

6/17/2018

“God Knows Best”

Scripture: Isaiah 48:12-13, 17-19

4th Sunday after Pentecost

Father’s Day

Theme: We can trust that God, our Heavenly Father, looks out for our welfare and helps us accomplish what is best for us and others.

† Sometimes it’s hard to understand God’s commandments or instruction

Esther Zeiset of Pennsylvania recently shared a reflection called *God Knows Best* with readers of *The Upper Room* (6/11/18):

“When our son Joel was learning to ride a bike, he had to ride in the driveway and on the lawn, because there were no sidewalks near our house. Our gravel driveway was short and bumpy, and riding on the lawn wasn’t much fun either. So, Joel eyed the road in front of our house hopefully. My husband looked at the same road, but where Joel saw a straight, smooth, wide stretch for his riding pleasure, my husband saw fast-moving traffic — definitely not a safe place for a five-year-old to develop his riding skills. My husband didn’t enjoy withholding this pleasure from our son, but where Joel saw fun, my husband saw danger.”

“Sometimes it is hard to understand God’s commandments or why God withholds what looks so good and right to us. But, our perspective is limited. We can’t know or see what God knows and sees. We can only trust that out of great love for us, God looks out for our welfare to accomplish what is best for us in the long run.”

She prays: “Thank you, Father, for looking out for our good. Increase our trust in your loving heart. Amen.”

Along with Father’s Day coming up, the devotional title reminded me of a TV show I used to enjoy watching as a boy called *Father Knows Best*. It was a family show which starred Robert Young as the father named Jim Anderson, Jane Wyatt as the mother named Margaret, and their three children. Although I never knew it until just this last week, the show originally started as a radio program before I was born in which the father was cast as being “far more sarcastic and shows he really rules over his family.” (Wikipedia)

In an interview published in the magazine *Films of the Golden Age* (Fall 2015), Young revealed about the radio program: "I never quite liked it, because it had to have laughs. And, I wanted a warm relationship show ... When we moved to TV, I suggested an entirely new cast and different perspective."

I’m glad he did and the broadcasters listened. And, I may have been watching reruns, because I was only four years old when the series was cancelled the final time.

Over the years there have been many TV shows portraying men as fathers in different ways and with different personality types and qualities – some better than others. Perhaps, most degrading

of all was Homer Simpson, who may have done more to paint fathers in a bad light than any other. On the positive side, I guess most kids watching the show could be thankful that their father wasn't like Homer Simpson. But, I think it gave an even worse role model for kids in the likeness of his son Bart. There again, most of us fathers could be thankful that our sons were not like him.

All in all, I believe most of us can give thanks for our earthly fathers. I know I can, as you have heard me express for my birth father, as well as those through marriage, including my father-in-law -- who has been a very good father, grand-father, and great-grandfather to his family. We can also be thankful to other men of faith who are caring, strong, encouraging, guiding, and a positive influence to many others, in families, church and elsewhere.

We can also be thankful that regardless of our earthly father, we have a Heavenly Father who gave life to our soul through the power of the Holy Spirit. It is that Father whom Jesus refers to so often in his teaching and living, for his own instruction, guidance, strength and encouragement. It is that Father as Jesus, and as Esther Zeiset has witnessed, that has great love for us. God looks out for our welfare to accomplish what is best for us, even when we at first don't realize it.

† **Sometimes God calls fathers and other men of faith to be peacemakers**

As we conclude this year's observance and celebration of Christian Home Month and our theme of Families Called to Peace, we can remember something Jesus told the crowds who gathered around him on the mount. As he preached what is most commonly referred to as the Beatitudes, or Blessings, one of those he proclaimed was: ***"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."*** (Matthew 5:9)

Fathers and all men of Christ can help lead their families in knowing and making peace. We have been considering how to do that as individuals and families over these past several weeks or more. I hope you have been doing so at home as well.

Let me just say that peacemaking is not for the faint and light-hearted. Peacemaking is not an easy task. Peacemaking takes courage, strength, wisdom, resolve. And, peacemaking takes restraint – both of the tongue, as well as of the hand.

If you don't believe me, just ask any good politician or world leader. I'm sure one or two may come to mind. I may not be fond of everything President Trump says or does, but I am thankful he has made progress in making peace with Kim Jong-Un and North Korea.

As Ecclesiastes, the teacher of wisdom, said, *"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens . . . a time for war and a time for peace."* (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 8b)

And, as Martin Luther King, Jr once said, "Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal." Certainly, for followers of Jesus, this is true.

As a father myself, I give thanks to God that God is with me to help as he does. I don't believe that I'm the perfect dad or always said and did just the right thing. But, hearing the thanks and appreciation from my son and others whom I've had a hand in parenting, I am thankful even more. My interest and desire for peace is not just for my child, but for all God's children, whether they know and acknowledge Him or not.

So, I invite and challenge you to think about and act upon these questions this week:

How have you experienced the love and guidance of God?

How have you been challenged to share or show the love and wisdom of God in your life?

How do you seek to make or bring peace to others?

**And may the God and Father of us all, bless you and keep you, now and forevermore!
Amen.**