

A. A Poem

1. a little over a week ago, I came across this poem which I saved to share with you today on Father's Day
2. "A Father's Prayer" — —<sup>{2}</sup>.

Dear God, my little boy of two  
has said his nightly prayer to You;  
Before his eyes were closed in sleep  
he asked that You his soul would keep.

And I, still kneeling at his bed,  
my hand upon his tousled head  
Do ask, with deep humility,  
that You, dear Lord, remember me.

Make me, kind Lord, a worthy dad  
that I may lead this little lad  
In pathways ever fair and bright,  
that I may keep his steps aright.

O Lord, his trust must never be  
destroyed, or even marred by me;  
Let Christ in all my actions shine  
to guide this little lamb of Thine.

So for the simple things he prayed  
with childish voice, so unafraid,  
I, trembling, ask the same from Thee;  
dear Lord, kind Lord, remember me!

3. That's probably pretty close to how the father's here feel this morning and it leads us to our text:

- B. Our Text (NAS): O God, Thou hast taught me from my youth; And I still declare Thy wondrous deeds. And even when I am old and gray, O God, do not forsake me, Until I declare Thy strength to this generation, Thy power to all who are to come.
1. you may have perceived with those words “old and gray” why these words seem especially meaningful to me
  2. but we will not dwell on that aspect of the text this morning!
  3. rather apply it to each of us as children of our fathers, and, to those who have, or will have, the responsibility of being fathers
    - a. let us stop at this point to realize that not all of us has been equally blessed as children in our home and family lives
    - b. for some of us here this morning, this Father’s day may be tinged with sadness and regrets for a host of reasons
    - c. but we need to pause to remember that our infinitely kind and wise heavenly Father
      - (A) has chosen in His own most perfect will
      - (B) that we should have the family that we have
      - (C) so that He might create us to be the person he desires
    - d. and for those who have had that especial joy
      - (A) of possessing a joyful home and family life
      - (B) of having a father who has faithfully sought
        - (1) to be the spiritual leader of his household
        - (2) to bring up his children to respect and trust God
      - (C) of whom it is true, as the hymn writer says <sup>—{3}</sup>.  
Happy the home where prayer is heard  
And praise is wont to rise,  
Where parents love the sacred Word  
And all its wisdom prize.
      - (D) will you not take some time this day to thank God for that blessing, and, as circumstances may permit, to let your father know how much you esteem him

- C. The writer of this Psalm shares things in common with the writer of that poem, and, I trust, with each one of us here today
1. first, he recognizes the inheritance he had received in his youth
    - a. earlier in this Psalm he says, "  
For Thou art my hope; O Lord GOD,  
Thou art my confidence from my youth.  
By Thee I have been sustained from my birth;  
Thou art He who took me from my mother's womb;  
My praise is continually of Thee." (Psalms 71:5-6 NAS)
    - b. so, the spiritual training and atmosphere in which he was raised is for him a joy and cause for praise regardless of the difficulties with which he is now faced
    - c. because the values and priorities that we learn in our youth are those that will surface when the pressures of life come upon us: it is under testing that the real person emerges
  2. second, he desires, to pass these onto the following generations
    - a. the Bible boils down all the commandments into just two
      - (A) complete and sincere love for the Lord God
      - (B) practical, demonstrated love to others around us
    - b. and love always wants to share its own joys
    - c. so the father who has learned to know Jesus Christ as his own personal Saviour will earnestly desire that his children may do the same
      - (A) not that their lives may be days of ease and plenty
      - (B) but rather, that as they go through life
      - (C) they may know in a practical way truths such as the writer of this Psalm expresses
      - (D) as in verse 19 (NAS):  
"For Thy righteousness, O God, reaches to the heavens,  
Thou who hast done great things;  
O God, who is like Thee?"
      - (E) or verse 22a (NAS)::  
"I will also praise Thee with a harp,

Even Thy truth, O my God"

d. because God, as we know Him in and through our Lord Jesus Christ, is a solid Rock, a foundation upon which a life can be built that can never be shaken

D. Conclusion:

1. will you not take time this day to bless God for the inheritance which He has given to you through your fathers?
2. fathers, will you not this day dedicate yourselves anew to passing on to your children those spiritual lessons you have learned?
3. to be able to carry out this responsibility let us prayerfully sing our closing hymn, that Lord Jesus, we keep "Close to Thee"

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Various English versions of the Holy Bible are used in this sermon. Some (for example, the AV, ASV, and NAS) seek to be strictly translations, while others (and especially PHIL) contain paraphrasing which involves a certain amount of subjective interpretation. Nevertheless, there is little material difference in meaning among these. Some prove slightly clearer on some verses than others. Looking at more than one version sometimes sheds additional light on any particular verse. Explanatory additions to the Bible text are shown in [square brackets]. The versions are identified as:

ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version
NAS	New American Standard version © 1975 The Lockman Foundation
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
PHIL	New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

Further sermons and illustrations may be found at the web-site, [www.holwick.com](http://www.holwick.com). Materials in this sermon from Rev. David Holwick’s database are identified by “Kerux” followed by a sermon or illustration number.

2. “A Father’s Prayer”; anonymous, The Evangelist, Vol 66, No 9, 2005-06
3. “Happy the Home When God is There” by Henry Ware (the younger, 1794-1843)