

Healthy Things Grow – Sacrificial Living and Generous Giving
A Tribute to Fathers
Pastor Dave Scherrer - June 15, 2014

A week in the Life of 4Cs:

- Thursday: Water Tap
- Friday the builder stated he would increase his price by \$200,00 so that he could meet our bottom line
- Dan Minardi and Diana Knight wedding
- A communication plan is being developed for the Veritas Workshop on July 20
- We calendared a block party/open house/building dedication for August 10
- We finalized our contract with Brittany Christenson and set up her new Children's Ministry digs and we finally got an office for Curt Vogt
- One of our parishioners lost a brother in a tragic accident
- Kelsey Kemp and Sam Foster marriage
- One of our parishioners had successful cancer surgery this past Friday and is recovering well but still in anticipation of radiation
- One of our families found a place to live where their 13 year old son could have their own room after a two and a half year search
- We sent 24 missionaries to Puerto Rico Saturday morning
- We hosted the MWC Executive Board
- Whew!

Wearing corrective lenses

If I take my glasses off the world becomes blurry. In fact, things begin to diffuse at about four inches from my nose and grow more distorted the further away they are. I am very dependent on my corrective lenses to see well.

Richard Dawkins, evolutionary biologist, and author of the book *The God Delusion* believes that this is evidence that there is no Grand Design or Grand Designer. What Designer would make such a crucial organ as the eye so prone to defection? What about a Designer who designed this defection so that we might see better in a much more important way? There's more in myopia than meets the eye. I think our defective sight is a parable of a spiritual reality: we must have help to see right.

I think this because of the Designer's parable of the eye:

Luke 11:34-35

³⁴Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light, but when it is bad, your body is full of darkness. ³⁵Therefore be careful lest the light in you be darkness.

And the Designer gets very specific about the light he has in mind in John 8:12:

John 8:12

¹²Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Now, Jesus helps us to see right in two ways: first, he opens our eyes to see and believe who he is and what he has done for us, and second, he helps us "walk by faith, not by sight."

But what does walking by faith and not by sight mean? It doesn't mean that faith is blind. It means that faith is another kind of seeing. Faith is the conviction — the perceiving — that there are more real, more reliable, and more wonderful things than what we see with our eyes (*Things that are seen are temporary but things that are unseen are eternal*). Which means that the corrective lenses we must "wear" in order

to see correctly are what the disciple Peter calls the “precious and very great promises” of the Scriptures. Without them we do not know where we are going or how to measure the stuff of life.

So as we launch into this tribute to fathers and speak into the missional marker of ***Sacrificial Living*** we do not neglect the corrective lenses of God’s living and active word. You won’t be able to see right without them. Rather, as you look through them today at everything around you I trust that Paul’s prayer is answered for us, that:

Ephesians 1:18-19

having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,¹⁹ and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might.

So I was reminded of this great Psalm by Gloria a couple of weeks ago that has long been a favorite but somehow fell from my remembrances. I like it because it reminds me of what a Godly man and father is constructed. I see it as a tribute to the Godly man and father:

A tribute to the Godly man and father – Remembering our single moms and those of us who grew up without a dad or perhaps even worse:

Bill Cosby once observed, "If the new American father feels bewildered and even defeated, let him take comfort from the fact that whatever he does in any fathering situation has a fifty percent chance of being right." Still the Bible helps us increase those odds in the face of a pretty tough task.

Psalm 112

¹ Praise the LORD!

Blessed are those who fear the LORD, who find great delight in his commands.

² Their children will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed.

³ Wealth and riches are in their houses, and their righteousness endures forever.

⁴ Even in darkness light dawns for the upright,

for those who are gracious and compassionate and righteous.

⁵ Good will come to those who are generous and lend freely,

who conduct their affairs with justice.

⁶ Surely the righteous will never be shaken; they will be remembered forever.

⁷ They will have no fear of bad news; their hearts are steadfast, trusting in the LORD.

⁸ Their hearts are secure, they will have no fear;
in the end they will look in triumph on their foes.

⁹ They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor,
their righteousness endures forever; their horn will be lifted high in honor.

What we are seeing here are the collateral benefits of delighting in the commands of the Lord, of letting the eyes of our hearts be enlightened by the corrective lenses of the Scriptures.

