

## How Does God Work Through Generations of a Family?

- Well Happy Father's Day to all the dads, all the grandads! Happy, happy Father's Day! Such an honor to have you join us. For those of you who are fathers, and like me, you've got kids, for those who are spiritual fathers, you're the mentors, the coaches, the teachers, the leaders in the community, we love you, we appreciate you, we honor you. And this day is specially set aside, and this weekend is uniquely designed to just encourage you, and to thank you and to bless you. And so I wore my t-shirt, "more fathers, less government," in honor of our time together, right? All right? And if you disagree with that, you need to come back and learn the Bible. All right, we're in a great book of the Bible called Genesis and usually for something special like Father's Day, the senior pastor will take a break and do a topical sermon, but today, we find ourselves in the perfect text. As we're in the book of Genesis, we hit Genesis chapter 25, and we're gonna answer this question, how does God work through generations of a family? We've been studying the life of a man named Abraham, one of the most significant men in the history of the world. This week, we're gonna look at his son, Isaac, and then his grandson, Isaac's son, Jacob. So actually right in Genesis 25, we're looking at lives and legacies being changed. We're looking at three generations. And so if you've got a Bible, find your place in Genesis 25, and I'll start with a bit of an analogy for all of us, but especially for the men, the husbands, and the fathers. My wife, Grace and I, this August, we will celebrate 30 years of faithful Christian marriage, and so I love her with all my heart and she is here. You'll meet Grace at the end. And when we first met, I was a baseball player in high school. We met March 12th, 1988. If you remember the 80s, it was parachute pants. And you know, I was too legit to quit. So I just kept pursuing Grace and she was running track and she was an Allstate sprinter, but I caught her. And so we started dating March 12th, 1988, and I had never really been to a track meet, but I really was attracted to Grace. So I'm trying to figure out track and she ran in the relay. And so what I realized was the handoff is the most important part of the relay. And so one person would run their race and they had a baton, but then it was really important that they hand the baton to the right person, can't hand it to the other team, at the right time, at the right place within this short window. And the key was the handoff. Many, if not, most of the races that I saw where Grace was running, they were won or lost with a handoff of the baton. And what's the worst thing you can do with the baton in a race?

- [Audience] Drop it.

- Drop it, okay? Just think with that analogy about marriage, life, legacy, and family. For those of us who are men, we want to take the baton, if our father knows and loves the Lord, and we wanna run our race, and as we head near the end of our life, our finish line, we want to hand it to our sons. And then we want them to run their race. And then we want them to hand it to our grandsons, hand it to the right person at the right time, in the right place and don't drop the baton. What we're gonna look at this week is actually three generations. Abraham, his son and his grandson. We're looking at faith and legacy continuing generationally through a family. So we'll start in Genesis 25 with Abraham running his race. So Abraham's wife, Sarah died. They were married for a long time. They finally had their son, Isaac, they waited 25 years. Sarah dies, Abraham's not done. This is crazy, the dude's over 100. He's like, "Time to saddle up and start a

family!" He is an overachiever, this Abraham. I'll tell you this. At 100, I'm taking a nap. That's what I'm doing. And after that, I'm gonna take a nap to recover from my first nap. I'm certainly not gonna take another wife whose name was Keturah. She bore him- He's gonna have six more sons!

- [Audience] Wow!

- How many of you are 100? You're like, yeah, I don't need six newborns. I don't. That's, we're all wearing diapers, it's too much. She bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak and Shuah, they're a cling-on family. "Jokshan fathered Sheba and Dedan. "The sons of Dedan were Asshurim, Letushim and Leummim." If you're new, and you're like, "Pastor Mark, I don't know if you said it right." No one knows. So I just say it confident and fast and just go with it. All right? "The sons of Midian were Ephah, Ephher, Hanoah, Abida and Eldaah." "All these were the children of Keturah." So Abraham, if you remember, he had a son with Haagar, he had another son with Sarah, and now he is gonna have a bunch of other sons after his first wife passes away. Abraham gave all he had to Isaac. So the inheritance and the blessing, the baton goes not to all the sons, but to Isaac, the son through his wife, Sarah. "But to the son of his concubines, Abraham gave gifts." He's generous to them. Inheritance, provision. "While he was still living, he sent them away from his son Isaac, eastward toward the east country." "These are the days of the years of Abraham's life." Dude lived to be 175 years of age! "Abraham breathed his last." So he's coming to the finish line. This is the end of his life. Paul says in the New Testament to "run your race." Well, this is the finish line for his race. "Abraham breathed this last and died in a good old age, an old man full of years and he was gathered to his people." So here's the next generation, father to son. "Isaac and Ishmael, his sons buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron," where we had studied previously in Genesis, "the son of Zohar, the Hittite, east of Mamre, the field that Abraham purchased from the Hittites. There Abraham was buried with his wife, Sarah." So let's look, first generation. So Abraham is the first man in his family to trust in the Lord, to belong to the Lord, to believe in the Lord, so he gets the proverbial baton. And here he's gotta hand it off to the next generation for a son to carry forth into the future for the legacy of the family. Now Abraham's father was an unbeliever and some of you are in the position of Abraham. You don't come from godly line and lineage. You're the first believer in your family. It kind of starts with you. This was the story of Abraham. We read of him in Joshua 24:2, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel long ago, your fathers lived beyond the Euphrates," actually in what is ancient Babylon or modern day Iraq. "Terah, the father of Abraham and Nahor, and they served other gods." So here's what we know about Abraham's dad: ungodly guy. Lived in Babylon, modern day Iraq, was in some sort of false religion or demonic cult. Worshiped other gods. God showed up and saved Abraham, so it all starts with Abraham. Some of you men are in that point and position of Abraham. You can't say, "Well, my dad loved the Lord" or, "My granddad loved the Lord," you're like, "Nobody loved the Lord." And it kind of starts with me. If that is you, the story of Abraham should be very encouraging and insightful. God told him, "You need to leave." "You need to make a clean break." If your family are all unbelievers, you can love them, but you may need to leave them. He needs to leave the family business, the family religion, the family nation, the homestead, and God tells him, "You

need to leave and go to a place that I will show you, trust me by faith." That's why he is the man who is the prototype, pattern and precedent of faith in the Bible. If you have a family that does not love the Lord, you can't carry forth that legacy, you can't. You can love them, but you need to leave them to start a new legacy.

- [Audience] Amen.

