

1 John 3:1-2

<sup>1</sup> *What marvelous love the Father has extended to us! Just look at it—we're called children of God! That's who we really are. But that's also why the world doesn't recognize us or take us seriously, because it has no idea who he is or what he's up to.*

<sup>2-3</sup> *But friends, that's exactly who we are: children of God. And that's only the beginning. Who knows how we'll end up! What we know is that when Christ is openly revealed, we'll see him—and in seeing him, become like him. All of us who look forward to his Coming stay ready, with the glistening purity of Jesus' life as a model for our own.*

## **Introduction**

Today is Father's Day. Happy Father's Day to the fathers in our church. Today, I do not plan to preach a message that is about: "Fatherhood 101" or "This is what Father's ought to do". Today, I want to tell you about a reckless Father. When you think of a reckless Father, there are countless images we can get of dads who do some reckless things to end up harming their children. Sometimes these reckless things happen because dads are not careful enough, but other times they happen because of sheer lack of wisdom. That may be the image you have of a reckless father. But that's not the recklessness I am here to tell you about today. I'm here to tell you about a father whose love is so great that in the eyes of others it may seem reckless. We can see it in the text before us today.

## **Teaching:**

**Marvelous** = *potapos* = what manner of? from what country? what origin?

The Bible translators use the word "marvelous" to describe that the kind of love the Father has originates from something marvelous, something full of wonder, leaving us in awe. This is because the Father's love is incomparable. There is none like His love. So it makes people question, "What is this?" Marvelous love means "This love is different! Where does it come from?"

**Extended** = *didomi* = to offer, to pour out, to give as gift.

The context lends us the NIV translation: LAVISH.

## **Illustration: The Prodigal/Reckless Father**

- We all know the story of the Prodigal Son. The word prodigal means wasteful. It's reckless, foolish, and uncalculated.
- Yet, we can apply this same definition to the father of this so-called prodigal son. Tim Keller calls him the prodigal father. The wasteful father. The reckless father.
- What is he wasteful with? What is he reckless with?
- He is reckless with his love.
- He does not consider what it would cost him. He only sees the redemption of his son.
- In fact, when the younger son asks for his share of the inheritance in the beginning of the story, The Scripture says that the father divided his wealth. In the Greek, it says that he divided his life between his sons.
- This indicates to us he gave everything. What is more wasteful than everything?
- He doesn't keep anything for himself!
- How do we know this? At the end he tells the older son, "EVERYTHING I have is yours!"
- Indeed. He gave the rest of it to the younger brother, and everything else that remained went to the older brother and in a sense, the father was living off the older brother. Why? Because the father's love for his sons do not calculate but is reckless. NIV captures this idea in today's text: LAVISH.
- We are worth the life of Son? Then we are worth the life of the Father. Can you put a price tag on your children? Well, CNN released an article back in January regarding a report released by the Department of Agriculture that the average cost of raising a child in a middle-income family is \$233,610 from birth to age 17. That's not counting any private school or college expenses! It averages out to about \$13,000/year if you're going to raise your child in the United States. I wonder what it would be

specifically for Northern Virginia! But honestly, yes, it costs money to raise children. But is your child worth any amount of money?

- Your child is worth you.
- And if we can grasp this, then we can grasp the heart of the Father.
- The Father's heart is this that we would exchange places with his one and only Son. To say that he would exchange the very apple of his eye for us says quite a lot.
- So, when the Scripture text today tells us that this marvelous love was extended to us. I'd like to us to visualize love being LAVISHED upon us. Not little drops of God's love.

### **Origin of Father's Day - Methodists**

1909 – Spokane, Washington

Senoya Smart Dod was listening to a Mother's Day sermon. She thought about her father who raised 6 children alone because Dod's mother had died. She wanted to honor her father and fathers everywhere. She proposed her idea to religious leaders and gained wide support.

### **Jesus revealed the Father (SO IMPORTANT)**

Jesus thought it so important that we know God as Father, that He needed to send us the Holy Spirit to remind us always. Romans 8:15: For you have not received a spirit of fear, but a spirit of adoption as sons, by which we cry out Abba Father. The word Father = nourisher, protector and upholder. Your calling as a disciple of Christ does not supercede your calling as a child of God. The church always teaches about how we need to become good disciples, but not enough about our sonship and daughtership.

