

What do you call a musician with problems? A trebled man.

Since its Father's Day, I wanted to start with some Dad Jokes! You ready!

For you kids: You know why you never see elephants hiding up in trees? Because they're really good at it.

For you politically sensitive folks: You know, it was so cold in D.C. the other day, I saw a politician with his hands in his own pockets.

For you spiritually sensitive people: And the Lord said unto John, "Come forth and you will receive eternal life." But John came fifth and won a toaster.

And lastly, for all you Father's: What do you call a cow with a twitch? Beef jerky.

Which brings me to a Father's Day treat we have for all you dads! Beef Jerky.

Be Present – Happy Father's Day

We honor Dad's today because we believe that they have a DIRECT IMPACT on a FAMILIE'S and their CHILDREN'S positive futures.

When Dads are present and involved there are better outcomes on nearly every measure of a child's wellbeing, from cognitive development and educational achievement to self-esteem and social behavior.

Children who grow up with involved fathers are:

39% more likely to earn mostly A's in school,

45% less likely to repeat a grade,

60% less likely to be suspended or expelled from school,

twice as likely to go to college and find stable employment after high school,

75% less likely to have a teen birth,

and 80% less likely to spend time in jail.

So when considering these statistics, I believe the greatest problem facing the family today is: ***the absence of fathers in the home.***

When a child does not have the involvement of a father in his or her life, it leaves a void. Many young men and women are still looking for affirmation from father figures in their lives.

I believe that many of you here today have experienced the very same thing. You didn't have a responsible dad so you struggled through life trying to figure

out what it meant to be a good man or what it is like to be loved and honored valued as a daughter by a dad who could showed you what real love and respect looks like coming from a man.

All that said, I want to applaud the many hard-working single mothers who have done good jobs raising their kids alone.

Single mom knows the struggle, first hand, of teaching a boy how to be a man – wishing they had a responsible man in their sons life to do that.

And they struggle with finding a good male role model for a young girl to see that aids them in finding a good husband.

Single moms have to do all of this and they do the very best they can in those situations but they know the value of what a good father figure brings.

If fathers are going to make a difference in the lives of their children, they must **have a positive presence** and **speak into their children's lives**.

Dads who are present and involved must be dads that speak. Children must know the voice of their fathers.

Our creator designed us to be like Him. Words spoken were important! He spoke the world into existence. Jesus, the Son of God is called the Logos or Word of God who became flesh and lived among us.

Spoken words are important and powerful!

Life and death are in the power of the tongue and every time we speak as fathers, we can either speak life or we can speak death into a situation.

So, today I want to look at the example of what a perfect Heavenly Father ***says to His child.***

Luke 3:21-22, *“When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened 22 and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: **“You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”**”*

When a Dad is involved, the children know he is present because he speaks to them and when he speaks, he must speak words that....

I. Communicate a sense of belonging – a sense of close relationship –.

In our text, The Spirit of God comes down in **bodily form** and rests upon Jesus. The Father isn't satisfied to just speak from Heaven. He wants His Son to know He is there; to feel His presence and know that His Father is there.

Son, I want you to know that your Dad is here for you. ***You are my Son and you are important to me!***

That presence and those words move the heart of a child – they put a smile on their face - be it a boy or a girl because to feel that physical presence and hear words like these, gives children a sense of belonging and attachment. When we communicate words of belonging to our children – that young boy no longer has to look to a gang to feel like they belong or that he is important.

When your daughter knows that she belongs to her father and is an integral part of the family, she does not have to seek out the approval of another man who may exploit her, use and abuse her, or take advantage of her and then looks for the next one in the same shoes.

Fathers it is our responsibility to let our children know that we are there for them and that they belong to us.

If God the father took the time to do this, what about us?

In my experience, I have a wonderful dad who spoke life and hope into me!

But I had friends I grew up with who didn't have positive relationships with their dads. Some of those relationships were toxic and led them down horrible paths in life. I hurt for them and wished they could have know my dad.

Maybe you're here and you need healing from a father who **ignored** you, **abandoned** you or **never made you feel** like you **belonged**. I want to tell you, **there is healing in the name of Jesus**. He wants you to **know His Father** and He has **made a way for you to know Him as your own Father**.

You still need to forgive that father who wasn't there and never spoke words of belonging into you. You need freedom from that deep-seated **hurt, anger and un-forgiveness** that has grown deep roots into your heart.

