

**SUNDAY, JUNE 17: Father's Day**

Message: Turning 21 with Wesley: Mature Life

Message Theme: Treating the other with the grace of God. Living out my faith with those whom I like least. Jesus forgives His crucifiers! Living for Jesus is easy with people we like, and when things go well. But the depth of our maturity comes out with people we don't like, or things go wrong. Rather than trying to avoid people we don't like, go after them! Show them grace! Show them love! Show them Jesus! Share your faith with them!

Message Scripture: Matthew 5:21-26 (CEB)

Memory Verse: "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone." Romans 12:18

Kids Activity: The Hot Seat: Have fathers answer questions from kids.

Blurb: This Sunday is Fathers' Day. We are to honor and give God thanks for your human fathers and for how they have shaped and influenced us in good and healthy ways. In worship, we will also turn to our Heavenly Father and learn how He wants to shape and mold us into what He intends for us to be. This is holiness. This week we will see this means inner maturity of our hearts affecting our outward maturity in how we relate to others. It's a holistic deal!

**Opening Song:** Hymn Sing

**Welcome:** -Pastor David

**Memory Verse:**

"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone." -Romans 12:18

**Worship Music Set:** - Sanctify

*This Is My Father's World*

*Only King Forever*

*Great Are You Lord*

Worship Prayer - Andrew

Lord's Prayer - Andrew

**The Hot Seat:** Questions for fathers

1. What's your favorite memory of being a kid?
2. What's your favorite memory of your dad?
3. What was one special thing you and your dad used to do together?
4. What is the most important thing your dad taught you?
5. Do you remember your grandfather? If so, what was one thing you loved doing with him?
6. Describe a clothing trend when you were a kid.
7. What did you want to be when you grew up?
8. What was your favorite dinner? What food did you hate?
9. Are you a dad? If so, what is something hard that dads have to do?
10. What do you worry most about as a dad?

**Message:** Turning 21 with Wesley: Mature Life

**Message Bumper**

**PP#1:** Turning 21 with Wesley: Mature Life

“...as far as it depends on you...” Romans 12:18b

Turning 21 with Wesley: Mature Life. Romans 12:18b “...as far as it depends on you...”

**PP#2:** *Image for a broken relationship, between brothers*

He’s not from this church, but a person I’ll call Luke is from a church in this community. I got to know him as another dad when our sons were in cub scouts. We would talk occasionally when waiting to pick up our sons, and over time he learned I was a pastor, and I learned he worked as an engineer for a firm that took him overseas regularly. Early on, he told me of his father’s death, and how his brother got weird about the estate. He had accused Luke, whom their father had appointed manager of his estate, of overspending their father’s monies in the last months, and after their fathers’ death, even though Luke was only trying to do what his father had asked him to do. Luke didn’t have proof of these verbal requests by his father, but heir father instructed Luke to give away tens of thousands of dollars to causes and needs...one of them happened to be through Luke’s church. Luke’s brother challenged him line by line, and accused him of manipulating their father to give money to places that Luke wanted supported. At the last time they spoke, Luke’s brother shouted at him, “What gives you the right to give away money that should have come to me?”

Now, I only saw Luke every so often, as he spent time overseas on work, but when I did see him, I would ask how he was doing with his father’s death, and his family complications. His brother’s daughter was getting married, and Luke didn’t get an invitation. Should he go to the wedding? He heard the details from a family friend. What to do.

I tried to coach him to follow what he knew on the inside was the right thing to do. And evidently—although I don’t really remember it—I alluded to our memory verse for today. I said that in the Bible it says, “as far as it depends on you,” do the right thing.

Luke agreed that it was stupid to let his feud with his brother keep him from supporting and celebrating his niece, and so they went to the wedding. The rest of the family was grateful they came, but Luke’s brother never spoke a word to him.

Another year passed, and one night the scouts went long. Luke and I sat visiting. Luke paused for a minute and said to me, “Remember when you said to me how the Bible says, ‘as far as it depends on me?’” I really didn’t remember, but I guess he did. He said, “I’ve been thinking about that. I haven’t spoken to my brother for over two years, since my father died. Now that he’s gone, my brother is all I have left, and I really don’t have him since we’re not talking. I didn’t do anything wrong, I was only doing what our father wanted. And it made me so angry that he accused me of stealing from him. So I let him close me out, because in all honesty, I was mad at him, too. But I’ve been thinking how dumb it is that I lost both my father and my brother when my father died, and I didn’t have to. And you said that in the Bible it says, “as far as it depends on you.”

