

Thus Shall the Man Be Blessed

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Date: 15 June 2025

Preacher: Colin Horne

[0 : 00] Psalm 128, I'll be reading from the English Standard Version.

! You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands.

You shall be blessed, and it shall be well with you. Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house. Your children will be like olive shoots around your table.

Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the Lord. The Lord bless you from Zion. May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life.

May you see your children's children. Peace be upon Israel. Let's hear God's Word. Several months ago, when the grass was still brown, there were no leaves on the trees and no beauty of the flowers that we could see, if you can remember that far back with me, we did a short sermon series that started in the Psalms and then kind of flowed out from there looking at the blessed man.

[1 : 41] Many times in God's Word we have read in that series, blessed is the man. Psalm 1 starts, blessed is the man. Now in that, it was clear, I think, to all of us that, well, it's the blessed person.

We're speaking of the blessed man, the blessed woman, the blessed child who knows the Lord. That is who the blessed man was in many of those Psalms.

Well, we come to Psalm 128 this morning, and this Psalm actually is for men. You men here on this Father's Day, we see the blessed man.

What does verse 4 tell us? Thus shall the man be blessed. And so we're not to read there man, woman, or child, though there certainly is much blessing for any man, woman, or child who fears the Lord and walks in His ways.

But particular to this morning, Psalm 128 is speaking to us men. And it's directed to us. There's wonderful blessing to be found in this Psalm.

[2 : 48] We're going to see that together. Satisfaction in our work. A wife and children who flourish in our homes and grandchildren to see in our future.

Those are wonderful gifts from God. But there's also an equally wonderful condition given in Psalm 128. The blessings are what follow this condition.

The blessings hinge on this condition, and we see it there in verse 1, don't we? Blessed is everyone who fears the Lord, who walks in His ways.

It is those who fear the Lord. It is those who walk in His ways that can expect these blessings to follow. And we see those blessings then, beginning in verse 2.

So men, do you want to eat the fruit of the labor of your hands? Men, do you want your wife to be like a fruitful vine? Do you want your children to be like olive shoots?

[3 : 49] Do you want to see your children's children? Then what must you do? Fear the Lord. You must fear the Lord. That is the starting point.

Everything in this psalm hinges on that. Do you fear the Lord? Blessed are those who do. Now it's interesting, just last month, for Mother's Day, Pastor John preached from Proverbs 31, the portrait of a godly woman.

And you know one page in that portrait was this. She fears God. Proverbs 31, 30 says, Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.

Well, men, this morning, the same ought to be true of us. We ought to fear the Lord. Now, fathers, before we can talk about our relationship to our wives, before we can talk about our relationship to our children or to our children's children, we must talk about our relationship to the Lord.

If there is no fear of God in your hearts, men, there will be no flourishing in your homes. Do you think about your life in that way? I must be cultivating my walk with the Lord if I am to lead my family well.

[5 : 17] I must fear the Lord first. First, the Bible talks often about the need for man to fear the Lord. In fact, the only fear we should have, according to the Bible, is of the Lord.

We ought to not fear man or anything else, but God alone. So there is a place for fear in our lives. Men, we are not to be fearless in every sense of the word.

That is not the goal. The goal is to only fear one, to only fear God. So then, what is biblical fear?

There is so much that the Bible teaches us about what it means to fear God. So this morning, we're going to consider just four facets of biblical fear.

And then if you're a note taker, leave some room, because then we're going to look at three blessings that follow. So we can do that math in our minds. That's a seven-point sermon. That's perhaps the most points that I've given in a sermon.

[6 : 21] I've saved it for you men. Me included. So let's look at biblical fear. Facet number one. Those who fear God stand in awe of Him.

Psalms 33.8 says, Do you hear the parallel there?

Let all the earth, parallels, let all the inhabitants of the world, and fear the Lord, parallels, stand in awe of Him.

