

I want to start off Father's Day similar to how we start off Mother's Day, just being a little bit about fatherhood and what that means and what it is.

And I want to start off by recognizing just the reality of the fact that today can be a struggle for many people.

I was actually thinking about this morning as I'm sitting there and going through my message and

The ups and downs and the realities of fatherhood, the joys as my youngest son came down the stairs and just curled up and put his head on my lap and lay down beside me as I'm preparing and studying this morning.

And then...

I'm going to get emotional just thinking about it.

The reality of grandfathers that aren't present anymore.

And so it can be a good but yet a hard day.

And we want to recognize the reality of that here at Heartland.

And so if you need prayer, if you want to talk to somebody about that, please feel free to reach out to me, any of the other elders.

We would love to pray for you, to talk with you through that, just because we recognize that it's a struggle.

But fatherhood, again, is a blessing.

It's actually part of the creation mandate.

When I think about fatherhood, I think I go back to the creation mandate.

The creation mandate was to be fruitful and multiply in Genesis.

And this was before the fall.

So we are unmarred image bearers at the time.

We hadn't sinned.

And God says, go and make more images of myself.

And that's where in my mind I think about biological fatherhood and the blessing that that is.

But then we fast forward.

And I love the fact that our God is the same today as he was yesterday.

2,000 years ago as he was at the creation, you have the Great Commission.

And what is the Great Commission?

The Great Commission is to go and make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son of the Holy Spirit.

And this is spiritual fatherhood.

This is where Paul calls Timothy and Titus his son because it's just as important for us to share Jesus.

Because when we share Jesus and people come to a saving faith,

that marred image is restored.

We are creating and helping in the process of being a part of creating image bearers of God.

And so fatherhood, be it biological, be it step, be it adoptive, be it spiritual, discipleship and mentorship, those are all important.

They all have benefits, which is seen through just, again, the struggles of the day, the reality of the fact we were talking about it in the prayer time this morning, the reality of the fact that one in four children have no father in the home.

And that's hard, and that leads to a lot of struggles.

But on the flip side, the positive side of the fact is, if the father is a regular attender to their faith gathering, 93% likelihood that the kid will maintain that faith through their adulthood.

So it's a blessing to be a fatherhood, but it's also, when I think about those, I struggle with the weight of that responsibility.

Those mistakes are hard to hear, they impact me, but they also be like, whew, that's a lot of responsibility.

And so this morning, we're gonna look at about the fact that we don't have to go it alone in that responsibility.

And not only do we not have to go it alone, the reality is is that we cannot do it alone.

And so our text this morning is going to tie directly to that.

If you would, turn with me to Isaiah chapter 41.

If you have the church Bible, it's going to be on page 714.

And we're going to read verses 1 through 20.

And this is God speaking to the Israelite people about the reality of the fact that they do not have to fear God.

of what's going on in the world around them and the responsibilities that they have.

And so if you are willing and able, would you please stand with me as I read the Word of God?

Isaiah chapter 41, beginning in verse 1.

Listen to me in silence, O coastlands.

Let the peoples renew their strength.

He gives up nations before him so that he tramples kings underfoot.

He makes them like dust with his sword, like driven stubble with his bow.

He pursues them and passes on safely by paths his feet have not trod.

Who has performed and done this, calling the generations from the beginning?

I, the Lord, the first and with the last, I am he.

The coastlands have seen and are afraid.

The ends of the earth tremble.

They have drawn near and come.

Everyone helps his neighbor and says to his brother, be strong.

The craftsman strengthens the goldsmith and he who smooths with a hammer, him who strikes the anvil, saying of the soldering, it is good.

And they strengthen it with nails so that it cannot be moved.

But you, Israel, my servant Jacob."

whom I have chosen, the offspring of Abraham, my friend, you whom I took from the ends of the earth and called from the farthest corners, saying to you, you are my servant.

I have chosen you and not cast you off.

Fear not, for I am with you.

Be not dismayed, for I am your God.

I will strengthen you.

I will help you.

I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand.

It is I who say to you, fear not.

I am the one who helps you.

And you shall rejoice in the Lord, in the Holy One of Israel you shall glory."

