

Today we celebrate Father’s Day, a day that has set aside to celebrate Fatherhood. Normally on Father’s Day sermons revolve around our responsibility as fathers, especially seeing what one author calls the epidemic of fatherless Canada. In several ways he’s correct, not only in the deterioration of fatherhood in Canada, but also as Canada has moved away from the belief in God the Father found in the Bible.

Now, when we think of the word “father,” many of us have mixed emotions considering our fathers as we grew up, that is, from love to hate. Others cannot comprehend the fullness of fatherhood seeing that their fathers were not around because of death, divorce, or abandonment. And for some fear and hatred exists because of a father’s abuse. And so, when we talk about God the Father, an inaccurate picture is conjured up in our minds. We see our Heavenly Father in the much same light as our human fathers, and a distorted image emerges.

But for me, the fact that I can call God, Father, blows me away. The fact that God desires that sort of closeness and intimacy is just amazing. Further that He wants and desires to be my Father, and as a result has brought me into His family where I’m now an heir to His kingdom! And all this for someone as sinful as I am blows my mind.

As I was reading Psalm 103, I saw a beautiful picture of our heavenly Father’s heart towards us that I would like to share this morning. It begins by saying that the Father’s heart towards His children is a giving heart.

“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.” (Psalm 103:2) David is telling us not to forget the benefits of God’s gracious dealings with His people. In the Bible, God continually tells His people not to forget the things they’ve seen Him do, the wonders and miracles He performed, His giving of the law and covenants, and especially His grace and mercy.

You see, as a Father, God gives us nothing but the best. The Apostle James says, “Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.” (James 1:17) And Jesus said that if we who are evil know how to give good gifts to our children, how much more will our heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask (Luke 11:13).

Next, the Psalmist points out that since God has a giving heart, His heart is one that is full of forgiveness. “Who forgives all your iniquities.” (Psalm 103:3a) Forgiveness has always been at the heart of God, and it’s in this forgiveness that He promises His New Covenant relationship with us. And we see this though what He said to the prophet Jeremiah. He said “I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.” (Jeremiah 31:34b)

The prophet Isaiah brings this out in his 53rd chapter. “Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows ... He shall bear their iniquities ... He poured out His soul unto death ... He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.” (Isaiah 53:4, 11-12)

Not only does God bear them away, but He also passes over them. This is a direct reference to that fateful night in Egypt when God passed over the homes of the Jews in Egypt. It says that when He saw the blood of the lamb upon the doorposts of their home the angel of death passed over that house.

What a beautiful picture of Jesus as that Passover Lamb of God who through His death upon the cross paid the penalty for our sins, and for all those who apply the blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God, upon the doorposts of their hearts, God forgives them and passes over them and they shall never perish.

And this is exactly what the Psalmist brings out in our Psalm.

“For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.” (Psalm 103:11-12 NKJV)

The third aspect of the Father’s heart is that it is a healing heart. “Who heals all your diseases.” (Psalm 103:3b) Another aspect of God’s heart is His desire to heal. David knew this as he cried out to God, “O Lord my God, I cried out to You, and You healed me. O Lord, You brought my soul up from the grave; You have kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.” (Psalm 30:2-3) But God not only desires to heal our body and soul, but our spirit as well, as brought out at the end of our verse, saying, “that I should not go down to the pit.”

Another aspect of the Father’s heart is a heart that is merciful. When it comes to understanding God’s merciful heart, there must be a delineation between what is mercy and what is grace, because they are different. Here’s a short definition. Mercy is God not punishing us as our sins deserve, whereas grace is God blessing us even though we don’t deserve it. Mercy is deliverance from judgment. Grace is extending kindness to the unworthy.

Now, in Ephesians 3:18, Paul tells us to comprehend, to understand the width, length, depth, and height of Jesus’s love for us. And if I can give a short understanding of this, it is that God’s love has no boundaries, that is, it is bound by nothing.

In Romans 8:35, Paul said that nothing can separate us from God’s love, not tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, or sword. These are the very real sufferings humanity faces, but what’s great is that no matter how powerful they may seem they’re not powerful enough to separate us from the heart of God’s love for us.

Therefore, nothing can separate us from the love God the Father has towards us, which was demonstrated when He gave Jesus, His only Son, to come and die for our sins so that we can live in a loving relationship with Him.

At the 1992 Summer Olympics in Barcelona Spain, the world watched the heart of a father.

Derrick Redman was about to experience his lifelong dream as he was favored to win the 400-meter race. But, 4 months earlier he had surgery on his Achilles tendon, the one he tore right before the exact same race four years earlier an hour before the race began. But now he was clear to run. As he entered the back stretch he tore his hamstring dashing his dream of winning, but not his dream of finishing.

In excruciating pain, he began hopping towards the finish line when suddenly his father jumped out of the stands and past the security guards and threw his arm around his son and said, “Let’s finish this together.”

This is our heavenly Father’s love towards us. He’ll carry us when we don’t have the strength to continue.

Are you experiencing the Father’s heart towards you? God wants you to know that while we were yet sinners, Jesus Christ came and died for us, so that we can finish this race called life and cross the finish line of heaven.

That’s the Father’s heart. It’s a giving and forgiving heart, a healing and merciful heart, a big and understanding heart, and it’s a heart that is full of love for all who come asking Him to be their Father through faith in His Son, Jesus Christ.

Amen.