- Start a new legacy. So that's what he does. It begins with him. Now here's how he finishes his race. Abraham was saved around the age of 75, he was an old man. God gave him a promise. "Your wife Sarah is gonna have a baby, through him will come a nation, the nation of Israel, the Jewish people. Through them will come the Lord Jesus Christ, the son of God, the blessing to the nations of the earth." They waited 25 years and they thought that maybe God wasn't going to come through. So Sarah, if you remember the story, she came up with a terrible idea, just a terrible idea- It's like, "Let's get another girl." "You can get her pregnant, we'll see what happens." No, it's always a bad idea. Right, so Jerry Springer episode started early in Genesis. That's where it all started. A lot of baby mama drama, a lot of paternity tests, lot of hair pulling, a lot of "we gotta go to commercial break." A lot of that going on in Genesis. It's a redneck hillbilly saga. It's a little bit of Kentucky, right? In the promised land. That's what they got going on in this family. So then what happens is they have their ups and downs and Abraham and Sarah are married, eventually God does provide, but now he's got two wives, two sons, Ishmael through Haagar, Isaac through Sarah. It's a lot of family conflict. So Haagar and Ishmael are sent away. And then he raises Isaac as the son of the promise and the covenant. And here we see him at the finish line of his life. Now up until this point, the truth is this: Abraham's had some good days and some bad days. His good days, he loved God. He obeyed God. He followed God. He walked in faith. He left his homeland. He planted churches. He saddled up with his mercenary army and he went to war to deliver his nephew, Lot. He's had some good days. He heard from the Lord. He talked to the Lord. He met with the Lord. It was incredible. He also had some bad days. He had days where he and his wife lied to people. They had a little habit of it. He pretended it was his sister, gave her away twice, committed polygamy slash adultery, and brought forth a child that he should not have been the father of, he's had some good days and bad days. But God has been good to him every day. Here's a big idea. You and I, we have some good days, some bad days. God is good, every day. Every promise that God made to Abraham was fulfilled by the end of his life. In chapter 12, God said, "I'm gonna bless you." And he did. God said, "I'm gonna give you the promised land," that we know is Israel, and he did. He said that Isaac would be coming in Genesis 15 through Sarah, and that happened. Said that he would live to an old age in Genesis 15. And he died at 175. Said in chapter 17 that he would father nations and kings. And he did. And it says that through him, generations in Genesis 17 would be saved, and that is happening. Everything God promised, God did. This is what you need to know about our God. He's not the kind of God that makes promises and doesn't keep them. This is why we believe in the resurrection of the dead, eternal life, the second coming of the Lord Jesus, there's still a lot of promises in the Bible that he has made that we're awaiting the fulfillment of, but the God who is faithful to all of his past promises, will be faithful to all of his future promises. That's the good news for us. He's had some good days and some bad days.

And here's the big idea: God does perfect work through imperfect fathers and families. That should be an encouragement. Because as we look at this father, was he a perfect father? No, he was not a perfect father. I mean, he, again, he had a child that he should not have had. And then after Sarah dies, he marries, has six more sons. Now I'm not saying that's a sin, but that's a lot. And what he does here, he sends them all away because they can't all live together as a family. So he blesses them. He gives them provision and he sends them away. Because the only thing that was really holding this family together, this entire extended family. Just think about this: at his deathbed, there are children from three different women. True or false; that's not going to be a happily-ever-after family, once the patriarch is gone. So he blesses them, scatters them and sends them. He's not a perfect man, but God is perfectly good to this man.

- [Audience] Amen.

- And again, I just want you to see this. He's not a perfect father. On father's day, many men feel the guilt. They feel the burden. We're keenly aware of what we have done wrong. And if our conscience isn't convicting us, then Satan is condemning us. And we know as a father, especially the older your kids get, when they're little, you can blame it on their mother, but when they get bigger, you're like, that's my kid, right? I kind of gotta own this. He's not perfect. He's not a perfect father, and true or false; this is not a perfect family. This is not a perfect family. But God does perfect work through imperfect fathers and families. That's the hope and the encouragement. It's not just the human father in this story. It's the divine father over the story. God, the father, who was working things out for the good of his sons and daughters. So Abraham dies and he's gotta hand off the baton to the next generation. Problem is, he's got two sons. Ishmael was born through Hagar. About 13 years later, Isaac is born through Sarah. And the question is, which son is gonna get the baton and carry forth the legacy of faith? Ishmael carried the baton or excuse me, Isaac carried the baton and Ishmael dropped the baton. There are two sons: one carries it, one drops it. Genesis 25:11-18, "After the death of Abraham, God blessed Isaac, his son." This would be my prayer for all of our sons and daughters, that God would bless them as he's blessed us. "And Isaac settled at Beer-lahai-roi. These are the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son whom Hagar the Egyptian Sarah's servant bore to Abraham." So father dies, he's got two sons with two different women. What's gonna happen? "These are the names of the sons of Ishmael, named in the order of their birth." And just so you know, these are all Arab names because Ishmael is the father of the Arab peoples. Isaac is the father of the Jewish peoples. Today, if my memory serves me correct, there are 15 million Jews on the earth and 436 million who are Arab or Muslim. Many are Muslim. "Nebaioth, the first-born of the Ishmael, and Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah." That was fun. "These are the sons of Ishmael and these are their names by their villages, by their encampments, 12 princes, according to their tribes." So on the Jewish side, there will be the 12 tribes of Israel. These are the 12 tribes of Ishmael "These are the years of the life of Ishmael. He lived 137 years. He breathed his last and died and was gathered to his people. They settled from Havilah to Shur, which is opposite Egypt in the direction of Assyria. He settled over against all his kinsman." So here's what happens. There's a father, Abraham. Got two sons, Isaac and Ishmael. Now the wife that he births Ishmael through,

she is Egyptian. She is an unbeliever. She does not know and love the Lord. God blesses her. God is good to her. God is faithful to her, but she doesn't know and love the Lord. His other wife, Sarah, she does belong to and believe in the Lord. She's a believer. She gives birth, after Hagar does, to Isaac. And now the debate and the question in the family is, which son is going to lead the family in the next generation? Well, God made this choice, and he said it would be Isaac, not Ishmael, even though Ishmael was born first. God chose Isaac because he was the believer. The point is this, generally there are ways that things go, but ultimately the best person to lead is the one who knows and loves the Lord. That's the big idea.

- [Audience] Amen.

- God doesn't say, "Well, you were born first, so you get to be the leader." God says, "you actually know and love me." "You would be the best person to lead."

- [Audience] Wow.

