

Willow River Parish: Clear Lake, Deer Park, and Faith Family

Title: Father's Love

Lesson: Mark 4:26-34

²⁶ He also said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. ²⁷ Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. ²⁸ All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. ²⁹ As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come."

³⁰ Again he said, "What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? ³¹ It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. ³² Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade."

³³ With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand. ³⁴ He did not say anything to them without using a parable. But when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything.

Friends, today is a special day to honor the fathers who have had a significant impact on our lives. On this Father's Day, we reflect on the role and influence of fathers through the words of Mark 4:26-34. Let us take this time to remember the love and dedication of our fathers and express our gratitude for their hard work.

During my childhood, my father didn't say much, but he was a dependable presence, like a sturdy tree that supported our family. Just having him around gave me a lot of psychological stability, and I relied on him for many things. As a kid, I was pretty mischievous and often lost my toys or house keys. Whenever I told my dad that I couldn't find something, he would always find it for me.

(Slide 1) To me, he was like MacGyver. One day, I begged him to make a rubber band-powered airplane for a school competition. When I woke up the next morning, it was finished and sitting beside me.

He was reliable and responsible, always making decisions rationally without being swayed by emotions. He was constantly teaching me, and as a child, I wanted to be just like him.

(Slide 2) Thinking about my father, one memory stands out. About 20 years ago, there was a movie called "The Day After Tomorrow." Back then, services like Netflix and YouTube were not as popular as they are today. There were two main

ways to watch a movie: either go to the theater or rent a videotape from a video rental store and watch it at home. We loved watching movies, so we often rented videotapes to watch at home.

Although I don't remember exactly why, my parents watched the movie before I did. Before I watched it, my father told me that there was a line at the end of the movie where the father says something to his son, and that my dad would have acted and said the same thing if he were in that situation.

Then I started watching the movie. It was about climate change leading the earth into an ice age, with tornadoes, floods, and storms. The entire world was freezing over. In the movie, a scientist father hears that his son is in the New York City Public Library and sets out from Washington, D.C., with his colleagues to rescue him. After many hardships, he reunites with his son, and they hug each other. The son says, "Dad, you made it." And he replies, "Of course, I did."

In Korea, my father's generation tended to be stoic and less expressive of their emotions. At least my father was that way. So, I didn't hear him say he loved me very often, but after watching that movie, I could feel his love for me.

Jesus used the parable of the sower to explain the kingdom of God. After sowing the seeds, the sower does not know the exact process by which they grow, but the seeds grow by themselves. This is very similar to the role of a father. A father is like a sower in his child's life. The seeds are his love, education, wisdom, and example of living.

Fathers prepare and teach many things for their children. Sometimes, they pray with concern about whether their children are on the right path. However, they cannot control or understand every aspect of the process. But the seeds that fathers sow grow in the hearts of their children, becoming great trees. The love and wisdom of fathers have a profound and positive impact on their children's lives, bearing beautiful fruit.

Jesus also spoke of the mustard seed. Although it is the smallest of all seeds, when it grows, it becomes the largest of garden plants, with branches where birds can perch. The small actions and words of a father are like this. The small encouragement, expressions of love, and lessons from a father grow into a great tree in the lives of children.

Perhaps the small actions of a father may not seem significant at the moment. However, these small seeds play a crucial role in shaping the character and

direction of a child's life. The small encouragement and support from a father, and the exemplary actions he shows in daily life, are deeply planted in the hearts of children. These small seeds become great strengths as children grow and provide important guidance in their lives.

Just as Jesus spoke in parables, the influence of a father is similar. Not everyone may directly understand it, but the influence spreads deeply and widely. A father's role goes beyond physical nurturing; it includes nurturing the heart and soul of a child. The wise words and actions of a father deeply affect a child's life.

The role of a father cannot be evaluated by visible measures alone. Every moment a father prays for his child, gives wise advice, and lives an exemplary life leaves a profound mark on the child's life. The love and dedication of a father are crucial foundations for a child's growth, continuing to impact them even into adulthood.

Dear congregation, on this Father's Day, let us express our gratitude and respect to our fathers. Fathers are the pillars of our lives, and their love and dedication are the great strength that supports us. Let all fathers remember that their role is like that of a sower. Our small actions and words can grow into great trees in our children's lives.

We pray that God grants our fathers wisdom and patience, helping them to raise their children with love and positively influence their lives. And we pray that children become good soil so that the seeds can grow well. May God be with us, helping our small seeds grow and bear beautiful fruit.

(Slide 3-5) I would like to conclude this message with this poem.

FOR YOU ON FATHER'S DAY *by Deirdre Banda*

For you on father's day what ever you celebrate
 Fathers have been here in times and seasons
 For you on Father's Day that's really great
 To remember you not just on this day but every day
 It's father Day today for all fathers who have been
 Here and gone Your memories live on
 Fathers enjoy your children, draw them near
 Closer to you inside the heart
 Because they may think of you today
 Pick up the phone, and dial and say!
 Write a letter. You may be surprised with the reply

A very special love for you
Joyful Father's Day

Just for you
With all the grace of God's life to us
Can bring on your special day
Father's Day is the time for thoughts of quiet reflection
Memories of the year have gone by
A Welcome smile
Father's Day is the perfect time to receive God's grace
Ahead for the new day
And may a wonderful beginning and joy God brings aloud
Thank you God for all fathers
Remember God our Father in Heaven and Earth
Happy Father's Day