

COURAGEOUS PARENTING #6: FATHERS THAT ROCK

LUKE 6:46-49

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We began a series of messages several weeks ago, actually on Mother's Day called *Courageous Parenting* and the *Courageous Parenting Series* and the Courageous Parenting Website, www.courageousparenting.org is available in the days ahead, now a...a..., not only now while the series is on but throughout these days, in the days ahead we want to provide resources for you and your family and your parenting, because courageous parents today are desperately needed. And Dads I wanna speak to you today and all of us on the subject, *Dad's That Rock*.

Take your Bibles and turn with me to Luke's gospel, chapter 6. Now being a dad is a tough job, it's a challenging job, it demands all kinds of courage.

Maybe not as tough as the job I heard about or the fellow I heard about who applied for a job at a security company. He was small about 90 pounds, in fact he was a 90-pound weakling, but he was tough. When he applied the interviewer said, "Look, you're not big enough, you're not strong enough for this job, you might as well not even apply." He said, "Well, a..., you know, I...I may be small but I am tough." He said, "Well, just how tough are you?" He said, "Well, I'll tell you how tough I am." He said, "I was workin out in my farm one day and the combine got stuck and I reached in to unstuck it and it tore my arm off. But, I picked up my arm and went in the house and sewed it back on and came back out and finished the day's work." He said, "You did that?" He said, "Absolutely!" "You sewed your own arm back on and came out and finished the days work." And he said, "I absolutely did." He said, "You've gotta be the toughest man I've ever seen. You gotta be the toughest man alive. You have the job. The job is yours." And the man said, "Right on! Right on!"
[pause for congregation laughter and applause]

Now, [more laughter and applause] you gotta be tough to be a dad. [more laughter] Because it's a little bit up and it's a little bit down. [more laughter] But in the 6th chapter of Luke, verses 46 to 49 here's how Dad's rock:

⁴⁶"But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say? ⁴⁷Whoever comes to Me, and hears My saying and does them, I will show you whom he is like; ⁴⁸He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against the house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. ⁴⁹But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great."

1st Corinthians 16:13 tells us this, it's a challenge to Christians, certainly a challenge to Christian men:

Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.

In that single scriptural sentence we have the challenge for men and women to be courageous, to be brave and to be strong. Proverbs 10:25 says:

When the storm is swept by the wicked, the wicked are gone, But the righteous stand forever.

And then in Proverbs 14 and verse 26:

In the fear of the LORD there is strong confidence, And His children will have a place of refuge.

Dads who rock build their lives upon the rock of ages, the Lord Jesus Christ and build their families upon foundations of faith established in Jesus Christ. That's what Jesus is teaching us here; to build your life upon Him.

I was watching a television program, heard about actually, a television program regarding several years ago California wildflow...a...fires in Southern California, near Laguna Mi...Miguel and in this particular fires, they were featuring it on a..., this television program, there were 20 houses in this one neighborhood burned to the ground, burned down to the foundation. But right in the middle of these 20 homes devastated by the fires there was one house that was virtually unharmed and untouched by the fire. There was some discoloration because of smoke damage, a singe here or there, but this house amazingly stood all alone in the midst of the burned out houses all around it. And of course people wanted to know how that happened and they discovered that the man who built this house had taken extra precautions and preparations in selecting the building materials and building on a solid foundation. He was preparing for earthquakes, he was preparing for fires, but he was preparing and he went way beyond the basic requirements to make sure that his house was safer and more secure. His preparation included double paneled windows, thick stucco walls and special eaves and a concrete tile roof and abundant insulation. And when the firefighters realized that this house was untouched by the fire they actually moved into this house and used it as their place to stand against the fires sweeping that neighborhood and sweeping that area. I wanna say to you today that the home, the family, is the place to stand as the fires of hell and the winds of the culture are being unleashed against families and the home today. It is at the place of the home that we must stand because we know that these are difficult days for the family. Satan wants to hammer our kids and while we can't stop the fire from spread...spreading perhaps, we can stop them at our doorsteps. We can by God's grace and power keep the fires and the storms from tearing our houses down and in order to do that we need courageous parents, we need dads that rock and moms that roll, I guess. [pause for congregation laughter] What we need is courageous parents to get the job done today. Jesus is the solid rock and when you build your life, your home, your family upon Him it will stand. Dads who rock provide stability and strength for their families. This is a shaky world an unstable world and we have to admit that our children face an uncertain future, but dad you can be a rock and being a rock and establishing foundations for your family is a courageous act of faith. You might even say an heroic act of faith, an act of patriotism, if you will. It's true isn't it, that the most devastating problem we face as a nation is the demise, the potential demise of the home and the family? The family is being attacked and so to stand for our families and to fight the fires and the battles that are before us is an heroic act of faith. You see heroism is not just being a super star or a celebrity, in fact that's not really heroism at all, but being a hero is standing by your family and committing to your family and being a hero to your wife and being a hero to your kids by laying down your life. That's what parents of honor do, patriotic parents keep their word even when it's