- And so sometimes it's not just your education, your intellect, your intelligence, or your experience. It's your relationship with God that qualifies you to lead. And that's what happens for this side of the family. And so Isaac is going to carry forth the baton. He does know the Lord. He does love the Lord. He does serve the Lord. He was a promised son. His parents waited 25 years for him to be born. Finally, he was born. We looked at last week that he didn't get married until he was around 40. But he waited. He loved the Lord. They were surrounded with people called the Canaanites. The Canaanites were, they were ungodly. They were ruthless. They were not the kind of people you want your kids to marry. So there weren't a lot of options for him to marry. This should be like the, you know, the homeschool kid who loves Jesus gets dropped on campus at ASU on a Friday night on, you know, Greek row. And he's like, "I don't think my wife's here." No, no, no, she's not. I promise you. She left before this started, right? She's not coming back, right? So Isaac doesn't marry 'cause there's not a lot of options. So then Abraham sent his servant to go to another nation, to find a wife for him. And he waits patiently. The point is this; he's not running around. He's not wasting his single years. He's waiting for God. And ultimately, he meets Rebecca. He loves her. He marries her and he adores her. But you're gonna find out in a moment, she is beautiful and barren, just like his mother. Isaac's mom was beautiful and barren. So is his wife. Now what his parents had done previously, when the wife was barren, they got another woman. Isaac isn't gonna do that. You're gonna see in just a moment. He waits 20 years for God to give him a son. And he's faithful to his wife. That generational curse and sin of polygamy and adultery, it is broken with Isaac. So he picks up the baton. He's like, "Okay, my dad loved the Lord, my dad loved me." "My dad has died. I got the baton." "I'm gonna love the Lord." "I'm gonna serve the Lord." While I'm single, I'm gonna love and serve the Lord." "Once I'm married, I'm gonna love and serve the Lord with my wife." "We're gonna wait 20 years in faith and pray for God to give us a baby." "And then we're gonna love and serve the Lord as a family." "But I am not going to venture outside of this marriage." "And I am not going to bring children into the world through other women, and cause the kind of drama that my dad did." "I love my dad, my dad knows the Lord, my dad loves the Lord, my dad made some mistakes." "I

don't wanna repeat those mistakes." He doesn't dislike his dad, but he learns from the lessons of his dad. Ishmael on the other hand, the other son, he drops the baton. God told us in Genesis 16:12, he'd be a wild donkey of a man. Right? Good luck with that. Right? And so what Ishmael does, he does whatever he wants. He doesn't do what the Lord wants. That's Ishmael. He's just this rugged independence, says he's good with a bow. Told us earlier in Genesis, he's good at hunting and he's good at fighting, right? He not good at worshiping, but he's good at murdering and killing and attacking and fighting. That's who he is. He's always tough. He's not so good at being tender. He's a guy who is blessed by the Lord, but doesn't know and love the Lord. So he's going to drop the baton. He doesn't love. What we see here is he's at the funeral of his dad 'cause his dad loved him and he loved his dad, but he didn't love his dad's God, he doesn't worship his dad's God. He doesn't want to carry on the legacy of his father's faith. So he marries Egyptian gals who are unbelievers. He is blessed by God. Here's the big idea. Just because God blesses you, doesn't mean you belong to him. God is good to people who don't even know him. Ishmael's one of those guys. So God blesses him, but he doesn't believe in God. He doesn't have a relationship with God and he doesn't carry forth his father's faith. He settles, we read it here. He settles in a region that is near today, a place that we would call Mecca. 570 A.D., a man was born there named Mohamed, who is a descendant to Ishmael. About 40 years later, and about 610 A.D., This is about 2000 B.C., he got a vision for a new religion called Islam from Ishmael. And we just heard this in the names of his descendants. Those are Arab names. So now the Arab people descend from Ishmael. Many of them participate in Islam. A religion created by a descendant of Ishmael named Mohamed, who was born in the region where he settled. So that whole side of the family in large part doesn't know love and serve the Lord. What I would say is continue to pray for the Arab world and the Muslim world. There are many who do know and love Jesus. And there are strong underground churches in places like Turkey and Iran, where they're sick of this sort of oppressive religious rule. But for the most part, much of the geopolitical conflict between Israel and the Arab nations, between the Jews and the Christians and the Muslims, it all starts right here in Genesis. It's an ancient family feud. Abraham carries the baton, holds it out. Ishmael drops and says, "I don't want it." Isaac says, "I'll take it." "I'm gonna love and serve the Lord." So then he's gonna get married and he's gonna have a child. Now we're dealing with faith, going from one generation to two, and two generations to three. So Jacob carried the baton and Esau dropped the baton. These are Isaac's sons. I want you men to start to think in terms of legacy and lineage. Fools think of a good time. God's men think of a good legacy. Genesis 25:19-34. These are the generations of Isaac. This is the believing son who's carrying the baton, Abraham's son. "Abraham fathered Isaac and Isaac was 40 years old when he got married, took Rebecca, the daughter of Bethuel, the Aramean of Paddan-aram, the sister of Laban the Aramean," we looked at this last week, "to be his wife." And Issac what?

- [Audience] Prayed.

- Prayed to the Lord. Is he carrying the baton? Yeah. It never says this about Ishmael. Oh, and he prayed to the Lord and he prayed over his wife. Says that about Isaac. Issac prayed to the Lord for his wife. Because she was, she was barren, it's weird. We live in a culture now, where

for many people, the worst thing is to get pregnant. And in that culture, the worst thing was not to get pregnant. They really want a kid. They can't have a kid. You know what Isaac doesn't do, doesn't get bitter against the Lord. What Isaac doesn't do is get bitter against his wife. What Isaac doesn't do is go and get a concubine or another wife. What does Isaac do? He prays. Friends, let me tell you how long he prayed for: 20 years. What he says is, we're either gonna have a child God's way or we're not gonna have a child. That's faith. And the Lord what? Granted his prayer. I always say this friends, there's the Lord's will, and there's the Lord's timing. You think after 19 and a half years, it'd be like, "I feel like I prayed enough." Well, just keep praying. Maybe it's the Lord's will. It's just not the Lord's time. And Rebecca, his wife, conceived the...

- [Audience] Children.

- Plural. She's got twins. I'm telling you. That's a good prayer. "Lord, give my wife a baby." God's like, "I'll give you a coupon." I'll give you another one. They're having twins. Wow, okay! All right! The children struggle together within her. She's got two sons. What are they doing in the womb? Fighting. Right? All the moms laugh, right? You know what boys do?

- [Audience] Fight.

- They fight. You're like, "My boys don't!" Well then that's just when you're gone. They fight. Ask 'em what happens when you're not there. And she said, "If it is thus, why is this happening to me?" So she went to what? She's gonna go pray and ask, "Lord, I don't know what's going on." Is she a believer? Absolutely. Is he a believer? Absolutely. When they get stuck, they stop and they pray. So then the story continues. "And the Lord said to her," so God spoke to her. "Two nations are in your womb." "Two peoples from within you shall be divided." "The one shall be stronger than the other, the older shall serve the younger." It's an inversion of the first born. "When her days to give birth were completed, behold, the twins were in her womb." "The first came out red, all his body like a hairy cloak." "So they called his name Esau." Let me explain this real quick. So she's gonna give birth to two sons, Jacob and Esau. Okay. Jacob and Esau. It's kinda like Isaac and Ishmael. One generation to the next. What we have done in our study of Genesis thus far, I have tried over and over and over to show you that when the Bible says that a person or a place existed, archeology confirms that that's historical fact, right? So we looked at, for example, where Noah's Ark is purported to be where Abraham is buried, what's really interesting is, here's Jacob, here's Esau. Jacob comes out, looks like a normal kid. Esau comes out. He's a ginger. That's how we know who Esau is. He's a fuzzy ginger. And I'm happy to report that archeological evidence has confirmed the story of Jacob and Esau. So I'll share this with you in a moment. Archeologists dig up the past and it confirms the Bible. Oftentimes it's reported in something called the biblical archeological review. If you're a bit of a nerd and you wanna study this. I just wanna share with you the evidence from... There you go, so... Was that good or not? See? Okay, we'll vote. Should I do that tomorrow in the next sermon or not? Clap if you think that was funny. All right? All right? Okay, good. "What if I don't think it's funny?" Keep it to yourself. All right, so just a little sidebar. The key is always timing and setup, you know? And

