

Father's Day
6-18-17

Good Morning and Happy Father's Day! A little while back my Uncle Tom, my dad and I went fishing. When we got to the landing I knew it was going to be interesting when dad pulled out a lawn chair to sit in the boat. I knew he wasn't going to listen to our protests so we loaded up in the 14-foot aluminum boat complete with a fine lawn chair, two old guys and me...well, three old guys and we started fishing. Well, it all went well for about 2 hours, up until two things happened at once...Uncle Tom got a fish on the line and I got hung up. As I leaned over the side to unhang my line I heard a splash and knew what had happened. The lawn chair, my dad, his glasses and phone were now in the lake and all I could see of him was his foot. So I dove in with my big sombrero on and grabbed the foot and got him right-side up and swam him to the boat. Then I dove down and got the lawn chair and then chased my big hat across the lake. As we chased the hat in the boat we discussed his glasses and their fate. I prayed a silent prayer as we made our way back to the scene of the now infamous lawn chair dive, and I jumped in and dove down into about 7 feet of dark water and found the glasses in the first 5 seconds. I put them on my face and came up saying I couldn't find them anywhere. We laughed the rest of the day, and every time I come to that spot in the lake I think about the day of the lawn chair.

I'm blessed to have an amazing dad whom I've always wanted to be like. Even before he came to Christ he was a good role model for me to follow. He was a contractor for years and I worked for him and even though I know I drove him stark raving mad he still let me live! He has loved me for 54 years and has loved my mom for 58+ years.

I think it is very fitting to share something with you that has been very impactful in my life...the definition of a real man. I have repeated this countless times to men and boys everywhere I go. I believe it is fitting on this day when we are recognizing the fathers among us.

A real man is one who rejects passivity, accepts responsibility, leads courageously, and expects the greater reward...God's reward.

This definition is a contrast between Adam and Jesus.

A real man rejects passivity. Passivity says sit in the lazy boy and let the women do everything. Play Xbox or golf or fish and ignore the needs around you. Passivity is about my comfort. To reject passivity is to get up and help out! It says NO to the ladies doing everything! Adam passively allowed a snake to talk to his wife and then went along with what she did. Jesus crushed the head of the snake! There is not a passive bone in His body!

A real man accepts responsibility. When you do something wrong, you own it! Don't blame others for your stuff. Yes, we all make mistakes, but when you do, a real man owns his mistakes, a real man takes responsibility for those under his care. He gets and keeps a job and supports his family. Adam didn't take responsibility for his own actions, he blamed his failures

on God...That woman YOU gave me caused this! He was blaming God for his failure! Jesus accepted the ultimate responsibility of paying the death penalty for the sins of all mankind on the cross. He accepted responsibility!

A real man leads courageously. Any old dead fish can float downstream with the crowd. A real man goes against the flow. Adam didn't lead...he followed and it cost us all dearly. A real man follows the ultimate leader, Jesus Christ, and seeks to live like He did while on this earth.

A real man expects the greater reward...God's reward. We live in a fast food world, where you get your food in 90 seconds. God's reward doesn't work like that, rather, the true reward for living like Jesus is hearing Him say when you are finished, "Well done, My good and faithful servant." Then spending all of eternity with Him!

We all fall short in so many different ways, don't let falling short stop you from following Jesus and being the man He's called you to be! I believe that most dads in this room want to be a good dad.

I asked a young man who isn't a dad yet a question yesterday - What kind of a dad do you want to be? His answers...

1. Be the one that my kids can come to.
2. Be involved but not a helicopter parent.
3. Be one who can fix stuff when it's broken.
4. I want to help them make decisions that are smart and I can trust them when they're gone. I don't want to make all of their decisions for them. If something comes up my dad taught me to do _____.

I'm still learning how to be a dad so let's look at Psalm 127-128 together. If you have a Bible, please turn there and read this with me.

Psalm 127-128

I have just a couple of comments on Psalm 127:

- **Verse 2**, *It is vain to rise up early, to retire late, to eat the bread of painful labors; for He gives to His beloved even in his sleep.* For a disciple of Jesus, spending your life gathering material things is a wasted life. The promise here in this passage is that the Lord Himself will give to you **EVEN IN YOUR SLEEP!** It's not by your striving. Jesus told us in Luke that one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions. Even in your sleep the Lord supplies your every need!
- **Verse 3**, *Children are a gift of the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of your youth. How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them; they will not be ashamed when they speak with their enemies in the gate.*

How do you see your children? Are they a blessing or a burden to you? Have you ever thought of them as arrows?

Arrows are meant to be shot, not left in the quiver! The arrow must move from the quiver to the hand to the string and then shot...prayerfully, carefully, and intentionally, and there is ALWAYS RISK! You've got to aim them in the right direction.

