

Wednesday in the Word

Digging Deeper

June 23, 2021

Our Perfect Father

Genesis- Joshua-1 Samuel

Only in the brutal honesty of the Bible can we find a list of both good and bad examples of fatherhood. The histories of most nations prefer to shine a positive light on their accomplishments, conveniently overlooking their military failures or patriarchal misdeeds. The Jews however, saw themselves through the window of truth that the Lord God trained them to respect. In fact most of the progenitors, kings and leaders of Israel were egregious sinners who held no self control and found trouble constantly following them.

On Sunday we heard the painful stories of men who failed God and family. Reading on through each of their resultant lives we find that they caused problems much greater than could be predicted. Lot made the materialistic choice to pitch his tent toward Sodom and later dwelt within the evil city. Here he still showed customary respect to visitors, angels in this case. Genesis 19:1-3. It is quite clear he was acutely aware of the great sin in this city yet chose to keep his family there. The stain of the world and the failure of fatherhood quickly became apparent by his actions in verses 4-8. God still honored His bargain with Abraham back in 18:22-33. The Lord is faithful even when we are not. As if all this were not enough, his sin pursued him through his daughters in 19:30-36. Fathers, prioritize your lives. God, faith and family first.

We move on to the permissiveness of Eli the priest. His inaction concerning the sin of his sons was as bad as if he had committed such sin himself. James 4:17. Hophni and Phinehas disregarded the instructions of the Lord and took of the meat of the sacrifices as they saw fit. 1 Samuel 2:13-17. Chapter 2 describes more of their sin in verse 22 and Eli's failure to address it. Verses 27-29. God's prophet pronounced a curse upon him in verses 30-34. As Lot brought about the destruction of his family, so here Eli, because he did not rein in the sin of his sons, lost them as well as the Ark of the Covenant, resulting in his own death. 1 Samuel 4:12-18.

Lot and Eli for all their faults did serve the Lord faithfully in their daily lives yet allowed sin to invade them. God's Word records their deeds. Now we meet dishonest Achan who only shows up in the Word of God to highlight his great fault. Nothing good is reported of this man. How sad to be remembered only for your sin! Joshua 6:17-19 records for us Joshua's warning to take the city and its spoils for the Lord but nothing for personal gain. Chapter 7 describes the horrible military loss of 36 men to the city of Ai in verse 5 because of the sin of Achan in verse 1. God uses the rest of the chapter to describe the frustrating process of elimination to reveal the crime that started it all. Verses 24-26 detail the awful result of the evil act and coverup of a blatant disregard of the warning of the Lord. Achan's whole family suffered a horrible punishment for his sin and notice even the valuable spoils he stole were destroyed with them. God does not tolerate our sin. It must be punished. Remember today that our punishment was taken by the Lord Jesus Christ. We don't get away with it. Ever! What we do is transfer its result onto the cross of our Savior. He paid our price. Think of that next time you condone a personal sin.

Our Perfect Father gives us positive examples to follow. We start with the faithful walk of Enoch. How can you sin when you walk with God? You can't. Enoch lived a life exemplary before his God. Long before the fourth commandment was handed down to Moses, Enoch raised his son to honor his parents (Genesis 5:21-27) and he was blessed with long life. Exodus 20:12. Enoch is best remembered for being raptured by the Lord (Genesis 5:24) and for his powerful prophecy of doom twice fulfilled. Once shortly after his own life when his great grandson Noah was saved with his family from the wrath of God and soon again when the Day of Christ commences. (Jude 14-16) Peter in chapter 2 of his second epistle makes this case well.

Abraham, the consistent father of multitudes, appears to us in Genesis 11. In 12:1-4 we are witness to the moment when God speaks to [Abram] who is immediately faithful to act on His revelation. God called him in many ways at many times as [now] Abraham displays his consistent nature to follow the Lord where He leads. This in turn results in his children, the patriarchs of the nation of Israel continuing in faith to the One True God. Genesis 17:1-9. A lineage carried down through millennia to this very day. Ah the blessing of a consistent father!

Finally we look at Joshua, a great man of faith who stood strong in adversity. Joshua 24:13-28 portrays for us a mighty covenant made among men to stand with the Lord in honor of His Providence over them. The Perfect Loving Father in Heaven has carefully protected, cared for and provided for His children and they in turn committed themselves to Him with eternal determination. Though little is said of Joshua's offspring it is clear that his charge to Israel is one of a father to his children. This type of love and devotion was natural to this type of man. Notice one very interesting verse. In Joshua 7:19 he called Achan his son in a desperate plea to hear innocence in his confession. It had to be through a broken heart that Joshua pronounced punishment on Achan and his family, done in obedience to God's Holy Law. Such is the cost of being a steadfast man. May we forgive the sins of our beloved children even though they may suffer the deserved consequences of their actions. God bless us all.