

# “HAPPY FATHERS’ DAY”

Message for the Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

From Pastor Norman Staler

June 21, 2026

JEREMIAH 20: 7-13 \*\* ROMANS 6: 1B-11 \*\* MATTHEW 10: 24-39

GRACE, MERCY, AND PEACE FROM GOD OUR FATHER AND FROM  
OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST. AMEN. HE IS RISEN; HE IS  
RISEN INDEED!!



For those of you who came this morning thinking you were going to hear a sermon about dear ol’ dad, well, not quite.

I do want to wish all of those of you who are fathers a Happy Father’s Day and to those of you who are sons and daughters, my hope for you is that you have a father as loving as mine.

My dad would have been 110 years old this coming September 17th. I still think of him often and my fondest memories of him are of times that he would take us to a Reds’ game at the old Crosley Field or rabbit hunting but more importantly, sitting in church.

I’ve heard people say that when they were a kid, they had a drug problem; they were drug to church whenever the doors were open. That was not the case with the five of us kids. When we attended church, as I was growing up, which was every Sunday, we attended as a family. Like most good, normal Lutherans, we had our own special pew, one that comfortably fit the seven of us, mom, dad, my 2 brothers, my 2 sisters and me. Course we were a lot smaller then. Very seldom did my 2 brothers and I actually sit next to each other. Usually, for the sake of the pastor and those around us, my brothers would be at one end, I at the other....not that we were bad, it was just one of those “lead us not into temptation” things that my parents took very seriously.

My dad didn’t want to have to discipline us during church, because he was there for a reason. He was there to give thanks to God and to listen to the sermon, to

listen to the Word of God.

Now, can I admit something here that I don't think a lot of pastors admit?

A lot of times, I couldn't understand why my dad wanted to listen so closely, so intently.

It was the same old story. Week after week, month after month, year after year. God loves us! He truly loves us. Now, all I can say is, "Thank God!"

Thank God that the story never changes. Thank God that His love for us continues, even when we lose sight of Him. Thank God that His faith remains strong, even when we our faith weakens.

Do you ever feel like Father's Day gets the short end of the stick? Fewer people celebrate it, less money is spent on it, and back in the day, before cell phones, more calls were made collect on Father's Day than on any other holiday. But regardless of how the world treats it, fatherhood is one of the most sacred and significant callings God has ever given a man.

Father's Day isn't nearly as big as Mother's Day. The florist isn't overworked, card sales aren't nearly as profitable, restaurants will be half-filled, and church attendance pales in comparison.

On Mother's Day pastors all across America praise Mom for her sacrifices, and everybody weeps. But on Father's Day we talk about absentee fathers and deadbeat dads, statistics are recited, and we lay on the guilt for not being there for the kids. If you look up the word "father" in the dictionary, it occurs just before the word "fatigue," and just after the word, "fathead!"

I know many of your fathers are in heaven, as mine is, and I know today as you worship that you bless their memory and you thank God for them. You will always be blessed with what they left you and the heritage that they left in your life.

Happy Father's Day! We LOVE our dads here and thank God for them! It's weird sometimes but it seems to me that Mother's Day is so big, but Father's Day is so small. This seems to be true in the church as well. And while, in no way, do I want to diminish Mother's Day and its importance, I also want Father's Day to be an important day in the life of our church.

If you ask mom what she wants for Mothers Day, she wants the family to come to church with her. If you ask dad what he wants, he wants to spend some time on the lake, the golf course, or at the ballgame. I want that to change!

I want to give dads an excuse to want to come to church on Father's Day. I want you to know that God loves you just the way you are, but He loves you too much to leave you that way!

I know this isn't specific to Father's Day, but I'm learning that being a dad is a huge job! You have these little things called children and you are completely responsible for their well-being; physical, emotional, mental, psychological, social and most of all, spiritual!

Something so simple yet so true, is the statement that almost any man can father a child, but it takes a real man to be a dad.

I know some men who have no children of their own but they are more of a father than others who have many children. Being a dad is not about genetics as much as it is about relationships.

The presence of a father in the home is vastly important to the development and future of the child.

Drawing from Proverbs 17:6, "The glory of children is their fathers", one author builds a pastoral, heartfelt message around four things every father is called to give his children: unconditional love and support, encouragement and affirmation, time and presence, and provision. He reminds dads that their children are watching them far more closely than they realize. As one little girl put it when asked to draw a picture of Jesus: "I really don't know what Jesus looks like, so I just draw my daddy." That single moment captures the entire weight of the sermon.

This is the kind of Father's Day message that doesn't pile guilt on dads; it lifts them up, calls them higher, and sends them home with a renewed sense of the glory and privilege of fatherhood.

I want us to consider some things about the best Father of all.

As we study chapter 10 of the gospel of Matthew, we are reminded that God's love wins. God's love wins, always. Think about that, always! We have a Father in heaven who gave us His Son, Jesus Christ, as a gift of love, a gift of life.

