

**“I Will be a Father to You”** (2 Corinthians 6:11-7:1)(6.12.22)

2 Corinthians 6:11–7:1 (NIV84)

<sup>13</sup> As a fair exchange—I speak as to my children—open wide your hearts also.

<sup>14</sup> Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? <sup>15</sup> What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? <sup>16</sup> What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.” <sup>17</sup>

“Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord.

Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.” <sup>18</sup> “I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.”

**7** Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

LET US PRAY

INTRODUCTION: Slide 1

The Fatherless Home – A National Crisis

Posted on April 5, 2021 by Bud Boughton

According to a 2020 U.S. Census Bureau Report (Living Arrangements of Children Under 18 Years Old – 1960 to Present), over 24 million children in the U.S. (close to 33% of all children), live without a biological, step, or adoptive father in the home. The impact of this dynamic, for all children but especially boys, is absolutely staggering. Consider the following statistics from various studies and governmental agency reports.

90% of all homeless and runaway youths are from fatherless homes,  
85% of children who exhibit behavioral disorders are from fatherless homes,  
75% of adolescent patients in substance abuse centers are from fatherless homes,  
71% of high school dropouts are from fatherless homes,  
70% of youths in State institutions are from fatherless homes, and yes,  
65% of YOUTH SUICIDES are from fatherless homes. Based on these statistics, “fatherlessness” could very well be described as THE biggest social problem facing America since it contributes to so many of the behavioral/societal ills we are dealing with in our country.

In the United States in 2014 the average for out-of-wedlock births was 40%. The proportions of births out of wedlock for whites was 29 percent; Hispanics, 53 percent; and blacks, 71 percent.

My brothers and sisters, I would suggest to you that the violence and chaos conveyed on the daily news is a direct result of our turning our backs on God and His holy commandments. G. K. Chesterton stated, “We cannot break the commandments, we can only break ourselves against them.”

BODY:

1 Corinthians 4:14 (NIV84) I am not writing this to shame you, but to warn you, as my dear children.

1 Thessalonians 2:11 (NIV84) For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children,

3 John 4 (NIV84) I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

This was the mission of Paul, the mission given to him by the Lord Jesus. Paul was willing to suffer greatly to bring his spiritual children into the kingdom of God. 2

Corinthians 6:4–10 (NIV84)

4 Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; 5 in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; 6 in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; 7 in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; 8 through glory and dishonor, bad report

and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; 9 known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; 10 sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

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We must remember that Paul is writing this second letter to the Church in Corinth to admonish and correct them. Paul starts today's text with a strong statement of his affection towards them and he requests that they too return his affection. It is not just an emotion but a mutually loving relationship that Paul desires – as children hearing from their spiritual father. This open heart is also necessary to receive what Paul is teaching them.

Certainly, the warning not to be yoked together with unbelievers can refer to marriage. It can also be applied to business partnerships and can be extrapolated even further. Think about who you establish intimate relationships with very carefully. The reasons why will be developed more fully as we progress through this scripture.

Of course, being yoked together with the Lord Jesus is a multifold blessing. Imagine this idea of being yoked to

Jesus very literally. Each and every step you took each day, Jesus would be right beside you. In every interaction, every conversation, in your workplace, during your entertainment, Jesus is right there. Might that be a little awkward for you?

slide

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Put a spoonful of septic water in a glass of water – who would really want to drink it?

John 12:36 (NIV84) "Put your trust in the light while you have it, so that you may become sons of light."

Colossians 1:13 (NIV84) For he [Christ] has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,

Ephesians 5:8 (NIV84) For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light

Matthew 5:14–16 (NIV84)

14 "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

John 3:20–21 (NIV84)

20 Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. 21 But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.”

John 8:12 (NIV84) When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

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Belial is another name for Satan. We read in 1 John 3:8 (NIV84) He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work. Satan is the head of the demons and led their rebellion against God; he now leads them in propagating evil in the world.

Satan means adversary. So, it is crystal clear that when we are sinning, we are aiding the enemy. We have been blessed by forgiveness made possible through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. When we pursue sin, we are betraying our Savior.

What other names of Satan reveal his character? The devil; the serpent; the great dragon; the prince of the power of the air; the little "g" god of this age; the evil one; the prince of demons; the tempter; the prince of darkness; the accuser; the deceiver; a liar and the father of lies; a murderer from the beginning; a roaring lion prowling the earth looking for anyone he can devour.

It would take up too much time to list all the glorious descriptions of the Lord Jesus. So, let it suffice to remember the Nicene Creed:

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

Hebrews 6:4–6 (NIV84)

4 It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, 5 who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, 6 if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.

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Do you remember when smoking was very popular? In the early days of tobacco advertising, smoking was made to seem fun, even glamorous. When you would go to a social gathering, it was normal for a large percentage of people to smoke. You would get home and realize that though you didn't smoke you smelled like you did. It was in your clothes and your hair. Of course, now we know that smoking isn't glamorous at all. In fact, anti-smoking campaigns would show a poor pathetic sick person who looked like they had been to hell and back in order to dispel the fun and glamor myth. We know that smoking is strongly connected to lung cancer and death.

