

S.H. June 17, 83
Father's Day

"WHAT KIND OF A FATHER?"

Genesis 7:1-7

"Come thou and all thy house into the ark."

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As Father's Day rolls around, we have all sorts of considerations. Even from the standpoint - the choice of a husband. And if I were going to advise you on the choice of a husband, I would say that there are some things that you need to do. Because it is difficult business. Now some women may choose, not because they lack opportunity, but because they have an idea that they would like to live alone. And marriage may not be for them. They have a mission in life - such as Florence Nightengale. And other notable women. But in thinking of fathers, and of husbands, -- first, (deliberate and pray). To me this is one of the musts - to seek divine guidance. How much more important it is that you seek this than any other way. A women who selects a husband will make a mistake any other way.

✓ You do not select a husband by reading love letters. They are poor literature to read.

Then you would not select a man who despises religion, Christianity. You cannot find a happy life with a man who hates the Christian religion. That would insure you a life of wretchedness. He will make fun of your praying, and he will not speak well of your Christ. And it will be a disaster.

Then, the third thing, never think about marrying a man (to reform) him. If he has bad habits - and you have an idea that you are going to change those habits - you cannot

expect to win. You might as well put a little tender flower out here in the North wind and expect it to survive. Or, if you marry someone with bad habits - you marry a man 25 years of age, who has been throwing his life away on intoxicants, and you are going to change him. You might as well take a wheelbarrow and get out here on the Virginia Beach Expressway, and try to stop the traffic.

All the tears and the weeping will not help at this point. You cannot get him to see that he can do without this bad habit for at least a couple of years. Or else he must do without you forever.

Never pick out a man who is selfish. Who is just one blade of the scissors and he controls it all.

Remember, I think, Fathers - and husbands, a woman never wants to pick out a man from advertisement. Now a lot of people propose in the newspapers. And some women answer these proposals. I think they would be disappointed, without a single exception.

Now I know that you do not expect to find a perfect man. And if you find one, you probably wouldn't want to marry him. There are a lot of good husbands around. I think quite a multitude of noble men of character, self-sacrificing men, who are willing to be good husbands today. There are some men who sit in a little 10'x12' office - and are hard at work while their wives are out on the beach, or somewhere. And these men work hard day after day for 50 years. And leave a large estate and insurance to their families.

Your choice may be the greatest and the best thing that ever happens to you.

Now, on this Father's Day, God is calling to each man. I have picked out an example in the Old Testament that I believe will be helpful to us, to see. Because here is a man that lived in a day when the cup of iniquity was full. Even Jesus talked about the days in Luke 7:26 - when he said, "as it was in the days of Noah." After long years of warning, suddenly the stroke fell. And the sources of the Bible, tell us that there was a flood.

Geologists with their hammers and their spade have added their testimony -- sea shells and other formations found on top of the Alps and the Andes - proof that in some period of the earth's history that water washed over them.

Now we live in a day when the earth's history is again in turmoil. What are we going to do? Let us look at this one family. That had ears to hear, that had hearts to understand, and God ordered the building of a great Ark. Without it, they would not have survived. And there was no water to float it. It was without a rudder, no human hand was going to guide it. But it is symbolic of just one family embarking on a strange voyage. Then the door was shut.

The great storm swept hills and valleys, thunder over the mountains. The winds waved and moaned like the agonies of a dying world. The mountains trembled, the rocks crashed. The Heavens began to open. And God had turned loose the flood and the ocean was no longer attained into its place. And there was no place to safety to which you could fly.

In the midst of this, there was an ark. That rode the crest of the flood. And above the flood, were the dead floating. Noah, the man of faith, who had prepared

an ark, to the saving of his house. By which he condemned the world and became heir to the righteousness which is by faith, Hebrews 11:7.

v. 16 Noah entered in at the Lord's call with his family - before whom he had set a righteous example. And he had instructed them in the way of the Lord. V. 16 - it says, and the Lord shut him in.

Let us look for a moment and think about this father.

