

**16<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity: September 19, 2021**

**“Why Should I Care About Fatherhood?”**

Grace, Mercy, and Peace be unto you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen. Our text for this morning is our Epistle lesson, Ephesians 3, especially these words, “**Ephesians 3:14-15.**”

If you read ahead in the bulletin, you will see the title for this sermon is “Why Should I Care About Fatherhood?” The short and simple answer is because it is what is best for the children. Today there is much fighting and debate as to who is in charge of the family. Is it the father, the mother, the children, or a combination of these, or none of these? When it comes to making right and proper decisions for a family, what is best? Who determines what is best?

The Scriptures place this into the hands of the father. Don't get all bent out of shape yet, the word father is a very important word. Our current sociological climate has done much work to downplay and denigrate the word and role of father; and let's be honest, fathers have not helped their case either. Many fathers have abandoned their children, pursuing their own self-interests. Many fathers have been kept from their children, as a child becomes a weapon for both parents to use to hurt each other. Many fathers have even abdicated their roles of fatherhood, as men being spiritual heads of the household are ever decreasing.

It is important to know, it is from the word “father” that we get the word “family.” This is not so clear in English, but in Greek it is extremely obvious. Our text from Ephesians uses the same word for Father and family. It makes for a clunky English sentence, but an important one, “For this reason, I bow my knees to the Father, of whom every father in heaven and on earth is named.”

The family unit, as designed by God, is to have a father and a mother. Both are needed, and both have specific and complementary roles. There has been so much arguing and fighting around these roles, that many have forgotten their individual uniqueness and strengths they bring in harmony and complement to each other for the good of the children. In the past generation, we have seen a steady increase of children born outside the bonds of marriage, and a rise of families without a father. What we have been privy to is a steady decline of family in America. This being the case, it really is no wonder there is a lack of respect for those placed in positions of authority.



We cannot blame the children without first looking at those who were tasked by God to teach them; those who were placed by God to stand in his stead and given charge and care of their physical and spiritual well-being. It's no secret the 1960s seemed to thrust forward many ideologies seeking to attack and undermine any type of authority. It has been going on and handed down since the time of Adam, we've just gotten better at it. Adam tried to undermine the authority of his Father, God Himself, and passed that on to his children, so of course the parental role will suffer. This isn't just about challenging authority, it seeks to put the individual in the driver's seat of all knowledge and understanding; thereby making each man his own god.

There are also whole groups who believe and teach fathers are completely unnecessary. It promotes a simple idea that a man and a woman are interchangeable. It is a system that teaches a child can have any kind of parental unit, two fathers, two mothers, a mother and a father, or none at all, maybe it should be left to a larger system of government who knows better than an individual parent.

The basic truth does not change. A man is a man, and a woman is a woman. No amount of mutilation or altering of the body can change the basic chromosomal make up of XY male, and XX female. We get so bogged down by politically correct terms that basic biology is often overlooked. Instead of embracing confusion, we ought to be seeing how this is a mental health struggle, and people who suffer from these afflictions are to be pitied and in need of our prayers, our help, our love and concern for their betterment. We can love our neighbors, embrace them as a brother and sister in Christ, without embracing or agreeing with their sin. As brothers and sisters, we bear one another's burdens in love; but this can only be done if God's Word, and not our own personal philosophies, are the sole basis for faith and life.

Our generation might be confused about gender differences, but when a person chooses to be ignorant of the Holy Scriptures, or chooses to deny them, confusion is always the result. Confused or not, the reality does not change. Just because I don't know if a chocolate chip cookie is a chocolate chip cookie or a sugar cookie, it is still a chocolate chip cookie. In the same way, regardless of the confusion, a male is a male and female is a female.

These are vitally important distinctions, because “***God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them.***”<sup>1</sup> When God creates, gender is important to Him. It is vital to the ongoing procreation of the human race, and it is important to teach the relationship He has with His bride, the Church.

To get to where we are at today, one has to abandon belief in the Holy Scriptures. Either they are the authoritative word of God, or they are not. It is that simple. As the confession of God’s Holy Word has been chipped away little by little, many mainline American churches abandon the truth of God’s Word for a lie. Where this ends is not a good place. Ludwig Feuerbach, a 19<sup>th</sup> Century German atheist fervently taught that humanity makes God in its own image. He argued that what we say about God is simply a projection of our own wants, our own desires, and our own needs.

