

Like Father, Like Son



A few of my friends who are all sports junkies were talking about a football player named Aaron Hernandez and a story that came out on him recently. For those of you who don't know who Aaron Hernandez is, he was a football player. He played for the University of Florida. He helped that team win a national championship when Tim Tebow was there. He was then drafted in the fourth round by the New England Patriots and was a tight end with the Titans for Tom Brady with some of the best football teams ever. He signed a contract somewhere between the range of forty to fifty million dollars. If you look at this young man's life from a distance, it looked like he had absolutely everything. One day on the news, it pops up that Aaron Hernandez is arrested for murder. He was tried for murder and found guilty. While in prison, he commits suicide. The day of his death, his former team, the New England Patriots, are celebrating their Super Bowl victory at the White House. What happened? How could a young man who it seems has everything the world has to offer blow it all? The Boston Globe did a story on this man and they started tracing his entire life. They went back to his birth, and it was so interesting when you start reading the article. It's graphic, and it's a tough, tough read, but the first section, the title, the subtitle, is "Like Father, Like Son." You start hearing about

Aaron's father and how he was abusive, he was in crime, and had all types of issues. It just led to the same issues his father dealt with which led right to the son, the abuse, the anger, the crime, and the eventual death. It's so sad and tragic, and it's a sobering reminder this morning of how a mom and dad can influence a son or daughter, positively or negatively. We come here this morning as we think about a new you, as we think about a new way of thinking, believing that no matter what earthly family background we come from, we have a father/son relationship that we can look to that can transform us. It can transform us in such a way that no matter our earthly mom and dad, good or bad, we have a new example that transforms us and everything we do and transforms us as moms and dads. That's what we want to focus on this morning. We want to focus on and look at the relationship between the heavenly Father and His Son Jesus. Hopefully, you'll be encouraged in your way of thinking in 2019 as we start this year to really rethink about how you see yourself as a Christian modeling this father/son relationship as a mom and dad. I want to say this before I get going. Even if you're not a parent in this room, this sermon applies to you. This sermon applies to you knowing your salvation and it applies to any key relationship you have. Stand with me as we read from the gospel of John chapter 5 from verse 18 to 29.

Scripture

"This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God. So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. Truly, truly, I

say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment."

(Prayer)

Father, we come to You this morning and pray that Your hand be upon this time. Father, we pray that no matter where we are, lost or saved, we would be drawn to this father/son relationship and we truly have a desire to see what this like father, like son relationship is all about. We ask these things in Jesus name, amen.

What is going on in the gospel of John is that Jesus, in chapter 5, has just healed a man that's been disabled for thirty-eight years. Unbelievable...but the religious leaders are not happy. The reason they're not happy is because Jesus healed the man on the Sabbath. Jesus gets their blood boiling even more with Him because not only is He doing the Sabbath, He's going to make a claim that He is God. We read in verse 17-18 that this was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him. Not only was He breaking the Sabbath, He was even calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God. I remind us that as Christians we believe in a triune God. We believe in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one, and Jesus is saying in this passage that He is God; He and the Father are one. He makes this claim about Himself. He goes into detail about this father/son relationship, and as we look at this father/son relationship, I think it's will absolutely blow us away about how great it is. It is the best relationship that you could possibly imagine. So what are the details? What do we learn? Let's pick up in verse 19, "So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of

his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise." So what do we learn about this relationship? We have a Father and a Son, and the Son is completely, perfectly obedient to the Father. This Father is full of wisdom and has all the right answers.

What makes parenting hard? You can love your children, but there's still a struggle to know what to do. Our children are six, five, and three years old, and I remember when Graham was born. When we got pregnant with Graham, I remember we were introduced to this whole new world of moms. Every single mom had a different thought of how to do this, how to do that, and all these different things. I remember that there was this book that moms were reading called, *Babywise*. If I understand it correctly, it's all about getting your child or baby on a structure. You had all these different people with all these different opinions that didn't like it. Some loved it, some thought it was like next to the Bible and some were in between. We're trying to take all this information in from all these people we respect and trust. They have different opinions on it and here we're trying to figure out how to apply it to this baby we just love. Here we are, three days in to little Graham being born. We're excited; we're pumped! We love this little baby, yet at the same time, we're completely exhausted because we're not sleeping and we have absolutely no idea what we're doing! So there's this pressure and stress that comes along, especially with the first one. So it's three days in and Graham is crying, we can't get him to stop, we don't know what to do, and I asked this question of Brandy...are we sure we're doing *Babywise* right? Then all of a sudden, the stress and pressure of just trying to figure this out and she just starts crying, "I don't know!" She's bawling, and I'm like, "It's going to be ok!" But can I be honest? We continued to have more of those moments. We love our children, and I know some of you are saying we are just getting warmed up. I know. But here we are loving our children, and yet having these moments where we're trying to figure out having the correct wisdom to lead them and guide them in the right way. We don't always know if we're right. That's what's different between us and our heavenly Father. He's always right. He never guides us and directs us in a wrong way. Then we have the Son who is perfectly obedient.