I. (WHY) GOD CALLED THIS FATHER

In our text, it does not say that God called the mother, or called the children. You know people today sometimes get the idea that they can take their religion out in the wife's name. There are even a lot of men that do this. And thank God for good wives and mothers. The world would be a sad place without them. But it is hard to get the sons in the ark when the father is going in the opposite direction.

Dr. George W. Truett, told a story once about a fine boy, who for a number of days had attended a meeting he was conducting. And had shown much interest. And suddenly he seemed to lose concern. When the man of God talked with him, he said, he had made up his mind to follow his Dad. My father is a man of great intellect. He is a good man. And I am going to follow where he leads - he said. Now his Dad was one of the leading surgeons of that city. And he claimed to be a skeptic. Dr. Truett went and talked with

him in his office. He related to this man what his son had said. Much disturbed, the surgeon said, at what hour this evening will your service begin. When told the hour he said, I thank you for your visit, and I will be at your meeting.

When the Preacher had delivered his sermon and gave the invitation to those who would accept Christ as their Saviour, and follow him to come forward. Dr. Truett said, here came the great Doctor. And right behind him, the fine son. He said, I took his hand and said, "look behind you." And when the father saw the son, following him to the altar, he took him in his arms. It was a scene to make angels rejoice.

It is the father's solemn obligation to shoulder the responsibility of religion, in the family. When he makes the living and provides the education of Hamm, Shem, Japheth, and a nest egg to start them in life. If he is the right kind of a father, he will have an eye on the ark of salvation, for them against that day of judgement. When God will judge their lives.

✓ First, he called his father - because he is to be the protector for his family. The father is to avoid the pitfalls - the physical, the mental, the moral. And he is to warn against them.

There was a man in Louisville, Ky., who had gone deep in sin. His father had been an honored Deacon. A busy professional man, and evidently had not taken much time with his boy. This man said to a preacher one day, my father left me \$50,000 - but no kind words. I spent the money in sin. How much better off I would have been if he had not left me a dollar. But had taken time to be with me, to play with me, to be a pal. To counsel me, to give me advice.

It is a sad day for the boy when his father is more concerned about laying a foundation of a family (fortune) than he is of laying the foundation of a Christian character, of his children.

There is an old story of a dying young man who said, father, when I am dead, bury me by the path, that leads to the horse lot. And when you pass it say, there lies the body of a boy who never heard his father pray.

N. L. Jenkins one day said, my father is a timid man. He is the clerk of a little country church. I remember going to the meetings, and he would read the minutes at the Saturday conference, but I never heard him talk in a meeting or lead in a prayer. But one day near sunset, my brother came to me and he said, I was down in the woods near the house and I heard Pa praying - and he was praying for you and for me. The impression, he said, upon my young heart stayed near me as part of the (sweetest memories) of my childhood.

✓ Second, God called Noah, the father, to (be an example). To be an example. Of all of the hazzards today, the moral and the spiritual arm that we find upon the news stands - and the things that plague young men and poisons them. The father is to be an example. Sow a thought and reap an act. Sow an act and reap a habit. Sow a habit and reap a character. Sow a character and reap a destiny.

I think the old Proverb is just about right. The kind of things that children see, the kind of pictures, the kind of company their parents keep. The kind of movies the parents go to see. All of these will take hold in a 12 year olds heart and life. And they

will remember these things.

Evil companions can undo in a night - all that somebody else tries to do in a year. One drinking partner may give a boy or a girl a passport to Hell.

There are multitudes who say - I got in with the wrong crowd. Or there are others who say, times have changed. And somebody says yes - but sin has not changed even in this scientific age in which we live.

Father is to be an example and a leader. And there are boys who like to look and act like their fathers.

A man said his Daddy came back from the Civil War, broken in health. Badly stooped. He said, I wanted to look so much like him - that I began to cultivate that stoop. And you can notice that even a little six year old boy will endeavor to walk like his Dad. Or stand like he stands. Or clear his throat like he clears his throat. Whatever he does, the six year old will try to do it - as much as possible like his Daddy. No wonder the boy following the mountain climber said, when he was in a dangerous place, watch where you are going Dad, I am in your tracks.

