**“Valued”**

Psalm 91:1-10

Jeremiah 20:7-13

Romans 6:12-23

Matthew 10:5a, 21-33

 Pentecost 3

Jesus said: “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of **them** will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs on **your** head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; **you** are of **MORE VALUE** than **many sparrows**.”

Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Bridge**

Fathers (when being **appropriately** “**fatherly**”) are **of high** “**value**” every place … within families obviously, but also **well beyond** just the family. Society values fatherhood for its many contributions and attributes. Among those are that they:

* Govern financial and emotional and educational and, therefore, societal stability.
* They demonstrate manhood both in knowing responsibility and in carrying-out duty.
* They nurture and love differently than moms … and in ways that **need to be** seen and experienced.
* They exemplify values and nobility, so instill those ideas by demonstrating them.
* And, then, for the society that’s **well beyond this lifetime**, fatherhood builds **citizenship in that**. It’s said that only 2-3 percent of children (**where that fathering is skipped**) end up caring (ultimately) about Heaven. So they are **ESSENTIAL** for the **well-being of their families** **that way**.

**Text**

**Jesus** put it this way: “[some / too many if **any**] Fathers will **deliver over** their child to death” (He’s recorded saying in verse 21 of Matthew 10). The **COUNTER TO THAT** is **how Luther put it**: “as the head of the family should **teach the kingdom of Heaven** in a simple way to his children and whole household”. Yet we have this, from the text assigned for what is this Father’s Day: “Fathers”, Jesus said, “will deliver over their child to death”.

So (for fathers appropriately “fatherly”) you **deserve** every card you get this weekend. You **deserve** every well wish and good word you receive. You **deserve** (as a matter of fact) every reward Heaven gives for your fatherhood “**valued**” here on earth (in your homes, neighborhoods, towns and country certainly … **know that**) but also **far beyond this place** … **VALUED INFINITELY** **among and in Heaven’s realm**. You **deserve** every good that is (here and forever) yours to enjoy. You **deserve those** … and, also, the **HONOR** of your children and grand-children and friends and pastors … you **deserve** every acclamation and praise … you **deserve them**.

But, **if not**, then there is **this** **from Jesus**: “Fathers will deliver over their child to death”, and what Jesus is **talking about** is an end to this planet where **unthinkable evils like that** **will occur** **in many and various ways**; yet He’s also talking about the **delivering over of ones own child to Satan if not to God** … and there’s no way to sugar-coat that (and He wasn’t kidding-about-it or speaking in an analogy that’s not literal). He goes further (Jesus does) to describe that same destruction happening among **other family members (one to another)**, but it’s **Father’s** Day weekend, and this one stands **stark** and reaches into the homes of many men that even I know … and, maybe (a good bit / often), reaches into **my house** … I pray not, and for God (and my children) to **forgive me** … and **change me** …

… because **none of us with whom God makes a difference has a father who gives us over to death and Satan that way**. As a matter of fact, we have a Father (a Heavenly Father) that **cares enough about us** **ETERNALLY** to **know the number of hairs we have on our head** … who **values us (His children)** much more than anything else that He has made, yet **values even sparrows such that none “fall to the ground apart from the Father’s knowledge and tender care and protection”**. And **you (and I) baptized into His family and childhood** **(under His Fatherhood)** “**are of more value than many sparrows**”.

The Old Testament prophet, Jeremiah, was a **complainer**. Some would say that he had **reason to complain**, “many whispered to him, ‘**denounce your Heavenly Father, let us denounce Him!**’”, but he knew (down to his very soul) that the Father / God “was always with him **as a dread warrior**”. It was **not** **profitable** to be **eternally “fatherly”** in Jeremiah’s time. **Earthly** riches and prosperity was readily available, yet the **enjoyment** was a **slippery slope** to (soon enough) a **disastrous fall**. See, there is a historical rise **and fall** of civilizations … nothing **seemingly enjoyable for the moment** lasts and, usually, an over-indulgence in the **enjoyment of the moment** **brings-on** the slide of the fall.

For **American fathers**, we can focus too heavily on work or things, and if we focus on those things **absent God**, then we’ve **focused wrongly and inappropriately** (we’ve “given over our children” to death and Satan rather than to God … it was a **choice we’d made** every day, and nothing **short of that**). Revolutionary time American (and Virginia Governor) **Patrick Henry** wrote of **his regret in that**: “I have disposed of all my property to my family. There is **one thing more** I wish I could give them, and that is the **Christian Religion**. If they had **that** and I had not given them one shilling, **they would have been rich**; and if they had **not that** and I had given them all the world, **they** **would be poor**”.

The **focus** that **this Gospel text** **leads us to** is toward a “**value**” that we have to the Heavenly Father and the “**value**” that we, then, are to our children, and how we “**value**” them. I should explain, then here, about the **word used**. First of all, you’ll find that word in **verse 31 of Matthew 10**: “fear not”, Jesus said, “you are of more **value** than many sparrows”. “Value” is **not an emotion** (according to the Greek definition). It is an **action verb** … of **activity** (and **effort-filled activity at that**). It is of a “**burden born** or **carried**”. “**Distinguished** from all other things that could be of interest”, what is “**valued**” is **born or carried through everything** … and **for the purpose of lifting that which is valued up**.

Imagine **baring-up something fragile of high value**. The **care** at which that thing is **born in your hands and arms and protected**, now you’re beginning to get the idea of the **intention of this word that’s here used**. Men, your “**diaphero**” (and it has the word “**hero**” in it) is **how you** **function** **THAT CARING WAY (OF ETERNAL CONSEQUENCE)** **toward your children** **knowing that God, the Father, functions THAT CARING WAY (OF ETERNAL CONSEQUENCE)** **toward you**.

**Application**

Your **Heavenly** **Father** **diaphero’s** you: **He** **heroically** **bares you up** (**has** with the redemption of the cross, sacrificing His own Son’s life for you) and **still** **heroically bares you up** by making all of the blessings of that **yours simply by baptism and faith**. The wonderful news today is that we need not fear anything of this world (even in its worst) fearing only the **lack in us** of **securing our children**: being, instead, eternally detrimental to them by, even, killing them by giving them over to Satan’s influence rather than God’s (instilling Him into them daily and with insistence). You can’t have something in the middle, because **there’s no middle ground in this (it’s either for God or against Him to your children’s detriment and death … not something in between)**.

May **each of us**, men (fathers and grand-fathers), but also mothers and just friends of people that we should mentor and cherish: **repent of our sin that’s in any way this cruel**. And **may You, Lord, change us always toward faithfulness in caring roles**. May we **become Good examples** and point people (our children) Your Way, God, our Father.

May Father’s Day **be blessed** **… for everyone**. In +Jesus’ name. Amen.