

# Mark 1:1-12

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[ 0 : 00 ]     Very good morning to you all. We are told repeatedly to count our blessings, are we not? So I will start by counting my blessings today.

First, it's very good to be here again after so many years of not having been able to come. It's good. It's very good to be here and receive this warm welcome in the midst of a not-so-warm Scottish summer.

It's also very good to enjoy the hospitality and fellowship of a family with whom we've had a precious friendship for so many years now and spend this couple of days with the Macphersons.

It's a real gift, a blessing from God. Then to be called an honorary child for today, that was very good. That made my day. And to think that the other one I'm not so sure about, I will wonder what the minister will say in the church I attend to back in Medellin when I tell him that Mr. Macpherson encouraged us to get a few bubuzelas to make the call for worship at the beginning of the service.

But it is also a great thing to be able to open the word and spend a few moments reflecting on what the Lord has for us today.

[ 1 : 25 ]     So let's take a time to pray and bring our hearts to the feet of our Lord. Our Father in heaven, we very often do not realize how huge a privilege it is to be free, to gather, to worship you.

To be free, to gather, to have fellowship with one another and fellowship with you. To be free to open your word and read it and reflect on it.

Help us not to take it for granted. Help us, oh Lord, never to see this as a burden, an obligation.

That's what we have to do because it's part of our family tradition or national culture or whatever. But make our soul always thirsty, wanting to receive what you have for us.

So please, Lord, speak to us this morning from your word through the assistance and the illumination of the Holy Spirit. For we ask this in the name of your Son, your beloved Jesus Christ.

[ 2 : 43 ]     Amen. I'm told we are celebrating today Father's Day. And when there is a special day like Father's Day or Mother's Day or whatever other day, there is always the temptation for the preacher to stand here and speak, have a ton of platitudes about fathers, how wonderful they are or should be or how good a son or a daughter we should be to our fathers.

But I just wonder what good that makes. And it always makes me wonder when Patty, my wife, tells me that she finds a little bit annoying that for Mother's Day so many preachers go straight into Proverbs 31 and speak of the virtuous woman.

And she says, oh, it's impossible to be like her. She's too perfect. I don't like that. So let's try to avoid the common places of these Father's Day thing.

But on the other hand, it is a very good opportunity to come back to the idea of fatherhood, to come back to the image that God himself has chosen to present himself to us, God our Father.

We tend to forget that sometimes, but it is a good time to remember it. There are two occasions in which the Father is interacting with the Son, the Holy Father, the Holy Son, interacting in a very special way, very personal way.

[ 4 : 33 ] One of them is right after Jesus' baptism, as we read in the first chapter of the book of Mark. And the other one, very similar, is after the episode we know as the Transfiguration.

In both those occasions, God the Father addresses the Son incarnate and says, You are my Son, whom I love.

With you I am well pleased. That's in Mark 1, 11. You are my Son, whom I love. With you I am well pleased. And in the second one, after the Transfiguration, in chapter 9 of Mark, God says basically the same, but addressing other people, addressing those who are there with Jesus and says, This is my Son, whom I love.

Listen to him. Now think of it. Jesus has just been baptized. He is about to start his ministry. And as he comes out, and as he prepares, perhaps with some trepidation, thinking of his ministry that is about to start, perhaps stunted in the face of the enormity of the task he has ahead, we don't know what he is thinking, what his emotions are at the moment, but what we know is that heaven opens, and that what he himself hears is this small uttering from the Father.

You are my Son. The first thing that Jesus gets from the Father is an affirmation of his own identity.

[ 6 : 28 ] Now, we do know that Jesus knew who he was. We do know that a few years before he had disappeared, Mary was worried, and when he shows up at the end, he says, don't worry, I was dealing with my Father's business.

I was doing what my Father has sent me to do here. I know who I am. But for his Father, it is never redundant. It is never out of time to reaffirm and to renew for Jesus that sense of belonging.

makes me think of one of those old war films that sometimes we see on TV. I don't know if they show them here still, but we can imagine of a son, of a father seeing off his son going off to war.

They are in one of those old train stations. The train is about to depart, and they look at each other and they look a bit uncomfortable. They just don't know what to say.

They just don't know what to do. And the Father would say something like this. Remember, you are McPhee or McDonald's or whatever.

[ 7 : 49 ] Remember, you are. my father fought in the Boer War. I went to the Great War. Now you are going to this war. Behave yourself. Do good.

You are my son. You never forget that. You go and do your duty because you remember who you are. Here, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the very God, seems to be giving his son kind of a morale boost.

You are my son. You are no less than that. You are the son of God. He knows what he is going into.

He knows how difficult his ministry will be. He knows what the price he will have to pay is. So he stands by him and reminds him, you are my son.

Few things give a young man a greater sense of pride and honor than knowing that he is the son of a great man. man. And that sense of honor and pride is multiplied when that man, that man, that great man owns him, as the father is doing here, owning Jesus.

