

The Fathers Who Know Best

Ephesians 6

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[Dr. McKinley, *The Fathers Who Know Best*]

We are greatly blessed by Alan and Jerrod Monk, father and son. Alan serves on our staff as our business administrator. His son Jerrod is a wonderful young man entering his senior year in high school and what a joy to hear them a..., share and sing today. Today is Father's Day and of course a..., fatherhood is one of the greatest challenges, I believe, to the skill sets that men possess. In fact all you have to do is just watch a man hold a baby and it tells you that it's a bit a..., overwhelming and even intimidating. One of my favorite things are the baby dedication services that we have and watching the, the dads hold the babies and try to a..., a..., to know how to handle them and, and, and to cuddle them and to hold them appropriately and a..., fatherhood is, is an incredible a..., thing for every man. It's a fearful thing and I think that maybe a..., it was summarized best by J. August Strindberg who said:

"That is the thankless position of the father in the family, the provider of all, the enemy of all."

Heh, and a..., sometimes I think to be a dad is to feel like you're the heavy, you're the weight. A..., so many times you're trying to find a way to love and to nurture, but you also struggle with this other side of, of being a man and being male and what you do. And so a..., it can be a tremendous challenge to every man. Of course we live in a day where the role of fathers and fatherhood in society a..., has been changing. In fact, in my own lifetime, in my own a..., generation, I've seen the move from waiting room dads to labor room dads. A..., for some of you in this room the way that you found out whether you had a boy or a girl is that somebody walked in a ra...waiting room and said to you, "Sir, your wife has just given birth to a baby..." boy or girl. For others of you who are a part of the new generation of fathers, you knew in advance, you were there, you were at the bedside, you took part in the process. Now a few may have fainted in the process but they took part in the process. And a..., we've seen this incredible transition from waiting room to labor room dads.

Speaking of the waiting room dads I heard a story several years ago of a dad who was in Minneapolis, in fact there were 4 of them waiting in the waiting room to get news about what was happening. Suddenly the nurse burst through the doors and as she did all 4 of the men stood up and she walked over to one of them and said, "Sir, I am so excited to share with you that your wife has just given birth to twins." He said, "That is wonderful, it's incredible." He was shocked, but he looked at her and he said, "But you know what's even more amazing?" He said, "I work for the Minnesota Twins." [pause for slight congregation laughter] What a

coincidence. She walked out of the room and came back about 45 minutes later, she came through the doorway and when she did she walked over to another of the fathers and she said, "Sir, it's absolutely amazing." She said, "Your wife has just given birth to triplets." In fact earlier this morning I was praying with Michael Salem, one of our deacons and he and his wife Laurie have triplets here at Prestonwood and it's incredible to see all 3 of them there together, but this wa...woman went over and she said, "You have triplets." And the man said, "Well, that phenomenal, it's even a bigger coincidence." He said, "I work for the 3M Corporation." [pause for slight congregation laughter] She walked out of the room, came back about an hour and a half later. She walked in to the other of the 2 men that were still there and she said, "Sir" she said, "Sir, it's incredible, I've never had a day like this in the hospital." She said, "Twins, triplets, listen, your wife has just given birth to quadruplets." He sat down. Heh! He looked at her and he said, "That's amazing," He said, "and what's even more amazing is I work for the 4 Seasons Hotel." [pause for congregation laughter] Suddenly there was a crash across the room. [pause for congregation laughter] They ran over to see this other father as he was laid out on the floor and they began to fan him, he had fainted there in the room and as he came around he was just mumbling. "I should have never taken that job at 7 Up, I should have never taken that job at 7 Up. [pause for congregation laughter] Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