I explained, I don’t remember the exact words I used, but how I understand this to mean that if there are extra miles that you can go in order to keep peace, we are called to do that. We can’t make other people change their minds, but we can control us. And we are called to do everything we possibly can to open that door between us, and not close it on our side. It’s hard, because like Luke,

we can be wounded, and angry, and justified. But the Bible doesn't validate our justification, or say, "Yes, you're right." Instead it calls us to find some way that we can go the extra mile. It means put aside our woundedness and anger—actually give it to Jesus and ask Him to replace it with forgiveness and peace inside us. We release it and let it go. We can do that when we remember Jesus dying on the cross for our sin, and for our brother's sin. We can forgive because we have been forgiven, and we are called to forgive by the Holy Spirit inside us. It means doing everything we can think of to do on our end in order to keep the path open to restoration.

Luke said, "I've been thinking about that, and I want to do what I can to remove any barrier to my brother. I still have my half of what I got from my father's estate. I think I should offer to pay to my brother what he would have gotten had our father not told me to give away what he wanted me to give away. My wife's not too happy, and she tells me to forget my brother and keep the money. But this is something I can do. Besides, I'll still have about \$10,000 left over so we'll have something."

I warned him, to not expect it to work. I said he needed to decide to give it because he chose to give it, not in order to influence a certain outcome or hoping it would work. "If you give it, be sure to really, truly give it. Let it go, no matter the outcome. Mail it to him with a note saying that it is his, that you love him, and that you value your relationship with him over any dispute you may have."

I saw him only once more. He told me he had mailed the check and note, and that he had yet to hear anything. The check wasn't cashed. He told me he was going to go pay his brother a visit face-to-face. If that didn't work, he would then have fulfilled his sense of obligation to do all he could to keep the door open. I told him I was proud of him, that he did the right thing, and that he could be at ease having done all he could to repair their relationship. I told him he honored the Bible's instruction. That was something. No matter what, he was blessed to have done that.

I never saw him again, as Nathan then joined Boy Scouts, and his son did not. I never found out what happened. I'm so curious to know. I keep praying for him, and I would love to know if I should keep it up.

The way I see it, a couple of things could have happened. One is that he met with his brother, they forgave each other, and they are now close. I want that to be true. But it could also have gone that his brother didn't open the letter, or held on to the check believing that Luke was trying to slide out from what he did, or refused to talk with Luke, and that Luke was stuck with no restoration.

I don't know what happened. But this I do know. Luke was not caught into that mess. Luke could feel good about his side, taking the higher road, and doing all he could to keep that door open. Luke may be poorer in money, but he is richer in living a life free from that anger, resentment, wishing he had done something more, or lack of forgiveness. Although the relationship could still be broken, and if it is, Luke would have that pain, but Luke still has God's blessing.

**PP#3: John Wesley's 21 questions for the Oxford Methodists**

15. "Do I thank God that I am not like others?"
16. "Am I consciously or unconsciously creating the impression that I am better than I am?  
In other words, am I a hypocrite?"
17. "Do I confidentially pass on to others what was told to me in confidence?"
18. "Am I jealous, impure, critical, irritable, touchy, or distrustful?"
19. "Am I honest in all my actions and words or do I exaggerate?"
20. "Is there anyone whom I fear, dislike, disown, criticize, hold resentment toward or disregard?"
21. "When did I last speak to someone about my faith?"

These past three weeks we've been asking ourselves, each day, a probing question that has challenged us to go deeper in our faith journey. We've used the 21 questions that John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, had the very first Methodists ask themselves to help them grow in their faith.

It's been hard. We've moved into the tough stuff of living our lives selflessly, in the details, in the dailyness of it, as we follow Jesus. And if you're like me, you need to start over again, over the next 21 days. We'll leave the daily questions up on the web site, if you want to join me.

You see, we are made for more. God intends for us to be different. He is calling us to better. He wants us holy, and will not stop working on us, and working in us by the Holy Spirit, until we've made it. We have to partner with God, or else it goes nowhere. We have to show up, and work on it. We have to surrender what we don't want to. We may have to add what isn't easy. But God wants His image in you to be clearer. And honestly, that's what we long for, too.

