Our Heavenly Fathers Mission through an Earthly Fathers Home

Deuteronomy 6:1-15

A Fathers Day Present for our Heavenly Father

Today we celebrate fathers. We let them relax a bit more, we let them spend some time at the grill. We let them take a long, well-earned nap. We take them to their favorite restaurant to get the biggest and most expensive steak on the menu. We let them play a round of golf. Maybe we even let them choose to watch as a movie that THEY want to watch. WE give them gifts, and cards with strong words of affirmation. We tell our fathers how much we appreciate them, and love them, and that we couldn't do it without them.

Fathers, enjoy every minute of it. Fathers day is also a day to remember what our Heavenly Father says about being a father, a husband, a man of God. It's increasingly becoming difficult to follow God and lead our families in a world that devalues strong, masculine, leadership and godliness. We need to affirm men and their roles as men more now than ever before! And we as men need to get back to what our Heavenly Father, and the greatest of men, the man Christ Jesus means for us when He tells us to be husbands and fathers and leaders and followers of Christ.

What does our Heavenly Father want from us as men for His Fathers Day present? What would God say in response to the question, "Father, what can I give to you as a gift that is pleasing to you?" Certainly the greatest gift He desires is simply YOU. He wants your faith, your trust, your allegiance, you affections, your obedience, you HEART, SOUL, MIND, STRENGTH. He wants all of you. That's the greatest and most significant gift that you can give to God. But another thing God might say that He wants, is He wants your family.

Have you ever asked the question, "Why did God create family?" What does He mean by family - where there is a husband/father, a wife/mother, children, siblings…etc. What is God's ultimate purpose in family?

<u>God is relational</u> – Trinity – God, Father, Spirit – and so we are relational beings created in His image. God saw that man was alone and said, "It is NOT good that man is alone." Certainly, relationship was needed for man. But **why does God ordain** family ***as He does*** in Scripture. Where there is a father, a mother, children all with distinct and differing roles. Why does God command "leaving, cleaving, multiplying, blessing, spreading?"

<u>God is Missional</u> - From the beginning, God's ultimate Mission has been to Spread His Love and Glory across the face of the earth. God created the angels and humanity to ***receive, enjoy, and supply His love and glory***. God gave a commission to Adam and Eve, the first family, that they were to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. ***"And God blessed them [Adam and Eve]. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth…" (Gen. 1:28).*** Sounds a lot like a missionary endeavor to me! God created people to know Him, to love Him, and to ***spread His fame and glory through multiplication*** – ***be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth***. This is what God means to happen through family. As you know, the fall happened, sin came into the world, and this plan of God was *seemingly* thwarted. But God made a plan to reconcile all things in heaven and all things on earth to Himself through His Son Jesus

(Eph. 1:10) so that God's purpose would one day be realized. The prophet Habakkuk looks forward to a day in the future when, ***"the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." (Habakkuk 2:14)*** – This is God's ultimate goal and it will be fully and finally fulfilled in God's future coming Kingdom.

Adam and Eve failed and humanity fell apart…it got so bad that God eventually cleansed the earth with a flood and started over again through a man named Noah. Interestingly, the same commission given to Adam and Eve is given to Noah, ***"And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth." (Genesis 9:1)***. From Noah came Shem, and from Shem came Abraham. Through Abraham the commission to spread the glory of God across the face of the earth now ***was given to a single people group – the nation of Israel***. It was through Israel that the knowledge of God would spread to all peoples and across the face of the earth.

Listen to the commission of Abraham: "***Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. [2] And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. [3] I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Genesis 12:1-3)***.

- Abraham was called ***out from his own family*** to create ***a new family. His family would become a nation of families that would bless "all the families of the earth."***
- **Israel** = ***a nation with tribes, tribes with clans, clans with families***. Each family to be fully devoted to God. A man who leads them, a woman who comes aside the man, and children who are being trained to themselves one day go out – ***This sounds a LOT to me like a missionary endeavor…it sounds like church planting!***
- **In Exodus 1:7 as the people have now been grown and been transplanted in Egypt through Joseph and Jacob…listen to how Moses describes Israel – "But the people of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was filled with them." (Exodus 1:7)**
- **Everywhere God's people go…they are fruitful, they multiply, they are blessed, and they are a blessing to others around them. This is the missionary work of God through Israel, and now through the church, and through each and every family.**

What I want to do in our passage we just read is I want to look at three main characteristics of what it means to be a family that is fully devoted to the mission of God to be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the earth with the glory of the Lord. This passage is really written to a nation, but it's a nation of tribes, tribes with clans, and clans with families. ***Each family was to be fully devoted to the Lord…and each clan of families, and each tribe of clans, and each tribe making up the nation of Israel – one nation, fully devoted to the Lord.***

Three characteristics of "The family that is devoted to God…"

1. The family that is devoted to God…swears allegiance to God alone - (Deut. 6:4-6) – "***Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. [5] You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might." (Deuteronomy 6:4-5).*** This is known as the ***Shema*** (which comes from the Hebrew word, "to hear"). PAY ATTENTION Israel! Observant Jews would recite this daily. This

is like a creedal statement for the Jewish people and it's meaning is easy to understand, "There is one God, only one God, love Him with everything! All your heart, all your soul, all your might".