Well, whether you're a waiting room dad or a labor room dad, fatherhood is very important and yet the role of fatherhood is changing and while it may make you feel like you wanna faint, to realize that you're a dad. It's one of the greatest privileges and one of the greatest opportunities in all of life and this morning I am going to focus our attention together on what the Bible has to say about *The Father Who Knows Best*. The Father who is in heaven has designed the role of the man and of the home and of the family and this morning I want us to open together the Bible to the book of Ephesians, chapter 6 and I want us to consider what *The Father Who Knows Best*, has to say about *Fathers Who Know Best* in life and in their leadership in their homes. Now I immediately understand that I'm only speaking to about half of the audience because a..., about half of us here today are men. But whether you're a dad or whether you are a grandfather or maybe a father-to-be someday, I do think that it is important for every man to hear and to understand specifically what the Bible has to say about this subject of fatherhood. But it's not only important for men, it's really important for all us, because wherever the Bible provides wisdom in life, it is the wisdom that we need for life to give us a biblical perspective on how the Bible preached roles, responsibilities and relationships in life and so what we want to do today is to see what the Bible says at this point and really to have all of us walk away with a biblical perspective. At the same time as I talk specifically to men about the subject of parenting today I of course am going to be sharing biblical principles and I believe that these principles are a..., to be applied whether you are a child within the home, or a single parent, or a married couple, it literally is for every one of us to see and to understand what the Word of God has to say on this all important subject. Now chapter 6 of Ephesians completes a thought that begins in chapter 5. Chapter 5 talks

about marriage, the role of the husband, the role of the wife. But then in chapter 6, the Bible says, beginning in verse 1:

¹Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ²"Honor your father and your mother." Which is the first commandment with promise: ³"that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth." And you,...

What?

...fathers,...

Fathers I'm gonna give you a specific word, in fact this word is on the screen so why don't we all just read it and say it to the fathers together?

...And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and the admonition of the Lord.

The Bible says that the father is to take the role of leadership in the home, to bring up his children in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord. Now, I believe that within this passage of Scripture this morning there are at least 3 strategic insights about the subject of fathers and fatherhood and I wanna encourage you, maybe, to jot these down and to think about them with me because they are a part of the framework and the teaching of Scripture.

Number 1: The Bible tells us that **TO BE A DAD IS TO HOLD A ROLE OF HONOR.** To be a dad is to hold a role of honor. If you are here today and you are a father then in the Word of God, not my word, not my perspective, but from God's Word and His perspective, He says to you, you hold a role of honor. This concept of honor is one of the most significant and one of the most weighted of all of the things that the Bible teaches about relationships. In fact over and over in the Word of God, as we will see in just a moment, the word honor is used to describe what is to be the heart and quality, as though it were the, the thread of continuity in all of our relationships with God and with one another and the Bible clearly and specifically says, that if you are a dad, you hold a role of honor. Now, what does it mean to honor? What does it mean to honor? Well, I wanna illustrate that for you just a, a minute if I may this morning and Ross I need your help, if you'd come over here and help me just a minute.

I brought some things with me that I need a..., to use and so I'm gonna put these in your hand if you will and I want you just to step here to the microphone and tell everybody what I've just, whoops, put in your hands?

Ross: 3 rocks!

3 rocks, okay, now tell me about these rocks. Do you see anything that significant or important about these rocks?

Ross: *Nothing, whatsoever.*

Nothing at all. [pause for congregation laughter]

Ross: *Different colors.*

A little different color.

Ross: *Different shapes.*

But, different shape, different color, but really they're just pretty common looking rocks.

Ross: *Common aren't they?*

Now if I were to tell you that one of those rocks was worth a dollar, that another of those ro...rocks was worth 500 dollars and that one of them was worth 2500 dollars, would you be able to tell that by looking at em?

Ross: *No! Not at all! But could I keep em?*

Well, no, you can keep em. [pause for congregation laughter] Wait a minute, we did just talk about a price. You could buy them. [more laughter] and then you could take em. Let me tell you about these rocks just a minute.

This is a rock that I picked up on my way into the building. It is a..., simply a piece of gravel off the parking lot at Prestonwood. There are a lot of these out and about and this is the rock that I was sharing with you that's worth about a dollar. In fact, would you like it for a dollar?

Ross: *Not really!*

Of course you could pick up your own on your way to the car today if you, if you wanted to do that. But this rock is just simply a piece of gravel, it's what we park on, it's what we walk on around Prestonwood and there's nothing that significant to it in that it is plentiful and it is something that we have a lot of.

The other rock that you hold in your hand, this smaller one a..., it has something unique about it that is different from the other and what is that?