When the poor and needy seek water and there is none and their tongue is parched with thirst, I, the Lord, will answer them.

I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them.

I will open up rivers on the bare heights and the fountains in the midst of the valleys.

I will make the wilderness a pool of water and the dry land springs of water.

I will put in the wilderness the cedar, the acacia, the myrtle, and the olive.

I will set in the desert the cypress, the plain, and the pine together that they may see and know, may consider and understand that the hand of the Lord has done this."

The Holy One of Israel has created it.

God's word for us this morning.

Let's pray.

Dear Lord and Heavenly Father, as we prepare to take a look at this text this morning, God, and the realities that it reveals to us, Lord, I ask that you open up our ears, God, and our hearts.

Lord, allow them to be...

pliable to what you would have them to hear.

Lord, allow me to just be a mouthpiece, that nothing I say this morning is from my own will, God, but that it's all for you and for your glory.

Lord, as we grapple with the reality of the fact that we need your help in everything, God, allow us to be open to that.

Allow us to see your goodness in that.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

So this morning, we're gonna take a look at three overarching themes that I see in these verses and how they relate to not only fatherhood, but to parenting and being a believer in general.

And the first is this.

The first is that the battle is real.

When you look at the first seven verses, this is kind of like this weird picture of like a courtroom and the nations that are surrounding Israel have been stirred up and they're going after Israel and they're making this claim before the Lord.

And when I look at this, I see these nations as a foreshadow, as a picture of the reality of the fact that we engage in a spiritual battle in our lives as believers.

And so the best text, in my opinion, to go to that is, if you would, go ahead and flip to Ephesians chapter 6.

Ephesians chapter six, beginning in verse 10, Paul starts to write about the armor of God.

And here he really lays out the reality of the fact that life is a struggle.

There is spiritual warfare that occurs in life.

Paul writes this beginning in verse 10.

It'll be up on the screen as well.

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.

Put on the armor of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Therefore, take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, having done all to stand firm.

Spiritual battle is real, but it's not people.

Again, the nations, the people groups that Israel is fighting in the Old Testament are a foreshadow of the spiritual realities of life and the fact that we struggle against what the culture tells us, we struggle against the devil himself, we struggle against our own sinful flesh, and these things are real and evident

The biggest battle is the fact that the enemy is held in the palm of our hand.

The world is engaged with us constantly through our personal devices.

And because of that, as believers, as Christians, our battle is constant.

It's never over.

It's unceasing.

It's something that we must be aware of, but the reality is what Paul writes here is the fact that we have to stand firm in the Lord.

It's not about doing something.

The way that we fight this struggle is to stand firm in the Lord, to go through the rest of the text quickly.

All the other armor that's presented here

in this section is defensive except for one.

And the one offensive piece of armor is the sword, which is the word, but in verse 18, it's not on the screen, in verse 18 it says, praying all times in the spirit.

He talks about the sword of the spirit, but he talks about praying with it.

Again, that's not even us using it, it's us going to God and praying to him that his word will do the fighting for us.

Because this battle is real, this is why it relates to parenting, it relates to discipleship.

God has commanded us to teach his ways to our children.

These will be on a screen for you.

Deuteronomy 6 and verse 7.

Moses has shared God's law with the Israelites and this is what he says.

You shall teach them diligently to your children.

And shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise.

We are to constantly keep the gospel in front of not only ourselves, but of those in whom we are discipling.

It's a necessity.

Furthermore, Proverbs 22 and verse 6, this goes to the stat that I said about disciples.

children not falling away from the faith.

It says, train up a child in the way he should go, and even when he is old, he will not depart from it.

There's something to be said for consistent discipleship, consistently putting the gospel in front of those whom we're discipling, but first and foremost, in front of ourselves.

I know that that's where I personally struggle with the most is the fact of I need to be reminded that I need the gospel constantly and then to turn and those whom I'm discipling to put that in front of them.

And here's the kicker.

Here's the kicker.

If the battle...

is really this serious?

Because this is a serious thing, right?

God is telling us that we need to train up our children, we need to teach them that the battle is this serious.

