

**Malachi 1: 6; “The Honor We give to Fathers”, A Sermon for Father’s Day,
Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on June 16th, 2019,
in the Morning Worship Service.**

The verse that we are studying this morning is set in the context of the Lord’s great displeasure with His Old Testament people Israel. The reason for this great displeasure was that He, the One who had loved them, defended them, and had born patiently with their sins was not being honored. He addresses this letter to them through the prophet Malachi, “to the priests who despise My name”. In the verses which follow the one that I read to you, He describes what He meant by that. He complains that they had “offered defiled food on His altar”. They offered sacrifices which were not the best among their flocks, but rather the blind, the lame, and the sick. In other words, they offered that which God was not pleased with; offerings which they would not dare bring to their earthly governor. God was not being honored. Along with these poor quality sacrifices they would take vows unto the Lord. (Verse 14) But God says to them, “Cursed be the deceiver who has in his flock a male, and takes a vow, but sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished – “For I am a great King, says the Lord of hosts, and My name is to be feared among the nations.”

This is the day in our society when we honor fathers. This is also the Lord’s Day and every Lord’s Day we as a church honor God our Father by worship and praise which we believe that He delights in. By His grace, we will not dishonor Him by giving to Him that which is defiled in our hearts. But this morning we want to ask the question: What does honor to our earthly father consist of? This question is fitting for this day; for if we honor earthly fathers in this way which I will describe, then how much more should we honor God our heavenly Father? So let us consider the honor due to fathers as consisting of 4 components this morning. They are: 1st – A Respect for who they are. 2nd – A Submission to what they require. 3rd – An Appreciation for what they do. And 4th – A Love for them because they have loved us.

The 1st Component of honoring your father is – Respect for who they are.

In the verse that I just read to you it says, “If then I am the Father, where is my honor?” The kind of honor that is due to an earthly father is respect. And respect, we may say, is an attitude of thoughtful attention communicated in your looks, your speech, and your actions. If you are in the military you are expected to show respect for the officers over you by coming to attention in your posture and saluting them and saying, “Yes, Sir!” and “No, Sir!” You are required to listen carefully to what they have to say to you in order to do what they command. You do this because they have been set over you by men elected and appointed in our government. You do this for the sake of the authority invested in them. They are appointed to an office or an appointment made by the Federal Government.

But as we think about why our earthly fathers should be respected, we must understand that the first and the greatest reason that we honor them is because they have been appointed over us by God. They have been appointed over us by God because we are God’s created children. Turn over a page to Malachi 2: 10. A question is asked here by the prophet. “Have we not all one Father?” “Has not one God created us?” “Why do we deal treacherously with one another by profaning the covenant of our fathers?” There were those in Judah who had profaned the covenant by taking up the worship of a foreign god. It was a violation of the covenant that they had made with God when He delivered them from their bondage in Egypt and promised to serve Him.

They had dishonored Him. They had disrespected His Word to them. God has created all men and as such He is their Father by creation. But if they truly honored him they would treat each other with love and respect and not treacherously. We honor fathers today because it is God who has created them. He has given each of us a father. We will respect them and

regard them because God has given them the privileges and position of fatherhood. He instituted fatherhood in connection with marriage and in connection with the man's headship in marriage, and therefore it is a position which represents, on the earthly level, His own invested authority. And therefore, it is a position which deserves an appropriate respect.

Honor should always be given where honor is due, it says in several places in the Bible. All honor has the foundational attitude of respect, but honor may be shown, and at times must be shown, in different ways to different people, depending on their station in life, or the gifts that God has given them. We are told in 1st Peter 2: 17 that we are to "honor all men, love the brotherhood, fear God and honor the king". We must ask ourselves – What does it mean to honor all men? We need to understand that it means that we are to have respect for the fact that all men are created in God's image and likeness; even though we know that the image is marred by sin, due to Adam's fall in the garden in the Beginning.

Now, it is true that some men are not worthy to be honored because of the way that they speak, or the way that they treat other people. But we need to understand this primary truth in relation to giving all men honor. They are to be honored in the sense of respect because they were created in God's image and likeness. We honor all men, not because of what they do, but because of God who made them. In other words, all men are to be considered as God's personal handiwork. We are to fear God by respecting those whom He has created. They are not to be disrespected, or looked down upon, because they are weak or ignorant, or not as intelligent as ourselves. It is a matter of fearing God. Turn over with me to Leviticus chapter 19. Look at verse 14. It says here that, "You shall not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind, but shall fear your God: I am the Lord."

