

## “Faithful Fathers”

### Summary

This powerful exploration of biblical fatherhood reveals profound truths about sacrifice, honor, and divine calling through the lives of two remarkable men: Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus, and Zechariah, father of John the Baptist. We discover that Joseph's journey was far from easy - he accepted the calling to father a child not his own, endured social stigma and accusations, traveled under difficult circumstances with a pregnant wife, fled to Egypt to protect the child, and ultimately had to release Jesus to His heavenly Father's business. The cost of obedience was real and human. Similarly, Zechariah waited years for a son, was silenced for nine months as God prepared him, and then had to surrender his own desire to name his child after himself, choosing instead to honor heaven's purpose by naming him John. Both men demonstrate that true fatherhood often means decreasing so the next generation can increase. The message reminds us that no one need be fatherless because God Himself is a Father to the fatherless, breaking generational cycles of pain and absence. For those carrying the weight of fatherhood - whether biological, step, spiritual, or as grandparents raising children - this message declares that your sacrifices are seen, your faithfulness matters, and your voice carries prophetic power for the next generation.

### Small Group Study Guide – Faithful Fathers

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#### Opening Prayer

Begin your group time by thanking God for His perfect fatherhood and asking Him to speak to each person about their role as fathers, spiritual fathers, or children honoring their fathers.

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#### Icebreaker Question

**Share a memory (positive or challenging) about your father or a father figure in your life. How has that relationship shaped who you are today?**

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## Key Scripture References

- Psalm 68:5
  - Luke 2:41-52 (Joseph and Jesus in the temple)
  - Luke 1:5-25, 57-80 (Zechariah and John the Baptist)
  - Malachi 4:5-6
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## Discussion Questions

### Part 1: God as Our Perfect Father

1. **The sermon opened with the truth that "no one has to be fatherless" because God is "a father of the fatherless" (Psalm 68:5).**
  - How does understanding God as our perfect Father help heal wounds from earthly father relationships?
  - What does it look like practically to receive God as Father?
2. **Pastor Rob mentioned that fatherlessness creates a cycle that perpetuates itself.**
  - How can understanding God as Father break generational cycles?
  - What role do spiritual fathers play in the church family?

### Part 2: Joseph's Example

3. **Joseph faced significant challenges: social stigma, inconvenience, relocation, and ultimately hearing Jesus say, "I must be about my Father's business."**
  - What does Joseph's faithfulness despite not seeing immediate results teach us about fatherhood?
  - How do you think Joseph felt when Jesus referred to God as "my Father"? What does this teach us about releasing our children to God's purposes?
4. **The sermon noted that "Joseph likely never saw Jesus's public ministry" and died before seeing the fulfillment of his life's work.**
  - How does this challenge our need for immediate validation or results?
  - What does it mean to be faithful in seasons when you can't see the outcome?

### Part 3: Zechariah's Example

5. **Zechariah was silenced for nine months, then burst forth with prophetic words when he obeyed God's plan to name his son John.**
  - Pastor Rob said, "Pressure, though it's felt like an enemy...is God's way of getting ready to release your voice." How have you experienced this in your own life?
  - What "words" might God be building up in you during seasons of waiting or silence?
6. **Zechariah gave up the honor of naming his son after himself to obey heaven's purpose.**

- What does it look like for fathers today to prioritize God's calling on their children over their own plans or legacy?
- How can parents balance guidance with releasing children to their God-given purpose?

## Part 4: The Father's Heart

- 7. The sermon emphasized that fathers often sacrifice their own interests for their family's benefit, and this often goes unrecognized.**
  - Men: What sacrifices have you made that feel unseen? How does knowing God sees you change your perspective?
  - Everyone: How can we better honor and recognize the fathers and father figures in our lives?
- 8. Pastor Rob mentioned that men are "problem solvers" who may struggle with words but are "deep thinkers."**
  - How can families create space for fathers to process and communicate in their own way?
  - What misunderstandings arise when we confuse "lack of words for not caring"?

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## Key Takeaways

- 1. God is a Father to the fatherless** - No one needs to remain under the effects of absent or broken father relationships when they have access to God as Father.
- 2. Faithful fatherhood often requires sacrifice without immediate recognition** - Like Joseph and Zechariah, fathers are called to invest in purposes bigger than themselves.
- 3. Fathers have a prophetic voice** - God is preparing to release words through faithful men who have been "silenced" or overlooked.
- 4. The ultimate goal of fatherhood is pointing children to their Heavenly Father** - Success isn't measured by children following our plans, but by them discovering God's purpose for their lives.
- 5. Honor matters** - God sees, values, and honors faithful fathers, even when their work seems invisible.

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## Practical Applications

### For Everyone:

- **This Week:** Write a note, make a call, or have a conversation honoring your father or a father figure (living or deceased). Express specific appreciation for their sacrifice and faithfulness.

- **Ongoing:** If you struggle with father wounds, spend time this week in prayer asking God to reveal Himself as your perfect Father. Consider journaling about what you need from a father that only God can provide.

