

Honouring Your Father

Last Sunday was Fathers' Day. Families across our nation honored their fathers with cards, gifts of every description, telephone calls and special meals lovingly prepared at home or enjoyed at a restaurant.

God has a special place in His heart for fathers. God has this special place in His heart for fathers because they are accountable for their families and responsible for their families' lives. The father is the shepherd of his family and as such, responsible for leading his flock along life's pathway. The father is the breadwinner. He is typically responsible for providing for his family's needs. However, today in most families, the father and the mother must work outside the home to provide a good lifestyle for their family. The father is a role model. He teaches his children to sacrifice, to put the needs of the family first. By his example, he instills in his children the values he holds dear and his work ethic. By his example in daily life, a father teaches his children what it means to be a father and a husband. By his example a father teaches his children about faith in God and its expression. Many fathers across our land bring families to church regularly and made sure that their families receive a proper Christian education. I thank God for my father. By his example in matters of life and faith, he instilled in me the values I hold dear and my work ethic. He taught me what it means to be a man, husband, father and a man of faith.

By the words of the Fourth Commandment, God requires men and women of all ages to: "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you." (Exodus 20:12). To "honor" your father is to love him and to hold him in high esteem. Love and esteem for your father is shown through obedience. In many and various ways children esteem and obey their fathers. However, more often than we are willing to admit, we do not hold our fathers' in high esteem. As an antidote to this propensity in his children, God has placed in many a father's heart a precious gift, the ability to forgive his children when they do not esteem or obey him. When I disobeyed my father and/or did not give him the respect he deserved, he forgave me. His example inspires me to do the same.

There was a time when God actually directed children not to obey their father. Through the prophet Ezekiel God spoke these words: "I said to their children in the wilderness, "Do not follow the statutes of your parents or keep their laws or defile yourselves with their idols. I am the Lord your God; follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws." (Ezekiel 20:18-19). God was referring to the Exodus. God had brought His chosen people out of the bondage of slavery in Egypt through miracles; including the ten plagues God unleashed against their Egyptian slave masters, and parting the Red Sea and then leading His people safely through the sea. He gave them the Law, which included the Ten Commandments as the Law's crowning glory. The people agreed to obey the Law and to worship God alone. Within days of receiving the Law, the people began worshiping a golden calf. God promised to lead them in the conquest of the Holy Land. They doubted God and refused to walk with Him into the Promised Land. God made them wander in the desert for 40 years, until the disobedient generation passed away. The children of the disobedient generation entered the Promised Land. God told that generation, and every generation since, not to follow their parents when their parents do not follow God.

In every generation some sons and daughters have disobeyed their parents and have obeyed God. Every day sons and daughters hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ and are transformed by Jesus. These sons and daughters disobey their fathers and begin to follow God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Every day these sons and daughters face persecution from their family of origin, extended family and their fellow citizens. Please come to Grace Lutheran Church on Sunday June 29th at 6:00 PM and be informed, touched and inspired.

In Christ's service,
Pastor Ed Skutshek