

A Tribute To Fathers Of Integrity

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- [0 : 0 0] Good morning and greetings to each of you and happy Father's Day.! Thank you, brother, for what you shared.
- and welcome you and your family. I love to get to meet you all. So it's good to have you here with us.
- And just in case you wondered, we do greatly as a church, appreciate your aunt and uncle here as well. So, yeah, we can understand why they might be your favorites.
- So it's a blessing to be here this morning. Is this turned on? Okay, you all hear me? We're back a little further today than sometimes.
- Some of you look really far away in this little building. But, yeah, a blessing to be here. I'm not sure what all is planned here today.
- [1 : 0 0] It looks like you all went to some extra bother. And I want to comment that I did survive not coming in here till this morning. So many of you saw it.
- I was warned not to come in here. So I was tempted all weekend to come and look. But I made it.
- Some of you ladies came and decorated apparently. So thank you for that. Thank you for making Father's Day a special day. And I want to, I have mixed feelings this morning about just what or how to share.
- But I'd like to focus on and preach on fathers. I don't think I ever did before.
- Or I'll take that back. I've preached to fathers before, but maybe not on Father's Day as a special message.
- [2 : 0 3] But as a tribute to fathers. The verse we have on the board here stood out to me. The righteous man walks in his integrity.
- His children are blessed after him. I thought that was a good verse maybe for kind of a theme verse. And I just want to look at various verses this morning, scriptures.
- And I hope that it's an encouragement. I think sometimes we just need encouragement. And I want it to be that way.
- If you happen to also be convicted, that's okay. You know, you can mix it up if you want. But I know I was, and just thinking about it all, convicted in the areas of, you know, failure.
- Or the areas where I feel like I could have done much better as far as being a dad and a father. And I'm sure that every dad would probably say that, especially once you've raised your children.
- [3 : 1 5] And I'm blessed with what our brother shared this morning. Just spending that time with his family and making memories. And, yeah, I just, it blessed me.
- It showed me something about you as a family, I guess. So bless you as you continue your journey. But I want to read a verse here, or a couple of verses here in Proverbs 20.

You can follow along if you'd like in different, some of these scriptures. But, and I by no means have nearly all the scriptures or thoughts put together as to what could be said about fathers or Father's Day.

Starting in verse 4 in Proverbs 20, it says, The sluggard will not plow by reason of cold. Therefore, shall he beg and harvest and have nothing.

Wow, isn't that something? You know, if you're, if it's too cold or just, you just don't feel like going out planting and plowing the ground and getting ready.

[4 : 23] You know, at harvest time, you're just not going to have anything. And you can spiritualize that as well, right? We can, we can apply that to our lives spiritually. Not just in physical food.

Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out. Most men will proclaim everyone his own goodness, But a faithful man who can find.

A faithful man who can find. I had to think when I read that, I remember preaching to the ladies on Mother's Day about, you know, that her price is far above rubies.

And somewhere in there, it also speaks about, similar to this, as far as, as a woman or a mother.

But a faithful man who can find. And this, this verse, the next verse is what we have on the board. The just man walketh in his integrity. His children are blessed after him.

[5 : 31] And yes, this, may this be kind of our theme verse. Where are men with integrity today? We want to speak about integrity some through this and encourage, you know, if I could just look at it, you know, I'm not speaking to one individual man or father this morning or about myself or, you know, I might mention my dad later.

But, but, but I want to talk to a man of integrity. And if that's you, then I'm talking to you. That I want to see that, that man strengthened.

It says here about a just man. A just man that walks in integrity.

And I believe also that in our day, in our society, fatherhood is under an attack. It has been for a long time. True fatherhood is not looked up as something.

I mean, it's like least almost. Instead of most. It's least, least important. It's just not, not looked up to at all in our society.

[6 : 58] And yet, our society, even our government, knows that the lack of that is very destructive. The lack of integrity and fatherhood is extremely destructive. I mean, you can ask people in prison.

You can ask the guards. You can ask anybody in there. They're, you know, they know that a lot of the men in here are here because of the lack of fatherhood. And yet, our society puts it down.

How much sense does that make? Not very much. If you look at the system, the prison systems in our day, you'll find the lack of fathers being at home or fathers being at home but not being at home is a huge problem.

In other words, they're home but they're not there. You know what I'm talking about. You're there but you're not really there. I'm not sure which is worse really.

