

Sermon: Our Father

New North Church, Hingham

Mr. Jack MacNeill

19 June 2022

Based on **Psalm 22:19-28; Galatians 3:23-29**

Today is Father's Day and I would like to talk about two fathers of mine, one earthly and one Heavenly.

Our Scripture readings give us some insight as to how the two writers perceived and worshiped their Heavenly father. The reading from Psalms gives us a feeling that there was much to be feared and evil of all sorts was about to overtake his generation, but he believed his Heavenly Father was there to protect them. And he wanted everyone to know it!

The second reading gives a different perspective. God is love and is always there with us.

With these two thoughts, let's present a modern scenario with our earthly fathers. When we were you, there was much that frightened us. I can give at least one example. We moved when I was four years old to a house on Jerusalem Road in Cohasset. Down the road about a half mile was the Ravenscraig Nursing Home. Every so often a white rescue vehicle would come by with lights and siren heading to help someone at the Nursing Home. When I could first hear the siren coming, I would run and hide. I don't know why I did that! My Dad would try to calm me down by telling me they were not something to fear but were going to help someone in need. His comforting words must have worked because I am now an Emergency Medical Technician and take care of people's needs on my own. I can remember another time he tried to teach me something and I yelled at him and said hateful words. It was a long time later, but I did tell him I regretted those words and was so sorry.

He thought it would be a good idea for me to go to Sunday School. Dad sang in the Second Congregational Church Choir since he was fifteen and they rehearsed before church, so he sent me with Herman Siegrist, a good family friend. Things went OK until there was a chimney fire next door. Fire engines everywhere and I went ballistic! Dad was called down from the choir loft and took me home. Again, he taught me there really was nothing to fear. I

eventually went on to be a fire captain and fought many fires on my own. I know he was very proud of me because he told me so.

There were so many things I learned from Dad. Probably most important was his love for God and his fellow beings. He taught me all were children of the same Father. I never saw any difference in peoples. Oh, some talked differently, some were old, some had a different skin color, but that didn't make any difference.

He taught me to sing God's praises. I will never forget how he sang "In the Garden" when he took a bath. He had a gorgeous tenor voice and was called upon by several churches to be a soloist, even the Catholic Church. He was happy that I learned to sing and was in the All State Chorus. It wasn't until we sang together in a choral group when he turned to me and said, "where did you get that voice?" that he truly acknowledged my ability to carry a tune.

He got me into the Order of DeMolay for Boys and that started my long career into Freemasonry. Dad was thirty five when he joined the Lodge and he was there with me when I joined at twenty one. We were able to go to so many events together, not only Masonic events, but classical music, community choir, church worship and many more.

When I was twelve, I took on a paper route. I eventually got up to 165 customers. Can't do that on a bicycle easily. One day we were on a car ride on the old Route 128 through Dedham. Dad saw a horse in a field and before long Red (the horse) and all the tack as well as a surrey (no roof on top) were in our yard. We had a barn but no stalls. Easily accomplished! A neighbor let us graze in his field (after we put up the electric fence). From all this, I learned how to earn and manage money, give my customers excellent service and take care of an animal. When it was nasty out, Dad would drive me around the route. I repaid that when he was retired and got his own paper route. I would drive and we would both run up to the houses and put the paper behind the screen door. Teamwork makes light work.

Dad always gave of his best to his customers. When I was a teenager, I would work for him after school and Saturdays doing plumbing, heating and oil burner repairs. I remember going into one house and the customer took me into a bathroom to show me some work. It had been done by my grandfather. The pipes were brass. After they were installed, Grampa would insist the pipes were polished with steel wool and coated with lacquer. They looked brand new. Guess Dad learned from his Dad. When Dad put in copper pipes, there was no extra solder dripping, the pipes were parallel, and corners were perfect. He did his work the way he would want it done for

him. Excellent lesson! I do my work the same way. Sometimes it is not the least expensive way but we both have given a lot of time away just to make it better than just OK.

I have probably mentioned this before, but it is important to me. Dad was not perfect, but he trusted God! He did not go about preaching in the streets. He went about spreading his faith by the way he lived, how he treated others, how he enjoyed life and all the beauty around him. His kind words came in abundance. He never directly told me what to do but would ask me what I would do. If I was wrong, he might say something that might make me think from a different perspective. He taught me patience and perseverance. He taught me how to keep my cool.

Sometimes he was my protector. Sometimes he was my guide. Thanks to what my earthly Dad taught me, I know I have a Heavenly Father who is always there, even when I don't see him. He is my defender and shield and one who loves me even when I am not so loveable.

Thank you, Dad, you were my best friend!