### For Fathers (biological, step, spiritual, or grandfathers):

- **Reflect:** What "higher purpose" might God be calling your children (biological or spiritual) to that requires you to release your own plans or preferences?
- **Pray:** Ask God to show you the prophetic words He wants you to speak over the next generation. Write them down.
- **Act:** Identify one way you're sacrificing for your family that feels unseen. Thank God that He sees it, and release the need for human recognition.

### For Those Raising Children in Unconventional Circumstances:

- **Receive:** The sermon honored stepfathers, grandparents raising grandchildren, and others in non-traditional roles. Receive God's affirmation that your role matters deeply and that He has strategically positioned you.
- **Trust:** God can use the wisdom that comes with your age and experience to "skip the ignorance" and impart heaven's wisdom to the next generation.

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## Closing Prayer Focus

### Pray for:

- Healing for those with father wounds
- Strength and encouragement for fathers who feel unseen or discouraged
- Wisdom for fathers to release their children to God's purposes
- The spirit of Elijah to turn hearts of fathers to children and children to fathers
- Spiritual fathers to rise up in the church
- Honor to be restored in families and in the body of Christ

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## Additional Resources

- Study the biblical concept of spiritual fatherhood (Paul and Timothy, Elijah and Elisha)
  - Explore resources on healing father wounds through Christian counseling or prayer ministry
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## Main Points – Faithful Fathers

**Sermon Summary:** This Father's Day sermon explores the often-overlooked sacrifices and honor due to fathers through the biblical examples of Joseph (earthly father of Jesus) and Zechariah (father of John the Baptist). The message emphasizes that God is a Father to the fatherless and that no one needs to live under the adverse effects of absent or inadequate earthly fathers. Through examining Joseph's costly obedience in accepting his role as Jesus's stepfather and Zechariah's faithful surrender in naming his son according to God's purpose rather than family tradition, the sermon celebrates the sacrificial nature of fatherhood. Pastor Rob honors men who quietly bear burdens, provide for families, and point the next generation toward their heavenly calling rather than merely perpetuating their own names. The message concludes with prophetic encouragement that God is preparing to release the voices of faithful men who have been silent or unrecognized, and that their words will carry power and accuracy for the next generation.

### Key Points:

- God is a Father to the fatherless; no one must remain without a father's love through relationship with God
- Fatherlessness has significant societal consequences, but God provides the solution through Himself
- Joseph bore tremendous social stigma, inconvenience, and sacrifice to fulfill his role as Jesus's earthly father
- Joseph had to release Jesus to His heavenly Father's business, demonstrating the ultimate purpose of fatherhood
- Joseph likely died before seeing Jesus's public ministry, yet his faithful investment shaped the Savior
- Zechariah and Elizabeth received their son John in old age, representing grandparents raising children today
- Zechariah surrendered the honor of naming his son after himself to obey God's purpose
- After nine months of enforced silence, Zechariah's mouth opened with powerful prophetic words
- Fathers carry prophetic words for the next generation that God will release with force and accuracy
- The ultimate blessing of fatherhood is helping children discover their purpose in God rather than building one's own legacy
- God is turning the hearts of fathers to children and children to fathers in this generation
- Men's quiet sacrifices and steady presence matter deeply, even when unrecognized

### Scripture Reference:

- Psalm 68:5 - God as father of the fatherless
- Ephesians 6:2-3 - Honor your father and mother
- Malachi 4:5-6 - Turning hearts of fathers to children and children to fathers

- Luke 1:5-80 - The story of Zechariah, Elizabeth, and the birth of John the Baptist
- Luke 2:41-52 - Jesus in the temple at age 12, "about my Father's business"
- Luke 2:52 - Jesus increased in wisdom, stature, and favor with God and men
- Matthew 1 - Joseph's calling to be Jesus's earthly father

## Discussion Questions – Faithful Fathers

How does understanding God as 'a father of the fatherless' change the way we view our own earthly father wounds or disappointments?

Joseph accepted a calling that brought social stigma and required him to father a child who was not biologically his own. What does his example teach us about obedience to God's call even when it costs us our reputation?

When Jesus said 'I must be about my Father's business,' Joseph had to reconcile that he wasn't Jesus' biological father. How do spiritual fathers today navigate the tension between their role and pointing children toward their Heavenly Father?

Joseph's faithfulness helped shape Jesus' growth in wisdom, stature, and favor. In what ways do earthly fathers partner with God in forming their children's spiritual development?

Zechariah had to give up the honor of naming his son after himself to fulfill God's greater purpose. What personal honors or dreams might God be asking fathers today to surrender for the sake of their children's calling?

The message emphasizes that fathers often do things that go unnoticed or unappreciated. How can we as a church community better recognize and honor the quiet sacrifices fathers make?

Zechariah was silenced for nine months, and when he could finally speak, he prophesied powerfully. What does this teach us about seasons of waiting, pressure, and preparation in our own lives?

The sermon states that fathers carry 'a word from the Lord for this generation.' What unique prophetic role do fathers play in speaking identity and destiny over their children?

How does the reality that 'no one has to be fatherless' because of God our Father provide healing and hope for those who experienced absent or harmful earthly fathers?