[8 : 11] Probably the one that is physically not there, I would guess. But both are not good. To not be there for our families. I want to read a few verses here in Micah.

Wait a minute, not Micah. I think it's Malachi. Malachi. Yeah. Malachi. I wrote down Micah but I know it's Malachi. Four. Last chapter there.

Last chapter in the Old Testament. I know we've gone here before. But he's saying here, Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

And he's actually talking here of, I believe, John the Baptist. And verse 6 says, And he will turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers also, lest they come and smite the earth with a curse.

You know, we see a lot of curse when that is not the case. Fathers of integrity. Fathers of integrity.

[9 : 24] Has God turned your heart to your children? Do you have their hearts? You know, I would like to warn you younger fathers of something.

You know, it's really easy to have the hearts of your children when they're under 12 years old. Or let's say, for sure, under 10 years old.

It's really easy. I found it. I found it that way. And I imagine you do too. But the challenge is, when they become teenagers, when they become older, when they become more independent thinkers, and they become their own person, where are we then?

Are we still trying to have their hearts? Are we still concerned about that? Or do we just, like many cultures, just, well, when they're that age, we just let them run.

Let them figure out life. That's really, you know, if the foundation has been laid when they're young, that's really when they need us.

[10 : 44] For walking with, for guidance, for finding their purpose, and their ambitions, and walking with them. And that's, I think, where, you know, in case you younger ones judge us, older ones, you know, you're getting there too.

And I wish you well. With God, all things are possible. But it does become, in my experience, much more difficult when they're not 12 anymore, or when they're not 4 or 5.

Does that make sense? I see Dan nodding his head. Is that how you find it? That's how I found it. And I'm not blaming it on the fathers. I'm not blaming it on the children. But that's just life as it goes on.

But let's not take our eye off the ball. Just because it becomes maybe a little more of a challenge, or takes more of your energy, more of your time, when we take the eye off the ball, we'll miss the mark.

So take courage, if you have young children. And, or if you're thinking of being a father, someday.

[11 : 57] Take courage in that, that it's possible, that you can. Sometimes it may be our own ignorance, our own inexperience, or we just feel so alone.

We don't know how. I'm kind of going to bat for fathers this morning. That we don't know everything. We don't always know how to do things right.

But to let them just figure out life on their own with no input is false.

It is, you know, many of us are from that background where that was kind of common. But that's not God's way, and it's not the way of integrity.

It's not the way of honesty. Joshua said, As for me and my house, say with me, As for me and my house.

[13 : 05] Can you say that? Repeat. As for me and my house. Joshua said those words, I believe. We will serve the Lord.

And, um, I see many, many fathers today that, I don't know if they can really say that.

You know, maybe they want to say that. I see that, especially from my background, where a father may want to live a godly life, may want to have a godly home, but he can't really say it because his children, he doesn't have his children's hearts.

They're not, they're not with him. Does that make sense? Can we say, honestly, for me and my house, we will serve the Lord? And I guess I'm putting that challenge on you younger ones to say, will you allow your father to say that?

This is how we're going to do it at our house. Or, can he not get away with that? And I realize that you could say, well, yeah, he can serve the Lord.

[14 : 25] But what if he wants to serve the Lord in a certain area that, ah, you don't quite agree with? I don't think that's really necessary. I'm not, nope, not going to submit to that.

Makes it very complicated to be a father. Remember, I'm advocating fatherhood. I'm defending fatherhood this morning.

Is that, can we be fair about that? Many in my background cannot say that.

Why? Because the older children are not submitting to their fathers anymore. They deem that as non-important. And if a father wants to take a stand against something in his home or in his family, a thing that God has maybe written on his heart, and I'm not talking to just any father, okay?

I'm talking fathers with integrity. Fathers that are godly. And God has written something on his heart, a conviction. Can he do, can he say, as for me and my house?

[15 : 40] Or will a son or a daughter maybe rise up, or even a wife and say, not me, count me out. I don't have that conviction, dad. A father of integrity.

A man that is safe to follow. Spiritually speaking. If God has given you an earthly father and you are living under his authority, you should think twice before you defy that authority.

And I know that we often blame, you know, we blame dads for how things go in their home, right? Why do we do that? Isn't it because he's responsible?

