

“Fathers On Earth”
Message by DD Adams
Providence United Methodist Church
Father’s Day Sunday
June 16, 2019

The gospel lesson is from the book of Matthew, chapter 6, verses 9 through 13. ⁹“This, then, is how you should pray: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, ¹⁰your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹Give us today our daily bread. ¹²And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. This is God’s word for God’s people.

Please pray with me. God you are a perfect Father. We come to you to learn how to pray and use this prayer as a model. We trust you to have prepared hearts. Bless the reading, hearing, and understanding of your word today. Amen.

I know you all have heard of premarital counseling, but have you heard of pre-parenting counseling? When Dan and I began raising our two children, we realized quickly that our children are *extraordinarily* different from the other, and that much prayer would be needed. The change in your life that happens when you get married is one thing, but having children is a whole nother ball of wax.

In verse 9, Jesus tells his disciples in this model prayer to address God as “Our Father”, but some of us never had a Christian father. So the notion of calling

God “Father” makes no sense, so that may be a whole nother challenge for some fathers. In this prayer, fathers are instructed in the things they should do—to imitate God. However, mothers and children inevitably hold fathers responsible for many things, and fathers aren’t perfect. So, *we* learn how to pray for our husbands and what to reasonably expect, while giving *much* grace and patience.

Jesus gives earthly fathers a *priority*. In verse 9, Jesus states that God’s name is hallowed; it’s holy and set-apart from all other names. God’s name is above all other names and there is no one like God. His name is matchless, He’s perfect, eternal in the heavens, and always was and always will be perfectly just in all He does. God is the highest priority in a Christian father’s life.

Kids read between the lines. They’re not the least bit fooled. If you have yourself seated on the throne of your life, where God should be seated, kids know it. The goal is to allow God your Father to rule and reign in your heart, because keeping God’s name hallowed speaks volumes to your family.

In verse 11, Jesus teaches about *provision*. “Give us today our daily bread.” We all know what we *want* in life, but our Heavenly Father knows best. Jesus wants to teach us to be satisfied with what we need and that He will provide all of our need. This burden to provide can feel heavy for fathers if they try to carry it on their own. To be strong for others can suffocate a father’s capacity to breathe and feel at peace; it’s then we might think, maybe it’s our own doing that gets us into

trouble when we want to provide too much. “Philippians 4:19 encourages us by saying, “My God will supply all of your need according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

Jesus provides us with examples that point to this thought. Paraphrased—here’s a few. Don’t make your barns too big, we don’t know what God will require of us tomorrow. Don’t worry about what you wear. God clothes the birds of the air, and He’ll clothe and provide for you! God wants to teach us what we need and our best and wisest response is to listen to God.

Men are strong in many ways, but many can be falsely persuaded, that a man’s worth is based on how much they provide for their family. This is the world’s view of the measure of a man. From God’s perspective, a Christ follower’s identity is to let go of how the world measures a man’s worth.

We can get in over our head, and the work world screams and demands attention. And before we know it, our children are grown up and gone. And we knew all along, we needed to balance our work and time with family, but at the time, it feels and is so difficult. I want to encourage fathers to make time for prayer and attending church. Make God a priority, and allow prayer to keep you balanced.

In verse 12, Jesus teaches us about *pardon* and says, “. . . forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.” God models forgiveness to us through the work of Christ on the cross. He’s full of grace and mercy, loving

kindness and patience. If you want to be the best earthly father you can be, imitate God in these qualities. Discipline your children in love and forgive them just as your Heavenly Father has forgiven you.

Hebrews 12 tells us that God disciplines us because He loves us; this is one of the ways God instructs us. If we're left without discipline, God's word says we're illegitimate children. God disciplines us for our good, and it's true, "All discipline in the moment seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields peaceful fruits of righteousness to those who have been trained by it" (Heb. 12:6-10).

Show your children you forgive them just as your Heavenly Father forgives you. If we only have an earthly father who provides, we can be so seriously challenged in learning how to love and not even know what love is. Loving as God loves means we forgive; it's relational and it comes straight from the heart of God.

Fathers have many dreams for their children. Sometimes we live our lives through our children and our dreams for them become something we impose on them. Let's remember, fathers, mothers, and children—we're all sinners saved by grace. We all make many mistakes. Fathers, forgive your children. Mothers, forgive your husband. Children, forgive your parents, and honor them.

In verse 13 Jesus teaches how a father *protects*. Jesus prays, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." When fathers do what is morally right they protect their children. Christian Fathers protect. Our families

need moral and spiritual protection. And sometimes to say “NO” to our children is the best way to protect them. We can hurt them by saying yes too often. This doesn’t always make fathers popular in their homes, but know this. When God knows your name and hears you pray, God’s loving hands are wrapped around you and your family. And whatever comes your way, God goes with you. So go to God and trust only in Him.

Please pray with me. God remind us to encourage our earthly father. To thank them for working so hard. Help us to remind and reassure them how much we love them—maybe not always in words—but in our actions too. Help us all to remember we have a Heavenly Father who always has our best interest in mind. May God be with each of our families represented here today. Amen.