We hear the same thing in Psalm 22.23. You who fear the Lord, praise Him. All you offspring of Jacob, glorify Him, and stand in awe of Him, all you offspring of Israel.

To fear God, in part, means to stand in awe of Him. When you consider what it means to stand in awe of anything, we understand, well, that means to see the greatness of it.

[7 : 33] To see the greatness of whatever is before our eyes. We're captivated by the beauty. We're captivated by the brilliance and the grandeur of whatever that something is.

So all of us baseball fans here this morning, the four of us that there are, you go to Wrigley Field for the first time, and you walk through the tunnel into the stands with the field before you, and wow, it leaves you breathless.

You see a magnificent painting, a beautiful sunset, the peak of a majestic mountain rising up from the valley floor. You stand in awe of something that is great.

Well, who or what is greater than our God? Those who stand in awe of Him rightly see His greatness. They readily acknowledge His greatness. There's no arguing it.

There's no debating it. There's no uncertainty surrounding the greatness of God. To fear God is to recognize and to marvel at how great God is.

[8 : 40] We see this connection in the Bible many times. Psalm 86.10 says, For you are great and do wondrous things. You alone are God. So there's the proclamation of who God is.

There's the acknowledgement of His greatness. Verse 10. Now verse 11, the response. Teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth. Unite my heart to fear your name.

You are great, God. So what must I do? Oh, I must fear your name. Or again, Psalm 96.4. For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised.

He is to be feared above all gods. Stand in awe of Him. Recognize His greatness. His unparalleled majesty. There is none who compares to Him, including, obviously, us.

We do not compare to Him. And so it's not surprising that the Bible also teaches that humility as well is involved in fearing God.

[9 : 51] Facet number two of biblical fear. It is to bow low in humility. It is to bow low in humility. In Jeremiah 44, God is prepared to bring judgment upon His own people.

Now, why would He do that? Well, because God Himself says in verse 10, they have not humbled themselves even to this day, nor have they feared, nor walked in My law and My statutes that I set before you and before your fathers.

Those who fear God humble themselves before Him. And in the context of Jeremiah 44, what did that look like? What should that have looked like? Oh, it should have looked like repentance for sin.

A turning away from their sins and a turning towards God with a contrite and broken heart. Those who fear God will humble themselves in this way.

So they stand in awe of His greatness on our feet, and yet, they fall at His feet, bowed low in humility. So do you stand in awe of His greatness, and do you bow low in humility?

[11 : 10] What a wonderful picture that is. We're on our feet in our fear, and we're also at the same time down upon our knees. Those are like opposite physical postures, but aren't they the same heart posture there?

Fearing God, standing awestruck, and at the very same time we're face-planted on the ground? Well, those are just two, the first two facets of biblical fear this morning.

Let's layer on the third. To fear God is to tremble at His voice. It is to tremble at His voice. So often in the Bible, trembling accompanies fear of God, even among His own people.

Sure, we might think, yeah, oh, trembling with fear for His enemies. Sure, yes, that, of course. But even among those that He knows and He loves and He calls His own.

Even among those who know Him and love Him and call Him their own. In fact, Paul commands us in Philippians 2.12 to work out our salvation with what?

[12 : 18] Fear and trembling. Work out your salvation. In what way am I to do that, Lord? With fear and trembling. Psalm 2, verse 11.

Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling. Do you hear the parallel again? Fear and trembling. Obviously this outward, physical, uncontrollable shaking.

And when we see that, more often than not, we know, well, we know what's going on inside of that person. They are scared. They're afraid. They're shaking with fear.

But the person who serves the Lord, according to Psalm 2, will at the same time rejoices. So it is this happy, healthy fear that we ought to have.

That rejoicing is with trembling. Fear and trembling. The same parallel that we find in Jeremiah 5. God poses two questions to the people of Israel.

[13 : 18] His own people. His beloved people. Verse 22. Do you not fear me? Declares the Lord. Do you not tremble before me?

So that's the problem. Israel didn't. They had no fear of God. They had no trembling that seized them when they heard the voice of God and considered who God is.