If you never shoot your arrows, then they will miss living out the purpose for which they were created...and that is to bring glory to God! If you teach them how to throw a baseball, or to look like a million dollars and never teach them how to follow Jesus, then they are unshot arrows. **Let 'em fly!**

This world in which we live is not a friendly place. It's a war zone and the enemy hates you and your children and wants to destroy you. John 10:10, *"The thief (satan) comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."*

An unshot arrow is just a stick. The few years you have with your kids are meant to hone and shape them as disciples, and then to release, not to hold onto. They are looking at you to show them how to follow Jesus! **Dads and moms YOU are the primary disciple makers in your home, not Rick Sayger or John Sayger or any other pastor or teacher...Its you! What do they know of Him in your home?**

Guys, I have made a ton of mistakes raising our kids...but I'm still learning, still releasing them! Dads don't give up if you've not done well. God's grace is good for today too!

On to Psalm 128

Verse 1 - *How blessed is everyone who fears the Lord, who walks in His ways.*

As we roll into this I want you to understand what is, "The fear of the Lord." It's not like a slave cowering before a cruel master. It's not a terrified child before an enraged parent. It's the one who sees that his Master and Father are the Most High God who dwells in inapproachable light, and yet He stoops to live with the contrite and lowly, with His beloved children. This Most High God sent His Only Son, Jesus Christ to die for our sin on the cross. He is so holy that He had to turn His back on the Son, who became sin on our behalf when He hung on the cross. **Jesus told the disciples in Matthew 10;28**, *"Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell – and that One is God Himself! No one else! This is both an Old Testament and a New Testament concept; Proverbs 9:10, The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."* **Acts 9:31**, *"So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase."*

Bottom line on the fear of the Lord...is that we walk with a sober recognition of the One to whom we belong – He is the Living God and holds everything in place.

These two Psalms of Ascent celebrate the family and how God blesses those who fear and follow Him!

Psalm 128:3, *Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine within your house.* She is like a vine to tend, not a weed to kill. Guys, how do you treat something you want to see grow? You take care of the soil around it, you water it and make sure it's healthy. If you're married and your wife is drying up, you must ask the Lord to show you what's going on and tend to her heart. She's like a vine that calls for tender love and care.

My Story...I've not always seen my wife in this light. I vividly remember my wife being sick for several years...She got painfully thin and didn't want to come to church for fear of what people thought. She came anyways. We went to doctor after doctor and none could tell us what was wrong with her. I remember her health getting worse and worse, and I was busy changing the world and couldn't see what was happening to her. I can take you to the place in my house where I really saw my wife and began to change the way I treated her. I was doing ministry full blast and didn't see her. What about you? Do you see your wife? Are you doing other things full blast and not seeing her? Her life is like a beautiful fruitful vine that must be tended to...you must see her and move toward her. If you are still breathing there is hope! Don't let another day pass with her drying up on the vine.

Your wife is to be a fruitful vine! Not a dry lifeless one.

Let's stop right now and pray for the dads and moms in this room.

Now look at what this Psalm says about the children of those who fear and follow the Lord:

Verse 3 *"Your children like olive plants around your table."* This is an olive tree, and its purpose is to produce olives. In places where these trees thrive, the olives are harvested into olive oil and others are used in restaurants all over the world. The purpose of an olive tree is to produce fruit. It's not ornamental or just landscaping...it's a fruit bearing tree! That is how I see my children.

Fruitfulness from your wife and your kids...that's the goal! This imagery of fruitfulness is all through the Bible. From the very start when the Lord told Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply, and in the New Testament where Jesus, in John 15:16 calls His children to be fruitful...to bear fruit that will last. He said this, "You did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last. Maybe you've heard someone say of your kids, "Oh, they are growing like a weed." No, I want them to grow like olive trees who will be fruitful! You know, the source of any fruitfulness is the Lord Jesus Himself. He is our source of growth and fruitfulness! Without Him we do not produce fruit. Jesus said in John 15:5, *"I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing."*

What does it mean to bear fruit? You bear fruit as a follower of Jesus when you are becoming more like Him in the way you live...loving God and loving people and making Him known to those who don't know Him yet! If you live your life on purpose to see Jesus glorified in your life and others come to know Him, then you will bear fruit!

Guys if we want to see our kids running after Jesus, we have to run after Him first! Men, so many things want to chop down our children! I see it all the time! We must be diligent to lead our children by example in how to follow Jesus. I remember when my boys were little and when they saw me do something sinful. I will never forget it. I remember praying Lord forgive me!!! They are watching us like hawks, trying to figure out what's real and what's not!

Men, the purpose of this word is not to discourage you, but rather, to call you to action...to allow the Lord to build your house, and for some of you, for Him to rebuild your house.

I'm telling you it's not too late to see the Lord turn it around! Your house may be filled with anger and isolation, and divorce may be knocking at the door. You may feel hopeless about your children; you may have one or more running wild right now. Don't give up!!! He can do the impossible if you trust and obey Him! The real question is, are you willing to turn back to Him and let Him do the work in and through you? Are you willing to let the Lord build your house? Or rebuild it?

What if you and your wife started praying together every day for your relationship and for your children? I believe God would do something amazing in your home!

Arrows are to be shot, vines and olive trees are to produce fruit for our King! For His glory! The man who fears the Lord is blessed! And as a bonus, this man who fears the Lord gets to see his children's children.

Families find each other in this room, we are going to pray.