[ 9 : 18 ] You are my son. Or as he does after the transfiguration when he tells everybody else, he is my son. in a more human dimension, I can imagine a father just putting his arm over his own shoulder saying, he is my son.

Do you know that? Never forget it. He is my son. This is my son, my blood, my flesh, my lineage, my legacy.

This is my son. So, the first thing that Jesus hears is, this is my son. The second part of this uttering of this sentence goes a bit beyond that.

You are my son whom I love. Love. That fundamental yet little known thing called love.

It has been trivialized to the extent that we laugh at it. Love. It has been sexed to the extent that it embarrasses us even to mention love.

[ 10 : 43 ] It has been commercialized to the extent that it bothers us. Love. Yeah, sure. Fathers they love. Yeah, it's somebody trying to sell more cards.

It's just somebody trying to sell more stuff so that you can give to your father as a present. But the father in heaven sees Jesus as his son whom he loves.

The father is not only acknowledging his son, not only is making clear to everyone that he owns, his fatherhood, but he expresses in a very clear and straightforward phrase that he loves his son.

No way around it. And that son needs to be totally assured of his father's love. He knows his father will have to act upon it, upon him.

he knows that his father will have to let him bear all the punishment that you and I deserve as sinners. The son knows that his ordeal will be an extreme one, a very difficult one to go through.

[ 12 : 05 ] One that ended up being so terrible that made him, Jesus, come even closer to despair. when he says, why have you abandoned me?

Only Jesus' total, absolute, and unflinching conviction that his father loves him, could have taken him through all that he went through.

I'm getting all this from God. I'm getting all this punishment, even God separating himself from me, that's unbearable.

But I know he loves me. And I know that he's doing it out of love for you too. So that love was very crucial and sustained him to the very end.

Now, notice that love here is not a cheesy, wishy-washy, American, or Latin American absurdity, as we may be tempted to think.

[ 13 : 17 ] Love is at the very core of God's identity, and the scripture tells us that God is love. And God tells us that that love is at the very center of the relationship between father and son.

you are not only my son, whom I proud of, with whom I am well pleased, you are my son, whom I love.

We therefore ignore or disregard or distrust love at our own peril, whatever the reasons we may have to set it aside.

but then we come to a third part of this expression. You are my son, whom I love, and now with you I am well pleased.

I remember very vividly those occasions in which my father either told me or told somebody else in my presence that he was proud of me.

[ 14 : 29 ] I never felt more proud myself than when I heard him saying that that great man whose love I enjoyed was also proud of me.

What else could I ask for? What else could I desire? Jesus was human as he was divine.

and it was an inbuilt need in him to know that his father was proud of him, that his father was well pleased with him.

As he entered the time when he had to fulfill his mission in life, probably, and I'm just inventing, he may have had that thought that most men have had at least once in our life.

That question that so often is a regarding question, do I have what it takes? Will I be able to face what I have to face, do what I have to do?

[ 15 : 40 ] Will I be up to the circumstances? And it's incredible to realize how many men resign their call, refrain from taking risks, run from a wonderful woman, because they come to the conclusion that they are not good enough.

How many men and women have not come forward to accept fully God's grace and love and communion because they think they are not good enough?

But here we see the Father expressing clearly that he takes pleasure in his son, that he is well assured that his son will fulfill his mission, that he is and has all that is needed for such a task.

I know who you are. You are my son. I love you and I believe in you. Jesus of Nazareth, the son incarnate, God himself needed to hear these reassurances from his heavenly father.

He needed to hear that the father owned him as his son, that the father loved him, and that the father was well pleased with him. Now we are talking here of the perfect man, the perfect image, definition, and expression of manhood needed that.

[ 17 : 31 ] Don't you think that that gives us a clue about what we, being so far from perfect, mortal, weak human beings need to? many of us here this morning probably would give an arm or two to hear these things from his own father.

You are my son. I love you. I'm well pleased with you. We do need that from our fathers.

I have lived long enough and have counseled many people in the 12 years that I have in Colombia. Both my wife and I work a lot in counseling and I work also with men's ministry.

So I spend weekends with a bunch of men, listening to them, to what is in their hearts, and their souls, and their lives, what makes them feel they are less and they should be.

Christian men struggling to live full Christian lives, and this is a recurring thought, a recurring idea that comes of what I would give to hear this from my father.

[ 18 : 56 ] In Colombia, there's a great deal of people who simply do not have a father. There was a man one day that got their mother pregnant, not sure, but more or less that's all they can say from that man.

In less extreme cases, that man simply left one day. And the message that man leaves behind after slamming a door and disappearing from a child's life is, you are not my son.

I do not love you. I am not well pleased with you. So goodbye. I'm off. In other cultures, the father may be there, physically present perhaps, even dutifully fulfilling his role as provider and even as the ruler of the home.

But any show of love, any idea hugging a wee boy and telling him that he loves him is a total aberration. No way.

Oh, I'll never do that. Meanwhile, that little boy grows up, becomes a teenager first, a young man, an adult man, an old man one day, and still desperate to know, desperate to hear that his father loves him, that he is proud of him.

