

**Like Father, Like Son**  
Sermon - Pastor Joe Davis  
Union Baptist Church – 5/7/17

## I. INTRODUCTION

Do you believe today that sin is real and serious and regularly brings pain, suffering, shame, broken relationships and even death into our lives and the lives of those we love? Sin has many symptoms and many ways of working itself out in the daily actions and choices we make, but at its heart is unbelief in God. The heart of sin is mistrust in God and rebellion against him...a heart belief that either God is not real or that he's holding out on us and what the world has to offer is preferable to relationship with him and walking in his ways. And this heart issue of unbelief in God leads to all kinds of poor choices and destructive ways of living life that often bring unimaginable pain and suffering to us and those around us.

But did you know that sin doesn't surprise or scare God? Have you ever noticed that the Bible has a category or name for every type sin out there? One of these lists of sin categories is given to us in Galatians chapter 5, verses 19 through first part of 21:

***Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, 21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these...***

I'd say that God knows what sin is all about and isn't surprised by it! In fact, our perfect Father is well aware of every sin that's ever been or will be committed and he's gone to unimaginable lengths to provide a remedy for each sin and a path to healing and forgiveness and freedom. He knows more than anyone else how serious and damaging sin is and that conquering it and providing that path to freedom would require the ultimate sacrifice on his part...the suffering and death of his only Son, Jesus Christ.

Did you know and do you believe today, that there is no sin, no matter how serious and dark and shameful, that is ever too big for God to conquer and heal

and even accomplish something good through, when we handle it according to his perfect plan? Have you had any encounters with sin in your own life this week and how has it affected you and your relationships with God and others? I don't know about you, but I can get overwhelmed sometimes when I encounter serious sin that's having far-reaching consequences and threatening relationships and spiritual growth. But you and I both need to remember that God is never overwhelmed or threatened by sin and that dealing with it and bringing healing and forgiveness is what he does and does perfectly. In fact, this is why he sent his Son: because his mercy and love for all of us who were enslaved to sin motivated him to do whatever was necessary to make a way for us to be freed from that sin and find his path to healing and restored relationship.

We shouldn't be surprised when sin occurs and think it's something too big for God to handle. We don't need to be like the world and hide in shame, breaking off relationships and running away from facing sin's reality and its consequences. Instead, as we walk in relationship with our good Father as recipients of his incredible mercy and forgiveness through Christ, we can invite others to participate in and experience the same path to freedom we've experienced, which is repentance and confession leading to forgiveness and restored relationships. This is how our good Father relates to us as his children and this is how he calls us to relate to others as we walk in his ways. And as we do this, we're putting into practice and applying the gospel we ourselves have experienced and showing to others that they too can find freedom and forgiveness in Christ.

Some time ago I preached part one of a message examining what Scripture teaches us about God our Father and what he's like. Today I want to spend the rest of our time together first reviewing a little bit about who our good Father is and his plan for dealing with our sin, and then delving into what life looks like when we walk through life in his ways as his children. As we experience sin and its consequences in our day-to-day lives, we desperately need a firm understanding of who our true Father is, how committed he is to us, and how to do deal with sin his way. For any of us here today who are struggling with sin, guilt or shame or experiencing the damaging effects of them, I want us to see who our good Father is and how he relates to us through it all...helping us navigate and deal with the reality of sin in our lives and its damaging effects and experience the freedom and forgiveness only he can provide. As I said the last time I preached

on this topic, we're only going to be scratching the surface of who our Father is, but I trust that you'll be encouraged by what we learn about him and how he relates to us and provides for us in the real, tangible, difficult realities of our lives.

## **II. REVIEW: WHAT IS OUR HEAVENLY FATHER LIKE?**

I want to start by reviewing a few high points from my last message about what our heavenly Father is like.