The collateral benefits of delighting the commands of the LORD

Friday morning at Male Call we made our own list from this passage of the benefits of following hard after God;

The man and father whose eyes are on the Lord are:

Gracious, Generous, Steadfast, Just, Compassionate, Upright, Righteous, Secure, Fearless, Victorious, Happy

You know fatherhood is one of those positions that come with a certain degree of imbedded honor. Traditionally Kings and Priests and Fathers all come with a positional status that is by definition institutions of honor.

“The root of *kabod* literally means heavy or weighty. The figurative meaning, however, is far more common: “to give weight to someone.” To honor someone, then, is to give weight or to grant a person a position of respect. The source of all honor is God on the basis of his position as sovereign Creator and of his character as a loving Father. God the Father has bestowed honor on his Son, Jesus Christ. He bestowed honor on humanity by creating man a little lower than the angels. He has also created spheres of authority within human government, the church, and the home. The positions of authority in those spheres are to receive honor implicitly.” ~ *Baker’s Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*

Positions of respect are established by God but maintained by an upright and steady walk

It is incumbent on the holder of that position to walk in a manner worthy of the calling and the position. That is why we are all called to walk in a manner worthy of our status as sons and daughters of the King of Kings. If we walk uprightly we give honor to ourselves and the position. If we walk poorly we give dishonor to the position and to ourselves. Sadly the position of fatherhood has sometimes been dishonored by absent and abusive fathers.

Sacrificial living and generous giving are hallmarks of the Godly man and dad

I want to finish up by making reference to our missional marker of sacrificial living and generous giving. I chose to look at this missional marker on Father’s Day as these words more than any others perhaps symbolize godly fathering. Our Psalm 112 of the Godly man and father is filled with references to steadiness and generosity. But we all struggle to be generous don’t we? Yet it is the character of a healthy and missional church. I think these are some reasons for our struggles with giving.

1. I do not think they really understand why they should give. Their teaching was insufficient or their listening was not good. They tuned out the sermon as soon as their brain heard the words “tithing” or “giving.” They do not realize how important it is to God and how God designed it as a central part of our Christian walk – a part as important as faithfulness to our wives, for instance. They do not realize that is a blessing to give and that it delivers us from selfishness. They do not realize how essential it is to our happiness and holiness.
2. I think many people believe that all they have belongs to them. They earned it. They worked hard, studied hard in school and applied themselves in order to prosper. They never consider that they have what they have because God gave them the power to make wealth, the brains to learn, the training and motivation to work hard and the “good luck” along the way.

Deut 8:17-18

. . . you may say in your heart, ‘My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.’ 18 “But you shall remember the LORD your God, for ***it is He who is giving you power to make wealth***, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.

3. Many people think they cannot afford to tithe. Actually, we cannot afford to ***NOT*** tithe. Ten per cent is to be given to God’s right off the top and is never mine to begin with. I need to learn to live on the remainder. Tithing is supernaturally powerful. Here is a little Kingdom of God math. The 90% that God is blessing will go farther than the 100% that He is not blessing. This is called the transcendent economy of God. Faithful tithers will tell you that although it seemed difficult or impossible up front, God has always worked it out.

4. For many people it is a lack of faith. They just do not believe God will provide even though He has asked us to test Him in this promise. Malachi called it “robbing God.”

Malachi 3:8-10

⁸ Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, ‘How have we robbed you?’ In your tithes and contributions. ⁹ You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. ¹⁰ Bring the

full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.

I want to end with this idea of **sacrificial living**. For some reason to me it trumps the idea of being a generous giver. It means that every aspect of our life has the tone and character of sacrifice. Fathers, you have discovered that to be a great dad, you will have to often and joyously lay aside your preferences and hobbies and opinions for the sake of your family. You will have remembered the passage in Philippians where we read of the heart attitude of Christ:

Philippians 2:3-8

³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

As Christian fathers we know that it is not with only our generous checkbook that we display our Christ-like trait of other-centeredness. It is mostly in our attitude. A Christ like attitude means sacrificing when we do not even know that we are.

Dr. L. Nelson Bell was the father of Ruth Graham and the editor of *Christianity Today*. Twenty years after he left China, someone interviewed a former patient who remembered that when she needed blood and none was available, he took blood from his own veins to give to her. When Dr. Bell was reminded of it, he couldn't remember the event. Why? Because he had done it so often it was almost routine for him. When Jesus shed His blood for our sins, He was doing something that was not routine. Nobody had done it before. Nobody has done it since. Nobody could have done it, except Him.

Benediction