We have to ask the important question of, do we actually have the strength to fight it on our own?

Isaiah's humbling answer is no.

The answer is no.

We

are insufficient.

We are insufficient.

I can tell you right now that that is probably the thing I struggle with the most as a father.

I can be honest and humble here before you that when I came to Heartland, I took a lot of self-pride in being a father.

A lot of my identity was tied to how I was as a father.

So much so that it became a God in my life.

And it's because of right here.

I thought I could do this.

I can be a good father.

I wanted to be a good father, which isn't a bad thing.

But I tried to do it all on my own.

And through the gospel goodness here at Heartland and men holding me accountable, I've overcome some of that.

But here's the reality of how Isaiah puts it and how God, it's funny, going back to our main text, it's funny the way God presents this.

Because he's kind of like speaking out

up to Israel, but also at the same time, like, helping them understand where they are and their place.

So let's reread verses 8, 14, and 17.

They'll be on the screen.

Verse 8.

Verse 14.

And then verse 17.

When the poor and needy seek water and there is none and the tongue is parched and with thirst, I the Lord answer them.

He uses three examples to talk about our insufficiency.

He calls us a servant.

He calls us a worm.

And he calls us poor and needy.

He calls us a servant.

Think about that word for a minute.

Think about the word servant.

Servant.

In the Hebrew text here, it's literally meaning indentured servitude or slave.

Like that is what this word is meaning.

They have no authority.

There is no power in and of themselves to do anything.

They are submitted and under submission to whoever is over them.

You look at the word worm.

Worm.

It crawls on the ground.

It's the lowest of the low.

It's not even just on the ground.

It's under the ground.

It is not capable of doing anything but moving through the mud and the muck.

And lastly, in the most self-explanatory, God is just saying, you are poor and needy.

You are insufficient.

There is nothing about you that is sufficient enough to do these things.

And that's really hard to hear.

Particularly in a culture that tells us that if we just dig deep enough, we can overcome anything.

If you just dig deep enough, if you pull yourself up by your bootstraps, you can just overcome and do anything on your own and in your own strength.

You don't need nobody and nothing.

And God is telling you, no, you are insufficient.

You don't have to turn there.

It's on the slide.

Just a couple chapters over in Isaiah 64, 6.

Isaiah writes, we have all become like one who is unclean and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.

When we try to do things on our own, another translation says it's like filthy rags.

It's not even close to being sufficient and worthy and needed.

We are unable to do anything that is leading to righteousness on our own outside of Christ.

So what do we do?

Is there no hope?

Do I just give up?

No.

No, in humility we lean back.

into the strength of the Lord, because Christ is all-sufficient.

Let's reread verses 13, 14, and then we're going to read 17 through 20 again.

Verse 13 of our text in Isaiah says this, For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand.

It is I who say to you, Fear not, I am the one who helps you.

Verse 14, fear not, you worm, Jacob, you men of Israel.

I am the one who helps you, declared the Lord.

Your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel.

And then verses 17 through 20, when the poor and the needy seek water and there is none and their tongue is parched with thirst, I, the Lord, will answer them.

I, the Lord God of Israel, will not forsake them.

I will open up rivers and

On the bare heights and fountains in the midst of the valleys, I will make the wilderness a pool of water and the dry land springs of water.

I will put in the wilderness the cedar, the acacia, the myrtle, and the olive.

I will set in the desert the cypress, the plain, and the pine together that they may see and know, may consider and understand together that the hand of the Lord has done this.

The Holy One of Israel has created this.

Sufficiency and victory only come through Jesus Christ.

He is the only one that can help us do these things.

Otherwise, we're just going to toil constantly.

and get exhausted, looping back to what Josh talked about last week, if we do not find rest in Jesus but maintain our pride and think that, well, if I just, I can rest as soon as I get my kids into this program.

I can rest as soon as I reach this level of my career.

I can rest as soon as I get this level of retirement fund in my bank account.

Then, then I can rest.

No.

No.

No, all of that is just going to exhaust you.

It's going to make you angry.

In order to complete, in order to have victory, we just got to go to Jesus and rest.

His yoke is like, I grew up around farms.