- A. The Father knows all things and, before the creating the world, He, in loving community with the Son and the Holy Spirit, planned out and established all the details of the future. Nothing is a surprise to him or too big for him to handle (Acts 1:6-8; Ephesians 1:3-4).**
- B. If you've come to new life through repentance and faith in Christ, the Father has poured out his great love on you by adopting you as His very own child forever. In Christ there is no sin, no evil...absolutely nothing that can separate you from his love. (1 John 3:1-3; John 1:12; Romans 8:31-39).**
- C. The Father is full of mercy (1 Peter 1:3-5; Ephesians 2:4-9; Titus 3:4-7).**
- D. The Father comforts you in all of your troubles and gives you hope (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4).**
- E. The Father is with you at all times. You are never alone and He is never too busy for you (John 16:32-33).**
- F. The Father knows all about you and knows what you need before you even ask Him (Matthew 6:7-8; Matthew 10:29-31).**
- G. The Father cares for you tenderly and tells you not to worry about your life (Matthew 6:25-32; Matthew 10:29-31).**
- H. The Father is fully committed to you and will go to great lengths to rescue you and bring you back into fellowship if you go astray (Matthew 18:12-14).**

- I. **If you want to get a understandable picture of what the Father is like, look at Jesus Christ his Son (John 14:7-10).**

### III. **WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE DRAW NEAR TO OUR FATHER?**

So let's tackle some new material now as we seek to understand what life looks like when we walk in relationship with our Father and learn to live life his way by the power of the Holy Spirit. What are his purposes for us and how does he teach us to live our lives and deal with sin its damaging effects?

- A. **You exist for the Father. He's the reason for your existence and the purpose of it (1 Corinthians 8:6).**

1 Corinthians 8:6

***...there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him.***

As well stated in the Westminster Confession, the purpose in our very existence is "to glorify God and enjoy him forever." This is so important to keep in mind as we live our lives and navigate the sin, challenges and difficulties that come our way. Is that how you view the purpose for your life right now and are your words and actions reflecting that purpose?

- B. **The Father is the source of what you need to make good choices, know Him more, and walk by His power (Ephesians 1:15-19).**

*Ephesians 1:15-19*

***15 For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers; 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. 18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.***

When we seek Him earnestly in prayer, He gives us wisdom and direction for the future, invites us into close relationship with Him, pours out His love on us, and gives us His power to meet all of life's challenges in ways that glorify Him and bring us joy.

- C. If you've repented of your sin and trusted Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord, the Father has given you the Holy Spirit to live inside you, keep His presence with you always, and make it possible for you to represent Him well as His child (Galatians 4:4-7; John 14:16-17).**

*John 14:16-17*

***16 "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; 17 that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.***

*Galatians 4:4-7*

***4 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, 5 so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. 6 Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" 7 Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.***

Remember those sin categories God gave us in his Word from Galatians. Well, by the power of His Spirit living inside us, he gives us what we need to experience freedom from those sinful ways of living and replace them with what's called the fruit of the Spirit. Right after those verses listing sin categories in Galatians 5:19-21, he shares with us what the Spirit will grow in us instead as we deal with sin God's way by his power:

*Galatians 5:22-26*

***22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.***

**D. You can't love the world and the Father at the same time (1 John 2:15-17).**

*1 John 2:15-17*

***15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. 17 The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.***

You're loving the world if you're finding your hope and joy in physical pleasure, material things, or in exalting yourself. Loving the world instead of God is the heart of sin and what gets us into so much trouble. What do you live for? Where do you find your hope for each day? Where do you look when you're feeling depressed or struggling to keep going each day? What goal are you currently working towards that you think will finally get you what you need and bring you satisfaction in life?

**E. The Father uses His Word to change you and make you more like Jesus Christ (John 17:17).**

*John 17:17*

**"Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.**

As we've already mentioned, God has given us substantive direction and life-changing truth in his Word that provides us with everything we need to navigate even the most difficult of circumstances and find healing from the darkest of sin. God's Word is truth it's powerful and transforming when we believe it and put it into practice.

**F. As a perfect Father, God disciplines you as His child for your good (Hebrews 12:7-15).**

It's been said that "a wise father hates sin in order to love his son." And this is definitely true about how our Father loves us. He knows how harmful sin is and how much it will hurt us and other people and negatively affect our fellowship with him.

Hebrews 12:7-15

**7 It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? 8 But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. 9 Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. 11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. 12 Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble, 13 and make straight paths for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed. 14 Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.**

As we walk with our Father he'll discipline us for our good and do what it takes to guide us into the path of healing that will keep us in fellowship with him and pursuing peace and relationship with each other.

- G. As the Father changes you through his Word and his discipline, you will learn to love Him and love other people like He loves you (John 15:8-14).**

John 15:8-14

**8 "My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. 9 "Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. 10 "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. 11 "These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full. 12 "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. 13 "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. 14 "You are My friends if you do what I command you.**

If we're abiding with Christ and allowing the Father to change us through His Word, we will begin truly loving and caring about other people and we'll do

what it takes to stay in relationship with one another. If that's not happening, something's wrong and we've gotten off track somewhere.