as soon as I quote an academic source, You're like, "oh!" All the nerds perked up. But that, there, every time you see it, when my kids were little, the- I'll tell you a story. It's funny story. Dad's story, just comes to mind. The reason I think of this every time I hear this story, I was reading the little kid's Bible to one of my sons when they were little, and they loved Elmo. And as we read it, one of my kids was like, "Elmo!" They immediately went there. I go there every time. All right, so we'll keep reading the Bible. All right, for those of you, need more verses, this is not very biblical. Okay, well, "Afterward his brother came out with his hand holding Esau's heel." Can you see, this poor woman! Like giving birth is not hard enough, the two boys are fighting on the way out. I'm gonna be the first born. No, I'm gonna be the first born. So one's halfway out and the other's like, "I'm pulling you back in!" "I'm gonna be the first!" There's a lot going on here. Can you imagine, just think about this with me. You're a mom, "You're like, here comes one." "Wait a minute, what, what the- " Right? Is it just me or is this a lot? "After the brother came out with his hand holding Esau's heel, his name was Jacob." That means "to grasp." He's trying to pull his brother back in so he could be the first born. "Isaac was 60 years old when she bore them." "When the boys grew up, Esau was a skillful hunter." He is a lot more like Ishmael, "A man of the field." He's tough guy. Man's man. Diesel-lifted truck, right? Elk tags. He only eats what he can kill. Hunting, fishing, loving every minute of it. He's that guy! While Jacob was... He's a quiet man. He was indoors a lot. He was, "what are you gonna do today?" Said, "Imma go kill somethin'." What are you gonna do today, Issac? "I was dusting. Maybe bake some stuff, I don't know." "Hang out with mom..." I don't know, "we're gonna bedazzle some clothes and, you know." How many of you raised sons and they're just totally different? One son's like, "I'm gonna read a book." The other son's like, "I'll burn it." You're like, yeah, those are different kids. Isaac, the dad, what? Loved Esau. 'Cause they go hunting together and they'd eat what they killed together. Rebecca loved Jacob, is that a problem? Yes. They're playing favorites. Once, when- I noticed this today, I `was reading this today, who is cooking the stew? Just pointing out something the Bible says, all right? Esau was out killing things, and Jacob was home cooking it. You kind of got a mama's boy and a daddy's boy. When Jacob was cooking stew, Esau came in from the field and he was exhausted. He's been working and hunting all day. "And Esau said to Jacob, 'Let me eat some of that red stew for I am exhausted.' Therefore his name was called, 'Edom.'" That means "red." "Jacob said, 'Sell me your birthright now.'" This is like, "I want a hot pocket." "All right, then give me your truck and your inheritance." "For the hot pocket?" "Yeah." Jacob said, "Sell me your birth-" Is he a little bit of a trickster and an opportunist?

- [Audience] Oh yeah.

- Oh yeah. "Esau said, 'I'm about to die.'" Was he? No! He's just a teenage boy. They say that stuff. He's just a young kid. Every young guy's like, "I'm starving to death." Actually, you're not. You ate like 15 minutes ago. You're fine. There's something called fasting. You, you know, you'll be fine. "'Of what uses a birthright to me?' Jacob said, 'Swear to me now.'" Make an oath. "So he swore to him and sold his..."

- [Audience] Birthright.



- Birthright to Jacob. For what? Stew! I hope it was good stew. It had taters. "Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew and he ate and drank and rose up and he went his way." Right? Here's the big idea. "Thus Esau despised his birthright." Here's what happens. Two boys are born. They're fighting in the womb. One is born, the other is fighting for his position, and the one, Isaac, is he a great guy? Not really. Esau, is he a great guy? Not really. So God doesn't work with the great guy. He just works with a guy who wants a relationship with him. Esau could care less. Isaac isn't a great guy, but he actually does care about God. So let me just unpack a lot here. We looked at Abraham, two sons, holds out the baton and you've got Isaac, says, "I'll take it and run with it." Ishmael, "I could care less." Isaac has two sons, Jacob and Esau. Holds out the baton. Jacob says, "I wanna walk with God, I'll take it and run with it." Esau doesn't just drop the baton, he literally throws it in the garbage can and walks away. He could care less. A couple of things I wanna point out from this story. Number one, life begins in the womb. These are little boys in the womb. They have a name, they have names. They have a destiny. God said, "They're gonna be nations." So these are human beings with a name known by God and a destiny. Number two, God hears and answers the prayer of a mother. Right? It's amazing. You know, sometimes a woman will just have this sense, like, "Something is happening in my womb." Lord, what is it? Can God reveal to her and speak to her what is happening in the womb? Yeah, 'cause God knows. The Bible talks a lot about God knitting us together in our mother's womb, knowing us, setting us apart, even filling John the baptizer from the mother's womb. So she's like, "Man, here's a lot of action here." "Lord what's going on?" He's just like, "Well, your two boys are fightin'." And they're always gonna be fighting. And so you've got a battle in you that's gonna continue after your birth. And then we see that brothers tend to battle. How many of you have had more than one son? Do they ever fight, argue, disagree? Manipulate one another? Take advantage of one another? Yes, you should see all the men. There's certain men right now, they have PTSD. They're just thinking about their brother. And what happens is that brothers are built for competition. And so we've seen this so far. We've seen Cain and Abel have their conflict, Isaac and Ishmael have their conflict, Jacob and Esau have their conflict. And if you fast forward to the end of the book, there's a dude named Joseph and his brothers, big conflict. Okay, so let me just tell you this. If you have multiple sons, you need to raise them to work out their differences. You need to raise them to work on their relationship. What happens here is a fatal flaw in the parenting and architecting of the family. The boys don't get along. So dad's like, "Well, I like Esau." "He hunts and fishes with me. He's a tough guy." "Good with the bow, man's man, we go kill stuff." Mom's like, "Actually, I like Jacob." "He's a nice boy." "He hangs out with me and he helps me around the house and he's good with muffins." "And we have a lot of heartfelt conversations and we quilt together." "He's my kind of guy." And what they needed to do rather than dividing, they needed to be uniting and reconciling this relationship between the brothers. Now kids just tend to fight, but brothers tend to really fight. How many of you, moms and dads, you've raised sons and they just wear you out? You're like, it's always something. It's working on the relationship because the issue is not the issue. The relationship is the issue, and ultimately wherever they're fighting, it's really not what they're fighting about. They're fighting about which one of us is stronger, which one of us is dominant, which one of us is the leader, which one of us gets to be favored? And the issue is, this would