**PP#4: Matthew 5:21-26 (CEB)**

“21 You have heard that it was said to those who lived long ago, Don't commit murder, and all who commit murder will be in danger of judgment. 22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with their brother or sister will be in danger of judgment. If they say to their brother or sister, ‘You idiot,’ they will be in danger of being condemned by the governing council. And if they say, ‘You fool,’ they will be in danger of fiery hell.

Jesus spoke about this growing in maturity all the time. And, in His famous Sermon on the Mount, Jesus took the Old Testament laws, and turned them inward. The Old Testament laws, mostly, were about our outward behaviors, how we act. Don't commit adultery, don't steal, don't murder. But Jesus says that this is just the beginning, baby faith. You see, it is possible to restrain one's hand from killing them, all the while seething and hating them inwardly.

God's intention is purified hearts. It's becoming the person, outwardly and inwardly, that God intends for us to be. God wants our outward actions to stem from inner love.

Turn to Matthew 5. We're in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, just past the beatitudes. Jesus calls up the Old Testament rules, and then ups the anti! Verse 21, “You have heard that it was said to those who lived long ago, Don't commit murder, and all who commit murder will be in danger of judgment. But I say to you that everyone who is angry with their brother or sister will be in danger of judgment. If they say to their brother or sister, ‘You idiot,’ they will be in danger of being condemned by the governing council. And if they say, ‘You fool,’ they will be in danger of fiery hell.”

Wow, Jesus says that it's the same before God to physically murder someone as it is to wish they were dead in your heart. If you're angry—and here the meaning is hating in your anger—with someone, then you have sinned. If your attitude is rotten, if your inner value of that person is diminished and not loving them as you ought—thinking them an idiot or fool—then you are still sinning, even if you don't move a finger or say a word.

**PP#5: Turning 21 with Wesley: Mature Life**

1. Actions and heart purified by the Holy Spirit

Wow! That's a high calling!

But it's not impossible. Hang in there with me. Jesus brings this deeper calling of maturity because He knows that His followers are about to receive the only way they can fulfill it. They are going to be getting the Holy Spirit in them that will give them the ability to conquer these vile

feelings in their hearts. When we let the Holy Spirit live in our hearts, only then can our hearts be transformed and purified.

By the way, the word brother here, *adelphos* [a-del-FÖSS] can mean, besides a biological brother, also a fellow disciple. Jesus is calling us to that hard work of living by love with those who are closest to us...and therefore also can be the hardest to love!

**PP#6:** Matthew 5:21-26 (CEB)

23 Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, 24 leave your gift at the altar and go. First make things right with your brother or sister and then come back and offer your gift.

Verse 23, “Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar and there remember that your brother or sister [a-del-FÖSS] has something against you, leave your gift at the altar and go. First make things right with your brother or sister and then come back and offer your gift.”

**PP#7:** Turning 21 with Wesley: Mature Life

1. Actions and heart purified by the Holy Spirit
2. “...if your brother has something against you...”

Two things here. Verse 23 is one of the hardest verses in Jesus’ sermon. He doesn’t say, “If *you* have something against someone,” go fix it. Do your part. No. That makes a shred of sense, afterall. Instead, Jesus goes into the ridiculous! He says, “if someone has something against you.” It doesn’t matter if they are right or wrong! It doesn’t matter if they are justified or not! The weight is upon you either way! Even if you have done nothing wrong, and you are hurt or wounded, you still go and make the first move! This defies everything in me! He’s wrong, and I still have to go in first? Remember, it’s the Holy Spirit that makes this possible in us.

A phrase I’ve carried with me since my days in England help me let the Holy Spirit work in me. I teased them that according to Americans, the right way was to drive on the right side of the road. One older gentleman calmly said to me, “Well, here, you’ll be *dead* right.” In your broken relationships, you may be right, but you are still dead right. Your relationship is broken. It’s dead. It is more important to be wrong alive than dead right!

And that’s God’s point here! The relationship is what is most important! How sad to be right, but miss the relationship.

This is what the Holy Spirit was doing in my friend Luke. It was pressing him to go first, again and again, when his, in his case, biological brother, had something against him.

It’s Father’s Day today. On Mother’s Day we gave out nice gifts to women. Today, I’m going to ask the ushers to pass around gifts for all the men...teenagers and older. Go ahead, ushers.