He's accountable. He's going to give an account to God. He gives account to other people even. But one of the most unfair things is to blame somebody for something that he has no authority in.

It would be like, can you imagine if, if, let's say Merlin, at work, he would put somebody else, one of the other workers in charge, and maybe there's five people that work under him.

[17 : 07] But that person, because he's now a manager, is in charge, and he's going to give an account back to the owner. But those other five men, they're not going to listen.

They're not, they don't care. And, so, so now this, I'll pick Laverne, he's the, the head honcho, the manager, right under Merlin.

I don't know how you all have things set up. That's beside the point. But, so you have to give a direct account to the owner. But you have no authority.

They will not submit to you, but you are the one that's, do you see the picture? How unfair would that be? You know, Merlin needs to make it clear to the others that, no, Laverne's in charge.

So even if you don't quite agree with how to do things at work, yeah, the one that's going to give an account, he's, he's in charge. And so it is in the home. If a father has integrity and he's under God, he's submitted to Christ and his life is portraying that, he's going to give an account to his master.

[18 : 29] But, do we give him that? Does that make sense? Do we? What, what, what would happen to those five guys, Merlin?

What would happen if they refused to listen to Laverne? What would you do? You don't want to say it, do you? I know what you would do after a while.

Well, what's God going to do with us? Okay. Let's be fair.

I know, you're thinking, boy, you're really defending fathers. And I am. I think we need to hear it from time to time. Let's turn to Psalm 103.

I just have, you know, different random scripture here today. But even, I do believe that, that a father is, is special to God.

[19 : 38] God, God, the father, even compares himself with an earthly father.

So let's look at 103 and see what God says here. In verse 13, it says, like as a father pitieth his children. Another translation says, as a father has compassion on his children.

So the Lord pitieth them that fear him. Here God is comparing himself to a father, having compassion on his children. A father of integrity, right?

For he knoweth our frame. He remembers that we are dust. He remembers how weak we are. And that's why God has compassion with us. As for men, his days are as grass, as a flower of the fields, so he flourisheth.

For the wind passeth over it and it is gone and the place thereof shall know it no more. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him and his righteousness unto children's children to such as keep his covenant and to those that remember his commandments to do them.

[21 : 03] I looked up that word integrity in Webster and it says, I want to talk about that again a little bit. It says, the entire unimpaired state of anything.

The entire unimpaired. It's like, and then it says, particularly of the mind. Moral soundness or purity, incorruptness, uprightness, honesty.

Integrity comprehends the whole moral character but has a special reference to uprightness in mutual dealings, in areas like transfers of property and agencies for others.

When we meet somebody with integrity, it's somebody we can trust. somebody that, you know, I've already said to our customers, you know, we have our drivers, they're like, is it okay to give them cash?

You can give them a million dollars, no problem, you know, I mean, if they had that much. But we would trust them with that much. We would trust them with, there is no doubt that they're not going to steal.

[22 : 23] They have integrity. They're not going to pull out a few hundred dollar bills and keep it themselves and then come back with, yeah, this is what they gave. Never enters our mind because they have integrity.

How much money would it take for you to lose your integrity? Think about that.

How much money would it take for you to be dishonest? That's not in my notes but just a thought. What would we sell our soul for?

Now to Hebrews chapter 8. Hebrews 8 verse 6.

8 verse 6. I forget which. Well, we're just going to read, I think to the end of this chapter is only maybe five or six verses.

[23 : 36] But he that, or eight verses, but he that, I'm sorry, let me start over. But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, but how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant which was established upon better promises.

We're going to talk a little bit about covenants. Verse 7. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.

He's talking about the old covenant, the Abraham, the Old Testament covenant. for finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.

Talking about a new covenant for the children of God. Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand and led them out of the land of Egypt, because they continued not in my covenant and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord. I will put my laws into their mind and write them in their hearts and I will be to them a God and they shall be to me a people.

[25 : 12] Sounds like Jesus and his church, God and his bride, Jesus and his bride. And they shall not teach every man his neighbor and every man his brother saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know me from the least to the greatest, for I will be merciful to their unrighteousness and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

in that he saith a new covenant he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and is and waxed old is ready to vanish away.

Don't you love these words, the new covenant in Christ where he remembers our sins no more, our iniquities, he forgets them, they're gone.

Speaking of salvation and in this new covenant he will write instead of just in a book or on a tablet or a table of stones he will write his laws.