How careful a man's leadership ought to be and his example. Down in Chattanooga, Tennessee a father was out swimming with his two boys in the Tennessee River. The Daddy was a good swimmer. The boys were well trained in swimming. And farther and farther out he swam. Calling back to his boys to follow. We're coming Dad, they would answer. And when they were out in the swift current of the stream, he heard a cry. He saw them

struggling in the water. And before he could reach them, both of them were drown. Hours later their bodies were recovered. And there they lay in their coffins. He walked the floor. He had one cry. Oh, I went out too far from my boys. Oh, I went out too far with my boys.

When you think about that father going out too far with his boys, so far that it destroyed them. A lot of fathers today who are going out in example and leadership - that are destroying their boys. Some day it is going to be too late.

It is only natural for a boy to say - my Daddy drinks. He plays at the game of chance. And gambles. My Daddy takes God's name in vain. My Daddy breaks the Sabbath. My Daddy passes up the church. My Daddy never comes to Sunday School. And why shouldn't I.

Prodigal fathers make prodigal sons.

As a Preacher one day buried a young man who had lived and died without Christ, he had said of his father. My father was not a Christian. Why should I be. There are some can say those who can say, we are traveling home to God in the paths our fathers trod. But alas, for those fathers who leave their families the other way, that is why God called the father, Noah.

II. WHY THIS FATHER WAS CONCERNED ABOUT HIS FAMILY

Why should Noah be concerned about his family. Why should any father today be concerned about his family. Why should Noah be concerned about the ark. And about his sons, their wives, being ready when the flood came. And why should he and they come into the ark.

Did you know the ark is a type of Christ. It is the ark of our salvation. Why should we be concerned about that ark and about our children, and about bringing them in.

First, because it was a place of safety. That family, that father, it was the only place of safety for them. Noah looked, and some folks said, it is an April shower. And lo, there was a great earthquake. And the sun became black. Sackcloth of hair. And the moon became as blood. And the stars of the Heavens fell into the earth. Even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs - and she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the Heavens departed as a scroll when it is rolled together. And every mountain and island were moved out of their places. The kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, and the captains and the mighty men, and every bondsman and every free man. hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains. And said to the mountains and rocks, fall on us and at us from him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the lamb. For the great day of his wrath has come. And who shall be able to stand. Rev. 6:12-17.

It is part of wisdom to get ourselves and our families safely housed for eternity. If there is a wisdom in trying to get our children well settled for life, there is greater wisdom in seeing that their safety with the Saviour is settled for eternity. Once Noah and his family are in the ark - they are safe. No flood can swallow it. And so the ark of salvation rides the waves of death and hell. The winds may howl. Jesus Christ is the

same yesterday, today, and forever. Heb. 13:8.

Gen. 7:16 - The Lord shut him in. It is He that openeth and no man shuteth and shuteth and no man openeth. No burglar can pick the lock. No, we find the hand that shut Noah in, shut the flood out. Jesus declares in John 10:28 - "My Father which gave them me is greater than all. And no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. God does not ask you to come aboard a failing craft. A sinking ship. The ship of Zion is not a rescue vessel. With a leaky hull. Or shattered doors. Or torn sails, or a lost rutter. Or without a port. Where Jesus Christ leads - it is by the right way that they might go to the city, of habitation. The hymnwriter puts it - all the way my Saviour leads me. What have I to ask beside. Can I doubt his tender mercy who through life has been my guide. Heavenly peace, divinest comfort, here by faith in him to dwell. For I know what era befalls me, Jesus doth all things well."

The ark was ample for their safety. And there was no danger of over-crowding. Therefore he is able to save them also to the utmost for them that come unto God. By him seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for men.

Even our Lord Jesus said, narrow is the way that leadeth to eternal life. But wide is the way that leads to destruction.

Second, Noah was concerned because he wanted to provide the needs of his family. You see, it was the construction of the ark. It had one door and that one door was enough. And they entered. In the pierced side of Jesus, there was an open door through which all may enter and find life. It is the Christ of Calvary who says, "I am the door."