difficult and demanding. The foundations of your family will determine it's future. So, is your family built upon the rock or is it on the rocks? Dad, that's a question that you need to answer, because according to Jesus here in Luke in chapter 6, parents who get the job done in building their families on faith in Jesus Christ will carefully listen to the word of Christ and then live in obedience to it's truth. That's why verse 46 says:

"...why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not the things that I say? Whoever comes to Me, and hears My saying and..."

What?

"...does them,...is like the man who built his house on the rock."

I love 2nd Samuel 22, verse 2 and 3:

2... "The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; 3My God is my rock in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, He is my stronghold, my refuge and My Savior,..."

Our heavenly Father is our Rock and our Redeemer. Now all of us will be tested in life and our families are being tested. Thus Jesus talked about these storms, the crisis, the catastrophes that come in life and they do don't they? I don't know what your storm may be or the next firefight that you may face in your family, but I know it's coming and that's why you need to make sure that you have built solidly on Christ. To know and to do the Word of God and to practice the will of God, that's what it's to build a life on the rock; that's a dad, a mom who rocks. You see, dads who build upon Jesus Christ do more than just attend church when it's convenient, sort of check in and check out and hear a sermon and go home and forget about it and get on with life. Dads who rock actually listen and apply the Word of God and take into account in their lives what Jesus is saying. Your family will stand, men, if you stand; if you will put them on your shoulders as you stand on Jesus Christ. And that's what I wanna talk to you about today.

Joshua was a...was a dad who rocked. Joshua led the children of Israel strong and courageously. They were on the verge of crossing into the promise land and establishing their foothold as a nation. The people said can we go now, can we go now? And Joshua said yes, but wait just a moment because we need to settle something. He said: [Joshua 24:15]

"...choose you this day whom you will serve..."

And then he said:

"...as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

It was as though Joshua said I don't know what you're going to do, you have a choice to make, you have a decision to make, but I'll tell you what we're going to do, I'll tell you what I'm going to do, I'll tell you what our family's going to do.

"...we will serve the LORD."

And it is with that kind of decision and that kind of dedication and determination that we can be dads who build our lives and our families rock solid today and for the future. You say, how do we do that? Well, let me just mention 3 simple things to you, 3 simple gifts, the building materials, if you will on building a foundation and a future that lasts for your children.

#1: LOVE! You say, dah, everybody knows that. You're supposed to give your family love, well, everyone may know it but no everyone is doing it, especially in personal and practical ways. You know love is not simply giving people what they want it is giving people what they need. I love the definition of John Stock, Bible scholar, pastor from England who said:

"Love is the willingness to surrender that which has value in life, to enrich the life of another."

I absolutely love that definition.

"...the willingness to surrender that which has value in life, to enrich the life of another."

In other words, someone who is loving, says I will give up something of importance to me if you need it. That's what dads, that's what courageous parents do. They're willing to give it up in time and energy and effort and sacrifice. They're willing to give up personal agendas and even career ambitions if necessary to lay down their lives lovingly for their families. Somebody said, you know dads are willing to give whatever it takes, heh, a dad is a person who has pictures in his wallets where his...where his money used to be. [pause for congregation laughter] How does a dad show love? By **EMBRACING AND EXPRESSING AFFECTION** to their children.

I like the bumper sticker, which says:

"Kids need hugs, not drugs!"