[ 20 : 25 ] For some reason, somewhere down the line of history, we men have developed the idea that asking for love, for recognition, and affirmation is not a manly thing.

And then we start starving our children of those things, thinking that in that way we are forming their character.

If we tell them that we love them, if we show them that we love them, we will be spoiling those kids. I wonder if the father was wrong when he said this thanks to Jesus.

us. So, at the human level, we would do well in following God's model as a father and provide our children with this kind of assurances and affirmation, regardless what our own family or national culture may say about that.

But we also have to come to the reality that for many of us this could be impossible. Our fathers may not be with us anymore, or they may not be willing to do such a thing.

[ 21 : 50 ] We may never hear from our fathers that we are their sons or daughters, that they love us or that they are pleased with us. Is then everything lost?

Does that mean that there is nothing to do, that we will go to our graves with that huge emptiness in our souls and our hearts? Is that what he means? No, because that's when the beauty of the gospel comes in.

To all who received him, John 1, 12, to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

Children not of natural descent, nor of human decision, or of husband's will, but born of God. The man from whom I should have received this gift of hearing that he's my father, that he loves me, that he's well-pleased with me, may not be around anymore.

Maybe totally unknown to me, but Psalm 27, 10, says that though my father and my mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me.

[ 23 : 14 ] The Lord, our God, will be my father. Jesus teaches us to pray to his father, addressing him as our father, Lord in heaven.

Jesus Christ, the privileged son of the Most High, took on him all the punishment that our sin deserved so that we could be bestowed of all the privilege that were rightly his in a very unfair exchange.

Through him we are made sons and daughters of that father that spoke to him that day after his baptism.

We are children of God with all the honors and privileges that pertain to that condition. What do I have to do then to get the same that Jesus had?

Where do I buy that? Where do I get it? What do I have to do? Well, nothing other than receiving it. Nothing other than acknowledging that we need it.

[ 24 : 45 ] Nothing other than coming to the only one who can give it to us. So, if you're a father, consumed by the awareness of your own failures with regard to bringing up your children, or if you are a child longing to hear from your father what you will probably never hear from your earthly father, if you are a man or a woman who has never been able to see God as his or her father because the image you have in your mind of your natural father prevents you from even considering God your father.

It's so negative, it's so painful that you cannot even think of calling God your father. You don't want to have anything to do with that.

Today, you can come and approach your real father heart, with all your personal need, with your broken heart, with your heavy soul, with your empty life, with your terrible shame, with your excruciating pain, with your loneliness, with whatever human condition you may be able to bring to the feet of the Lord.

you can come to him and hear his words, telling you the same that he told Jesus. You are his child.

He loves you, and he is well-pleased with you. much more than you are of yourself, because when he looks at you, what he sees is the beauty of Christ, the virtue of Christ, the holiness of Christ, and that is what makes him pleased with you.

[ 26 : 56 ] Jesus was made sin for us, and when in that condition the Father saw him, he poured on him all the punishment and the condemnation that was ours.

Likewise, but in the opposite direction, the righteousness of Jesus is on us, so that when the Father sees us, he pours on him all the love and the appreciation and the pride that he rightly takes from him, from Jesus.

it does not depend on us, it's by grace alone. That's why it's totally secured. That's why it's impossible to stop God from doing that.

Oh, but that was for Jesus. Those words were for Jesus. those words will never be for me. I will never deserve them, which is true.

We will never deserve them. But again, remember, it's by grace. And that's when this passage we read first in Isaiah 43, come to bear.

[ 28 : 13 ] These words were not addressed to Jesus. us. Let's go back to Isaiah 43, and we will finish there. But now this is what the Lord says.

He who created you, and you can change there, Jacob, for your name. The one who created you, oh, John, Susan, David, Peter.

He who formed you, fear not, for I have redeemed you, I have summoned you by name. You are mine.

You are mine. You are my son. You are my daughter. And when life throws at you all the difficulties that life will bring, when you pass through the waters, I will be with you.

And when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burnt. The flames will not set you ablaze, for I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.

[ 29 : 30 ] I give Egypt for your ransom, cushioned silver in your stead, since you are precious and honored in my sight.

The Lord of heaven, God himself, is telling you that you are precious, that you are honorable in his sight, regardless of what you think, regardless of what you do or you don't, since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you.

You are mine, I love you, you are precious and honored in my sight. That's what Jesus Christ won for us on the cross.

He opened the door for us to be granted the right to be called children of God and to become the receivers of this message from the Father himself.

You are my child, I love you, I am well pleased with you. If we can remember this, if we can take this with us, then we will be better equipped to live a full, productive, joyful, Christian life, whatever the circumstances that surround us are.

[ 31 : 15 ] And that can only be for God's glory, for our benefit, and for the blessing of those who surround us. may the Lord keep his word in your heart.

to me. Good. compliqué. So short continues half water to take another lump into alt■■■ and continued■■ELL to get steps to move easier and speed to procure some■■■■ bitches