And so God tells them, well, you should. They should fear Him. They should tremble before Him. But He doesn't just state it. He tells them why.

This is why they should. Verse 22. I placed the sand as the boundary for the sea, a perpetual barrier that it cannot pass.

Though the waves toss, they cannot prevail. Though they roar, they cannot pass over it. So God is saying, fear me. Tremble before me because I am the creator of the heavens and the earth and you are not.

[14 : 19] I put the sand for the boundary of the sea and you did not. This is like a Job moment, isn't it? Remember when Job was spoken to by God?

God spoke to him out of the whirlwind. That alone put the fear of God in Job. or remember when God spoke to the Israelites from Mount Sinai with the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking.

The people of Israel had the fear of God put into them. According to Exodus 20.18, they were afraid and trembled.

There it is again, trembling at the voice of God. Now we might think, well, the Israelites, we see that they often were incurring God's anger, so perhaps they're fearful in that kind of way.

But even Moses himself in Exodus 20, the man whom the Lord knew face to face, the man who was called a friend of God, this same Moses, when he saw Mount Sinai, seeing it along with the people of Israel, Hebrews 12.21 tells us, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, I tremble with fear.

[15 : 38] Not just the people of Israel, but Moses himself. If Moses did, men, so should you. If we understand who God is, that God is holy and awesome and all-powerful, that he wraps himself in light, he speaks out of the whirlwind, he thunders from the mountain, he consumes his enemies like stubble and makes the waters to pile up at the blast of his nostrils.

He who sits enthroned in the heavens and makes the earth his footstool. If we understand who he is and if we understand who we are, sinful, yes, even more basic than that, simply creatures, we should fear him.

Have you considered, even in eternity, when we are with God forever, we will be free of sin, but we will not be free of fear.

We will always fear him. Revelation 19 gives us a glimpse of heaven and there from the throne we hear these words, praise our God, all you his saints, you who fear him, small and great.

Well, that means everyone who is found in God's heavenly courts, they are praising him. Fear him is what we are to do, is what we will do. So men, do you tremble with fear at his voice?

[17 : 16] And where do we now hear his voice from? Where is it that God declares to us from? It's right here. God speaks to us in his word. So consider the posture of your own heart as you approach his word, as you hear his voice.

What a serious matter it is. How careful we must be to not make light of it, but to approach the word of God like we are approaching the throne of a great king.

Because men, we are. That is what we are doing. And though we have been welcomed into his presence to hear his voice, it is still the presence of the king of heaven. And that should leave us trembling with a healthy, happy, even fear.

So men, is this your condition before the Lord? Do you fear him? Do you stand in awe of him? Do you bow low in humility before him?

Do you tremble at his voice? There is a humble strength that we should possess. We have been called by God to work with our hands and to lead in our homes.

[18 : 27] There is strength and courage and conviction that is needed to do that. And, what humble submission before the Lord is equally needed as well.

So are you looking to lead with this humble strength? You are fearing no one and nothing but God alone standing in awe of him, bowing low before him, trembling at his voice.

And then the fourth and the final facet of biblical fear. It produces obedience. We see this here in Psalm 128. Blessed is everyone who fears the Lord, comma, who walks in his ways.

meaning there's obedience that follows this heart posture that we've already considered. We fear God and in fear of him, we obey him.

The Bible is filled with examples of this connection between fear and obedience. Deuteronomy 13.4 You shall walk after the Lord your God and fear him and keep his commandments and obey his voice.

[19 : 41] We see the fear of God is like couched in the midst of all of this obedience language there. You see the walk after the Lord your God, the keeping his commandments, the obeying of his voice.

That is all this, okay, this is how we're to live now. And at the heart of that is you fear him. You fear him. Or how about the summary statement of the whole book of Ecclesiastes?

The end of the matter. All has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments. This is the whole duty of man.

