought about the idea that after the resurrection, Jesus could have removed every trace of the cross from his body.

He didn't have to have scars in his hands. He didn't have to have scars in his feet or on his side. He could have removed all memory of what took place on the cross. And so the question is, why did He keep the scars? Why did Jesus keep those scars on His body so Thomas could see them? He kept the scars because they were a sign of His love. Jesus kept the scars because they were a reminder of what He did for us.

These were what some people would call a scar of sacrifice, which says, "I gave up something so that you could have everything." Think about some of the scars in your life, some of the difficult seasons that maybe you have gone through. Maybe it is actually a physical scar that was a scar of sacrifice. It was something that happened to you because you were protecting your family.

Maybe you were protecting your spouse or protecting your kids. Sometimes a father's scars are because of that sacrifice that he made for his family. A godly father doesn't hide those scars. He doesn't hide every wound. Some of these scars that you and I experience are scars of failure.

Now, Jesus didn't have scars of failure, they were scars of victory, but our scars as human earthly fathers can remind our children and the next generation that you know what? We didn't do everything perfect. We weren't always right. We made mistakes, but we learned to repent. As you read through Scriptures, you don't see one perfect human father, not one. I don't know if you've read through the Old Testament and you read some of their stories.

Actually, when I read through the stories of the Old Testament and some of the dysfunction in the families, it makes me feel pretty good, right? You read about some of the things that they did and you're thinking, "God, these are the people that you use to fulfill your plan and your vision and your dream for mankind." You don't see perfect fathers, but even in the Old Testament, you do see men like David, King David, who was known as a man after God's own heart.

And after you read His story, you can't help but question and say, "God, how was He a man after your own heart?" Look at all of these things that He did, but the reason why He was a man after God's own heart was not because He didn't have scars, He did, but because He was willing to repent and allow His failures to instruct His children. Remember when the prophet Nathan goes to him and confronts him on the adultery that he commits with Bathsheba?

He cries out to God. He recognizes that he has sinned against a holy and a righteous and a good God. He was willing to repent. Now, I wish that we could look at the children of David as we continue their story and see that they learned all of the lessons from their father and they didn't have to make the same mistakes. But is that what happened? Not at all, not even close. They continued to make mistakes because we're human. But sometimes our scars can teach the next generation.

Our failures can teach the next generation. There is another scar that Jesus held for us or that He has, and we call this the scar of perseverance. This is the idea that He kept showing up even when it was hard. It would have been easy for Jesus to give up. I often think about the time that Jesus hung on the cross, and I think about times in my own life where maybe I was going through some type of physical pain or some type of emotional or mental pain.

And sometimes when you get as old as I am and even older, you go through seasons of life where the pain is just so heavy that you think to yourself, "God, I will do anything if you will just take the pain away." Just take the pain away. What do you need me to do? Whatever you're trying to teach me, I am willing to listen, right? And so we get to those points. And I want you to think about this.

The pain, the hurt that Jesus was going through on the cross, not just the fact that He was in agony with every breath that He took, but again, understanding that He would carry the sins of the world upon His shoulders, and then to know that Jesus had the ability to call down the hosts of heaven and to halt the pain and the hurt with one simple word. And yet He persevered.

He persevered on that cross because of His love for us. It was a scar, a burden that He would carry, and so He followed through to the very end. Many dads bear a similar scar. This scar of perseverance that you keep showing up even when life is hard, even when life is difficult. When you reach that moment where it would have been so much easier just to give up, but you say, "You know what?

I am going to keep going because I have people that are depending on me, people that care about me." And so when you and I enter these seasons, may we be reminded by the example of Jesus not to give up, so that when we look at His endurance and His perseverance on the cross, that it would give you and I the ability to push through the doubt. Those days where you wonder if it's all worth it, those days where you wonder if you can make it.

When we look at the endurance and the perseverance of Jesus on the cross, would we allow it to be a reminder so that we can push through our fear? The fear of failure, the fear of mistakes, the fear of maybe not knowing what you're doing. When we look at the cross and we see the endurance and the scars that Jesus bears for us, would it give us the strength to push through the hard days, the difficult days?

When you and I look at Jesus on the cross and we see the scars that are there, would we be reminded and have the courage to push through the temptations that come our way? As the enemy is constantly trying to attack us, men, as we are called to be the leaders of our house, would we push through the temptations? As we think about Jesus on the cross and the scars that He bears for us, would it give us the strength to push through the midlife crisis?

I think I've begun that in my life. I turned 44 last week. I don't know if that's midlife or not anymore. They keep changing it, right? But I'm old enough, and anybody that's my age or older, or maybe even a little younger, you just get to that point where you had goals, you had dreams, you have ideas of what life was going to look like, and you maybe have attained all of those, or maybe you haven't attained all of those, but you begin to think to yourself, "Is this really what I want my life to look like?" You begin to recognize that you don't have forever, right?

You get to the stage where you notice there's going to be an end to this, and do I want to get to the end and only keep doing what I've already done, or is there something else that I should be doing? And I think that when we think about the endurance that Jesus endured on the cross, when we think about persevering, when we get to that point in our life as fathers, we need to push through and recognize that the greatest job that we have been given is to care for that next generation and to lead them up, to point them toward Jesus, to stay strong, to not allow that midlife crisis to bankrupt everything that you have done up to that point.

Sometimes you just have to stay the course and stay strong. That's endurance, that's perseverance. When I think of the example of Jesus, I pray that it gives me the strength to push through the challenges. As dads, as fathers, we have difficult seasons, difficult days.

Again, burdens that sometimes we carry silently, but when we look at the example of Jesus and the scars that He bears, that it would give us the strength to push through those difficult seasons, and that we would follow the example of Jesus, recognizing that it may bring scars to us as well. Today, I just want to end by thanking the dads for what you do. Thank you for the scars that you bear.

Some are visible, some are not. Thank you for working behind the scenes and answering the call. Thank you for loving the best that you know how. The best that you can. Thank you for bearing the scar of sacrifice and the scar of failure and the scar of perseverance.

Today, I want to make sure that as we lift up our earthly fathers, that we do also remember our heavenly Father and we thank Him for being our example, that we thank Him for bearing the scars that He didn't need to in order to offer us what we don't deserve. He truly is our example that we would take time to thank Jesus for the life that He lived and for the example that He gave. And dads, I want to leave you with this final statement.

Children don't need perfect fathers. They need fathers who can say, "Here's where God carried me." Children don't need perfect fathers because if they did, not one of us could live up to that. What they do need is dads that are willing to say, "You know what? Here's where I made a mistake, here's where I messed up, here's where I was inadequate, and here is where God carried me."

Here is where we can trust in Him." That is the best example that we can leave for our kids. Sometimes it's good to show the scars so that they can be taught and reminded to trust in Him. Let me close in prayer. Heavenly Father, only you know the scars that every man and woman here today bear.

The hurts, the pains, the struggles, the moments of failure. We are grateful for Your grace and for Your mercy. God, I thank You for the many stories that I hear so often of dads that are loving and caring and nurturing, providing, doing the best they know how. May they feel appreciated and valued and loved and cared for today.

Again, being a mom, being a dad can often be a thankless job. And so I pray today that they would feel loved and cherished. And God, that you would heal some of those wounds that still exist. Maybe it hasn't even scarred yet. It is an open wound still today. Would You bring Your peace as only You can?

And Lord, as always, it is our prayer, it is our desire that You would be lifted up. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.