Last week, Kory gave a sermon and he talked about marriage. He used a boxing analogy. He talked about the boxing gloves in marriage and went through this whole thing of whether you're fighting against each other or are you on the same team. I had multiple people come up to me after that sermon and said, "I needed to hear that, but I needed to hear that for my kids." The thought here is that we sometimes don't feel like we're on the same team with our kids. Why? They're not listening to us. They're not being obedient. There's a frustration there. That's what makes parenting hard as well, is that we want our children to do something and they don't want to! Yet when we look at Jesus, He is the perfect Son, always obedient. So we have a Father that always has the right answer, full of complete wisdom and a Son that does nothing of His own accord, but is always following His Father's will. It just gets better. Verse 20 says, "For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel." We have this relationship, and we learn something else; the Father loves the Son. When Jesus gets baptized, one of the statements I love is the Father says, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well pleased." In this loving relationship, the Father shows the Son all the works. There's a closeness, there's a trust that's going on, and the Father trusts His Son with these works that need to be accomplished. These works are so amazing. When we understand these works, the result is that you and I will marvel.

The question is what are these works? When we look in this passage, we get a glimpse of it. Verse 21 says, "For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will." What's going to happen? The dead is going to rise. This thing is continued in verse 24-25, "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live." Then verse 28 says, "Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice..." So what are the works of the Father and Son? The works of the Father and Son can bring dead people to life. How is this going to happen? The heavenly Father has a plan for the Son. That Son is going to be perfectly obedient,

obedient to the point of death on the cross. That Son will take your spot and my spot on the cross, and that Son will take on death by following His Father and will defeat death. By defeating death, He will be raised from the dead and has victory over death, and that has the power to give life to you and me. "For whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." If we repent, believe, and make Jesus the Lord and Savior of our life, we go from being dead bodies to having eternal life with Him forever. Just not eternal life, but what John 1:12 makes clear is that we have eternal life now as children of God. When you come to Christ, you are on a path to death, you had a death sentence on your head, and now you live. You live and have a whole new identity and you have a whole new inheritance. That's all the base on this father/son relationship.

Do you know what I think our struggles can be in this life? It is that each and every single one of us, deep down inside, no matter how old or young we are, we want to believe our mom and dad loves us. We want that. We want to fight for that. Deep down inside, we genuinely want to hear they are well pleased with us. The thing we will try to do instead of trusting in Christ is we will try to earn it by works. So now, all of a sudden, to make sure that we have that love, that we have that acceptance, that our identity is secure, we can maybe try to live up to a certain type of standard, and then out of fear that if we don't live up to this certain type of standard, then we will bring shame upon the family name. So we're constantly being morally good, but at the same time, constantly feeling pressure because we've got to live up to the law. Or, we could work ourselves to death. Maybe your father and mother are bad, maybe it's good, but deep down inside, you're going to work, work, and work because you want to prove to them that you're something special, but they'll love you and be well pleased with you. You can go the other way around. Maybe you feel like a failure this morning, and you feel like you just have no hope at all and it's leading to sexual immorality, maybe looking at pornography. Maybe you are a young lady in here desperately wanting to experience the love of a father and you're willing to sacrifice your body and treat it like a piece of meat and compromise just so you can feel the love of a man. Whatever your situation might be in those scenarios, you're believing lies. What is so good about this father/son relationship, what He's

telling that person who is trying to live up to the standard, Jesus lived up to the law so you wouldn't have to. Lay it down. What he's telling the person who is putting all their identity in their work is that Jesus did the work for you. Lay it down. What he's telling that person, that man or woman who is struggling with sexual sin and feels like they are marked with condemnation and shame; Jesus took the shame for you. What this pastor is saying is when you get the father/son relationship, the encouragement for you is you don't have to live up to the law, you don't have to work it, and you no longer have to be marked by shame. By believing and trusting in Jesus, you can experience the love of the heavenly Father, and hear the heavenly Father by your new identity tell you that He is well pleased with you. the question is do we believe that, because the more we do, the more we understand who our Father is, the more it should lead to us having a desire to be drawn to Him. We should have the desire to call out to Him. Why? Because we know who He is. We know what our identity is based on the Son, and we know who He is because He's our Father.

Do you know what I love? In Luke 11, the disciples asked Jesus how to pray. So Jesus starts teaching them. The first word Jesus tells them to pray in Luke 11:2 is Father, Dad. Get this. In 1 Timothy 6:16, it talks about our God dwells in this unapproachable light. Think about Isaiah. Our God who is holy, holy, holy. When you read revelation and all the imagery that's around the throne of God, that's who our God is and we can come up to Him, pray, and call out to Him by what Jesus has done for us and say Father. The more we understand that our Father is in control, the more we understand our heavenly Father is good, the more we understand that He loves us and cares for us, the more we should be drawn to Him day and day out believing that no matter what comes our way, He's good, He's in control, and He's going to take care of us. This doesn't mean life's going to be easy; life is going to be hard. Let me say this as well. We might not always have all the answers in life of all the why's and why did this happen. We might get those answers on the other side. We might not know the why, but we know the who. The more we know the who, the more we can call out to Him believing that He is going to take care of us.