They'll be in our mind and they'll be written in our heart. Those are precious things and I believe that a man of integrity a father of integrity will have the laws of God written in his heart.

[26 : 40] If you are a person of true integrity if that is you a man of God then that has already happened right?

God has already done that work he's already written or at least some of his law some of the things of God maybe there's more to be written on our hearts of course without God there is no true integrity if someone says they believe in integrity but he doesn't believe in God then he's confused he at least at the very least believes in the principles of God because without God there is no true integrity all integrity comes from God all truth comes from God I want us to think this morning about what a father with integrity really is and how rare and hard to find that is in this world today maybe we need to defend his calling a little bit more could it be that we have become a disrespectful people toward what

God has established you know my dad when I was thinking about all this my mind went to my dad and I don't know if I ever met a man that had more integrity than he did and I'm not saying that because he was my dad he's just the man that I knew and he's not with us anymore you know and he didn't have all his doctrines right he didn't according to my understanding of the Bible his views were not all biblical perhaps but he believed and lived what he believed what he was in our home is how he was he wasn't one person in our home and then a different person in the church and a different person at work he was just my dad you relate with that

Joe I've gotten to know your dad and that's what I would think about him as well when things came up everyone knew where Norman Hosteller stood they didn't have to ask it was not wishy-washy one time this way next time this way as much as I wanted him to be more lenient he was always just the same and I would have been much better off as his son if I could have understood that in my younger years and I know I have deeply hurt my mom and dad and I regret having withstood him and tried to argue my way past him to undermine his

God given authority in the home I caused them a lot of worry and heartache with my own selfish ambitions and my lack of fear of God and I'm not making this up you could ask any of my brothers and sisters they say that's how John was I might not be emotional right now but I was when I wrote this it's another verse in Proverbs a couple more verses in 17 verse 6 it says children's children are the crown of old men now listen to this this is my experience this first part is certainly my experience children's children are crown of old men

[31 : 31] I guess maybe that puts me in a certain category but that means my grandchildren are my crown and I love my grandchildren so does my wife obviously but then he goes on and he says and the glory of the children are their fathers I hope us dads can be the glory of our children wow that's bible another verse proverbs 23 verse 22 hearken unto the father that begat thee and despise not thy mother when she is old I'll keep reading there but the truth by the truth and sell it not also that means purchase the truth and don't sell it keep it also wisdom and instruction and understanding the father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him reminds me of what

John I believe wrote no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth thy father and thy mother shall be glad and she that bear thee shall rejoice my son give me thine heart and let thine eyes observe my ways my son give me thine heart then a few verses in Proverbs 1 chapter 1 verse 7 the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge but fools despise wisdom and instruction my son hear the instruction of thy father and forsake not the law of thy mother for they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head and chains about thy neck my son if sinners entice thee consent thou not here's the father giving instruction it doesn't say how old you know

Jesus expresses the heart of our heavenly father so well in Luke 15 maybe I'll read a little bit of that in Luke 15 he says and he said a certain man had two sons and the younger of them said to his father father give me the portion of goods that fall to me and he divided unto them his living you know I had to think I have to think of how you know that sounds so unbelievably selfish you know just before you know before it was time a son just coming to dad and saying you know I want you to just give me my inheritance now you could put something else in there it wouldn't have to be inheritance!

And he divided it it says he divided unto them his living and not many days after the younger son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country and there wasted his substance with riotous living and when he had spent all there arose a mighty famine in the land and he began to be in want and he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country and he sent him into the fields to feed swine and he would fain have filled his belly with the husk that the swine did eat and no man gave unto him he didn't even get that and when he came to himself he said how many hired servants of my father have bread enough to eat and to spare and I perish with hunger I want to add not only that you're in a pigpen I will arise and go to my father and will say unto him father

I have sinned against heaven and before thee and am no more worthy thy hired servants and he arose and came to his father but when he was yet a great way off his father saw him and had compassion there's that word again compassion as a father pitieth his children do we have compassion are we compassionate fathers he had compassion he ran he fell on his neck and kissed him and his son said unto him father I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight and am no more worthy to be called thy son but the father said to his servants bring forth the best robe and put it on him and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet and bring hither the fatted calf and kill it and let us eat and be merry in bound and they began to be merry now his older son was in the field and as he came and drew near to the house he heard music and dancing and he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant and he said unto them thy brother is come and thy father hath killed the fatted calf because he hath received him safe and sound and he was angry and therefore came his father out and entreated him and he answered to his father lo these many years do