Fear him and obey him. Simple, straightforward, clear as can be. So what is our duty in life? It is to do that. Those who fear him walk in his ways.

Those who fear him obey him. We listen to him and we do as he says. And furthermore, we do as he says with cheerful hearts.

[20 : 42] With hearts that long to obey. Not begrudgingly. Not complaining. Not half-heartedly. Not doing the bare minimum to get by.

Those who fear him obey him joyfully. Listen to Psalm 112 verse 11. Blessed is the man who fears the Lord. Comma.

Who greatly delights in his commandments. There's the connection for us. Men, if you fear the Lord, then what follows? A delight in his commandments.

How about Psalm 19? Such a well-known psalm of David extolling the wonders, delighting himself in God's commandments.

Verse 10 says, More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold, sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. So David is saying your commandments, they're better than anything else that we might find enjoyable or valuable in this life.

[21 : 50] And in this psalm, David calls God's commandments by many names. He calls them the law of the Lord, the testimony of the Lord, the precepts of the Lord, the commandment of the Lord.

And in verse 9, the fear of the Lord. See how the fear of God and the commandments of God and the delighting in the commandments of God, they're all just wrapped up together.

The idea that you could fear God and not obey him or that you could obey him but not delight in his commandments, that idea is found nowhere in God's word.

That's foreign to the biblical authors, to God himself who inspired those writings. And it should be foreign to us. We should not think of it as being able to be separated in those ways, siloed out in those ways.

So this is foundational. Before we can think about our relationships to anyone else that God has entrusted us to or entrusted to us, we must consider our relationship to him.

[22 : 56] we are to fear him. We are to walk in his ways. Now let's consider the blessings that follow.

They're not guaranteed. These are not promised if we just obey. We still live in a cursed world because of sin but as a general rule, life goes well for those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.

That's what Psalm 128 is teaching us. The general rule. Well there's three blessings that then follow for those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways. First we see the blessing of eating the fruit of the labor of our hands.

Verse 2 there in Psalm 128. You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands. You shall be blessed and it shall be well with you. Now again this is directed to us men.

It's very specific to us. Why is that? Because it's dealing with our work men with the labor of our hands.

[24 : 04] This is not to exclude women from any work whatsoever. We saw the Proverbs 31 woman she worked. But men we are to be the primary breadwinner in the home. The man the husband the father that's our role laboring with our hands.

We see it in the garden. God put the man in the garden. What did God put the man in the garden to do? To work it and to keep it. And then when Adam and Eve both fell into sin what then followed in the curses that were given?

The one that was directed to the man what did God tell Adam? That the ground was now cursed. He said in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life.

Thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground for out of it you were taken for your dust and to dust you shall return.

So the blessings of obedience that we see in Psalm 128 now here in Genesis 3 the curses for disobedience. The same picture is painted for us in Deuteronomy.

[25 : 18] As the people of Israel approach the promised land as they prepared to enter it God laid out for them here are the blessings for obedience and here are the curses for disobedience and in the many blessings is the promise of fruitful labor.

Verse 12 of chapter 28 The Lord will open to you his good treasury the heavens to give the rain to your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hands.

So there's the wonderful blessing for obedience but for disobedience curses would follow. The same futility that Adam had experienced in his work would now be experienced by Israel and listen to all of the different ways that God describes this in Deuteronomy!

28 cursed fruit of your ground so the fruit of their labor they would not eat it would be eaten by others whether people or pest laboring in vain that was the consequence for Israel for their disobedience obedience so here we are in psalm 128 and we see this is the ideal picture this is the picture of blessing for obedience now is there still a measure of futility this side of eternity of course there is but is there enjoyment and satisfaction to be found in our work of course there is as redeemed by the

Lord men now your work is redeemed we of all people should have a strong work ethic we of all people should have a sense of purpose in our work not just laboring for what we can get out of life but ultimately laboring that we might honor the Lord and the Lord blesses our work he enables us to enjoy the fruit of the labor of our hands even now in this life but that enjoyment comes only as we fear the Lord and walk in his ways which means that we must be working heartily as unto the Lord which means that we should take our cue from the ant!