### **APPLICATION**

Do you enjoy being a child of God? To those who believe in the name of Jesus, were given the right to become children of God. This is what happens when you have salvation. God goes from being Yahweh, Lord God, King of the Universe to "Father." Very often our roadblocks to being a "child of God" is our own experiences of Father. Salvation is being brought into loving relationship with God as Father/Daddy to me.

### **Illustration: ME and My Dad.**

My dad tends to be "just deal with it. Don't think too much. Just do it." But for some reason, maybe he felt something in his spirit. He has the gift of wisdom. He just kept telling me, "I love you, son." It's quite foreign to me. Something I hear my mom say, but not my dad. For some reason he just kept saying it. I think he said it about 30 times. I'm not one to express emotions much, but when my dad said those words, it's something that which is perhaps similar to what happened when God breathed His Spirit breathed his breath into Adam's nostrils. Everything that which is material becomes alive (spiritual). Did you know a child's confidence comes from the father. There's something so precious about understanding the Father's love. Your view of God in heaven is so closely tied to your view of your own father.

**Which means this: there must come a time in which your experiences of dad or lack thereof must be reconciled and brought before the Heavenly Father.**

### **P.Isaiah Story**

For so long, P. Isaiah's view of God being Father was a scary image. It was skewed and confused by her experiences of her earthly father. But once you have a deep understanding of your REAL FATHER. Not your earthly father, but the REAL FATHER from which you come to life. The one who gave life to your spirit. Your earthly father may have provided the seed for pregnancy and birth, but it is the Spirit of the Father that was placed into you.

### **Apostle John, continued Bible explanation**

That is why Apostle John is hammering away at this point. The love of the Father has made us His children! *Indeed* that's *who we are!* And this identity is so important because everything stems from it. Eugene Peterson the translator of the Message version of the Bible says so clearly: "That's only the beginning!" But

that's where it starts! If we don't start there and if we don't know this for sure and we don't know the kind of love relationship we have with God, then you won't be able to get on this adventure of life that you were made for!

**Application: The enemy seeks to tear down families from having a clear view of God**

Culturally speaking, it is usually the mothers who are close to their children and fathers are distant. Even fathers who are actively involved in caring for the children, are very often emotionally disengaged. Very often between parents and children, it is quite unfortunate but the reality that it is more often that fathers are absent, uninvolved, abusive, oppressive, detached.

If the enemy would tear down a certain relationship in order to tear down our image of God, who would he attack? It would be the father.

**Illustration: Faith of the Fatherless by Dr. Paul Vitz**

How does one become an atheist? Does a person's relationship with his earthly father affect his relationship with his heavenly Father? These are some of the questions we will explore in this article as we talk about the book *Faith of the Fatherless* by Paul Vitz.

Vitz is a psychologist who was an atheist himself until his late thirties. He began to wonder if psychology played a role in one's belief about God. After all, secular psychologists have been saying that a belief in God is really nothing more than infantile wish fulfillment. Dr. Vitz wondered if the shoe was on the other foot. Could it be that atheists are engaged in unconscious wish fulfillment?

After studying the lives of more than a dozen of the world's most influential atheists, Dr. Vitz discovered that they all had one thing in common: defective relationships with their fathers. The relationship was defective because the father was either dead, abusive, weak, or had abandoned the children. When he studied the lives of influential theists during those same historical time periods, he found they enjoyed a strong, loving relationship with a father (or a father substitute if the father was dead).

**Illustration: Joseph**

Joseph knew his father's (Jacob) love for him, so even at the worst possible situation, Joseph never gave up.

**Application: Closing**

Father's also come in all shapes and sizes. They come overly engaged and some completely non-existent. We have all kinds of fathers. Whether they be our birth fathers to male mentors in our lives. Fathers and father figures make all the difference in the world. They make us or break us. But the reality is that even the best of our earthly fathers leave marks in our lives that leave us wanting. Because we were made not to look to our earthly fathers, but that our earthly fathers would in some manner point us to the True Father, our Heavenly Father. Should it be that your experience of dad in your life has been negative, that our Heavenly Father is much much more than any failed experience of dad you've ever had. If your experience of dad has been rather positive, know that it's but a glimpse of so much more in the Heavenly Father.

Some of us are dads in this room, but all of us have dads in some shape or form. In this day that we think about Father's Day, it is a day that points to the greatest father of all: Our Heavenly Father. So let your dad experiences be laid down before Him. And let the love of our Heavenly Father dawn upon your soul. And in Him, every lack fulfilled.