John 10:7. No man cometh unto the Father, but by me. John 14:6. The son of God who shed his blood on Calvary's tree. The door of life throw open wide for you and me.

It is a door that swings both ways. It swings outward towards all our sins and whoes. And inward, toward all that will save us for the joys of Heaven. When it shuts one in or out - it is done forever. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment. But the righteous into eternal life. Matt. 25:46.

Whosoever cometh need not delay. Now the door is opened while you may. Jesus is the true, the only living way. Whosoever will may come.

In that ark, there was a window above. The door was for entrance. The window was for vision. How different all things look when see through the window of grace.

P. D. Pullock, the President of Mercer University, was delivering a sermon once and he made this statement. "Oh, that I could get one look at this universe as God sees it."

When you think of it, you say like I Cor. 13:12 - glory to God. I shall not only get one look, but I shall see it and explore it, in that day when I shall know even as I am known. What visions he had now. As children of grace, beloved, we are sons of God. And it doth not appear what we shall be. But we know that when he shall appear

we shall be like him. For we shall see him as he is. I John 3:2.

The Father knew and he had provided for the needs and he knew in the ark, there was something else. Plenty of food. They would be sustained in the ark by the food that had been provided. Well, Jesus is the bread of life - and he supplies something that never gives out. He is the bread which came down from Heaven, and of which a man can eat, and will nevermore hunger. This bread that sustains and satisfies. John 6:50 is the one. And so Noah led his children in the ark. He was concerned about their future.

And so should a father today be concerned.

III. (WHY) DID OTHER FATHERS FAIL THEIR FAMILIES.

When we think of the ark and the kind of Dad - and when the ark was finished. They went in two by two. This doesn't sound like evolution - does it. They went in two by two, and then God called Noah. You bring your family in. And come on in. There was only one father. Why were there not other fathers. Why did they not come in. Noah had been preaching and warning for long years.

Now there are some fathers who come into the marvelous grace of God today. Other fathers who stay out. Now they, not only, do not come themselves - but many of them keep their children on the outside with them.

First, procrastination. I think this kept some out - because this is the thief of

time. Year after year, it steals until all are fled. No doubt, there were some who meant to be found and numbered in the ark when the flood came. Well, the question is, Noah had preached 120 years. And the flood had not yet come. Now why was there any need to hurry about it.

A man whose wife was a member of a church was going to be a Christian sometime. He was suddenly stricken down and his dying lament was -- "I never thought I would die like this."

Am I speaking to some father on this Father's Day who intends to become a Christian. But you keep on putting it off. You are getting farther away from God every day. The example is leading your boy or your girl away. What that is within your power, in a material way, would you not do for your boy or for your child. Why that boy of mine, what is he worth. Pour the whole world up on the balance. It's honor, it's pleasure - over against him. My boy outweighs them all. And when we fathers neglect the spiritual welfare of our children, we rob them of the greatest treasure that earth or Heaven affords. And we fail at the point of our greatest responsibility.

Second, I think some were kept out of the ark and failed their families because of ridicule. I think they had contempt for religion. They talked about Noah and his big ship. It made sensational headlines. And they talked about him running an excursion. They were curious. No water to float it. I imagine some of these folks came and said to Noah's sons, we are sorry - but your Daddy is losing his mind. He is too good a man to be led in this way. And something ought to be done about it.

And when the ark was being filled up with every beast, fowl and creeping thing why I imagine they said, he is an animal lover. What will this old man be doing next.

When the clouds came over - there was a sprinkle of rain and they said, well, I guess this is Noah's flood. And there won't be enough water to fill up a fish pond much less float this boat. But when the clouds had thickened and the Heavens grown dark, the creeks and the rivers began to overflow their banks. And the people who ridiculed the old man who preached on the hill country and the hillside. They themselves were making it up the hillside.