How sad that just over a hundred years later, this is what hear from many pulpits in America. We have church bodies that argue God is not necessarily Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They argue these are outdated and relative terms that originated during a patriarchal and sexist era of human history; a time when women were dominated and kept in inferior positions. They retort we have now progressed well beyond those unflattering dark ages of male supremacy and now we can call God mother or parent, or any name that is not specific to a certain gender. I was at a wedding where God was addressed as “Father, Lover, Mother God.”

We must be ever on guard so we do not fall into such temptations. We are not to change God’s name. We are to use it properly to call upon in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks. My parents gave me a name, and you wouldn’t even think of changing it for me. You may want to call me by different descriptive words sometimes, but you wouldn’t go so far as to change my name. How pretentious and pompous must we be to think we have the right to change God’s Name for Him, to change His Word for Him, or to change His gender for Him! If God didn’t think gender was important, He wouldn’t have made it, and He certainly wouldn’t have been happy with Jesus commanding His children to pray, “Our Father.”

---

<sup>1</sup> Genesis 1:27-28



As the perfect Father, God did think of His Children, and He knows what is best. He sent His Son to die for the transgressions of mankind. His only-begotten Son, very God of very God, took on human flesh. He emptied Himself and became a man. He was born as a male baby, from the Father and an earthly mother, and was born into a human family to restore all fathers, all families. Where the first man, the first father Adam, was not content with given role and importance of father, the second man, Jesus Christ, was. He lived perfectly with One God, One Lord, One Father of All. With One Father, there is but One family. That means, one blood line, one blood shed, one life-blood poured, one blood that connects all children together.

The importance of gender goes way beyond the simplicity of physically having babies. There are roles and strengths given to each gender, because there are weaknesses given to each gender. Man and woman are not to fight and overthrow in attempts to neutralize each other. Man and woman are not interchangeable. They are complementary. If two men, or two woman, are interchangeable with one man and woman as parents, then we should see single parent households really thrive, shouldn't we? If it is a matter of numbers, then there should be no parents, and the government should be in charge of all kids because there is a larger number than two, right? Father and mother are both important, and both must be kept, respected, loved, and cherished.

God is the Father. He is not the Mother, or a general random deity. The Scriptures never call Him mother, because they call the Church our mother. The Holy Scriptures exclusively use male pronouns to refer to God. Not because He has a sex as a creature with biological chromosomes, but because He is our Father, not our mother.

If we are going to be a church that believes in and confesses the true God, there can be only one source of our teaching and one authority of our proclamation, to have otherwise is to be lost confusion, and we would all fumble in the dark. From God's Holy Word, we see every family springs from One Fatherhood.

Each family has at its source the fatherhood of God; whether they recognize it or not. It is backwards to think generations called God “Father” because they lived in a patriarchal society. Human fatherhood directly stems from the Fatherhood of God. The father of the home has his identity given to him by the Fatherhood of God Himself. The father and the mother of a child derive their identity and their roles towards their child from God Himself.

As His Children, the Heavenly Father has graciously given us The Church, our Mother, through whom the Holy Spirit births children in the kingdom of God, and bestows on them all glory and honor as heirs of heaven. He uses this, our Mother, to feed and nourish with His Holy Word. As we are in His Bride, in the Church, we, with St. Paul, bow our knees in prayer. This is a bodily display of a spiritual posture. It is a physical reminder of Jesus’ words, “Whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.” We don’t speak as unruly children, or heap up empty phrases. We don’t make selfish, nonsensical, demands based upon my ideas of God; rather, with all boldness and confidence we ask Him as dear children ask their dear father.

How do we know He will answer, or hears, or even cares? He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He has commanded us to pray in this way. He has sent His only Son to buy us back from sin, death, and hell giving us victory over Satan and his evil horde. He forsook His only-begotten Son on the Cross for your eternal benefit. Why would He not listen? If you ever think God does not care about you, simply look at His Son. Behold His love for you, the breadth and length and height and depth, as the blood poured out on the cross, and into the chalice which you drink for eternal life.

“Father, forgive them.” The fatherhood of God is not a bloodless masonic religious speculation. It is the fundamental truth of all creation. God the Father is Father of the Son by an eternal begetting. The Son is of the same substance as the Father. We are children of God through faith given in the washing of regeneration. The Jesus who walked up to the coffin and touched it, defying death with His almighty word, is the Jesus who brings us the love of our heavenly Father, as He walked up to us and touched our coffins, our bodies of sin and death and gives us a new life. He gives us to our mother who cares and sustains us.