[37 : 42] I serve thee neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment and yet never thou gave gavest me a kid that I might make merry with my friends uh oh he was offended he was sorrowful he was jealous you might add but as soon as thy son was come which hath devoured thy living with harlots now he brings up his past isn't that how the old nature does let's just say this guy was my brother he was evil and said and he said unto him son thou art ever with me and all that I have is thine it was meet it was necessary that we should make merry and be glad for this thy brother was dead and is alive again and was lost and is found that's the heart of our heavenly father

Jesus gave this to illustrate how our heavenly father is how he functions how he thinks about us and so let's not be weary in well doing let's not be weary in the battle of life our inheritance is with the father and he's saying all I have is yours you're with me you know even if we were the younger son and we blew it but now we're bought with a price and we belong we're now a child of God if you are a father of integrity or you want to be someday I want to encourage you that with God all things are possible and also as a body or as a church body here can we agree to lift up and respect fatherhood in its proper place and encourage each other in it and young people if you're struggling with this and maybe you're struggling with your father and please know that we're not always right sometimes we need to be adjusted too but I want to just say that your turn is coming your turn to be ahead of your homes coming very fast and all of a sudden you'll find yourself in those shoes that you thought your father didn't wear right maybe

I'm just saying maybe that could be the case and you realize how little you know I remember my older brother when he had children I was 12 years younger and when he had children I just couldn't believe what he let them get away with I thought they needed so many more spankings and he just doesn't know how to raise a family well he raised a family of I think nine children and they're doing just fine and mine they're okay too I love them dearly but I'm just saying when I stepped into those shoes my attitude about my older brother completely changed so yeah have grace with your older brothers and their children you'll be in those shoes soon and then it's your turn but while you are where you are let's let's honor our fathers it is a blessing it's the first commandment with promise and

I'm talking about in Christ as much as you can there are things about fathers and we know this that are not honorable right there's fathers in this world that are just not honorable they don't care about their children and in case somebody like that would be listening to the message you honor where you can in Christ right I remember when that reality hit me that the best way I can honor my father my earthly father is to sell my life to sell out for Jesus Christ to give him my whole life whether my dad agrees or not with where I'm at that's how we honor our father I hope this is a fair message and not one sided

I want to read something that Laverne shared in one of our Michigan whatsapps I don't know if you remember a few days ago that that brother Aaron shared I think with him right it's okay if I read that I just thought it was fitting and to do with integrity and with fatherhood this is written by Aaron Byler a father I beseech you therefore brother by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice holy acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service and be not conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of

[44 : 02] God then he goes on he says this is a heartfelt invitation from God he is asking you to offer yourself body heart and soul as a living breathing sacrifice not out of obligation but as a natural response to his love Christ's love it's about choosing to live in a way that honors him not blending with the world's ways instead of following fleeting trends or shallow values God invites you to let him reshape your thinking renewing your mind like a fresh spring as your perspective transforms you'll start to see clearly what his good pleasing and perfect will looks like for your life wow he's interpreting those verses that we just read there in

Romans 12 it's not about following a checklist it's about growing closer to him and discovering his path through a heart and mind that's made new that's a father of with integrity!

I think we're going to quit early there is a verse in 1st Corinthians chapter 4 I want to read that says for though you have ten thousand instructors in Christ meaning though there's thousands of teachers about Christ yet have ye not many fathers and then Paul goes on he says for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel Paul is saying I believe that there's a need for spiritual fathers it's not just about instructing and teaching and preaching but there's a lack of fathers in the

Corinthian church maybe we lack that maybe we need more fathers we got plenty of teachers we got plenty of people tell us what to do but is God calling us to be fathers maybe you're not even married but he wants you to be a spiritual father to somebody you get the picture a mentor somebody that walks with somebody is there a lack in our day I would say absolutely we need more fathers can we encourage and strengthen each other as fathers especially when one of us gets knocked down or maybe we face that mountain that was talked about and we sang about there's that mountain and it's a hard one are we too quick to just judge and say well if you had done it this way you know or do we actually lift up each other have each other's back the world does not have our back they would love to tear it down even further but may the church rise up and bless the fathers who