I've got two jobs. One of the jobs I work for my dad, and the other here at church I work for my spiritual father. That's pretty good. Here I'm just blessed with these relationships and here I was talking to a few different men, and we were all in this unique situation where we work for our dads. One of the things we were talking about is the comfort we have when times are really hard, really difficult and we don't know what to do, we can pick up the phone and call the dad. They have the wisdom, they have the understanding, they've been there, they've done that, and it doesn't make the situation actually easier, but they can help us. No matter what happens, the very next day we know they're going to be there. That is so comforting, but so much more, that's who our heavenly Father is. When we realize and understand who our heavenly Father is and how great He is, how powerful He is, it leads into us wanting to be more obedient like His Son because we realize we want to gain His wisdom, we want to hear from Him, and the more we hear from Him, the more we become like the Son Jesus Christ. When we become more like the Son Jesus Christ, the more this transforms our family, the more we represent Christ in our homes. We represent the Son in our homes, as we are fathers and mothers. All of a sudden, our homes are not marked with condemnation. They're not marked with a works based mentality. They're not marked with trying to live up to a standard; they are with the blood of Jesus Christ. We've been so transformed by what Jesus has done for us that we want our children to be drawn to our heavenly Father.

The question is do we believe it. Do we believe that we have this unbelievable amazing father/son relationship? As good as our earthly fathers are our heavenly Father is even better. Do we really believe that He hears us? In Luke 11 at the end of the Lord's Prayer in verses 11-13, Jesus says as He teaches them how to pray, "What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" We understand our earthly father relationship, we understand as a mom and dad how much we love our children, we're just going to love them that much more when we see who our heavenly Father is and how much He loves us. Is there discipline, hard

times, trials, tribulations? Yes, yes, yes, and yes. We live in sinful fallen world, but our hearts have been changed by this son/father relationship and it should lead as moms and dads in this room to model and imitate the son/father relationship.

Here again, where are you? How is your heart right now feeling towards the creator of the heavens and the universe? Do you genuinely believe that through His Son that you can call out to Him as Father that you can call out to Him as Dad? I think we've got options this morning as we think about it. Right now, wherever you are, you can be in this situation and you can be morally good but living without Christ. Maybe your mom and dad is not morally good, but whatever your situation might be, if you do not know the son/father relationship, you might not be abusing your child like Mr. Hernandez, but you might be leading your child right towards judgment, right towards death, right towards hell. This might be a time this morning based on you being an earthly father or mother that you realize and understand who your heavenly Father can be. This might be a time this morning you might need to repent and put your faith and trust in what Christ has done for you. Let me say this as well. I believe there are a whole lot of Christians that know and understand what Jesus has done for them; they've put their faith and trust that Jesus is their Lord and Savior and are also believing a whole lot of lies. They're believing their identity and inheritance is based on works. They're still condemning themselves and beating themselves up. Let me say this; it's overflowing into the house. This morning, this might be a time for you to repent. You might need time to think and meditate on what you're living and where your heart is this morning.

Let me give you a challenge as well if that's you. One of the things that was so beneficial to me when I was going through a dry time in my life and all I did was read the gospel of John. When I read the gospel of John, I just focused on every single passage that dealt with the father/son relationship. I asked myself do I want in. I was already in, but after reading the gospel and seeing how good this relationship is, I wanted in again because I truly saw and understood that the father/son relationship in John, in the Bible, there's nothing better. By being grafted in, adopted in

this relationship, it changed everything for me. The question is even as a Christian, do I really believe my identity. If I believe my identity, one of the things is there should be a longing for Him. There should be a trust in Him that should be growing. Do you know what I want for people talk about things they are going to be doing for 2019? I never heard people talk about regretting praying. I want in my heart to be so much more in love with Jesus, I don't feel like I'm forced to pray, but I want to pray because I know who my Dad is. I know who my Father is. I know who the Son is. If that's you this morning, maybe there needs to be some time to repent and question where your identity is.

Maybe you don't have children. Maybe you're single. Maybe your children are out of the house and you're a grandparent. One of the privileges and honors I have at this church is that I get to baptize college students. One of the overall themes I've heard again and again is even if mom and dad are not walking with Christ, they've had a grandpa or grandma who has, and it's been a light to them. If you truly understand this father/son relationship as a grandparent or as a single person, Paul talks about timothy as a spiritual child, there probably needs to be somebody in your life that you need to be a spiritual father or mother to. As you think of this new way of thinking, who is that person going to be that you try to influence their life, be a spiritual mom and dad, and point them to this amazing relationship of the heavenly Father and heavenly Son. Do you believe your identity of how you've been grafted into the father/son relationship and is it overflowing as you being an earthly father and mother to your sons and daughters?