I know what oxen are.

I know what yokes are.

In fact, I like to work out.

I like to carry around heavy things.

And I tell you what, to throw all of it on Jesus is rest.

The burden is removed.

He's strong.

He can make oases in the desert.

I can't do that.

He can crush mountains before me.

He can take my enemies and with the snap of his finger make them disappear.

I can't do that.

It's only in Christ and resting in his sufficiency that we can do the task set before us.

This is not on the screen, but 1 John 5, 4 and 5 says this.

Faith

And the one who is victorious.

Faith in Christ is what overcomes our fear and allows us to fulfill what God has planned for us.

Talk specifically here a minute about fatherhood.

Fatherhood is scary.

People ask me a lot of times, how do you do it?

I have six kids.

There's plenty of other families in here that have a lot of kids.

People ask, how do you do it?

And I go, well, it's scary, but it's scary because I'm a new father every year.

Every time my kid has a birthday, it's the first time I'm a father of, list those kids' ages.

When the next birthday comes around, I guess what, it's the first time I'm a father of kids with those ages.

And every single time, it's scary.

I don't know what to do.

I fall into this thinking of am I doing it good enough?

Am I being a good enough father?

The fear, the anxiety wells up in me because I think I'm gonna screw up.

I don't wanna screw up because we talked about all the things that happen when you screw up as a father.

And it's because I forget.

I forget that in Christ, that is where all sufficiency lies.

That's where my victory is.

It's when he shows me what it's like to be a father, when I go to him, when I go to the word, when I go to prayer, when I stumble and fall to repent and run to him first so then my kids can run to me.

He provides everything.

He is the one who is all sufficient to remove our fear.

It is only in him can we do all things.

things, turn with me to Philippians chapter four.

This is another coffee mug verse.

I'm an athlete.

Many athletes have seen this.

You probably know where we're going, but I want to read the full context of the verse because I think it has bearing on what we're talking about today.

So Philippians four, beginning in verse 10, Paul writes, "I rejoiced in the Lord greatly."

that now at length you have revived your concern for me.

You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity.

Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content.

I know how to be brought low and I know how to abound.

In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need.

I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

Let me say that again.

I can do all things through him that strengthens me.

This is not about your basketball game or your dance recital or your test.

God cares about those things.

Don't get me wrong.

What this is about is recognition that

In the hard struggles of life or in the abundance of life, the only way you get through that, the only way you have joy in those moments is if you're in Christ Jesus.

It's Jesus who provides all of those things.

It's not the latest self-help book that you find.

It's not seven steps to a healthier marriage.

It's not even seven baby steps to better financial health.

It's not those things.

Those things, while may be good, if they are apart from Christ, they are insufficient.

If we want to be better fathers, if we want to be better parents, if we want to be better disciple makers, we have to lean into the Lord.

We have to trust in his sufficiency.

Because when Jesus went to the cross, he didn't say nothing.

Here's more you have to do.

What did he say?

It's finished.

It's finished.

It's done.

All sufficiency is wrapped up in Christ and the work that he did.

Not us.

It's only through his provision of his sacrifice on the cross that we can do anything.

To show you how much as I struggle as a father, when I was doom scrolling this week,

I know, bad example.

Shouldn't doom scroll.

But as I was doom scrolling this week, I came across a reel from one of my favorite pastors.

Pastor's name is Alistair Begg.

Yes, one of my kids' name is Alistair's for that guy.

Love that guy.

Great man of God.

And he was sharing what later became a song, but a poem of John Newton's.

And if you don't know anything about John Newton, John Newton is the man who also wrote the words to Amazing Grace after God saved him and rescued him from being a former slave trader.

But in here he writes a song based on Philippians 4 and God's provision.

And I think it sets well with what we've been talking about today.

And so here are the words of John Newton's poem.

Though troubles assail and dangers affright, though friends should all fail and foes all unite, yet one thing secures us whatever betide.

The fact is, the Lord will provide.

Humans fail.

We, when we try to do it in our own strength, fail.

Self-help books fail.

The Lord provides.

When Satan appears to stop up our path and fills us with fear.

We triumph by faith he cannot take from us.