[28 : 04] As we read of in Proverbs 6 if we're to walk in God's ways well God says consider the ways of the ant without having any chief officer or ruler she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest so there's no place for laziness in our lives for being a sluggard who only wants to sleep the man who walks in the ways of God does not walk in idleness to take the words that Paul says in 2 Thessalonians 3 we walk in obedience and we work hard and as a result God blesses and we enjoy the fruit of the labor of our hands so men if we fear the Lord we have a strong work ethic we reap the benefits of that even in a cursed fallen world where work is hard and thorns and thistles still grow Psalm 128 then helps us to envision all the more and to look forward to all the more that future that glorious day when the curse will be no more and all creation will no longer be groaning all of creation will be singing with joy at

Christ's return in that day we will enjoy the full fruit of the labor of our hands no longer a taxing hard toilsome labor but a joyful fully satisfying work as our souls are fully satisfied in the Lord himself well that's the first blessing that we enjoy as we fear the Lord now let's consider the second the second blessing that we enjoy men is a home that flourishes beginning in verse three your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house your children will be like olive shoots around your table behold thus shall the man be blessed who fears the Lord so Psalm 128 here is presenting us again with generalities we've been in first Corinthians seven so I hope we also know in the evenings from those sermons the

Lord loves to give the gift of singleness as well this is not a knock on that or that's a diminished life but for the man who enjoys marriage to his wife and children look at the blessings here in Psalm 128 and it's a wonderfully balanced perspective on the many good responsibilities that God has given to us as men there is work to be done and there is a family to be loved and cared for it's not working only it's not investing yourself in your family only it's both in proper proportion so now let's consider that family life well the blessed man who fears the Lord and who walks in his ways has a wife who is like a fruitful vine now this is Old Testament imagery here the vine in the Old Testament is very specifically talking about the grape vine so a fruitful vine produces an abundance of grapes and those grapes were then pressed and made into wine which was then of course to be enjoyed so the blessed man enjoys his wife his heart is captivated by her he loves her and her only he delights himself in her alone he's faithful to her so you could say the man who fears

God is faithful to his wife and his wife flourishes in his care a fruitful vine is not automatically produced I would know because I am no gardener and I can testify from experience that if you leave a plant outside just in a pot not watering it not putting it in the ground it will die I have killed many plants very effectively by such a strategy and if it doesn't die first well the bunnies will get to it I've also seen that as well a neglected vine will never be fruitful you must tend to it you must nourish it you must care for it so that it grows and it produces!

fruit so men husbands how are you tending to the garden of your marriage loving your wife nourishing your wife tending to her like a faithful gardener tends to his vine watering her so that she grows and produces fruit you don't get a fruitful vine without watering it well so husbands as strange as this may sound are you watering your wives are you doing that you know Jesus Christ has done that for his beloved bride Ephesians 5 26 says that Christ has cleansed the church by the washing of water with the word so are you watering your wives!

[33 : 22] with the word nourishing her with it of course you can't cleanse her of her sins! as Christ has for the church you can't wash her in the water of the word in that way but are you doing all that you can to promote her holiness are you encouraging her growth in grace are you proactively involved in her pursuit of godliness her happiness and her contentment and her joy in the Lord it will be to your joy as well the faithful god fearing husband loves and needs his wife so that she is like a fruitful vine in his house and his children too they will be like olive shoots around his table kids does your dad ever say come here olive shoots let's gather up for dinner maybe he will now psalm 128 seems like a good model for us kids are called olive shoots in the scriptures and like the fruitful vine the olive shoot that's grounded in