be the big parenting point, never play favorites. Never play favorites unless you've only got one kid, then it's fine. I forgot one kid. You're like, you're my favorite! Like, "I'm the only one!" And my favorite. So, but as soon as the other kid's born, you're like, "Yeah, I don't have favorites." See, if you grew up in a family where mom or dad or mom and dad played favorites, it was devastating. Well, you know, I was moms and you were dads, like what? Whoa, they both birthed you. They should both like you. Right? What happens here, dad's got his favorite, mom's got her favorite. Jesus says a divided house falls down. It can't stand up. If you don't love all your kids, then you have a divided household. So this division is now between the mom and the dad. So every time the boys have a conflict, what do you think's gonna happen? Esau's gonna go to dad, "Dad, here's what Jacob did." Jacob's gonna go to mom, "Ah mom, here's what Esau did." Mom's gonna go, "Esau, what did you do?" Dad's gonna go, "Jacob, what did you do?" House divided. Total conflict. Don't allow the conflict between the children to be pushed up to the parents. Your job is to lead them. Not to follow them. If they are fighting and you are dividing, they are leading and you are following. That is not parenting. That is enabling. But boys take work. Let me say this about boys. They take faith. It takes a lot of faith to raise a son. Have you seen a boy? The thought that one day they could take care of not only themselves, but other human beings for decades. You're like, I don't think that's possible. Somehow, they lost faith in the other son. Somehow mom lost faith in Esau and dad lost some faith in Isaac. The truth is this mom and dad need to unite. They need to have faith for all of their children. They need to not play favorites and have love for all of their children. And when their children are battling, they need to be working toward reconciling those relationships rather than accepting those divisions. Here's another point I would make out of this. There is no guaranteed way to raise godly kids. You know what? Every so often somebody writes a parenting book and it's like the guaranteed. "That's why it's all up to the Lord!" And let me just say, if their kids are not yet grown, laugh, but don't read the book. So people have asked, "Why have you and Grace not written a parenting book?" 'Cause our kids are, well, a couple are married, a couple are in college, but we have not yet reached the point where we feel confident to tell you what might work. We're still beta testing our ideas on our children. It's like the- Some years ago there was a dude I knew, he got married and two years in, he wrote a marriage book. It's like, you don't- You're ridiculous! No one should buy this book. You're adorable. Right? You guys still have stuff from your registry. You haven't even field tested most of your ideas. This is ridiculous. But every generation there's- Because parents, we all want our kids to grow up and love and serve the Lord, right?

- [Audience] Yes.

- So if there's a book, like I guarantee you're like, "Okay." No. No. So here's the case study, okay? Jacob, Esau. Okay? They're twins. So they're born. Same time. Same parents raised in the same home. Grew up in the same room. Maybe slept in the same bunk bed. Went to the same church, went to the same school, ate the same food. Grew up, totally different. This guy's really tender. This guy's really tough. This guy is mama's boy. This is daddy's boy. This guy actually loves the Lord. This guy could care less. There's no parenting guarantee. I wanna take a burden off of you. Some of you are parents. You're like, "man, I got a prodigal." "I got a wayward. I got a kid that doesn't care." "I don't know what happened." Like, it was like, you

know... "This kid love the Lord," and "This kid love the Lord." "And this kid could care less!" Like we treated them like the other, what the- Here's the big idea. Adults are responsible for their own decisions. Now as parents, we're responsible for our parenting. And on a day like father's day, there are certain dads that have certain pains. They're like, "Man, I regret it." "I wish I would've done it differently." Then go tell your kids, "Hey, I'm sorry." "I apologize." "I repent looking back, I would like your forgiveness." Put some grace on it, but sometimes it's like, "You know what?" "As a parent, I can't own anymore, You just don't care." Like there are certain, there's certain parents they're like, "Hey, can I help you get a job?" They're like, "I don't wanna work." "Okay. Well, can I help you make a budget?" "I don't care about my money." "Okay, well do you wanna go to church with me?" "Can I buy you a Bible?" "I don't care about God." You're like, "Okay." And what I always say is that the have to- The want to rather precedes the how-to. Like, if they don't want to, you can't teach 'em how to do anything. If they want to, then you can give them the how-to. Let me just take a burden off of you for some of you, your kids don't know, love, serve the Lord. And every day you think, "Well, what could I have done?" And the issue is, well, this is ultimately between them and the Lord. Okay? I mean, I've got five kids who love the Lord. We're tremendously blessed. They all love and serve the Lord. But ultimately it's between them and the Lord, 'Cause here, I'm a dad, but I'm not a savior. I can't save anybody. And I can pray for their heart, but I can't change their heart. Their heart belongs to them. And ultimately it's between them and the Lord. Here, there are two boys, one loves the Lord, the other, it says he what? Despises. He just despi- Everything that God would want him to love, he hates. And everything God would want him to hate, he loves. This is hard to hear, but it is, sometimes, the way it works itself out. And as the first born, here's what he would've gotten: double the inheritance. And Abraham is loaded! He's got land. We now call it Israel. Who would- Oh, you're like, "I'll take it." All right, that's a lot of land. He's got thousands of people, probably in his household. We saw earlier, he is got 318 trained mercenary soldiers raised from youth in his household to protect his fields and his flocks and his businesses and his extended family. This is- And if you're the first born, there's only two, you get double grandpa's estate, double inheritance. Plus, you're the leader of the next generation of the family. You're the patriarch. And on the deathbed, the father would pray over you, pronounce a blessing over you. And it was usually a prophecy that unlocked the rest of your life in future generations. I mean, how many of you are like- Here's what Esau says: I'll trade it for soup. Okay? Well trade what? I don't care about money, don't care. I don't care about family and I don't care about God. Nothing motivates me. Okay, if you meet somebody like this, they're bewildering. He's like, "I could care less." And here's the big idea, sometimes it is a momentary pleasure that destroys a generational blessing. Sometimes it is a momentary pleasure that destroys a generational blessing. What God is talking about here is, I've got- blessing that started with your grandfather, comes through your father, is gonna come to you. Yeah, but soup sounds really good right now. But see we hear this, and we're just sort of- How many of you are just kind of shocked, but how many of us have done this? You know, in a moment, you're like, I chose alcohol. I chose pornography. I chose fornication. I chose adultery. I chose comfort. I chose the snooze alarm rather than walking in God's will and living in obedience so that he could bless me. I mean, for some of us, it's that little dopamine hit on the front of the brain. You're like, "I'll take it now." And that's what he does. Okay, so it's a warning to all of us. It's a warning to all of us. And sometimes the worst pain is