Though oft he has tried.

The heart cheering promise the Lord will provide.

Spiritual battle is real.

Satan is real.

We must be aware of that as we disciple our hearts and disciple those we love.

He tells us we are weak.

Our hope is in vain.

The good that we seek we ne'er shall obtain.

But when such suggestions our faith does have tried, this answers all questions the Lord will provide.

No strength of our own nor goodness we claim.

Our trust is all thrown on Jesus' dear name.

In this strong tower for safety we hide.

The Lord is our power.

The Lord will provide.

All sufficiency is in Christ.

We need nothing more.

When life sinks apace and death is in view, the word of his grace shall comfort us through.

Not fearing or doubting with Christ on our side.

We hope to die shouting, the Lord will provide.

It is only in our recognition that we are insufficient and Christ is all sufficient that fear is removed.

What do you have to fear when you go into a situation knowing that the creator of the universe and your savior says, I'm gonna hold your right hand.

I'm gonna hold your right hand.

I'm gonna be right there with you, present in it.

I don't know about you, but that's comforting to me.

That will remove a lot of fear when I have to have that next big discussion with my kid, when I have to go have that tough conversation with my boss, or I have to have that conversation with my employee, or just life, right?

When I got to get up and walk out my front door in the morning.

God's hand is holding yours.

Picture that for a minute.

The sovereign creator says, I'm going to hold your hand.

And because I'm holding your hand, you don't have to fear.

I got it.

This is in my notes.

This just brought up a story of, I was on a mission trip with, or a youth camp trip with our previous church.

And we were whitewater rafting in Colorado.

And

one of the students fell out of her boat in Category 4 Rapids, which, by the way, that's really fast.

That's really fast.

And she went under a boat, and someone reached out the back and grabbed her and pulled her out.

And later that evening at the service, she shared about that experience, and she said, how do you know you were going to be okay?

She goes, that person that pulled me out said, I got you.

I got you.

And I knew I was going to be okay.

That's this.

When you're going through a struggles in life and it's scary and it's hard and you don't know what to do, you feel like you're going underneath the boat in a category four rapid.

God grabs you and says, I got you.

You're mine.

I'm here.

So to wrap up, fathers, parents, fellow believers alike, fear not, the Lord will provide.

Take that encouragement with you this week as you engage the world because the world is dark.

It is scary.

I forgot to put the, I forgot to, I missed a part of my notes.

Romans 12 and verse 2 tells us that we need to renew our minds because of the world around us.

So rest in Jesus.

Renew your mind.

Spend time with the Lord.

He's near to you already.

If you don't know Jesus this morning and you're here, I pray that the Spirit stirred in your heart this morning to recognize that

You can just go to Jesus and lay it all down and he's sufficient for everything.

And if you want to talk about that, I'll be in the back.

I'd love to talk with you about that with you.

I'd love to pray with you for that.

But this morning as we close in prayer, let's just thank God for this reality.

That he has provided everything.

And that we can rest wholly in his provision and his mercy and grace.

Let's pray.

Dear Lord and Heavenly Father.

God, I don't have better words than John Newton's words of just the reality of the fact that it is a scary world that we live in.

Like Moses, when you gave him the task to go and speak to Pharaoh, the task of fatherhood is weighty.

It's hard.

The task of being a believer and going and sharing the gospel with others is hard, Lord.

It can be intimidating and scary.

Lord, we need

God, make us aware of this reality that you shared in Isaiah, the fact that you hold our hand.

The fact that it's not you who leaves us, it's too often it's us who walk away from you and your presence and your love and your mercy and grace and our sinful rebellion.

Lord, I know that as a believer, I need to be reminded constantly of the gospel.

I need to be reminded constantly of the fact that you left heaven and came to earth and died for me.

For my sin.

Because you wanted a relationship with me and to be able to help me do what you've called me to do.

Lord, I pray this.

That that is what the hearts hear this morning.

The reality of the fact that the creator of the universe, their savior Christ, loves them so much that he wants to come and be with them.

Work in and through them.

Lord, as we continue to sing, just let our hearts outpour our love and thanks for you being the great provider.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.