Our Father's gift conquers sin; it conquers death; it conquers brokenness and separation. Our Father's gift overcomes the world and brings life and immortality to light through the gospel.

Jesus, God's gift, was crucified for our sins. He obeyed his Father and died a terrible, cruel, excruciatingly painful death on the cross. All the sins of all humanity were laid on him, not just a select few or chosen people but all the sins of all humanity, all of you, all of Bridges church members, all of St John, all of St Paul, all of the Episcopal church, all humanity, were laid on him as he suffered on that cross, and he was punished for each and every one of our sins as if he had been guilty of them all. He was crushed for our iniquities, he was wounded for our transgressions, he was punished for our sins; the chastisement that brought us peace fell on him. He was despised and afflicted, for our sakes. He, the innocent, suffered so that we, the guilty, might be set free. What a gift! What an ironic work of heaven for humanity!

Jesus' death is the heavenly gift and work of salvation for us. Jesus' resurrection is the proof that Jesus is the Savior, Son of God, and Lord of life.

Jesus died as our Savior and he rose to prove it and to be our Lord.

What a grand finale for the gospel, the good news of Jesus! Jesus, who was crucified, is risen! He fulfilled all that was written about him in the Old Testament scriptures, and now he rules from heaven as King of kings and Lord of lords.

You may ask, "What does this have to do with Father's Day and fathers today?" I'm glad you asked! It has all kinds of things to do with that.

First, think about God the Father's relationship with Jesus his Son.

Our Father in heaven has had big plans for Jesus his Son from before the beginning of time. Those plans have been revealed to us throughout the scriptures and Jesus has followed the Father's plans to the letter, even when it cost him his life. I propose to you that we have a Father/Son relationship here that is a great example of all Father and child relationships (or all parent/child relationships for that matter).

What if God the Father had modeled his Fathering after our modern concept of individuality and freedom of expression and self discovery and personal fulfillment? What might Jesus' life have looked like if that were the case? If Jesus

had only had his own personal will to follow, he would not have gone to the cross. He himself said, "Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; not MY will, but THY will be done." Whose will is Jesus following here? His own or his Father's? Whose plan is Jesus keeping?

Jesus didn't come here to fulfill himself, did he? Jesus came here as the only begotten Son of God who the Father said at his baptism, "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased!" And at the mountain of transfiguration, "This is my beloved son, listen to Him!" You see, God the Father has entrusted all things to the Son, Jesus Christ. Why? Because Jesus is faithful as a Son! Jesus follows the will of the Father! Jesus loves his Father and is completely in submission to his Father and walks in perfect step with his Father's will. Jesus performs the plan. Jesus said, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent me." And whose will is that? It has to be the will of God the Father.

Secondly, the Father in heaven is perfect. He knows Jesus his Son perfectly and fully. He loves Jesus his only begotten Son and gives him all authority in heaven and on earth.

Think about this with me. What kind of parent/child relationship is imagined in the Bible? What kind of honor are children called to have for their parents? What kind of nurture and admonition are parents called to give to their children?

What the Bible shows us is that God not only had a plan for Jesus, God the heavenly Father has a plan for every one of us! God, the heavenly Father, wants every one of us to become His children and follow His plan for our lives. As Dads and yes, moms too, we need to know God and read his plan for our lives and walk in it first, so that we can help our children come to know the plan for their lives and walk in it too.

Our heavenly Father gave us the perfect gift! He gave us Jesus. Jesus is the way, the truth and the life! He reveals the Father's plan for us! If we father our children as God demonstrates for us, we will teach our children his plan for their lives and help them follow in it. We will show them how to walk in the plan by walking in it ourselves and calling on them to follow.

God's way is the very best. It is not always the easiest or the most thrilling, but it is the very highest and the very best.

Father's Day is a very special day. Our Fathers are special in so many ways. Too many ways to describe here today. We know too that not all fathers are the best at being a father.

This is Father's Day. I want to go on record saying that Dad's are critical to the raising of sons and daughters. I don't need to have that verified by Government studies. God knows that neither fathers nor mothers are handed an owner's manual or a quick start guide when they first become parents. They usually model what they learned from their parents. God provides priorities as what we are to say and what we are to do.

There is only one perfect father: Our Father in heaven. Unfortunately a bad experience with an earthly father can cause anger or resentment and it is difficult to transfer trust to the one who calls himself "Our Father." Now, I know that our earthly fathers are not perfect but you can help your son or daughter have self esteem, security, personal value.

Remember, we were made in the image of God. God is actually our Father! You therefore are to follow in your Father's footsteps and become co-creators to the world, to the air, the soil, the water, to the animals, to each other. You are to be a blessing for others, like God has done with us.

Children need your time. They need your example. They need to see you imitate Jesus. Happy Fathers' Day!

**Amen.**