

**ST PAUL'S CHURCH (RONDEBOSCH)
FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
SERMON (YEAR B)**

20 JUNE 2021

**READINGS: 1 SAMUEL 17:32-49// PSALM 9:9-20/
2 CORINTHIANS 6:1-13// MARK 4:35-41**

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Let us pray

God of wisdom and love, source of all good things, teach us your truth and guide our actions in your way of peace and love. Lord open our ears that we may hear you Open our eyes that we may see you and open our hearts that we may accept you. AMEN

My dad is better than your dad

Three boys on the playground were bragging about their dads. One said. "My dad scribbles a few words, calls it a poem and they pay him R750." "Oh, yeah. My dad scribbles a few words, calls it a song and they pay him R1500." "That's nothing," said the third boy. My dad scribbles a few words, calls it a sermon and it takes six people to collect all the money in the room!"

To all the Father's, grandfathers and all those who are not Biological Fathers but are a role model or a mentor too many children. Happy Father's day.

On Wednesday the 16 of June we celebrated **Youth Day**. Youth Day commemorates the **Soweto Uprising**, which took place on 16 June 1976, when thousands of students were ambushed by the apartheid regime.

On Youth Day, South Africans pay tribute to the lives of these students and recognises the role of the youth in the liberation of South Africa from the apartheid regime.

Today our youth (young people) are faced with other challenges. The challenges of the Covid 19 Pandemic. Emotional, Social, Physical and Spiritual pressures that lead to uncertainty and self-doubt and low self-esteem and even to committing suicide. Then there is the challenges of online studies and unemployment and those who don't have the money to go study further or parents that put pressure on their children to excel in their studies. In some

communities there are the challenges of gangsterism and substance abuse in and then there is the challenges of single parenting and absent fathers. Today we celebrate Father's day but did you know that **South Africa** has one of the highest rates of fatherlessness in the world. According to the 2017 Statistics **SA** General Household Survey, a shocking 61.8% of **children** under the age of 18 live **without** their **father**. South Africa has one of the highest incidences of domestic violence in the world. Every day, women are murdered, physically and sexually assaulted, threatened and humiliated by their husbands or partners, within their own homes. And the young children our youth of today are expose to this violence.

Don't get me wrong I know we have wonderful caring loving Father's and men but there are some Father's and Men that give "Fatherhood" a bad name.

Today's Gospel reading is the familiar story of Jesus calming the storm--a perfect text that coincides with Father's day because in this text Jesus is an example of a Father who is stern yet loving and protective of his children. Let us reflect and unpack the text and see what we (our fathers and men) can learn from Jesus as our Father.

In John 4 v 35 we read *"when the day was over Jesus called His disciples to set sail for the other side of the lake. When darkness fell the disciples were making their way across the lake while guided the boat Jesus fell asleep in the rear of the boat"*

Jesus was weary because it was a long and difficult day for Jesus. He had a confrontation with the Pharisees (Mark 3:20). He preached to the multitudes gathered to hear. He spend time explaining the parables to his disciples using the boat as his pulpit. Now Jesus is saying to them let us sail to the other side of the lake. As they made their way across the lake a powerful storm erupts.

Mighty waves crashed into the tiny boat and it begins to flounder and fill with water, the wind screams, thunder and lightning pierce the darkness. The storm described here must have been especially strong if it frightened the experienced fishermen like the disciples

Jesus was in their boat and they were still afflicted by a storm of suffering and sorrow.

Many a times our young people and children go through difficult times, and it brings fear and anxiety.

In v 38 we read ***Jesus was in the back of the boat sleeping. The disciples woke him up and said Teacher don't you care that we are about to die Their words mean Do we means so little to you, with death staring us in the face how can you sleep?***

The disciples doubted Jesus. They accused the Lord of not caring about what they are facing. After all they already seen his compassion and goodness, they had seen Jesus conquered demons and diseases. (Mark 1:22-2:21)

Now they are faced with a storm and they are afraid. They should have known that a wind could not prevent God's omnipotence. Their problem was they were looking at the situation and not the Saviour. They had their thoughts on the facts and not faith and trust in God.