Because every father gets his fatherhood identity from God, every person ever born is important. That is a body and soul individual for whom God shed His blood. Because the human race did not evolve from primordial slime or ancient, prehistoric ooze, every human is not just a product of random chance. Each person, regardless of race or nationality, is bestowed by God the Father with inherent dignity and value. No child is an accident. Every single one is planned by God. It may not be in our plan, but it is in His.

If we truly care about the health and strength of families, if we truly think about and care about the children, then we first need to act as if what we confess about the fatherhood of God is true. That means every father of every family has the God-given duty and privilege of acting as God's appointed head of the home. Caring for in thought, word, and deed the physical and spiritual well-being of those in their home. Where a father is lacking in this vocation, we must help to restore and strengthen. Where a mother has been abandoned, we get to help. We, in the body of Christ, have wonderful opportunities to encourage and bear these burdens in love.

God has given us Fatherhood, He has given us family. Sin and Satan try to destroy them both. Christ has defeated sin and Satan, and gives the victory to His blessed children. May He grant us His grace to think about the children; He certainly has.

“The will of God is always best  
And shall be done forever;  
And they who trust in Him are blest;  
He will forsake them never.  
He helps indeed  
In time of need;  
He chastens with forbearing.  
They who depend  
On God, their friend,  
Shall not be left despairing.” Amen.

May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.



**Prayer of the Church—Responsive Form**  
**Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity: 19 September 2021**

Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

Lord God, heavenly Father, we acknowledge that the devastation of sin wreaks havoc upon our lives, our marriages, and our families, so that our only hope of salvation is in Your mercy in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Deliver families from all bitterness and resentment. Strengthen them to live by faith in Your mercy toward them, so that they may live at peace with one another and serve each other faithfully; where there is division bring reconciliation, where there is hurt bring healing; help us to see and to act on every opportunity to help single parents, and the fatherless; Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Merciful Lord, You provide for our needs in countless ways. Protect all laborers. Grant that their work would be done not from self-interest, but in love for their neighbors. Sustain the unemployed and underemployed, and enable them to find ways to fully utilize the gifts You have bestowed on them for the benefit of all Your people. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Gracious Lord, in many and various ways You spoke to Your people of old by the prophets; now in these last days, You have spoken to us by Your Son. Spread Your saving truth to the nations through Your means of Word and Sacrament; strengthen and keep all pastors and missionaries. Guide also the members of the media as they carry out their work, that all communication may be accomplished in the light of truth and be pleasing in Your sight. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Holy Comforter, You gave aid to the widows of Zarephath and Nain so they would not be left alone. Provide faithful friends and companions to our shut-ins and those who live alone, that they may be encouraged in faith toward You and love toward one another. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Merciful Father, in His compassion Your Son responded to the need of the widow of Nain and raised her son from death to life. Have mercy on all who are ill, afflicted, the lonely, downtrodden, and all in need *especially Carmen, Susan, Zoey, Donna, Floyd, Tricia, David Teggatz and those we name in our hearts.* Relieve them of their discomfort and grant them healing and recovery according to Your will, that they may glorify You in all things. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Loving Father, we give thanks that in Holy Baptism we receive forgiveness of sins, deliverance from death and the devil, and eternal salvation, bless those who celebrate baptismal anniversaries this week, especially, *Kevin*, grant that by Your Word and Spirit they may faithfully keep the covenant into which they have been called, boldly confess their Savior, and finally share with all Your saints the joys of eternal life; We thank and praise You for the gift of life and for the protection and care you have provided as *Ruth, Dale, & Cindy* celebrate their birthdays. Grant that they may grow in grace, continue to know Your loving-kindness, abide in the confession of Your care and protection, serve You faithfully all the days of their life and finally come to the fullness of Your joys in heaven; Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord God, Heavenly Father, we give thanks for the joy and blessings that You have granted *Joel & Danielle and Nathan & Stephanie* during the years of their marriage. Assist them always by Your grace that with true fidelity and steadfast love they may ever honor and keep their marriage vows, grow in love towards You and for each other, and come at last to the eternal joys that You have promised; Lord in Your mercy; **hear our prayer.**

Ever-present God, as You once visited Your people in the person of Your Son, so Christ continues to visit Your people now with His body and blood in the Holy Supper. Grant that those who receive the Sacrament this day would receive these gifts in true faith, trusting Your Word that, in this meal, the forgiveness of all sins is delivered to them by the Savior's own divine promise. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