- H. The Father teaches you to be merciful, letting go of revenge and instead loving your enemies and praying for those who persecute you. He teaches you to forgive (Matthew 5:43-45; Luke 6:35-36).**

*Matthew 5:43-45*

**43 "You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.' 44 "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.**

*Luke 6:35-36*

**35 "But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. 36 "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.**

*Mark 11:25*

**"Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you your transgressions.**

The Father calls us to be merciful to all and to release anger and leave it in His hands. He calls us to forgive. Isn't it just so natural for us to want to repay wrongs that are done to us and to end relationships whenever we're hurt? Isn't it so easy to take the emotion of anger and allow it to become sin as we let it settle down inside us and plan how to take revenge or how to punish? And even though we know that holding anger inside is physically bad for us and leads us away from peace and close fellowship with God, still it's so easy to hold it there and refuse to hand it over to God. So why do we do it?

Dallas Willard, in his book, "The Divine Conspiracy," has some great thoughts on this question. He says, "Anger indulged, instead of simply waved off,

always has in it an element of self-righteousness and vanity. Find a person who has embraced anger, and you find a person with a wounded ego. The importance of the self and the real or imaginary wound done to it is blown out of all proportion by those who indulge anger. Then anger can become anything from a low-burning resentment to a holy crusade to inflict harm on the one who has thwarted me or my wishes or bruised my sense of propriety...”

“Only this element of self-righteousness can support me as I retain my anger long after the occasion of it or allow its intensity to heat to the point of totally senseless rage. To rage on I must regard myself as mistreated or as engaged in the rectification of an unbearable wrong, which I all too easily do.”

Well the Father, who has every reason to be angry and pour out His wrath on each of us, has chosen instead to rescue us and forgive us and pour out his wrath on His own Son instead. And if anyone had a reason to be angry and to seek revenge, it would be Jesus Christ. A completely innocent and good man, He was tortured, mocked, abused and hung on a cross to die for crimes he didn't commit. He endured the white-hot wrath of God the Father for sins that he did not commit. And yet what were some of His final words as He hung on the cross? “Father forgive them...”

My friends, as the recipients of this incredible mercy through Christ, can't we do the same and forgive those who we believe have wronged us? Can't we stop insisting on our own self-righteousness and perfect motives, and instead come to humility, recognizing our own failings and imperfections, and offer the grace and forgiveness we've received to other people? Can't we learn to trust our Father and release the anger and bitterness and desire for revenge to Him? Can't we honestly deal with and face sin as it arises in our lives and the lives of others and follow the Father's path to freedom and restored relationships, which is repentance and confession leading to forgiveness and restored relationships.

Yes, we can...because with the Father all things are possible. And when we live life and deal with problems and sin his way, by the power of the Holy

Spirit, we show the world a glimpse of what our God is like and the power of his gospel to bring forgiveness, healing and freedom in a very broken world.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Don't we have a good, good Father? He's ready and waiting to provide us with everything we need as we call on him, meditate on his Word and learn to put it into practice by the power of His Spirit. Do you have an issue in your life that seems too difficult to face and resolve? Are you trying to run away from guilt or shame instead of dealing with it God's way? I'd like to invite you today to run into the arms of your good Father and allow him to guide and direct you into his perfect way of dealing with sin and broken relationships: honesty, repentance, and confession, leading to forgiveness, freedom and restored relationships. It's the pattern he laid out for us through the work of Christ on the cross, "**...who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God**" (Hebrews 12:2b). In him we also can despise the shame and do what it takes to bring healing, reconciliation and forgiveness no matter the cost.

Sin is real and there's not one of us here who hasn't been guilty in our lives of committing serious and damaging sin. In the words of 1 John verse 8: "**If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.**" That's pretty clear, isn't it? But what follows that statement is the path to freedom: "**If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**" Come into the light and confess your sin to God and to those you've harmed. "**This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.**"

Because of the blood of Jesus, we can have freedom, forgiveness and restored fellowship with each other through repentance and confession. Thank you, Jesus, and thank you Good Father for making this possible for us. Teach us to walk in your ways and follow in your footsteps! May this phrase be true of each of us: "Like father, like son."

Let's spend some time now, remembering and reflecting on the amazing work of Christ on the cross that makes this freedom and forgiveness possible and invites us to live life and eternity in relationship with the best Father in the universe!