The book of Deuteronomy is a second giving of the law (deutero; nomos – second law) and its actually a single sermon given by Moses…he is preparing the people of Israel to enter in to a land filled with idolatry. The single mark of Israel that made them distinct from the other nations was their faith in Yahweh alone. "HEAR THIS ISRAEL! There is only one God – Yahweh…you are to love Him with everything!" Do not serve the gods of the pagans…you are to love and fear Yahweh alone! He is the, "***the God of your fathers"*** the one who ***"promised you…a land flowing with milk and honey. (Deut. 6:3)***. He is the God who commanded me to teach you, and that you would fear Him…. "***you and your son and your son's son… that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey." (Deut. 6:2-3)***.

- **A family devoted to the mission of God is marked by its allegiance to God alone**. I chose to use the words "swears allegiance" here because the word "faith" unfortunately has lost the raw commitment that the Bible intends for it to have. Many families say they believe in God or would identify with the word "Christian", but biblical faith is not simply agreeing with truths about God. Faith implies surrender, and it implies allegiance to God as to a King. What does it look like for a family to swear its allegiance to God alone? ***It means not only affirming truths about God, but devoting every part of the home to love and serve Him. It means loving God with everything within the home – husband, wife, children – each individual in the family pursuing a growing love relationship with God.***

2. The family that is devoted to God…is saturated with the Word of God (Deut. 6:6-9) – ***"And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. [7] You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. [8] You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. [9] You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."*** On your heart, being taught, talked about when you sit, walk, lie down at night, rise in the morning, on your hands, before your eyes, written everywhere in your home. God's home is ***saturated*** with God's Word in this passage. This is written for the people of Israel under the Mosaic covenant. How much more should God's Word be saturated in our home as those who have received the greater revelation of Jesus Christ and the New Covenant! God's Word is intended to be the pervasive subject of the home. Everything is being filtered through the Word of God – "where should we go?", "How should we live?", "what decisions should we make",…the constant question in God's home is, "WHAT DOES THE WORD OF GOD SAY ABOUT THIS?". ***What place does God's Word have in the daily events of your home?*** Is God's Word being taught? Is God's Word consulted when making decisions? Is God's Word being submitted to? Is God's Word being memorized? Is it written on hearts, is it ever before the eyes of each person? The goal is that each member of the family would have God's word upon their "heart".

Salvation through allegiance to Jesus is God's job…we cannot control the faith of our spouses or children. **But God uses the means** of our constant referencing, our devotion to, and our training in His Word. ***"Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17).*** It is our job to ensure that every member of the home hears the Word of God, and God takes the seed sown and produces the fruit in His way and His timing.

- **The family devoted to God is devoted to biblical training and biblical education – Parents, the most loving thing you can do for your children is to pass on your faith to them through God's Word.** Think of all the time we devote in our lives to mathematics, to English, to History. We drive our kids to school, we spend countless hours doing homework, we pay large sums of money for tutors….***12 years at minimum*** are devoted to these subjects and ***these subjects PALE IN COMPARISON to the importance of knowing the Word of God!! We spend so much time and energy doing math…but we are so often content with a very elementary understanding of God's word! There can only be one reason for this…either we don't understand, or we really don't believe that God's Word is a treasure trove of wisdom and joy! This is a GOD INSPIRED BOOK! There is a glorious <u>profit</u> in studying it! Listen to what Paul the apostle says about Scripture:***

All Scripture is breathed out by God and <u>profitable</u> for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16)

- ***Profitable…for teaching – or "doctrine" –*** truth about the God of the universe – no other topic more important than that!
- ***Profitable…for reproof –*** like a surgeon that diagnoses you with cancer…the word of God reproves you of sin and error. Sin that is cancerous and has the potential to destroy your life and the lives of others around you!
- ***Profitable…for correction –*** once reproved for your sin, it actually tells you how to repent and change directions! It corrects you! It sets things right…extracts the cancer and shows you the path of healing and restoration.
- ***Profitable…for training in righteousness –*** it points you to a righteous and holy life and joy filled life – it is the means of receiving and enjoying the love of God! Most importantly it points you to the righteousness that is through faith in Jesus Christ for salvation from sin and hell. I can't think of a more important topic than that.

3. The family that is devoted to God…celebrates the grace and provision of God (Deut. 6:10-12) ***- And when the Lord your God brings you into the land that he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you—with great and good cities that you did not build, [11] and houses full of all good things that you did not fill, and cisterns that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant—and when you eat and are full, [12] then take care lest you forget the Lord, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.*** Notice that over and over Moses reminds them, "You did not provide for yourself! God has provided for you – cities, houses with good things, cisterns you didn't dig, vineyards and olive trees, food that you ate and were filled with!" The family that is devoted to God is a family that has a story to tell…and steps out in faith to do big things for the Lord. What happens when you step out in faith to trust God with big things? God provides! When God provides, you then have a story to tell of the big ways that God came through and provided. AS the family of God trusts Him, God continually comes through in such a way that the family together says, "We didn't do it! God did it! He came through once again!" In the middle of the storm the family looks forward to the deliverance that is to come. After the storm the family looks back on God's provision.