John the Baptist went into the wilderness to fulfill his calling, which likely confused his elderly parents. How should fathers respond when their children's God-given purposes don't align with conventional expectations?

# Scriptures – Faithful Fathers

## Explicitly Mentioned or Directly Referenced:

1. **Psalm 68:5** - "A father of the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy habitation"
2. **Matthew 6:9** (or Luke 11:2) - "Our Father" (The Lord's Prayer)
3. **Ephesians 6:2-3** - "Honor your father and your mother, that it might be well with you and you might live long upon the earth"
4. **Malachi 4:5-6** - Spirit of Elijah turning hearts of fathers to children and children to fathers
5. **Luke 2:48** - Mary and Joseph finding Jesus in the temple after Passover
6. **Luke 2:49** - "Did you not know that I must be about my father's business?"
7. **Luke 2:50** - "But they did not understand the statement which he spoke to them"
8. **Luke 2:52** - "And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and with men"
9. **Luke 1:5-25** - The account of Zechariah and Elizabeth (the angel's announcement of John's birth)
10. **Luke 1:57-66** - The birth and naming of John the Baptist
11. **Luke 1:67-80** - Zechariah's prophecy (Benedictus)
12. **Matthew 1:18-25** - Joseph's decision to take Mary as his wife (alluded to)
13. **Matthew 2:13-15** - The flight to Egypt (alluded to)
14. **Matthew 2:19-23** - Return from Egypt to Nazareth (alluded to)
15. **John 2:4** - "Woman, what are you doing?" (Jesus at the wedding in Cana - paraphrased)
16. **John 19:26-27** - Jesus giving his mother to John at the cross (alluded to)

## Devotional – Faithful Fathers

### Day 1: The Father of the Fatherless

**Reading:** Psalm 68:1-6

**Devotional:** God declares Himself "a father of the fatherless" in His holy habitation. No matter your earthly story—whether your father was absent, present but distant, or even harmful—you have access to a perfect Father. This is not religious sentiment but tangible reality. God steps into the void created by broken fatherhood and offers Himself. When Jesus taught us to pray "Our Father," He opened the door for every person to experience divine fatherhood. Today, bring your father wounds to God. Let Him speak identity, worth, and purpose over you. His fatherhood breaks generational cycles and establishes new legacies. You are not defined by what you lacked; you are defined by whose you are.

### Day 2: Costly Obedience—Joseph's Journey

**Reading:** Matthew 1:18-25

**Devotional:** Joseph accepted a calling that cost him reputation, convenience, and personal plans. He fathered a child not his own, endured social stigma, fled to Egypt, and constantly adjusted to heaven's interruptions. Yet his obedience shaped the Savior of the world. Fatherhood—biological or spiritual—often requires sacrifice that goes unnoticed. The late nights, financial strain, relocated dreams, and silent endurance matter profoundly to God. Joseph never saw Jesus' public ministry, yet his faithful presence during Jesus' formative years was irreplaceable. Your hidden sacrifices are not wasted. The seeds you plant through costly obedience will bear fruit, perhaps beyond your lifetime. God sees every act of faithfulness. Press on.

### Day 3: Turning Hearts—The Spirit of Elijah

**Reading:** Malachi 4:5-6

**Devotional:** God promised to send Elijah's spirit to "turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers" before His coming. This divine work prevents the curse of relational brokenness from destroying the land. We live in a fatherless generation, but God is actively restoring what has been fractured. Whether you are a father needing to turn toward your children with intentionality, or a child needing to honor an imperfect parent, God is working reconciliation. This turning is not optional—it carries eternal weight. Ask God today: Where do I need to turn my heart? What relationship needs divine restoration? Let the Spirit of Elijah work in you.

## Day 4: Prophetic Voices Released—Zechariah's Song

**Reading:** Luke 1:57-80

**Devotional:** Zechariah remained silent for nine months, but when he obeyed God's plan over his own preference, his mouth opened with prophetic power. Sometimes God silences us not as punishment but as preparation. Pressure builds a message. Delays develop depth. Your voice has been forming under the weight of faithfulness, sacrifice, and surrender. When God releases it, your words will carry authority that blesses the next generation. Zechariah spoke directly to his son John, calling forth his destiny as the forerunner of Christ. Fathers, you carry prophetic grace to speak life, purpose, and identity over those entrusted to you. Your words matter. Speak blessing. Speak destiny. Your voice is coming forth.

## Day 5: Growing in Wisdom and Favor

**Reading:** Luke 2:41-52

**Devotional:** Jesus increased in wisdom, stature, and favor with God and men under Joseph's earthly care. While God was His true Father, Joseph's faithful presence provided the human framework for Jesus' development. Fatherhood—whether biological, step, adoptive, or spiritual—shapes the next generation's capacity to fulfill their divine calling. Your role is not to make children serve your legacy but to prepare them for their Father's business. This requires humility: releasing your name for His name, your plans for His purposes. The ultimate honor of fatherhood is seeing those you've invested in awaken to their God-given destiny. Today, ask God: Am I pointing them toward their heavenly calling? Your faithful investment will produce eternal fruit.