Old Testament imagery also have you noticed before the Old Testament is actually filled with references to olives go back to Genesis the first book of the Bible you don't have to sorry I'm in your minds think about Genesis how did Noah know the waters had subsided well a dove came and what did that dove bring to him a freshly plucked olive leaf Genesis chapter 8 or how about Deuteronomy 8 God describes the promised land we often think of it as a land flowing with milk and honey well listen to this description of the promised land a land of wheat and barley of vines and fig trees and pomegranates a land of olive trees and honey and in the tabernacle that mobile temple of the Lord do you know what was used for the lamp in the tabernacle it was tended to by Aaron and his sons morning and evening well it was olive oil olive wood was used for the doors to the temple 1st king 6 tells us and for the anointing of kings the oil that ran down them the oil that ran down the priest

Aaron beard olive oil or how about the mount of olives what about that well that was that hill with an olive grove upon it it's a well known place in the bible David went up the mount of olives he was weeping as he went because he had learned of Absalom his son's conspiracy against him Jesus too in his earthly ministry went to the mount of olives many times including even the night of his betrayal we often think garden of gethsemane well where was the garden of gethsemane located upon the mount of olives then after his resurrection Jesus gathered his disciples to himself just as he then ascended into heaven where did he gather them up at the mount of olives and one day Zechariah says that Jesus will return and he'll plant his feet in triumph where the mount of olives in a subtle but significant way show up all over the bible in psalm 52 david reflects on the end of the wicked what their ultimate end will be he says in verse 5 that god will uproot them from the land of the living in contrast though he says something very different about himself in verse 8 he says but

I am like a green olive tree in the house of god so the wicked will be uprooted but the righteous like david will flourish like a green olive tree in the presence of god so olive trees are all over the old testament kids it's a pretty cool thing that you get to be called olive shoots because olives were valuable they were prized they were loved so much so that David wanted to be like!

one in god's temple he could have picked anything for his simile and David said an olive tree that's what i want to be so if we think oh olive tree that's not very cool yes it is the bible loves the olive tree now here in psalm 128 we don't have full grown olive trees we have olive shoots the young saplings shooting up from the dirt of the ground full of the olive trees whose oil would then light the lamp in the tabernacle and run down the beard of Aaron whose wood would form the doors of the temple and whose branches our very savior would sit under as he taught upon the mount of olives but you don't get olive shoots without doing what without planting that seed and tending to that seed patiently pouring in time and energy and effort to see that those seeds sprout and grow to one day become trees so fathers how are you doing in the garden of your home in the garden of your children's hearts are you bringing them up in the discipline and instruction of the

[38 : 59] Lord are you teaching them who God is are you telling them what God has done in Christ and are you training them that they might fear him just as you do are you teaching are you telling are you training training them that they might fear him just as you do and do your children see that in you that dad fears!

the Lord by the grace of God that dad is making every effort to walk in his ways your example to them is the best training program they can have does God does dad know and love God does dad look anything like Jesus your example fathers in what you say and do God will use that to mold and to shape your children or to stick with the analogy to grow those little olive shoots into fully matured olive trees and how we want those olive trees to be like David delighting themselves in the presence of God in his heavenly temple we want to see our children to grow and mature into men and women who are after God's heart just like David was and then finally now the third blessing in this passage the blessing of seeing your children's children beginning in verse 5 the

Lord bless you from Zion may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life may you see your children's children peace be upon Israel so there's a word here in Psalm 128 this Father's Day for grandfathers as well what a blessing it is to see your children's children what a gift from God that is because that means two things that he's given you long life and he's given you a heritage he's given you children who then have had children so the question for you is how are you investing in your children's children maybe even for some of you your children's children's children Spurgeon once said oh that the line may continue for years to come till as long as generations are born there shall be one of our kith and kin to carry the standard and sound the trumpet and fight for the