The family devoted to God is faithful to give God the glory and credit for the provision, grace, and deliverance.

The family that is devoted to God…

1. **…swears allegiance to God alone (Deut. 6:4-5)**
2. **…is saturated with the Word of God (Deut. 6:6-9)**
3. **…celebrates the grace and provision of God (Deut. 6:10-12)**

Back to the idea of the family as a missionary endeavor*. God means for each family to be a single, united, group of individuals each committed to the mission of God to spread His fame and glory across the earth. *Each individual has a special and distinct role and season in life to carry out this mission. Kind of like a church plant.

Each family is unique, and has its own particular struggles. Each family has its own unique spheres of influence to the world around it. But the roles and the mission are the same…

The Role of Husband – Missionary and Missionary Trainer - His primary role is to separate from his own family, and be joined to his wife, and to lovingly lead his own family as the head of the home. He is a missionary, a church planter! Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh (Gen. 2:24) Notice the emphasis on the "man leaving" - this is church planting! Leaving one family for the sake of multiplication! The man's primary commitment is to his new wife and to this new family that he has been commissioned to love and lead. Husbands are very much like pastors in their own homes. He is the sacrificial leader of the wife and home – For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior." (Eph. 5:23)…the husband takes his missionary plans from Christ as the leader of the home. He is to be the *first to sacrifice*, the *first to be willing to die* for the sake of his wife and family. He remains very close to God and listens to the Lord's directions for his family and then takes action decisively – Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her (Eph. 5:25). It is the primary job of the husband to initiate, to lead, to sacrifice Himself for the sake of the others in the home. When a family has gone astray from the mission of God, God holds the man accountable first because it is the man's job to lead his family.

- **Love supplied within the home from the husband looks like loving, sacrificial, humble, consistent leadership from the man of the home. He shows the family what Jesus looks like by the way He loves and leads and sacrifices Himself for his family. *If a man loves His family in this way, taking His cues from Jesus, the wife and children are far more likely to follow His lead because they know that as He makes decisions He is willing to lay down his rights for their sake - He considers them first in all that he does and that provides a safe environment for everyone in the home.***

The Role of Wife – Missionary Aid - Her primary job is to separate from her own family, and to be joined to her husband in order to come alongside of her husband under His leadership of the home. Her primary role is to be a "helper". Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him. (Gen. 2:18). Before you think that being a "helper" somehow devalues women, know that the Greek translation of the word "helper" in Gen. 2:18 is the

same word for the Holy Spirit who is spoken of as a Helper. The wife is to take her cue from the church that submits to Christ - Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord… Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. (Eph. 5:22,24) This is not a popular way of looking at marriage in our day and age – still God's Word is clear. She is called to respect her husband, even when he might not be acting in a respectful manner - let the wife see that she respects her husband. (Eph. 5:33) There are times when the husband in not following God's Word - Wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives (1 Pet. 3:1). The way to assist your husband when he is off is not with words, but with your conduct. This doesn't mean that a woman doesn't share her opinion, and any wise husband should want to know what his wife thinks. Who is a better counselor and advisor than his wife?! But when there is a disagreement as to which decision to make, the Bible is clear that a man is to lead and the woman is to submit to his leadership and to respect her husband – otherwise Paul would have no reason to talk about submission.

- **Love Supplied within the home from the wife looks like gentle, respectful, submissive, support for her husband. She is his best counselor. She is willing to follow his lead because she is first and foremost submitted to Jesus and she trusts that God will protect her even when her husband may make some careless mistakes. *The wife's respectful and submissive demeanor emboldens and inspires the love and trust of the man and causes Him all the more to be the sacrificial leader and to put her interests above his own.***

The Role of Parenting – Missionary Training - Both the husband and wife are to train their children in preparation for them to one day leave the home - Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it. (Proverbs 22:6). The child's role is to be trained and to be equipped and prepared for his/her future missionary endeavors. While they are being trained, they are to honor and obey their parents. "Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), [3] that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land. (Eph. 6:2-3) This obedience and honoring of their parents pleases the Lord and God promises a blessed and fruitful life will come. It is the parents job to train them, and to provide support and patience for them in a safe environment as they are grow in their understanding of what it means to follow God as future missionaries. Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. (Eph. 6:4). It is very easy for a parents instruction to become suffocating for their children. We are to consistently, and lovingly, and patiently teach our children in an environment of grace and mercy and forgiveness where mistakes can happen and where love is not dependent upon performance.

- **Love supplied within the home through parents looks like consistent, patient, careful instruction and discipline. It looks like pointing our children to their heavenly Father. Providing an atmosphere where they can make mistakes, and grow, and be loved unconditionally. It's showing young men how to love their wives sacrificially. It's showing young women how to respect and love their husbands submissively.**

What does our Heavenly Father want for Fathers Day? He wants each of us individually…but He also wants for us as families to be committed to His vision to spread His glory across the face of the earth – to be fruitful and to multiply and to fill the earth with the knowledge of His love and grace seen most clearly in the gospel of Jesus Christ.