When Carol and I first moved here, we bought a house on 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. in Galloway. After painting most of the house,



I started painting the downstairs bathroom. There was this brown substance on the wall. Scrubbing and painting wasn't enough. It came through the paint. I had to use a primer and a couple more coats of paint. We believe because there was an exhaust fan in the bathroom, that was the only room where smoking was taking place...but the fan did not prevent the staining of the tobacco smoke.

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For we are the temple of the living God.

The Jerusalem Temple was a magnificent sight. It was built by King Solomon to exacting specifications given by God. Even the furnishings were explicitly specified by the LORD Almighty. In the innermost sanctum of the Temple was the Holy of Holies. There, behind the curtain, was the golden Ark of the Covenant. The presence of LORD Jehovah "sat" on the mercy seat of the Ark. All this was to bring glory to God. At the Lord Jesus' death, the curtain to the Holy of Holies was torn from top to bottom so that we all have direct access to our God. Jesus taught that we must be born again, born from above, born of water and the Spirit. Then we have access to eternal life with the Father.

Paul tell us in 1 Corinthians 6:19–20 (NIV84)

19 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

In the Christian life, there is no place for idols of any sort. Even good things can become idols to the detriment of our faith. Like the Jerusalem Temple, we should be bringing glory to God.

Warren Wiersbe wrote, "The local church is the dwelling place of God because believers are the people of God. For a local church to compromise its testimony is like a holy temple being defiled."

Exodus 6:7 (NIV84) I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians.

Exodus 25:8 (NIV84) "Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them.

Leviticus 26:12 (NIV84) I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people.

Ezekiel 37:26–27 (NIV84)

26 I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant. I will establish them and increase their numbers, and I will put my sanctuary among them forever. 27 My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people.

A most special relationship. The Lord Almighty is the perfect Father. Many have been hurt, wounded, abandoned, and even abused by their earthly fathers. The damaged son or daughter is often impeded from coming to a saving faith because of the pain through which they have suffered at the hands of their earthly fathers. In today's culture the role of the biological father continues to be diminished as most of them do not live with their children. This is a tragic truth that is simply astonishing.

Often in the Old Testament, the Lord Jehovah identifies himself as father: He is the Father of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The concept of God the Father is prominent in our New Testaments. It is crucial to our understanding and relationship with our Creator. When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, how does that prayer begin? "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name."

Psalm 68:5 (NIV84) A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling.

2 Thessalonians 2:16–17 (NIV84)

16 May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and **God our Father**, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, 17 encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

Jesus says in Matthew 13:43 (NIV84) "Then the righteous will shine like the sun in **the kingdom of their Father**."

He who has ears, let him hear.”

Think about the Father in the parable of The Prodigal Son. Our heavenly Father is patiently and lovingly looking for the wayward son to return home. When the son comes to his senses and starts the journey back, the father sees him from afar and runs to greet him. Luke 15:20–24 (NIV84)

20 So he got up and went to his father. “But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

21 “The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

22 “But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23 Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. 24 For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.

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Jesus’ words are recorded in Acts 26:18 (NIV84) I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from **darkness to light**, and from the power of **Satan** to **God**, so that **they may receive forgiveness of sins** and a place among **those who are sanctified by faith in me.**’

I cannot read this scripture and not think about the current state of the United Methodist Church.

Have you ever had anyone break a promise to you? Have you ever broken a promise you made to someone else? Sometimes we are overcome by unforeseen circumstances and a promise is broken because they are out of our control. This can never happen to Father God. He is perfect. He cannot lie. He is never surprised. Our heavenly Father is omniscient (all knowing) and absolutely Sovereign. Therefore, the Lord's promises are a sure foundation for our future.

Children's Chat lesson: hand washing; purified by the word of God

What are we feeding our minds and spirit? Philippians 4:8 (NIV84) Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

Contaminants: Pornography,  
alcohol & drugs,  
Jesus compared sin to leaven,  
mixing other things with Christianity (Paul the missionary to Nairobi; Guatemala)

Hand sanitizer and masks for contagious viruses.

Holiness is a process: sanctification – it refers broadly to the concept of being set apart as sacred.

In Christian theology, a distinction is sometimes made between justification and sanctification where justification refers to having saving faith and sanctification refers to the process of gradual purification from sin and progressive spiritual growth that should mark the life of the believer. This doctrine of sanctification draws on New Testament passages that emphasize a move toward holy and righteous living that characterizes following Christ in faith.

1 Thessalonians 4:3–8 (NIV84)

3 It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; 4 that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, 5 not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; 6 and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. 7 For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. 8 Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.

What is REVERENCE? — a feeling of profound awe and respect. Because of His majesty and holiness, God arouses a feeling of reverence in those who worship and serve Him

(Hebrews 12:28–29 (NIV84))

28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, 29 for our “God is a consuming fire.”).

Slide 16

There is an old song by Pete Seger called “Where Have All the Flowers Gone?” I think a version for today might be titled “Where Have All the Fathers Gone?”

Where have all the fathers gone, long time passing?  
Where have all the fathers gone, long time ago?  
Where have all the fathers gone?  
Gone, forgotten, everyone.  
When will we ever learn?  
When will we ever learn?

We need biological fathers in the home. We need spiritual fathers. We need our heavenly father most of all. “I will be a Father to you,



and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.”

Amen and amen. Let us pray.