felt in our family, with our siblings. We saw in Genesis 3, sin enters the world, and then it enters the family. And sometimes the greatest pain of sin is with siblings. I, gosh, they don't love me, they don't love the Lord, we don't get along... Mom and dad are not helping, it's a lot of problems. But ultimately adult children are responsible for their decisions. It says that... We hear that Jacob marries a believer and they pray and they worship God. Esau marries unbelievers, never worships God or prays. You're gonna, if you come back next week, in Genesis 26, it says this. "He married unbelievers" and it said, he quote, "made life bitter for Isaac and Rebecca." Son, please don't do that. That's what I'm doing. Son, if you do that, you're gonna really wreck your life. Son, please don't marry that girl. That's just... That's not gonna end well. "That's okay. I've got a lot of wives." He's a polygamist. "I'm just gonna sleep with a bunch of girls. "I'm gonna hunt, I'm gonna fish, I'm gonna eat." "I'm gonna drink, I'm just gonna do whatever I want to do." "And you're gonna need to shed your tears every day." In Hebrews 12:16, it uses these words to describe Esau: Sexually immoral, depending upon what English translation you prefer, a fornicator, sexual sin, profane, unholy, ungodly, worldly, godless, careless about God and irreligious. Here's the good news, some people do care about God and God's plan for their life. Where you look Esau and go, "Oh man, that was terrible." And then we could look at Jake and we say, "You know what?" "He's not the greatest guy in the history of the world, but he does know and trust the Lord." He does care about God's blessing. He looks back and he says, "Okay, Grandpa loved and served the Lord, Dad loved and served the Lord, I wanna love and serve the Lord too." Can God work with that?

- [Audience] Yes.

- Yes. The want-to is there. He's got a lot of how-to to learn, but the want-to is there. And ultimately, I want you to know that if you are raising sons, you are raising nations. That's what's shocking about all of this. We see little boys and God sees nations. And God said, "This mama's praying." She's like, "What's going on?" God's like, "There's two nations in your womb." "What are you talking about, there's two nations?" "There's two boys." Boys become nations. Boys become nations. Through Esau comes the Edomites. It's a whole nation. Throughout the Old Testament, they're always enemies of God's people, attacking them. The whole book of Obadiah is a prophet warning them against the Edomites. Through Jacob comes the Israelites, the nation of Israel. Throughout the Old Testament; we can read the prophets, and they're often talking about the conflict between the Israelites and the Edomites. And we read it, and we're like, "What's going on there?" It's the descendants of Isaac against the- Or of Jacob rather, against the descendants of Esau. And it culminates. This will blow your mind, you ready? Jesus Christ is born. Which side of the family? Through Jacob or Esau?

- [Audience] Jacob.

- Jacob. 'Cause the whole point is to bring Jesus as the savior of the world. Not just the son, but the son of God. And then when he's a baby boy, there's a king named Herod who wants to kill him. So he puts out a death sentence on all the Jewish boys. His name is Herod and he's? He's an Edomite. The murder of first born sons in the days of young Jesus in an effort to eliminate

and eradicate his life was just Jacob and Esau generations later. 2000 years later. So from Abraham to Jesus is 2000 years. These boys become nations. Just as they're fighting in the womb, Jesus is born. They're still fighting. And Herod, the descendant of Esau says, "I am going to kill Jesus, the descendant of Jacob." And I'm going to kill all the firstborn sons of Israel, the descendants of Jacob, because I am going to rule and reign. See, what we see throughout history are decisions and conflicts in families that happens not only generations, but sometimes millennia previously. So then Jesus says this, this is a mind-melt. He says, "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob." Father, son, grandson. Baton handed off for generations, not dropped but carried. And Jesus says, "That's my family." So I want to talk in closing for a bit about the fact that dads make a difference. So Abraham lived, from our day to his, is 4,000 years. And you know what we call him today? Spiritual father. You read the New Testament, they call him "Our father, Abraham." Spiritually, he is our father. We're worshipping Jesus Christ, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. That's three generations. The whole goal is, we like to say it here at Trinity, we open our Bibles to learn, we open our lives to love, so that lives and legacies are transformed. Men, that's where I need you to activate. It's not just about your personal walk with God. It's about handing off that walk to other persons. See, my dad, on honor, my dad on father's day, my dad knows and loves the Lord. I'm proud of him. And now, so it didn't start with me, started before me, but I wanna take the baton and then I wanna hand it to my kids. But especially my sons, 'cause they're gonna become patriarchs and nations. And then what do I want them to do? Walk with God, carry the baton, and then what? Hand it to the grandkids that I prophesied one day will come. And then the great grandkids that I prophesy someday will come and I'd love to see them. And the goal is to have as many generations walking with God as possible. And the goal is every generation does a little better than the generation before. So with Abraham and Sarah, they had a child, they shouldn't had with a woman. They shouldn't have chosen. Next generation says, "You know what?" "We learned that lesson, we're gonna do a little better." "We're not gonna make that mistake" "We're gonna stay faithful to each other in the Lord." The goal is that every generation would make a little bit of progress. Now let me say this, our entire culture has declared war on children and their fathers. I know everything I'm gonna say is very controversial, but it's a weird day. It's like, well... "Hey, you know, we believe in men and women." "Oh gosh, that's binary." "That's very intolerant." "Some people were just triggered." "And, you know, we believe that gender's on a spectrum." "No, no, no, that's a gal, I'm a guy." "And we can have a baby and..." "Oh no, no, no, no, don't talk like that." "That's very masculine." "And we all know that masculinity is toxic." See when our culture says toxic masculinity, what they mean is masculinity. That's what they mean. There is toxic masculinity, but most of the time they're toxic and they just don't like masculinity. "Like I'm a man, she's a woman." "We like to get married, like God said, and then have a child." "Oh, you shouldn't do that." "Yeah, shouldn't do that." "Well, what should we do?" "Well you should kill the child." "Oh, well what if, what if we don't want to?" "Well then when you have them, just let the educational system of the government raise them 'cause they know what's best." "Send them to school, where they're taught to hate God, and be brainwashed about gender, marriage, sex, and family." Or really tweak them and confuse them. "That's okay. Then we'll send 'em to university." Where we can make sure that they're tweaked and confused. And somewhere along the way, we might even take 'em to a medical procedure and cut them up and let them wreck the biology that God

intended for them. So dad, whatever you do, dad, don't, you know, don't be involved, don't be engaged, and don't bring the Bible in, and don't think in terms of good and evil and God and Satan and the world and the church, don't do that. Dad, we don't need you, actually, dad, you're a problem. So most of our movies and our stories and most of our cultural narratives, the dad's always gonna be an idiot. The dad's always gonna be a buffoon. The mom's gonna work hard and the family pet and the kid are gonna save the day and figure it out. And you're just sort of a comedic side piece for mocking men and family. Just send your kids into the world. Let 'em just go on social media. We'll teach 'em how to grow up. Just let 'em watch entertainment. We'll just tell 'em how to be. Just send them to school, the professionals have written the curriculum. Dad just stay out of it. Oh my gosh. Well, now they're shooting the kids in the school. That's okay, men just stay outside. Don't don't get active. Don't be aggressive. Don't take action. That's so toxic. I mean it feels like the whole world has declared war on children.

