## Return to the Father’s Love

Pastor Jono Mok 6/9/2020

In the book of Malachi, we read about God’s promise to return to His people when they return to Him. God also promises to turn the hearts of fathers to their children, and the hearts of children to their fathers. (Malachi 3:7, 4:5-6)

When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, something in the spirit died – there was a fracture as something broke between God and mankind in terms of our ability to fellowship with Him. As a result, we have lost our strength and sense of value. Adam and Eve turned to earthly things to compensate – they looked for leaves to cover themselves with. In the same way, often we may also find ourselves looking for value and acceptance from earthly sources such as relationships, the media, work and family. However, God’s original intention remains – that our ultimate source should be our Heavenly Father.

**We need the everlasting love of the Father**

Some scriptures to meditate on and refer to:

* Jeremiah 31:9 - “I am Israel’s Father”
* John 1:12 – the right to become children of God
* Galatians 3:26 – we are all children of God through faith in Christ
* Ephesians 2:19 – no longer strangers/foreigners but citizens of God

**What is love?**

Pastor Jono also spoke about the difference between “Fish Love” and God’s Love. Fish Love is conditional and focused around ourselves and what we can gain out of a particular relationship. However, God’s love is unconditional – it is a perfect love that is sacrificial and unchanging, the kind of love that gave up everything to rescue his people.

Other features of the Father’s everlasting love:

1. Extends grace
2. Expresses faith
3. Expects the best from us
4. Endures the worst

***Q: What kind of love environment are we creating and fostering at home? Are we mirroring the Father’s unconditional and everlasting love in the things that we do and say? Think about some examples that you have done well in this week, as well as areas that could be improved.***

**Fathers and Mothers are co-heirs in their families**

In Romans 8:17, we read that we are God’s heirs. God has made us co-heirs which means that parenting is a joint effort. One is not greater than the other and there needs to be a sense of unity in our parenting journey. A good example of this is found in Judges 13:8 where Manoah (Samson’s father) prayed to the Lord asking him to “give us more instructions about this son who is to be born”.

Fathers and mothers have different roles within the family and both are important and essential for a strong family unit. Fathers are called to be the source of love for the family (Husbands are called to love their wives) – this love needs to be demonstrated and spoken out. This then leads to the mothers role which is to supply the love practically. The two roles work hand-in-hand and children need love from both a father and a mother.

***Q: Discuss what the term “Generational Discipleship” means to you and share some examples with the group.***

**Be an Action Dad, not a passive dad**

Ephesians 6:4 speaks about the role of fathers in bringing up their children with discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord. Fathers are the backbone of strength, authority, stability and direction in their families.

Fathers need to know that law and bring correction according to the Word of God. This requires knowing the Word of God and praying for discernment and direction for the family. Fathers and mothers should discuss parenting/discipline strategy together and be unified and in agreement – however it is ultimately the role of the father to provide the discipline and direction.

10 tips for Fathers:

1. Understand that children are an inheritance from God
2. Establish the authority of scripture throughout the family life
3. Pray together
4. You cannot expect your child to become what you are not
5. Do not make idle threats – follow through with discipline as well as promises
6. Never argue with your child
7. Pray everyday for and with your children
8. Be a whole family
9. All forms of wrongdoing must not be overlooked. Learn to discern between wrongdoing vs. genuine mistakes. Wrongdoing requires correction, mistakes require patience.
10. Communication with your child is important