I do not know if you have ever thought about the way that you treat people, in light of this passage. Do you fear God enough to treat people with respect? Even your father, when you disagree with Him? Even your father, if he is getting older and doesn't seem to be able to understand what it means to be young? God still expects you to treat your father with respect and kindness because this is the way that God is Himself. What about giving honor to your father even though you think that he is not as moral a man as he should be? God Himself, it says in Luke 6: 35, is "kind even to evil and ungrateful men". You do not honor sin, or men as they commit sin. But the real test of whether you fear God, is whether you can continue to show them respect, even when a person is not being kind or loving to you. Can you still show respect to a person in authority who doesn't deserve it? I believe that the Biblical answer is yes.

And yet we are not to give honor to people in a way that shows partiality. You can see this if you look at Leviticus 19: 15. "You shall do no injustice in judgment." "You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty." "In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor." To honor the person of the mighty is to show partiality to him over the poorer person as is talked about in James chapter 2. The honor that we give and the honor that we show, should not be based on our being given money or bribes. It must be an honor which fears the Almighty first, and wishes to respect all men based upon what God has done in them and through them. What kind of honor should be given to older fathers and older people in general?

You can see it if you will look over at Leviticus 19: 32. "You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear you God: I am the Lord." In the margin of my Bible it says that you should rise to give honor. Let me ask you, do you show respect for your aged father in this way? Do you show respect for all the aged men in this way? So, to honor your father suitably is to first of all to show him the respect which he deserves, because it is God who has appointed him to this position and given him authority

and responsibility in it. And so, you should listen carefully to their teaching and receive their instruction which is in line with what the Bible commands.

2nd – Honor to fathers has in it the component of Submission to what they require.

We are speaking of a Biblical submission of course. Turn over with me to Ephesians 6 and we will look at verses 1-4. It says, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.” “Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise: that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.” “And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.” Children, your first and foremost commandment in your young life is to obey your parents in the Lord. In stating that children are to obey their parents, Paul is using a quotation from the 10 commandments to honor your father and your mother, which is given to us twice; once in Exodus 20 and a second time in Deuteronomy 5. This is one of the great ways that God expects you, children, to honor your parents; it is to obey them. And you also see, here, that a promise is annexed to the command. It is – “that it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth.” Have you noticed? It is when you do not obey your godly parents that it does not go well for you in this life? And it is entirely possible that if you continue to dishonor them that you may actually shorten your life?

You see, over and over again in the Word of God, that God instructs young people in the strongest terms not to go against their father and his instruction. Look at Proverbs 20: 20 with me. It says, “Whoever curses his father or his mother, his lamp will be put out in deep darkness.” The lamp is that light that the young person sees by, that is coming from his own understanding. Proverbs 30: 17 says, “The eye that mocks father and scorns obedience to his mother, the ravens of the valley will pick it out, and the young eagles will eat it.” Oh children, do you not see how it grieves your parents if you will not listen to their instruction? Do you not see how it pains them when you insist on going your own way, if you are stubbornly out to pursue the world, believing the world’s empty philosophy, and thinking that you know better than your father and mother, what is best for you?

How can it be honoring to your father if you talk back and argue with him when he is patiently and loving trying to get you to see the problems with the world’s philosophy; the world’s way of thinking and doing things? Oh, that is fighting against your father’s good teaching and his good instruction; the instruction from the God of the Bible. This must be repented of, if you would have things go well for you. The way of Biblical submission to your godly father is the way to a long and satisfying life. If the verses that I quoted to you from Proverbs are so strongly opposed to the course of fighting against the wisdom and instruction of your godly father, then just think of the wonderful blessings that will come to you when you are honoring him.

You should honor your father because it is he who commands you to do those things that he finds in God’s Word. He will train up his child in the way that he should go. In Genesis 18: 19 God says of Abraham – “For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice, that the Lord may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him.” It is the honor given to fathers that their children will obey them and submit to their teaching from the Bible and Biblical principles. Why? Because it means that the way of the Lord will be kept, and God will be honored; that’s why. And God will abundantly bless that family that does so. He will give to that family, spiritual and eternal blessings. This is what brings joy to the heart of a godly father, to see his children walking in the truth! (3rd John 4) A godly father will train up his child in the way that he should go; he will teach him to observe all things commanded by the Lord. He will take notice of obedience in his children; to praise it and reward it. And he

will take notice of disobedience to God's Word to correct it if he can, so that his children are walking on the right path.