Oh, they were not scared. It was just going to be an unusual wet spell. They would go and stay with the relatives, in the country for a few days. They had been promising to visit anyways. And so they are going to make good time until the rainy season is over. The flood kept rising and they kept climbing. The tops of the highest hills and mountains were reached. They began to see dead bodies of men and beasts floating everywhere. Their number did decrease one after another, by the surging water. They caught sight of the ark floating majestly on the flood. Noah, oh Noah, bring your ship this way and let us in. But the answer came back - too late, God has shut the door.

Back yonder they were saying with content, go into the ark. There is going to be no flood. And it wouldn't float if the flood came. There are some who would have probably gone into the ark but they listened to the ridicule of others. Did you know there are a lot of people today who stay out of salvation and following Jesus because of the ridicule and contempt of other people. There are some students today because of a skeptical instructor, or some friend, who ridicules and says - believe in God? They say that we should believe in Him. Why, we believe in the natural forces.

Man is the creator of his own destiny.

There are always some who are not Christians because they have not the courage to face this crowd. Like the rich young ruler - he was not lacking in some of the fine qualities. He was lacking in the courage and conviction to say I will go and follow the master.

So they were sure and some fathers failed their families.

Third, other fathers failed because they had no love for their family.

There is Noah's belief - you can hear them say, and he has a right to it, if he wants it. But to us, it is foolish business and foolishness.

There are lots of fathers who do not have love for their families. They are unconcerned. And to them, the preaching of the Gospel, and the following of Jesus Christ in their lives is foolishness to them.

There were those who had their businesses, their professions, and deaths coming. Judgement is waiting.

Come thou, and all thy house into the ark. The invitation is to the father, the head of the house. And to his household with him.

Let us ask ourselves a question - are we in the ark of salvation.

And then, what about these fine sons of ours, these wonderful daughters.

The Philippian jailer when told to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved, and that there was salvation for all of his household. No sooner did he profess his faith. And he was off to his house with Paul and Silas. To tell the good news, and they too were saved. It was the case of the father, entering the ark of safety, leading his household with him.

Come in Noah, God said. Do not forget Ham, Shem, Japheth. The call to Christian fatherhood is to bring his children to Jesus. Surely no father can covet any higher privilege of greater joy. This failure is to fail all. The father who gave his boy an education, good manners, and all of these other things. But never told him how to die - has failed miserably.

I wrote sometime ago in my Pastor's Column - the story of William E. Hatcher. Early one morning his doorbell sounded, it was an infidel father, he was excited. I wish you would come around to my house. My boy Frank is sick and he has begged to talk to you for two or three days. I went around and the mother took him up to the boy's room. His cheeks - he was not far from the gates of death. They tell me he said, that I am getting better - but I know that I am getting weaker. Then he said, I know I will not get well and I am afraid to die. The minister told him - there was a way to get ready to die. The story of God's mercy as brought to us - by Jesus, the son. The boy told him that they did not talk about such things. That his father would not allow them to talk about it. Finally, with peace and joy of Heaven, he took the minister

by the hand and he said, I understand. I understand. That night, Frank told his mother that God would not let him die until he had had the chance - and he said, I expect to die tonight. Wake me up at 1 o'clock. When 2 o'clock comes, I expect to go. A little after 1 - he roused up that she should wake up his father and brothers. And he simply told them goodbye. He told his father, I found that I could not die your way. I was afraid to go. But I have found the Saviour and I have stopped being afraid. The father and the brothers went back downstairs, the mother kissed him goodnight and continue until the clock struck 2. His hands were clasp on his breast - he moved not. He went at 2 as he said.

Dr. Hatcher said the boy had a Christian funeral. And salvation came to some members of the family. But not to the father. Oh, God grant today, that every father becomes concerned with his own salvation. It would have been pitiful to have seen Noah in the ark and his children left out. Or his children in and the father left out. But this was a scene of rejoicing.

A lady with her children on a ship that was wrecked and sunk on a voyage to Australia. Sent a cable to her husband - "saved alone". We want to come into the ark - but we do not want to come in alone. The question is, will the circle be unbroken, by and by, by and by. In a better home awaits us in the sky, in the sky.