You’re wonderful gift is a commitment card. You see, godly fatherhood is about being godly men. We are called to be the men in our families, in the people that God places in our lives, modeling self-control and self-sacrifice. This is the calling of godly men. This is leadership. This is love.

The card says, “This week, “...as far as it depends you ... ” I will act first to restore one broken relationship.” Hang on to the card. In a moment, we’re going to pray over you empower you to do this.

**PP#8: Turning 21 with Wesley: Mature Life**

1. Actions and heart purified by the Holy Spirit
2. "...if your brother has something against you..."
3. "...leave your gift at the altar and go. First make things right..."

Second radical point. Jesus says it's more important to do this than to give offerings to God! He says, if you come into worship and to give gifts to God, but there is a broken relationship between someone and you, then stop right there. First go and work on that relationship. God wants *that* offering more. After you have done your best, *then* come and offer your gift. Jesus is calling us to authenticity. Align our outward actions—like offerings to God—with our inner hearts of humility and forgiveness and restoration. God desires holiness!

You will notice that we have not yet taken up our offering. I moved it to after the message because I want to give you an opportunity to take this seriously. I'm going to suggest that if the Holy Spirit brings to mind someone who has something against you, then you don't give your offering today. That's right! You know I'm serious when I mess with the offering! But don't give it. I mean it. Use this week to go and act first, seeking to do "as far as it is up to you" to open the door. I am suspicious that we just might have a light offering today! So be it.

Now, notice, Jesus doesn't say pocket the money, or spend it on something else. He says wait and give it next time.

And this teaches us about God's view of our money. For God, it's not about the money. God doesn't really need our money. We need to give it. And we need to give it in a way that brings maturity and holiness. How can we give money to God's work when we have God's work we should be doing? He would rather have us doing God's hard work of repairing our relationships than hiding behind the easier work of giving money, and calling it good.

**PP#9: Charge to Men and Prayer for the Holy Spirit**

"Man of God: run away from selfish things. Instead, pursue righteousness, holy living, faithfulness, love, endurance, and gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith. Grab hold of the eternal life you've been called to, making good confession in front of many witnesses. I charge you in the presence of God ... and Christ Jesus, who made the good confession when testifying before Pontius Pilate: obey this order with conviction and tenacity until Jesus appears again." -1 Timothy 6:11-14

So, I'm going to finish here by calling our men on this Father's Day, to live this out. Godly fathers, godly men, lead by example. They go first. They act first, doing the right thing. So, men, I ask you to hold your card, and stand up. I want to call us to greatness, in God's eyes. I want to empower us with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. I want us to look to our Heavenly Father to see how we are to be fathers to the children and people God has placed in our lives

The charge I'm going to use comes from Paul's charge to Timothy, in 1 Timothy 6:11-14. Hear this as our charge today. "Man of God: run away from selfish things. Instead, pursue righteousness, holy living, faithfulness, love, endurance, and gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith. Grab hold of the eternal life you've been called to, making good confession in front of many witnesses. I charge you in the presence of God ... and Christ Jesus, who made the good confession when testifying before Pontius Pilate: obey this order with conviction and tenacity until Jesus appears again."

Now, a prayer written for Father's Day by Nathan Decker. Women and children, could I ask you to extend your hands in prayer to the men near to you? And then, please, pray over us this prayer.

**PP#10: A Prayer for Father's Day**

by The Rev. Nathan Decker, written for Father's Day 2008.

**O Lord Our Heavenly Father:**

**You, who adopt orphan children and care for the widows;**

**You stand at the door staring at the horizon,**

**desiring that Your prodigal children come home.**

**PP#11: Bless fathers and men everywhere this day**

**that the orphans may have role models,**

**that the widows may be provided what they need,**

**that the future men may see Christ reflected in the love**

**of piggy-back rides and hard-learned lessons**

**Through Christ and the Spirit to the Father, Amen.**

Thank you, you may be seated. We needed that!

It's now time for the offering. Again, a reminder, if the Holy Spirit has raised anyone in your heart that you need to go and first attempt to make repairs, hold your offering until next week. Funding God's work starts with how you live and what you do!

Andrew?

**Offering:** *The Standard* - Sanctify

**Closing Song:** *White Flag* - Sanctify

**Memory Verse**

"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone." -Romans 12:18

**Announcements:**

Lifeline at 6:30.

Next week, Camping Sunday. Dress like you are going camping!

**Benediction:** -Pastor David