I have come to tell you that **there is a path for forgiveness** through Jesus.

Remember that verse I shared with you two weeks ago, God has promised to be a **father to the fatherless**.

Psalm 68:4-6, *“His name is the Lord—rejoice in **his presence!** 5 **Father to the fatherless**, defender of widows—this is God, whose dwelling is holy. 6 God places the **lonely in families**; he sets the **prisoners free** and gives them **joy.**”*

God is saying to you right now: I'm here for you. I want to be your Father. Embrace me! I want you to be my beloved son and daughter and I want to set you free from your pain and hurt and unforgiveness – that prison that is holding you back from the joy I want you to have in life.

So Dads, Be Present - Speak - Convey a sense of belonging to your children.

Secondly, *when a Dad is present and involved, the words he speaks will...*

II. Convey love and value to his children – that they are special.

“...The Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love.”

If children are going to know that they are important and have worth – those words must come from the father.

Listen here, it doesn't matter whether a father lives in or out of the house, he can and should still tell his children how much he loves them. It should be sincerely and openly and often said to them alone and in public. **Say the words that matter!**

Other people were around when God spoke these words to His Son. It was a public Baptism. Could they hear Him? Was it just a thunder for the public ear and words only Jesus understood? I don't know. But these words are recorded here for us to learn from.

Truth is, a large percentage of the children today don't live in the same home as their fathers, but that should not prevent fathers from speaking into their children's lives.

Think of it this way, God and Jesus weren't living in the same house when God spoke these words of blessings upon Him from Heaven. Jesus was living on planet Earth.

It is just not possible for some dads to be in the same house as their children but that should never stop them from conveying to them value and worth.

As a loving and concerned Father, God knew that Jesus was living in a difficult and dangerous world - so he took time out to encourage Him.

We know what kind of world our children are living in too and if we don't take time out to encourage them with our love, the temptations and challenges they face will be too great for them to handle.

God encouraged Jesus at His baptism just before Jesus entered the wilderness and faced 40 days of temptation. ***And you know what those temptations were meant to accomplish?***

They were meant to cause Jesus to question who He was and what his purpose was. **Satan kept saying – “if you are the Son of God...”**

Many voices will compete for our children's attention – but if they have heard well the voice of a loving father - other voices will not lead them off course.

Each time Jesus heard that other voice – he had words from His Father He could rely on. “No, not true - ***My Father has said...***”

When fathers have close and loving relationships with their children, they feel secure when they find themselves “***trying to survive in the deserts of life.***”

So, Dads, be present and involved and convey belonging, love and value to your kids. And lastly...

III. Create in them a deep sense of confidence.

Tell them how proud you are of them

“You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”

It's like saying, *“This decision you are making, it reflects your purpose well and I am well pleased with what I see. I love it. You make me proud.”*

God is saying to Jesus as His son, Jesus you are making me proud.

If God had to say it to His child, what should we be saying to our children?

When children know that we have confidence in their ability, they'll try even harder to make us proud but the opposite is true also...when there is no confidence – then there is **no motivation to try harder.**

Kind and affirming words **are great tools!** But careless words, spoken in anger, can discourage our children and demotivate them, causing them to *look for love and approval in the wrong places.* **Choose your words carefully!**

Proverbs 18:21, *“The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.”*

James 3:10, *“And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right!”*

When we say good job – well done – I’m proud of you, we’re showing our appreciation for their God-given gifts and abilities – we’re letting them know that we believe in them and that gives them the confidence to believe in themselves – **it is a blessing – it is life giving!**

So, fathers, let’s bless our children.

Create in them a sense of confidence – encourage them with words that will enhance their lives.

In Closing:

Encourage your kids to walk in the straight and narrow way.

Encourage them by modeling godly behavior.

Encourage them to live worthy of their calling as children of the Lord.

Encourage them to cultivate their relationship with Jesus by loving the Lord with all their heart.... And their neighbor as themselves.

Encourage them to read their Bibles and to become involved in church and in things that matter to God.

And when they follow your encouragement and do well in these areas, **be quick to let them know how proud you are of them and how confident you are of their abilities.**

Fathers, future fathers – men - Listen to this, when a father is present and involved, 92 % or 9 out of 10 times, the children will follow in their footsteps.

Fathers we must take the lead in challenging our children to making a commitment to the Lord and living that faith out.

Be Present and Involved Fathers - **Let me Pray for you!**