Ross: *Different color, a little yellow.*

It's got some paint on it, some color on it, yellow and kind of a green. Let me tell you about this rock. This is actually a piece, a chip of the Berlin Wall. When I was a pastor in Florida, one of the men who was in my church had actually done a tour of duty in Germany and when...he was there during the time of when the Berlin Wall came down and so one day he came into my office and said, "I wanted to give you this as a reminder of one

of the greatest, most significant moments in history." And of course it's something that I've treasured. It's just a little piece of, of cement, that's painted, that has some of the spray paint from the Berlin Wall, but it sits on my bookshelf at home to be a reminder to me of the incredible moment that that represents in my lifetime in history and the freedom that has come to all of Eastern Europe and of course you've been there. You have a brother who serves there today as a missionary serving Christ. So, that's an incredible thing, that's the 500 dollar chip of rock that you were holding.

There's still one more, this one and this one is possibly the least presentable, the least a..., of significance of the ones that you've seen. But let me tell you little bit about this rock. Several years ago I had the privilege of leading a group of people to Israel, to make one of the journeys in the footsteps of Jesus and on a Sunday morning we were up early, just after sunrise, sitting on the side of the Mount of Olives. We were looking over the Kin...Kidron Valley and looking over the city of Jerusalem that was there and as we were there that morning worshipping I was leading and teaching and it just dawned on me how incredible the significance of the place where we were standing was in the Scripture. The Bible tells us in the book of Acts, that Jesus stood at the Mount of Olives and that as He held up His hands He began to ascent into heaven after His resurrection and all the disciples were there and they were looking and watching and the angels said, you men of Galilee, why do you stand here gazing into heaven? This same Jesus that you've seen go will so come again. And do you know where He's gonna come when He comes back? He's gonna touch down on the Mount of Olives. And so I began to think about how incredible it was that Jesus had stood on the Mount of Olives that He had ascended from the Mount of Olives, that He would come back again, one day, to the Mount of Olives. And so this rock sits on my bookshelf as a reminder of the hope and the future that I have in Christ that one day I am going to see this same Jesus. I put a 2500 dollar value cause it would cost me at least that much to go back and get another one. [congregation laughter] And so a..., I decided that that would be the 2500 dollar rock that I would have there. So Ross, thanks, I appreciate your help man. [congregation laughter]

You see what I've done for you this morning is to simply take a moment to try to help you to see honor and value in something that would otherwise just look like a common rock. And somehow as you've seen and heard me describe these things it changed the value, the perspective, the understanding that you have and the Bible simply says, to each and to every one of us, that when it comes to the arena of fatherhood in human relationship, we are to honor, to esteem, to value our fathers. The word honor means esteem or value. And so the Bible says, this is the golden cord of relationships. In fact I wanna just do a quick reference through the Bible this morning, just to quickly give you a perspective of what the Scripture says about this subject. You may wanna write down several of these references as it relates to our relationship with God the Bible says in 1st Samuel 2 in verse 30:

"...those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me will be lightly esteemed."

God expects us to honor Him. In the book of Revelation it says:

"You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You've created all things and by Your will they existed and were created."

Of course we know that one of the big 10 Commandments, repeated here in Ephesians, but originally found in the book of Exodus, chapter 20 is this:

"Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the LORD your God has given you."

The Bible speaks about husbands and their relationships with their wives and the Scripture says:

Likewise you husbands, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered.

Between generations Leviticus 19 in verse 12 says: **< should be verse 32 >**

You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I am the LORD.

To those who are needy, the Bible says:

Honor widows who are really widows.

On the job the Bible says:

Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their masters worthy of all honor so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed.

The way you treat, the way you act toward your boss is a picture of how you honor God. In society the Bible says:

Therefore, submit to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake, whether it's to the king or the governor of those who are sent to punish evildoers for the praise of those who do good.

And then the Bible says:

Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the King.

How bout in the church? 1st Timothy chapter 5 in verse 17, the Bible says:

Let the elders who rule be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in word and in doctrine.

And then as we did twice in this service, we are to honor the Lord with our money. The Bible says in Proverbs 3, verses 9 and 10:

⁹Honor the Lord with your possessions, And with the first fruits of all of your increase; ¹⁰So your barns will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine.

Honor, honor, honor, the most strategic building block of all human relationships according to the Word of God, is that we are to live with a view to honor those in leadership and those in relationship with us in life and to take it down to the bottom line, this is what the Bible teaches. Failure to honor our parents is an insult to God. Failure to honor your parents is an insult to God. I know it's common in our world to disk dad today, to make dad the buffoon of the family, but the Bible says that to be a dad is to hold a role of honor.