There have been times when the storms were raging in our own lives when we question God's concern for us and we cried out "***Lord don't you care about what is happening to me?***

In V 39 -40 "***He got up rebuked the wind and said to the waves "Quiet" "Be still". Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. He said to his disciples. Why are you so afraid do you still have no faith?***

The disciples needed not to be fearful, because Jesus promised that they were going to the other side (v35). They had already seen his power demonstrated in the miracles. They could see Jesus was perfectly at peace in the midst of the storm. By his power Jesus brought peace over the storm.

My dear friends Jesus can bring peace in our situation

- Jesus gives peace in the storm of our sorrows
- He gives us peace when life's problems involve us in a tempest of doubt and uncertainties. There comes times when we don't know what to do, when we stand at some cross-roads in life and do not know which way to take. If we turn to Jesus and say "Lord what do you want me to do? The real tragedy is not that we do not know what to do, it is that so often we do not humbly submit to his guidance.

- He gives us peace in the storms of anxiety. But Jesus speaks to us of a Father whose hands will never cease his child a needless tear and a love beyond neither we nor those we love can ever drift.

In Hebrew 13: 5 Jesus said I will never leave you I will never forsake you When the storm is raging when your boat is rocking and reeling when the adverse winds are blowing when the waves are crashing against your vessel LIKE NOW Remember Jesus will not let you sink. He will hold you up and never desert you under any circumstance.

And that is the assurance that our children, our young people also need to hear from their earthly fathers –that their fathers will not forsake them but protect and journey with them with them so that they can experience peace against the challenges and problems they will encounter in life. They need to have fathers who love them and whom they can trust when they face the storms of life.

In v 41 we read “*They were terrified and asked each other “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him”*” but I like the NRSV translation “*And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”*”

Awe: means a feeling of great respect and admiration and sometimes mixed with fear and surprise

The disciples began to realize that Jesus was far greater than they had previously experienced.

Our children our young people, our young boys must be in awe of their fathers and they must look up to their fathers. Their fathers must be their mentors and role models, they must respect and admire their fathers.

Conclusion

This morning I would like to thank and salute all men that are wonderful, loving caring husbands and fathers. Thank you to all fathers who encourage, motivate and treat their children (especially their daughters) with respect and dignity. We need more men and fathers like you.

And to all our children love and respect your fathers even when they are growing old have patience with them

Let me conclude with the following story

“A frail old man went to live with his son, daughter-in-law and four –year-old grandson

The old man hand trembled, his eyesight was blurred and his step faltered. The family ate together at the table.

But the elderly grandfather’s shaky hands and failing sight made eating difficult. Peas rolled off his spoon onto the floor. When he grasped the glass, milk spilled on the table cloth .the son and daughter in-law became irritated with the mess.

We must do something about grandfather said the son I’ve had enough of this spilled milk, noisy eating, and food on the floor.

So the husband and wife set a small table in the corner .there grandfather ate alone while the rest of the family enjoyed dinner. Since Grandfather had broken a dish or two, his food was served in a wooden bowl.

When the family looked in Grandfathers direction sometimes he had a tear in his eye as he sat alone.

Still, the only words the couple had for him were sharp criticism when he dropped a fork or spilled food.

The four year old grandson watched it all in silence.one evening before supper, the father noticed his son playing with wood scraps on the floor. He asked the child sweetly what are you making?

Just a sweetly, the boy responded, Oh I am making a little bowl for you and Mama to eat your food from when I grow up.

The four year old smiled and went back to work. The words so struck the parents and they were speechless. Then tears started to stream down their cheeks. Though no word was spoken, both knew what must be done.

That evening the husband took Grandfather Hand and gently led him back to the family table

For the remainder of his days, he ate every meal with the family. And for some reason, neither husband nor wife seemed to care any longer when a fork was dropped, milk spilled, or table cloth got soiled.”