

June 21, 2009 (Father's Day & First day of summer)

“Like Father Like Son (child)”

Exodus 34:6-9

A biker was riding along a California beach when suddenly the sky clouded above his head and in a booming voice, the Lord said, "Because you have tried to be faithful to me in all ways, I will grant you one wish."

The biker pulled over and said, "Build a bridge to Hawaii so I can ride over anytime I want." The Lord said, "Your request is materialistic. Think of the enormous challenges for that kind of undertaking. The supports required to reach the bottom of the Pacific! The concrete and steel it would take! It will nearly exhaust several natural resources. I can do it, but it is hard for me to justify your desire for worldly things. Take a little more time and think of something that would honor and glorify Me."

The biker thought about it for a long time. Finally he said, "Lord, I wish that I could understand my wife. I want to know how she feels inside, what she's thinking when she gives me the silent treatment, why she cries, what she means when she says nothing's wrong, why she gets so upset when I'm out riding with some friends, and how I can make a woman truly happy."

And the Lord replied ... "You want two lanes or four on that bridge

Exodus 34:6-9

6 The LORD passed in front of Moses, calling out,
"Yahweh! The LORD!

The God of compassion and mercy!

I am slow to anger

and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness.

7 I lavish unfailing love to a thousand generations.

I forgive iniquity, rebellion, and sin.

But I do not excuse the guilty.

I lay the sins of the parents upon their children and
grandchildren;

the entire family is affected—

even children in the third and fourth generations."

8 Moses immediately threw himself to the ground and
worshiped. **9** And he said, "O Lord, if it is true that I have

found favor with you, then please travel with us. Yes, this is a stubborn and rebellious people, but please forgive our iniquity and our sins. Claim us as your own special possession."

Today is Father's day and I wanted to speak to the dad's, yet what I have to share will apply to everyone. We want to be like our father, we ought to listen to our father, and we should honor our father. Now if that is true about our earthly fathers, how much more is it true that we ought to be like, listen to, and honor our heavenly Father?

Now I don't know about you, but whenever someone said of me, "Oh, he is just like his father!" I loved hearing that, I considered it a compliment, because they were usually referring to something they liked about my father, and were seeing that likeness in me.

[clip]

In our text The Lord called out, "Yahweh," = "The Lord, the Lord God." It is the name by which God called Himself. And now He was going to reveal to Moses all that is implied by that name. And so some of the characteristics of God, our heavenly Father are mentioned. Let's list them.

God is a God of...

Compassion and Mercy (God is merciful and gracious)

He is slow to anger (God is patient)

He is filled with unfailing love and faithfulness.

He forgives iniquity, rebellion, and sin.

He is holy and just, so He cannot excuse our sin. (but he forgives)

God is our heavenly Father, and we are to be like him. I would love for someone to say, He is just like Christ.

1. Be like your Father (i.e. our heavenly Father).

We need to have these same characteristics. Our children, our spouse, the world is looking for people especially men with these characteristics. We need fathers and all men and women to show compassion, mercy, and grace; full of compassion, merciful (merci-ful), and gracious. You also must be slow to become angry. Did you hear that NY is now number 1 in road rage incidents? Where does all this anger come from? Anger is a result of not getting what we want including respect (that's where road rage comes from ... "how dare you disrespect me and not do what I want you to do, or not give me what I want, or not treat me like I want to be treated."). Whatever happened to patience? We demand we get what we want, rather than give to others what they need. If someone has to cooperate with you to get what you want, you have the wrong goal. You need to change your goal, because if they don't cooperate (and most times people don't) then you are going to get angry. But, if your goal is not to get others to give you what you want, but rather to give others what they need that's a goal you can achieve.

You can give others things like understanding, respect, kindness, forgiveness, mercy, compassion, grace, love, faithfulness – none of these require the cooperation of others, therefore they are better goals.

Like your Father you must be filled with love and faithfulness. And when others fail you than treat them as you would want to be treated and the way God treats you i.e. forgive iniquity, rebellion, and sin. Like God we don't excuse sin, but we can forgive it.

2. Listen to your Father

He says He will not excuse the guilty. God is loving, but God is just and fair. If we are guilty, He will not excuse it; He will not say, "oh, that's ok, don't worry about it. Do as you wish." He must punish sin. By the way, take this example from God in disciplining your children; be like your Father in this respect also. Think about it, God gave us commandments, then He gave a warning, obey them and live, disobey them and there will be a punishment. Then He followed through, when we obey He is pleased, He tells us He is pleased and we receive His blessings. If we do not obey, there is punishment. And even when there is forgiveness there are still consequences for our actions. Use those same principles in raising your own children: make sure they are clear on your commands, give them a warning of blessing or punishment, follow through on what you say, forgive but help your children to know there are consequences for wrong choices.

Sin and rebellion are terrible things. There are always consequences for wrong actions. Sometimes those consequences affect not only us but even generations to come. God warns, "I lay the sins of the parents upon their children and grandchildren; the entire family is affected—even children in the third and fourth generations."

When we were at the District Assembly this year, one of the speakers was Peter Scazzero, author of *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*. One of the exercises he gave us to do was a family tree. In other settings he gets real specific and more deeply into it, but he had us start with our grandparents on both our father's and mother's side of the family, and of course our father and mother, and then us and our brothers and sisters. Then he had us write some traits of our grandparents, parents, our siblings, and ourselves. It was amazing how some of the negative traits of a grandparent were in their sibling and then in us. Of course, by the grace of Christ the cycle can be broken, we don't have to continue the sin of our parents and grandparents, but it was obvious that the entire family is affected by the sins of a grand parent or great grand parent. What a responsibility that puts on the choices you make every day. What you do will not only have consequences for you, but for your family, and even for generations to come. Listen to your (heavenly) Father, heed His warnings. Let me also hasten to point out that v7 says God will also lavish unfailing love to a thousand generations.

3. Honor your Father

(Vs 8- 9) Moses immediately threw himself to the ground and worshiped. And he said, "O Lord, if it is true that I have found favor with you, then please travel with us. Yes,

this is a stubborn and rebellious people, but please forgive our iniquity and our sins. Claim us as your own special possession."

It is as if Moses couldn't believe what he was hearing about such a loving God. He has received blessings beyond his hopes. God forgives, that we might belong to Him and be in His presence always. And so Moses worships and makes this statement from his heart, "...I have found favor with you...travel with us. Yes, this is a stubborn and rebellious people, but please forgive our... sins. Claim us as your own special possession." He give humble reverence to God.

Our God is a God of compassion and mercy; He is slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness. He is holy and just so He does not excuse our guilt, but He forgives our iniquity, rebellion, and sin. Sin is a terrible thing. Even though forgiven, and sin wiped away, yet the consequences of our sin remain. Our sin can affect generations to come. The decisions we make are so much more significant and crucial than they may appear at the time. Be very careful of the choices you make today. On the other hand, remember that God will also lavish unfailing love to a thousand generations. Therefore, worship, and honor the Lord, the Lord God.