Dads we need to embrace our children and express love to our children in physical ways, so that they not only hear us telling them but show them. You say, well I'm not really turned that way. Well, get over it! [congregation laughter] Because, God wants you to take your children in your arms, even as Jesus did though with the little children and blessed them with a physical touch. Remember the story that Jesus told of the prodigal son? Who ran away from home, spent his fortune in wasteful living and came back beaten down by the road and by his experience and his father sitting on the porch waiting for his son to come home. You know that story of the prodigal son is really the story of the prodigal father and his great love, his extravagant love for this boy. So when this boy came down the road looking like a tramp, smelling of a pigsty, that father, Jesus said,

"...ran to meet him..."

And Jesus said when he reached him:

"...he embraced him and fell on his neck and kissed him..."

And the word that Jesus used was he kissed him again and again and again and again. That's a

picture of the Father's love for us when He wraps us up in His love... [turn tape] ...grace. Give your children love by expressing affection personally and frequently to them. Did you know that studies show that frequent hugs will protect your children, even from moral impurity, especially, we're told that girls, teenage girls who enjoy the wholesome embrace of their fathers ~~will unlikely~~...will not likely go looking for intimacy or love in immorality. Dads, it would do your children a lot of good for them to see embracing mom every now and then and being affectionate, yes public displays of affection guys. [slight laughter] Every now and then our children would walk in when a..., I had Deb backed into a corner somewhere. [pause for congregation laughter] That's okay. [more laughter] Because, according to Jay Strack, youth speaker and writer, the number one question that kids are asking today, guess what it is? "Dad do you love mom?" The number one question that kids are asking, they wanna know, "Dad, do you love my mom." So if you wanna be a dad who rocks, put your arm around...your arms around your family and hold them close and do it often and don't be ashamed to show your love.

And then encourage, **YOU LOVE BY ENCOURAGEMENT**. Children need affirmation and acceptance, they need words of blessing and praise. Guys you need to be a cheerleader for your kids without a skirt. [slight laughter] Our kid...your children and mine, they need to know that you are proud of them, that you believe in them and that includes your adult children, that you support them in their chosen endeavor and calling in life. In the Bible there is the blessing that comes from God, the blessing or giving the parental blessing is...is really the universal longing of the human heart. It's not some new physiological invention, but it is a biblical principle, this thing called the blessing. We find it in the early...the first book of the Bible, the book of Genesis when Abraham blessed Isaiah his son and Isaiah in turn blessed his children and so on. Today Jewish fathers practice the blessing when they gather at a certain time. Generally between the ages of 14 and 16 both girls and boys and they gather their friends and family in a circle and they speak a word of blessing and favor and acceptance and love to those children and then the father often picks up that teenager puts him on his shoulder and dances around the room. That's the blessing of lifting up those children to the Go...to the Lord and in life. We all need the blessing of our fathers. You say what is that blessing? It is giving favor, it is expressing fondness and it is passing on faith. Blessing your children means, dads, that they receive from you, your glowing acceptance, that they understand that they are of value and significance to God and to you...and to you, that you say things to your children like God is gonna use you in a great way, God has special plans for your life, you're going to be a man of God, a woman of God. We all long for this affirmation whether we're a little...are little toddlers playing in the sandbox saying dad look what I made or a young student waiting for her mom to read the report card wanting to know, honey you did a great job, or a teenager who comes out all dressed for the prom who's waiting for those words, you look great honey, or even grown children who still want their parents to say things like, I love your new house, I like your new car and that baby he's the greatest. [slight laughter] All of us need this blessing from the hands of our parents and in particular the father. You say, wait a minute, I never got that from my father, I never sensed that acceptance or affirmation, I've lived my entire life without the blessing, I don't have a blessing to give because my life has been a wipeout. And if I know anything about the gospel of Jesus Christ, I know this, that while you can't change the past, in Jesus Christ He can change your present and your future. I know this, 2nd Corinthians 5:17 that we are made brand new in Christ:

Therefore, if anyone be in Christ, he's a new creature; old things are passed away; and all thing have become new.

You shouldn't live in the victimization of the past, but rather if you are a believer in Jesus Christ, if you have been blessed by His salvation then you are a brand new person and you don't have to repeat the mistakes of the past or live in the emptiness of...of a life without God or without blessing, you can know Jesus Christ in your life and you can break the chains of curse in the past and live in blessing to your family and to your children. [Amen] That's what Jesus will do for you. So give them encouragement.