Lord of Israel I want to see the prosperity of Jerusalem just as Psalm 128 says Jerusalem being the place where God's presence was found in the Old Testament meaning I want to see the prosperity of God's church I want to see the prosperity of God's church locally gathered even here and that means I want to see my children grow and become servants of the Lord I want to see my children's children counted among those people as well and do you want that not just to see your children's children though but to see your children's children walking with the Lord and every generation after every generation that we won't see listen to this promise from Psalm 103 verse 17 but the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him and his righteousness to children's children to those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments grandfathers what a blessing it is to see your children's children and what an opportunity you have to point your children's children to the

Lord that you might see them one day by God's grace walking with the Lord I also know for some of you the sad reality is that you have little relationship with your children or your grandchildren perhaps they live far from you maybe there's tension in the family and try as you might to have a relationship with them they don't reciprocate that desire you have little opportunity to point them to the Lord but you do have ample opportunity to bring them before the Lord in prayer and that's not just for you grandfathers who see your children little but for all grandfathers what an opportunity what an impact you can have that simply can't be measured all through faithfully praying for your grandchildren and of course if you have the opportunity to do more than pray make use of it and thank God for the influence that you have in their lives so

[44 : 04] Psalm 128 it has challenged us as men and as dads and it has encouraged us as well with these rich concrete tangible blessings blessings what blessings there are for those of us who fear the Lord eating the fruit of the labor of your hands having a home that flourishes and seeing your children's children!

And at the same time what a high calling this is for us fathers! What tremendous responsibility! How needed are godly fathers!

Whether those fathers are biological fathers or even spiritual fathers! I couldn't help this week but to think of the apostle Paul.

Paul as far as we know had no children of his own flesh and blood and yet he was a father to many in the church. He said it himself in 1 Corinthians chapter 4 and he wasn't saying what follows after sharing all kinds of just lovey dovey!

encouraging happy things. Paul had said some hard needed truth but then he says this beginning in verse 14 I do not write these things to make you ashamed but to admonish you as my beloved children for though you have countless guides in Christ you do not have many fathers for I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel I urge you then be imitators of me that is why I sent you Timothy my beloved and faithful child in the Lord to remind you of my ways in Christ as I teach them everywhere in every church so here's Paul and who's he sending to Corinth he's sending his beloved and his faithful child in the Lord Timothy and he's sending him to his other children in the Lord the Corinthians like a good father what's he doing he's reminding them of his ways in Christ so men whether you have children who share your physical

[46 : 18] DNA or not you have many opportunities around you among you in the church to be like a father an example to a younger man of what an older man in the Lord is to look like modeling for him godliness teaching him reminding him of your ways humbly!

in the Lord! Whether biological or spiritual fathers are needed today in the church Christian fathers fathers who have turned from going their own way and who have put their trust in Jesus Christ too often men get labeled as apathetic and spiritually lazy and perhaps sometimes that label holds true just showing up to services to keep the wife happy or to make sure the kids get taught good morals that's not the kind of men that the church needs we need fathers who know and love Jesus Christ and are leading their families in that as well I'm thankful that I know that to be the case for so so many men here this morning press on and persevere to that end and lock arms with your fellow brothers in that journey but if you're here this morning and you recognize that's not you whether a father or not you recognize that you are not a man who knows and loves

Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior then turn to him this morning and fathers you need only have a childlike faith believe that Jesus Christ died for your sins and rose again and you will be forgiven and you will walk in newness of life it's not a maybe it's not a sorta it's not a hoped for reality it is exactly what will happen if you believe on Jesus Christ and turn to him and of course that's not just true for men that is true whether you're a man a woman or a child whether you have children or not we all need a Savior the only Savior the Lord Jesus Christ come to him today cry out to him for salvation blessed is everyone who fears the Lord who walks in his ways!

Let's Heavenly Father we give you thanks that you are gracious and you are merciful that you come alongside your people and you help us how we desperately need your help those of us who are men here this morning those of us who are fathers here this morning we need your help by your spirit to live in such a way to love in such a way to fear you in such a way give us that help we pray by your spirit make us to be men of courage and conviction and humility give us a humble strength that we might serve you and that we might serve those entrusted to us by you we pray all of these things in Jesus name amen