

Father's Day

June 21, 2015

“Why are you afraid?”

John Pilch offers this commentary on today's Gospel. “Our minds today see this story of walking on the water as a *‘miracle’*. First-century Mediterranean peasants would have seen that the story was about *‘honor’*. Mediterranean culture trains and expects males to behave bravely, especially in the face of danger. A public expression of fear is shameful. Sudden and violent storms are common on this sea. Surely the men who fished there knew that. That these experienced sailors should yield to fear is shameful and could be potentially damaging to their honor status if it ever became known. Jesus appears to *‘rub it in’* by asking the embarrassing question, *‘Why are you afraid?’*” The disciples' question, *‘who then is this, that even sea and wind obey him’*, is not an attempt to fathom Jesus' identity but rather to rank him properly in the honor hierarchy.

In Western culture, and particularly the English language, faith or belief usually involves the internal, affective assent of the mind to truth. In the Middle Eastern world, the Hebrew and Greek words for the English word *“faith”* are better translated as “personal loyalty” or “personal commitment.” In today's story, Jesus, after stilling the storm, upbraided his disciples that fear shook their loyalty to him. *“Loyalty”* and *“Commitment”* are a central message of the scriptures.

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Today is Father's Day. The vocation of the father comes out of that central message of the Scriptures: *“Loyalty”* and *“Commitment.”* Just as God is loyal and committed to us, so fathers are to be loyal and committed to their families. This vocation, this job description, comes right out of the Lord's Prayer.

“Our Father who are in heaven.” Scriptures tells us we can call God, “ABBA,” which has the colloquial meaning of “daddy.” That is the familiarity we have with God, One to whom we may run with freedom and confidence regardless of what we have done. Isn't this true of our fathers, ones to whom we can run with freedom and confidence regardless of what we may have done.

“Hallowed (holy) be your name.” God is holy - for us, One who treats life in a wholly and wholesome way. Isn't this true of our fathers, ones who are to be holy for us, who treat life in a wholly and wholesome way - for us.

“Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” The full life we long for in heaven is fully here already on earth. Being with Christ does not begin after we die, it begins right here and now as soon as we allow ourselves to be opened up to it. Isn't this true with our fathers, that their work is not just to prepare their children for adult life, but also to help them experience the fullness of life in their young lives as well.

“Give us this day daily bread.” The Lord’s Prayer was translated into Latin in the fourth century. Our English version, *“Give us”* is a weak translation of the Latin, **“DA NOBIS,”** which is an imperative, a demand, *“Give us, no questions asked.”* We have such familiarity with God that we know God knows what we need and we expect God to “deliver.” Isn’t this true of our fathers that we have such familiarity with them that we know they know what we need and can expect them to “deliver.”

“Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. This is the Golden Rule. It is the task of realizing *“Peace, Shalom”* - fullness of life. Isn’t this true of our fathers, that they wish for us peace, a fullness of life.

“And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.” Another translation of this is *“Let us not fall into temptation.”* God protects and saves us, all the way to the Cross if necessary. Isn’t this true of our fathers, that they will give themselves, all the way to a cross if necessary to save their family.

Only God lives out this vocation perfectly

Only God lives out this vocation perfectly. The beauty of the loyalty and commitment that fathers give is in their “trying.” God loves the sincere of heart. It is in sincerity of heart that the fullness of the fathers’ loyalty and combatant to their family is lived out. Thank you, fathers, for leading from your hearts in *“what you do for us”* and *“who you are for us.”*

CONGREGATIONAL SHARING:

I would like now to invite you to reflect and share if you would like a time when your father touched you deeply by his loyalty, commitment and love for you.

Let us celebrate our fathers this Father’s Day by singing them a song;

F is for the fun we had together,
A means you keep adding to the fold.
T is for the tears you shed to save me,
H is for your heart of purest gold.
E is for your eyes with love-light shining,
R means right and right you’ll always be.
*Put them all together they spell Father,
A word that means the world to us.*

HAPPY FATHER’S DAY!