And then **ENABLE AND EQUIP THEM** by building them up rather than tearing them down. Be willing to listen and to counsel them from God's Word or just from the wisdom of your own life, built upon the Word of God. Have you ever noticed how your children so often wanna talk when it's the last thing in the world you wanna do? Dad, you're tired, maybe it's 1 o'clock in the morning and that son or daughter just has to talk? I'll tell you what, they're remember those late night talks long after they forget everything you said. Do you have the kind of attitude that says, honey, children you can talk to me about anything, anywhere, anytime, anyplace and I'll listen. You see we give our children love by expressing affection, by encouraging with affirmation and by equipping them with the Word of God. But then we're to give our children...

FAITH. We build upon the rock with love and with faith. Proverbs 22:6:

Train up a child in the way that he ~~would go...~~ or should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.

Now there's a difference between training a child and teaching a child. Teaching is good but it will only take a child so far because a child needs, not only teaching and training. It's the difference between, let's say, teaching a child to drive and training a child to drive. Some of us, many of us, of course, had the experience of training our children how to drive. I'm talkin about an automobile, scary thing. You take your life in your hands. You buckle up your seatbelt. You get in, you don't just give your kids a book on how to drive and say here read this and go do it. You get them in the car and what's the first thing you do? You show them where the brake is. [pause for congregation laughter] If you're...if you're a wise dad you don't show them the accelerator first, [more laughter] you show them the brake and then you know, you teach them and you train them and pretty soon their driving. And in life it means training them and that means taking time to live it and to show them your own faith, that you're giving to your children, not a hand-me-down religion, but a genuine authentic faith in Jesus Christ. We are responsible for passing this faith along to our children, a faith that lasts. Oh, I know, sometimes we say well it won't be long these kids are gonna be out of the house and mom and I are gonna have a great time. Or maybe your thinkin, I can't wait till they're grown and gone and I get done with this parent thing. Can I tell you you're never done with that parent thing? The job of being a parent never ends. I mean anybody can start something, but God wants people who start something and finish something and that's dads that rock, who are willing to stay it...see it through and to stay it through, to be committed all the way, that your faith is real. I think of the words of John, talking about people who came and professed faith but never really lived their faith out he said:

They went out from us because they weren't really of us. For had they been of us they would have no doubt continued with us. But they went out from us so it could be evident that they were not really of us to begin with.

You see genuine faith not only professes faith, but preservers in that faith and finishes in commitment by giving the faith to others, starting with our own families. Did you know that you will still be parenting a hundred years from now? You say, whoa, I can't last that long. Well, think about it this way, your kids can and so can your grandkids and your investment to your children today and your grandchildren will have impact in generations to come that you will never see. My grandfather, A. J. Simms was born in 1884. Now if my math is correct that's 120 years ago. My grandfather taught me the Scriptures and had the biggest impact on my life as a young boy, leading me to Christ and though he has been in heaven since 1960 and it's been 120 years since he was born his influence is still alive in me today. He's still a parent because he invested in me and invested in the future of his family. So you need to stop thinking about your parenting job as being 10 or 20 years and start thinking about a century of more of what God can do through you and your family. Hey, one of these days you're gonna have grandchildren and that's a good thing. But think about this one of these days your grandchildren will have grandchildren. That blows my mind. Most of those grandchildren of your grandchildren won't even know your name unless it's written down in somebody's Bible somewhere. But the question is, not whether or not they know your name, but do they know the name of Jesus, because you have passed your faith along to your children and their children, that you are using your influence to not only touch today, but to touch tomorrow, to raise up your children so that one day you'll meet generations to come in heaven who will say thank you dad, thank you mom for building our family on the sure foundation of Jesus Christ. That's the kind of faith that I'm talking about, it's the faith rock solid in Jesus Christ. Give it to your children, it's the greatest gift that you can give.