There's a second thing that I want you to see this morning and that is not only that to be a dad is to hold a role of honor, but that **TO BE A DAD IS TO BEAR THE RESPONSIBILITY OF A LEADER.** If you are a father here, the Bible not only says that your children are to honor you but listen to this, you are to be an honorable person. I love the balance of the Bible. The Bible doesn't look at children and say, now you honor your father and your mother and then say, dad do what you want to. Instead the Bible says father, you are to be a father who is worthy of honor. You're not to make unreasonable demands upon your children. You're not to be outrageous in your punishment. You're not to be inconsistent in your example, your rules and your controls, for the Bible says, don't provoke your children but bring them up. And the Bible is saying that to be a dad is to bear the responsibility of a leader and leadership is needed in every home and in every family. Now the question is, how are we according to the Word of God, to lead our children? If God has given us this role of leadership or should I say this responsibility of leadership, how are we to lead our children in a way that will ultimately impact their lives for good and for God? Let me give you a little checklist that you may want to write down and to use.

Number 1:

LIVE DECIDEDLY.

If you're going to lead your children you're going to do it because in your life you have made a decision to live decidedly. The Bible says we are to bring them up in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord. That means that you know where you're going, that there is a spiritual focus in your life. And for every father and for that matter, every parent, nothing is of greater importance that you are clear and that you are absolute in the decision that you have made to be a follower of Jesus Christ. That's where it starts, to live decidedly. John Erskine said:

"In simplest terms a leader is one who knows where he wants to go, gets up and goes."

And I would say to you that the problem with parenting today is that most leaders in the family don't know where they wanna go and they're not getting up and their not going. You see to lead is to live decidedly. One of my favorite portions of the Scripture is found in the book of Joshua. Joshua was the a..., the one who was to follow the leadership of Moses. Moses led God's people out of Egypt, but then it was going to be Joshua who was going to take them into the land of promise and in the closing chapters of the book of Joshua, Joshua having been through conquest stood before the people and charged them and challenged them one more time when he said:

"Choose this day whom you will serve,... But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

You didn't have to wonder about where Joshua stood. It was clear, he had made a decision to follow the Lord in his life. And today I wanna challenge every man who is the leader in a family, whether you indeed are married or a single parent, I wanna encourage you to choose to be decided in your following of Jesus Christ, but I wanna challenge every parent to live decidedly. The Bible calls us to decision and to bring up our children in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord, means that we have focused our lives and our attention upon the Lord, His plan and His purpose. But not only are we to live decidedly there's another way to lead your children and that is...

To

ENCOURAGE GROWTH, encourage growth, what do I mean by this? Well, the Bible says,

Fathers do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training..

The word training there in some translations is nurture and to nurture means to encourage, to bring along, to nurture growth and what every child needs is a parent who is nurturing their growth and their well being in life, that you are a part of helping them to know what to do and how to do it and that you are nurturing, training, bringing them up. You see the problem is that for so many of us we aren't bringing our children up, we're putting our kids down. We're constantly telling them what's wrong with them. We're constantly communicating negatively to them and I know that children can be testing and difficult and challenging to our patience and, and if we're not careful it seems as though what we communicate to our children is that they have become another obstruction in an overcrowded life. It's so very important that every one of us finds ways to encourage growth in our children. I believe there are 3 ways that every parent can stunt growth in the lives of their children, 3 words, criticism, comparison, control; criticism, comparison, control.

CRITICISM, it's so easy to fall into the pattern with your children day in and day out, don't, ah, um, ah, um, um, quit it, be quite! Now I'm not saying that they don't need to be corrected, absolutely not! All of the

world is counting on you to tame them. [pause for congregation laughter] But the reality is that to simply use criticism as the means of dealing with your children is to ultimately, negatively impact your children. And criticism is disruptive and disturbing in the life of a child. I believe, men listen up, I believe that every child needs triple the affirmation that they get criticism, triple. I could have picked any number but I think about men and I think about going through the drive-thru at Wendy's and every man knows that when your in a drive-thru at Wendy's there's one thing you start thinking is, "I bet I could eat one of those triples. [pause for congregation laughter] I don't want a single, I don't, I want one of those triples." You know that's kind of the ultimate manly thing? I'm gonna put down a triple. You know? Well, you just remember that your kids need triples in their lives. They need the big word from you over and over and over again and they're hearing affirm them and build them up and pick them up because they need you to encourage their growth and you do it with affirmation of their lives. But not only is there criticism that will stunt growth...