- [Audience] That's right.

- From the womb, to the classroom, to the screen. It's just war. And so if you're a man and you hear this, let me say, you are more desperately needed in Western culture than in any time in our history.

- [Audience] Amen!

- You're more desperately needed. And some of you men you're like, "Well, I have some failures and some shortcomings." Look, you don't need to be perfect. You have a perfect father. There is no perfect father. You just need to be an activated father and invite in your perfect father. That's what you need.

- [Audience] Amen!

- And I'm telling you that the church of Jesus Christ and the word of God is the only thing that is standing up against a culture of complete insanity. That is a generational experiment that is in the process of ruining and wrecking a whole generation of human beings. And so I'll just share with you the evidence. The census says that there are 18.5 million children growing up without fathers in our nation. We're the most under-fathered nation on planet earth. And it's just weird. Like, oh, there's another school shooting. Well, you know what? He didn't have a dad. You know what, the kid before that didn't have a dad and the kid before that didn't have a dad. See, they don't tell you the things that they don't want you to know because actually it would activate the men. See? And at the end of the day, it's like- We need children to be controlled and raised by the government. And if the men get involved, well, that could ruin everything. So let's not tell 'em the truth. The truth is that 25% of kids today go to bed without their father in the home. They're under-fathered. 88% of teens with behavioral disorders do not have a dad. 70% of adolescents in drug and alcohol treatment centers do not have a dad. If you do not have a dad, you're five times more likely to live in poverty. You need the government. You're nine times more likely to drop outta school. And 90% of homeless and runaway children do not have a dad. In addition, if

you don't have a dad and your age is 25 to 29, you're almost twice as likely to be idle. That means no job and no school. You're not doing anything. You're sitting home, being over-mothered and under-fathered. If a dad's in the home, he gets up, he's like, what are you doing on my couch? Eating my food, playing video games on my internet. You gotta go get your own, right? That's what a dad does. And what I'm telling you is, the most significant difference after faith in the Lord, Jesus Christ, in a child's life, is the presence of an engaged father. Statistically, it is incontrovertible. They just don't tell you that because it doesn't fit the the narrative where ultimately we need to just raise a generation of dependent adult children who can't activate themselves and take responsibility, who then endure things. And then they're just sort of counseled through all of their trauma. And then they're just raised to vote for people in the government who will continue to over-mother them. And the question is when do we stop the cycle of addiction, dependence, folly, and lack of fathering? And what I'm telling you is the world in its wisdom does not know God. I don't care what people who don't know God think, I don't care if I get canceled and I just got kicked off the internet. I could care less. I know what all is said and done. I am responsible for us as a flock and I am responsible for my family. I will stand before God and give an account for Grace and our kids. Men, you are responsible in the sight of God, for your marriage, for your family, for your legacy, for your lineage. It doesn't mean that there's any guarantee that everybody's gonna get it right. Even the best people in the Bible have some kids who go wayward and sideways. But statistically, I want to encourage you, and to encourage you is to pour courage into you. You men matter, your lives matter, your marriages matter, your children matter, your grandchildren matter. And you are a significant part of God's intention for generations of your family. That ultimately the world doesn't think this way, but God's people should. And ultimately, I wanna encourage you because in this church are some of the greatest fathers you will ever meet. Some of the most honorable, integrest men you will ever know. We are not perfect men, but God's men are here. And I will just tell you this. The biggest data study done in the history of the world on faith, freedom, fatherhood, and family. I'll just quote from the sociologist: Conservative Protestant men with children are consistently more active and expressive with their children. Statistically, you're the best stats. See if the world just went with the facts and be like, "We need to have a whole department at the university on how to be a dad." Nope, can't get that degree. You could take a women's studies class where they trash men who wanna be fathers, but you can't take a class on how to be a father. In addition, "Church attendance almost uniformly promotes higher levels of paternal involvement and expressiveness among Conservative Protestant family men." Here's what I'm telling you. The best dads, they go to church, read their Bible, pray. And they know that God is a father and he has a heart for him and he loves them and he pursues them and he's generous toward him. He's gracious with him. And every once in a while, he has to correct him because he needs to get him back on track. And as a result of being God's son, they're like, "Then I wanna be a good dad." I'm telling you until you know God is father, you know nothing of masculinity, you know nothing of marriage, you know nothing of fatherhood. And once you meet the father, he starts to train you to be a good father. Quote as well, "Religious attendance is associated with more empathetic behavior for married men with children." I love you. I'm emotionally present. I care. How can I pray? Let me try. In addition, "Conservative Protestant married men with children are consistently the most active and expressive fathers and the most emotionally engaged

husbands." If you don't believe that, just walk around campus. I had a single mom and walk in recently. Here's what she says. She's like, "First, I didn't feel very comfortable." "Lot of trucks, lot of beards, lot of dudes." She's like, "And then I noticed they're all holding little children and watching a bouncy house." She's like, "I realize this is exactly where my son needs to be to see men." To see men. In addition, one of you needs to marry her. Okay? Last one. We'll put her photo up at the end. All right, so... "Men who are regular churchgoers are more likely to spend time in youth-related activities." "They hug and praise their children more often and yell at their children less than other fathers." It's not that they don't yell at their children. They're still dads. But the point is this, the best fathers know the father.

- [Audience] Yes.

- And the best fathers are good sons of the father. So in a moment, we're gonna share with you a worship song that was written specifically for father's day. I love the fact that the men in this church, they have the father's heart. We have great men, wanna honor you, men. And I wanna call out my friend, Drew, and he and another guy in the church wrote a song. They wanna share it with you for father's day. And it's a blessing. And it's speaking blessing over you men. And so Drew, good to see you, my friend. Maybe... And Drew's one of our volunteers. So maybe tell 'em real quick, what you do during the week for your paid job.

- I am a full-time meat cutter.

- He's a butcher.

- At a grocery store, so... I'm a butcher. He's very toxic, you know?

- So keep your kids away from me.

- So you guys wrote this special song that you're gonna now debut here at church and live online. And your story behind it, especially on father's day weekend. It's really something, maybe share whatever you're willing, buddy, with the church family. So I've been this entire week trying to figure out how I'm gonna be able to talk about this without breaking down. So just bear with me here. I first want to just take a second to honor my dad. My mom and dad had been married for 43 years. And from as far as I can remember, my dad's always been there and my dad's always loved me. And I was not... I was not a good son to my mom and dad.