Ronald Reagan impacted the world in American. He changed the world. He gave us a great deal as president and as a person. But his own son, Michael, who was the adopted son of Ronald Reagan and his wife Jane Wyman stood at his graveside and said...make a remarkable speech regarding his own father and the greatest gift that Ronald Reagan gave him. Let's remember what he said right now:

VIDEO: "You knew my father as governor, as president, but I knew him as dad. I wanna tell you a little bit about my dad. We looked forward to those Saturday mornings when he would pick us up sitting on the curb on Beverly Glen as his car would turn the corner from Sunset Blvd. and we would get in an ride to the ranch and play games and he would always make sure it ended up a tie. As the years went by and he could no longer verbalize my name he recognized me as the man who hugged him and so when I would walk into the house he would be there in his chair opening up his arms for that hug hello and the hug goodbye. It was a blessing truly brought on by God. We had wonderful blessings of that nature, wonderful, wonderful blessings that my father gave to me each and every day of my life. I was so proud to have the Reagan name and to be Ronald Reagan's son. What a great honor. He gave me a lot of gifts as a child. He gave me horse. He gave me a car. He gave me a lot of things. But it is a gift he gave me that I think is wonderful for every father to give every son. Last Saturday, when my father opened his eyes for the last time and visualized Nancy and gave her such a wonderful, wonderful gift, when he closed his eyes that's when I realized the gift that he gave to me, the gift that he was going to be with his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He had, back in 1988, on a flight from Washington DC to Point _____ told me about his love of God, his love of Christ as his Savior. I didn't know then what it all meant, but I certainly, certainly know now. I can't think of a better gift for a father to give a son and I hope to honor my father by giving my son Cameron and my daughter Ashley that very same gift he gave to me."

The greatest gift that you can give your children... [pause for applause] the greatest gift you can give your children is that gift of your faith, your personal faith in Christ, that they may receive it as their

own and that means your little children, but in the case of Michael Reagan, he was an adult when his father shared his personal faith with him. Ronald Reagan's personal faith grew by leaps and bounds in his later years. You see it's never too late to share your faith with your family. Give your children faith, give them love and...

GIVE THEM JOY. When you build with th...your life upon the Rock, Jesus Christ and your home upon Him and it will be filled with His joy and your home will be the happiest place on earth. We tried to make sure in our home that our kids had a lot of fun, that we were real, that we laughed a lot. We wanted our home, our house to be a kind of place where they would want to bring their friends because we had a good time. We want our home and our family to know that special joy that comes when you walk with Christ. You say, you bring a lot of kids over to your house, they'll tear the house up. That's okay. You know Phyllis Diller said:

"Cleaning the house while the kids are still at home is like shoveling snow when it's still snowing." [pause for congregation laughter]

Make your house a place where kids like to hang out because of the joy of Jesus that is filling the rooms. Let laughter, the laughter that our Lord gives, the abundant life, the life according to Jesus be the life and the heart of your home. I close with this, written by Bob Benson:

I pass a lot of houses on my way home – some pretty, some expensive, some inviting – but my heart always skips a beat when I turn down the road and see my house nestled against the hill.

I guess I'm especially proud of the house and the way it looks because I drew the plans for myself.

It started out large enough for us—I even had a study—two teenage boys now live there.

And it had a guest room—my girl and nine dolls now reside in the guest room.

It had a room Peg had hoped would be her sewing room—the boys swinging on the Dutch door have claimed this room as their own.

So it really doesn't look right now as if I'm much of an architect or builder. But it will get larger again—one by one they will go away to work, to college, to service, to their own houses, and then there will be room—a guest room, a study, and a sewing room for just the two of us.

But it won't be empty—every corner, every room, every nick in the coffee table will be crowded with memories. Memories of picnics, parties, Christmases, bedside vigils, summers, winters, fires, going barefoot, leaving for vacation, conversation, black eyes, graduations, first dates, ball games, arguments, washing dishes, bicycles, dogs, boat rides, getting home from vacation, meals, rabbits and a thousand other things that fill the lives of those who would raise children.

And Peg and I, we will sit quietly by the fire and listen to the laughter in the walls.

Build your house, your life, your family upon Jesus Christ with love and faith and joy and not only will you hear the laughter in the walls but you'll hear the laughter in heaven for the joy of knowing that your children will join you there. Dads, rock for Jesus Christ it will change everything about your family and its future.