There is COMPARISON. Comparison communicates one thing to a child, limitations on your love. When you compare your children to other children, to other people, to other standards you are constantly saying to them, "My love is limited." And how important it is that you not use the tool of comparison to create favoritism or unrealistic expectations that fail to acknowledge the uniqueness of your child. Your child needs to know that you value them and that you are gonna nurture growth wherever they are growing, socially, spiritually, relationally, emotionally, physically, you're gonna nurture their growth not by comparison but through your love and your support.

And then CONTROL, control. Control is so often seen in the lives of our children when we over protect them, when we're afraid to take a risk or to let them get up and grow up a little bit. I do want to remind you that your role as a parent is to guide them in the growth process and that means that you're willing to relinquish control from time to time to let them grow. For all of our boys and girls in here and parents who've recently been to see the, the new hit film, *Finding Nemo*, you know exactly what we're talkin about. Merlin the daddy is constantly worried about the fin of his little son Nemo and what that little fin is gonna do to limit him and the whole movie is about the story of a father who tried to overprotect his son and the outwork of that in their lives and in their relationship. It's a sweet film, but it's a great lesson for parents. You see we do it when we overprotect our children; we control them or when we fail to let them be children. So many times we as adults expect something of our children that, that they're not capable of doing. Have you ever seen a parent walking through a department store with a child in their hand saying, "You're acting so much like a child." Dud...a...! [pause for congregation laughter] They are children and we have to remember that we allow them to be childlike in order that we may help them as children to grow into being mature adults. You see our goal is not just to raise good children, our goal is to raise mature adults and sometimes there's some bumps along the way and so we have to understand that they need us to

encourage growth. So number one, live decidedly, number two encourage growth.

Number 3:

A APPLY WISDOM. If you've ever purchased some glue, one of the things that you're told to do with glue is to use the applicator because you don't wanna get the glue on your fingers and so you're encouraged to take the applicator and to apply the glue with the applicator. Listen to me, dad you are a truth applicator in the life of your child and your children need you as a father to apply truth to them, to apply it literally is the word admonition. The word admonition means to give verbal instruction, specific verbal instruction and every child needs to have a father and of course a mother who not only nurtures their growth but who ultimately applies wisdom to life. Applying wisdom, helping them to see life from God's perspective, constantly speaking to them and sharing with them, maybe not always gaining their approval through the things that you say, but being willing to say what needs to be said and to say it over and over and over again. I love the book of Proverbs, a Father who knows best speaking to his son saying, listen, listen, listen and it's so important that you give your children verbal instruction, admonition, the application of wisdom and even if they don't appreciate it, they will. I've loved the words of ~~Mark Train~~...Mark Twain who said:

"When I was a boy of 14 my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be 21 I was astonished at how much that old man had learned in just 7 years." [pause for congregation laughter]

So important. And then:

D DISPLAY JOY AND LAUGHTER. Display joy and laughter, if the Bible clearly says fathers do not provoke your children to wrath. The Bible is saying let them see your joy, impact them positively. The Bible says in the book of Proverbs:

A merry heart does good, like a medicine...

And dad you can be the medicine in your home and family if you can help to bring joy and laughter to the home and to the family life. Our kids need images of us laughing and leading the way to laughter. The problem is we're so serious and we take ourselves so seriously. But we need to learn to laugh. We need to learn to laugh at them, laughing at us. That's when we really have a hard time. [pause for slight congregation laughter] And learn to share joy and laughter together, because to be a dad is to bear the responsibility of a leader.