- You were more Esau than Jacob.

- Totally. Yeah, totally. Who's the wild donkey? That's was Ishmael.

- Ishmael.

- Yeah, I was the wild donkey. But yeah, so I just wanna honor my dad. He's just been such a



blessing to me, especially the last two and a half years of my life. So I just- Should I share that story really quick?

- Yeah, you grew up in a Christian home. Your parents love the Lord.

- Yeah. Yeah. So I grew up with, you know, my- I have two older brothers and they did really good, in like school and jobs and they succeeded and I struggled in school and grew up just feeling like I never gave my mom and dad anything to be proud of me for. So I just kind of felt like I hated myself and didn't know why I even was created on this earth. If I'm watching my brothers, you know, succeed and move forward. And I'm just like, here I am struggling. I can't do good in school. And I'm always disappointing my mom and dad. And then the one time I found something that I was good at, was the one thing that a mom and dad aren't gonna be like, "Oh, good!" I started skateboarding. And my parents are like, "Oh my son's a skater." "Look at him, hanging out with all the stoner skater kids, yay!" And I got really good at skateboarding, but my parents were just like, who cares, man? You know, so still just struggled with, you know... You know, not making my mom and dad proud. And I always just kinda hated myself for that. And then as time went on and I ended up graduating, which is awesome, don't know how that happened, but it happened. And then after high school, started playing in bands and discovered the party life and the bar life. And you know if a mom's child is a musician, they're like good job, son or daughter. And then when they're like, oh, they like metal. That's not something to be proud of either, you know? So continuing on in my twenties with, you know, just not feeling like... My mom and dad aren't proud of me for being in a heavy metal band, you know, playing at bars every weekend, you know, drinking and partying all the time. And then I ended up meeting a girl when I was, I think it was in 2012, we got married, and this is when, like, a lot of the pain really started. But in 2012 we got married. And then in 2013 we had my son David, who's nine years old. And he's... He's everything to me. Whenever I talk about my son, I get choked up. Cause he's very special to me. But 10 and a half months after he was born, my other son was born and his name was Dustin. And he lived on this earth for three months and he died on father's day. And from that point on, was another, you know, part of my life where I felt like I failed as a dad because I wasn't able to like, protect my kid. And I failed as a husband and we got divorced and then I just went downhill and just struggled with drug addiction for the following seven years of my life. And still my mom and dad are like, you know, they're still there. They still love me, but they never gave up on me. But they weren't proud of me, you know, my whole life. And then in, in 2020 of January, I checked myself into rehab and that's when everything changed. So it was like my third day in rehab, I was sharing this story with Pastor Mark before the service and my dad's gonna see this tomorrow and it's gonna wreck him. But it's a really special moment in my life to me, you get a five-minute phone call each day in rehab. I was in crossroads and I call my mom and dad and I'm coming down off of drugs and it's just awful and I'm depressed and I want to die. And the only thing I can think about is how much I miss my son. And I'm talking to my dad on the phone and I'm crying on the phone and I'm saying, "Dad, I miss David." "I miss David." And my dad said, "Drew, you know how much you miss your son?" "Well, imagine how much I miss my son." And that was the first moment where I realized like, I surrender, like, I can't. I can't put my family through this and I can't put my son through this because I was so

neglectful as a dad. Just, memories that will never leave my mind of me neglecting my son, just so I could try to get high, you know? And he's out in the living room by himself and I'm in the bathroom for two or three hours at a time. Just memories that break my heart when I think about him now. And it's the reminder that I can't go back and I know it's not who I am anymore. And I know that I'm forgiven and redeemed, but still those memories don't leave me. So, and then a week after my dad told me this, this was the second moment where I knew that that life is about to change. And you were talking about towards the end of the sermon about how good our father is, our heavenly father, and how he feels about us. So it was gonna be my first visitation with my son and my mom was bringing him to the rehab facility I was at. And I remember standing, there's like a walkway, and you can't pass the two walls. And the walls are probably like this high and they go along the sidewalk, and I'm just pacing back and forth, waiting for my mom and my son to show up. And on the other side of the wall, I see this little head bouncing up and down on the other side of the wall. And he turns the corner and there's my son. And he runs at me like a football player and he hits me and I pick him up and I just start crying. And that was the first time I've ever seen my son completely sober. So even when he was a baby, until he was six or seven years old, I was always on something, alcohol, weed, whatever it was, I was always on something. So this was actually the first time in my life where I got to see my son completely sober. And when I was holding my son, I literally heard father say, "Drew, this is exactly how I feel about you." And then that was the second moment where I knew that everything was about to change, and everything changed. And I started coming to church and I got a job and became a responsible father to my son. And then now, this is so crazy, how everything has just fallen into place. But then there's also a tragedy that me and my son are walking through right now, this morning... This morning, we had to wake up and we had to take my son to his mother's funeral. His mother's Memorial service. So May 24th of this year, my son's mom passed away. And me and her had a rough past, but I know how much she loved David. And I know how much David loved his mom. And this couldn't have happened two years ago. This probably couldn't-

- So you're a single dad today.

- I'm a single full-time dad today, yeah.

- And you three, four years ago, were a drug addict and were not ready for this.

- No, I wasn't ready for this a year ago, man, even though I was sober, you know, I just think the timing was... As hard as it is to realize that that she's gone, the timing was perfect. God's prepared me to be what David needs, so...

- You're ready and you're doing a great job. And I'm proud of you. They never do that for me. They love you. Yeah. So let's pray. So you started writing this song a few months ago before your wife passed- Before your ex-wife passed away, and before you became a single dad.

- Yeah, and my girlfriend Martha's out there and she actually helped me write part of my verse or

whatever. And at the time we were writing it, it meant a lot to me. But now that my son's mom has passed away, I think the lyrics that we wrote for this verse means so much more to me and to David.

- I love you, buddy. Let me pray. I don't know how you're gonna sing. I don't know either.

- You know, we love you and we're proud of you, my friend,

- You too.

- Yeah. Father God, thank you for the honor of bringing Drew and David and their extended family to Trinity church. We love them very dearly. We've had the honor walking this path with him for a few years, and God, I just think of the words that were spoken over the Lord Jesus. "This is my son in whom I am well pleased." Lord, I thank you for his son, Dustin, who is in your presence. And we look forward to a great homecoming and God, just grieved that he lost his son on father's day. Thank you that David has a brand new father, a completely different redeemed man filled with the spirit and new desires. God, thank you for Drew coming to volunteer and lead us this weekend in the worship. Thank you for his friendship. We love him very much. We appreciate him very much and we're very proud of him and God, as he shares this song that he and Jen from the church wrote for father's day, Holy Spirit, I pray he put an anointing on it to minister to all of us, but especially to the fathers. In Jesus's good name, Amen.