A 3rd Component – Honor to fathers consists of an appreciation for what they do for you.

It is a very good thing when you take notice of the fact that your father is the one who does many things for you which you ought to deeply appreciate. He works hard, and he provides for all of your physical needs. He provides you with the food that you eat, and the clothes you put on, the bed that you sleep in, and a roof over your head. And he provides you, not with just the bare essentials, but if he can afford it, he will sometimes give you things which will be build your strength recreationally. He will give you things that will challenge you, and help your mind intellectually and spiritually. I wonder if you have come to see that it honors your father if you tell him that you are thankful for him, because you have come to know that this kind of love that he has shown to you, has been wise and discerning love. He has done you good, and he has shown you what was good for you physically and mentally.

Your father, if he is godly, remembers the words of Jesus in Luke 11: 11-13 – “If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone?” “Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish?” Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?” “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” So he is also one who will consider and ponder what his children truly need, not only in things physical, but also in things spiritual as well; things related to God. He gives his children Bibles, and good books, and he asks them if they have read them. And indeed he will read them to them himself if they are young, or if they are reluctant to pick up a book themselves.

He prays for them, and he prays with them, and he would have them to learn to pray for themselves even before they come to know the Lord, in order that they might come to know the Lord. He prays for them, and pleads with them, to ask God for the greatest gift; the gift of salvation in Jesus Christ; the gift of the Holy Spirit who comes to live in their heart when they exercise faith. A father prays that his children will learn to pray themselves so that they may be saved from their sins. He prays that they will find all that is, and all that God, is interesting. Why is it that so many young people are bored? Well, part of the reason may be, because they do not know God. It is because they have not found the riches of Christ's glorious grace; that He has a fullness with which He can fill their souls and give them true joy. A father will pray that they would be filled with the fullness of God in their young minds and hearts.

God is supremely interesting, God is supremely wonderful. God is supremely wise. And all of life which He has created is interesting in every way. Psalm 112: 2-4 says, “The works of the Lord are great, studied by all who have pleasure in them.” “His work is honorable and glorious and His righteousness endures forever.” God has created all things that every person might take an interest in them. If you are bored it is because you think that you have seen it all, when you have only touched “the fringes of His ways”. When you come to know Christ, oh how much you will appreciate your godly father and mother. How much you will attempt to honor them and speak well of them and thank God for them.

Then the 4th Component – To honor you father is to loving him because he has loved you.

“A father”, Benjamin Keach tells us, “dearly loves, highly esteems, and greatly pities his children.” “If they are sick or under any calamity, his tender and compassionate heart yearns with pity and sympathy to them.” “In this love the earthly father portrays and represents God the heavenly father to his child.” “As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear Him.” (Psalm 103: 13) How do we know love? It is because God first loved us. But we

know love, extending this truth, from our fathers. Think about John 4: 7-11 with me. “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.” “He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.” “In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.” “In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” Let me ask you this morning – Did you, as you were growing up, have a father who loved you, a father who himself knew God? Or perhaps you did not have a loving father. I do not know. But often we come to know God, or not know God (as a child), from how our father acted towards us. And we can more easily honor the father whose love was clearly shown and demonstrated to us because we came to know it and experienced it.

But I would say to you today, don’t let the sins of your earthly father stop you from considering the love of God the Father in sending His only begotten Son to be the Savior of the World, and the propitiation for our sins. If you can’t honor your earthly father’s love toward you, then honor the heavenly Father’s love toward you in Christ, and believe in Him. Will you not honor God the Father today by placing your faith in Jesus Christ for your salvation? If you trust in Christ you are honoring God the Father. It says in John 5: 22 and 23 – “For the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will.” “For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the son just as they honor the Father.” “He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.”

You see, you can honor the Father by honoring the Son with your total and implicit trust in His finished work upon the cross, and His resurrection from the dead. And when you do this, you will no doubt also come to see how important it is that children have fathers who are godly and you will appreciate God’s gift in giving them to us, as we do here today. We honor fathers, and especially godly fathers, as God’s gift and God’s blessing to our society this day. They are essential to the fulfillment of God’s purposes and plans being fulfilled in the world in all generations, and in our generation today. Let us honor God the Father today who gives us holy fathers, fathers like Joshua who said in Joshua 24: 15 – “And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell.” “But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” We need more fathers like Joshua, and it is for this that we will pray.