There's one final thing that I quickly wanna say and I'm through and that is that **TO BE A DAD IS TO FACE THE RESISTANCE OF A WARRIOR**, it is to face the resistance of a warrior. Not only does the Bible tell us that to be a dad is to hold a role of honor and that to be a dad is to bear the responsibility of a leader but in the same 6th chapter after the Bible gives us specific instruction about what it means to be a father, it jumps

down in verse 10 and it says:

¹⁰*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.* ¹¹*And put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*

I wanna be absolutely straight with you today, you are the target of Satan's destructive schemes and I want you to know that Satan will do anything that he can to destroy a man who is a father, who is in a family so that he can destroy that family and destroy those children and destroy the society that is around us. Satan is a thief, he is a destroyer and it is so very important that every one of us not only understands the responsibility but the resistance that we are going to face in spiritual attack when we seek to lead our families for Christ. There is a battle to be fought and there is a war to be waged. In recent days in America, in Iraq war has become a reality once again and a whole generation of young men and women have come face to face with the ugly horrors and realities of war. But I want you to know that I believe in every generation fathers, mothers, families must wake up to the reality of a war and we need to respect our enemy because he will not overlook you and me. We are in his sights and so what are we to do? Well, the Bible clearly says here, and I believe it's a big part of what parenting is all about, if you'll look down in verse 12:

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in high places.

What are we to do? We're to fight, we're to battle and the Bible says here we're to put on the armor of God and then what do we do with that armor? In verse 18 it says we are to be:

praying always...

Dad the greatest thing you can do for your family is to pray and to be a prayer warrior for your family. There are many things that you cannot control. There are many things that you cannot a..., bring to bear in the lives of your children, but you can commit yourself to prayer. When Joseph, my oldest, was a little boy I walked in a bookstore one day and saw an incredible painting. It was entitled, *Spiritual Warfare*, and it was the picture of a dad down beside the bed of his little boy. I looked at that little boy and that little boy looked so much like my Joseph laying on that pillow in those days and he had a bear just about like that. Of course, I couldn't identify with the guy, he had a dark head of hair and full hair to boot. [pause for congregation laughter] But I loved the fact that it demonstrated a dad praying for his children and while you can't really see it in that picture right now, just beyond the arch of that window there are the wings of angels, as though an angel of light was standing outside the room bearing a sword against any evil perpetrator that would come against that child. Warfare, our children need to know that we love them, that we pray for them and that we care for them and dad

one of the greatest things that you can do is to be a warrior for your children. Now I know immediately having spent time talking about dads and fathers that there're a whole group of people in this building who said great, that's what the Bible teaches but hey, you don't know my dad. I never knew my dad, my dad walked out on me, our family was a victim of Satan's schemes and for you I know this day is always a hard day but I wanna tell you about a fact about the Father who knows best, the Father in heaven, He is a Father to the fatherless and though today you may have never had a good healthy, holy, earthly dad there is a Father in heaven who made you that He might have relationship with you. He's not everybody's father, He is the creator of all but He is not a father until you have entered into a relationship with Him and God loves you so much that 2000 years ago He sent His Son Jesus Christ to step out of heaven and to become one of us so that with one hand He might take the hand of a holy God and with the other hand He may take the weak broken sinful hand of man and that He being the mediator, by the cross may bring us together. Today if you've never had a father, you can know God who is the heavenly Father and you can know the power of fatherhood, His approval, His love, His joy, His grace in your life. For others of us here today it is a fact that this Father is the Father who forgives, who cleanses, who guides, who takes our lives and shapes our lives and, and who guides us all the way through and today if you're facing a point of turmoil and uncertainty in your life I want you to know you can come to a Father who will love you and grace you and guide you through life. We have a Father who loves us and today having spoken to fathers I just wanna close this service speaking about that Father and invite men and women and boys and girls today if you've never entered into that relationship to enter that relationship with Him. For others of you this needs to be a moment of decision, living decidedly, for some of the men in this room today needs to be the day, this needs to be the moment where you stand up and say I've received Christ but I'm gonna make it public. Some of you need to stand up and say, I've received Christ but I've never followed Him in baptism and I am going to identify as a true Christ follower. The first step is to believe. The second step is to be baptized and for some of you today you need to begin to follow Christ in obedience by identifying with His death, His burial, resurrection, saying I don't belong to me, I belong to Jesus. Some of you dads need to lead your families today and say we're gonna become a part of the Prestonwood family. We're gonna put our roots down here, we're gonna belong here, we're not just gonna come in and go out Sunday to Sunday, this church, that church, we're gonna get committed to a church and some of you dads need to make a decision today to lead your family into the fellowship of this church. But it's not just dads, each of us needs to make a decision, to live decidedly as a follower of Christ.