

A Few Good Men

It's Father's Day and we honor the men and especially the Fathers among us today. I was one of those fortunate and blessed individuals who had a godly, loving father. I cannot possibly overestimate my Dad's influence on my life. My dad taught me how to be a man, a husband, a father, a Christian, a son. He taught me to pray, to love God. He taught me the bible. He showed me the importance of living a disciplined and godly life. Of course, like most dads, he taught me how to drink from the carton, how to go past the first couple of stale slices of bread in the loaf to get the good stuff, how to swear like a Christian. I never heard dad use a curse word, not even slang like "golly or darn." Instead, I heard, "no good, cotton pickin' sorry rotten, outfit." "What in the cat hair." "Lord have mercy." "Well I'll say to my time." "Well, I'll swan."

Dad's been in heaven a little over four years now and mom has been there just over ten. Not a day goes by that I don't think of them and miss them. I know relationships with Dad's can be difficult at times. We don't always get it right. We over react, bump heads. We try to fix things and in the process we exasperate our children and wives at times, but cut us some slack. We're trying right? And if your father is still alive, call him, text him, reach out, tell him you love him while you can. And to all the fathers out there: happy father's day.

Let me say at the outset that this message applies to all of us, but since it is Father's Day, I'm going to aim this message especially at men and fathers. Ladies, please include yourselves.

Remember last fall when I preached about the boundary stones? I told you God had established boundaries and there was a time when our culture for the most part recognized those boundaries. Notice how the boundary stones have kept moving even since last fall? Our culture is busy redefining everything. We have redefined one of the foundation stones of human society - marriage and family - and made it about choice. "I want to marry whomever I wish to marry, regardless of gender." But that wasn't enough. Let's redefine gender. Apparently gender can't be based simply on dna or biology, it too should be based on choice. "I feel more like a woman so from now on I will be a woman. I'm going to live as a woman." (I realize I am over simplifying the claims and I don't mean to be unkind or insensitive to anyone struggling with these issues, but I want you to see a problem at the heart of this.) After choosing your gender you can then apparently choose your sexual preference. Gender as well as sexual

preference becomes a matter of choice. “It’s fluid” is the phrase I’ve heard used. “I may be bi-sexual. Maybe I’m gay, maybe I’m straight. I’m trying to decide.” (I thought the argument was you either were or you weren’t, but now for some it seems to be about choice.) And now, with this latest interview with Rachel Dolezal, the former NAACP director in Washington state, it appears we can choose our race as well. When asked if she was an African-American, her answer was “I don’t understand the question.” Seems pretty simple to most of us doesn’t it? But here is the reason for the confusion. She told Savannah Guthrie on the Today show, “I definitely am not white. Nothing about being white describes who I am. I’m more black than I am white. That’s the accurate answer from my truth.” Aha! There is the problem. Here is where the “truth wagon” veered off the road for her and for all the rest of us. For all of these issues: **“That’s the accurate answer from my truth.” ...Rachel Dolezal**

No wonder she is confused. No wonder I’m confused. She bases her answers and her choices on HER truth, not on THE truth. This is a sample of the confusion of relativism. When truth is relative, then everyone has their own truth. Understand, particularly with regard to racial issues, I’m all for blurring or erasing racial lines. As Dr. King said, I’m all for judging a person on the basis of their character and not their skin color, but we still don’t get to choose our own truth and our own reality. That only leads to anarchy and chaos. It doesn’t work in the real world. That’s Picasso working as a police sketch artist. We produce art but we never catch criminals. Truth still counts. Absolute truth, God’s truth still matters. And we need a few good men who are willing to believe and live and speak the truth! We need a few people who aren’t afraid to state the obvious – the emperor doesn’t have on any clothes.

The prophet Isaiah said, **“Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.”** **Isaiah 5:20.** We are living in a broken world, a world of confusion, and calling good evil and evil good doesn’t fix it. Creating our own truth rather than seeking God’s truth and living according to his truth, won’t fix it. Denying the truth won’t fix anything. We need people willing to live the truth in addition to speaking the truth. I’m looking for a few good men and women who will dare to live for God, live according to his truth and his commands, and model that godly life for the next generation. It’s the only hope for this broken world.

The bible says, **“Even in the case of lifeless things that make sounds, such as the flute**

or harp, how will anyone know what tune is being played unless there is a distinction in the notes. Again, if the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle?” 1 Corinthians 14:7-8. I’m looking for a few good men that won’t be afraid to speak the truth and live the truth. Who will dare to live according to the boundaries God has established in his word. I’m looking for someone who will dare to make a distinction in the notes they play, in the song they sing, in the life they live, in the choices they make. With that said, let me share some examples of the kind of men I’m talking about.

Daniel was one of those “few good men.” He was a teenager when Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah, destroyed Jerusalem and took its citizens captive to Babylon. The bible says the king ordered his chief of staff to choose “some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility – young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand and qualified to serve in the king’s palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians. They were to be trained for three years and after that they were to enter the king’s service.” Daniel was one of the young Jewish men chosen to be assimilated into Babylonian culture. He was on the fast track to the top. All he had to do was “go along to get along.” “Come on Daniel, just be one of the boys. You don’t want to be some religious fanatic. The king likes you. He’s giving you a chance to be somebody. A new name, a new identity. Forget about Jerusalem and your God and be a citizen of Babylon.”

The bible says, **“But Daniel resolved not to defile himself...” Daniel 1:8.** The king provided food and wine for Daniel and the others, but Daniel had been taught to eat kosher, to eat according to God’s law. Daniel wouldn’t defile himself by what he ate or drank regardless of what everyone else did. Still good instruction for us. When he was commanded to pray only to the king for the next 30 days, “Daniel resolved not to defile himself.” The bible says when Daniel knew the law had been passed prohibiting prayer to anyone but the king, **“[Daniel] got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.”**

Daniel 6:10

Daniel had made a decision as a young man to serve God and obey the Lord. When he was dragged off to Babylon, surrounded by sin of all kinds, plunged into a pagan culture, Daniel resolved that nothing had changed. He would still serve God, just as he had done before,

regardless of the cost. More than once his life was literally on the line and yet he refused to give in or compromise. And where did it get him? He served three or four different kings in three or four different empires and was highly regarded by them all. More importantly, it was an angel from heaven that referred to Daniel as “you who are highly esteemed.” I would say his resolve to not defile himself with the “things” of Babylon was the wise choice. Let me remind you, sin doesn’t satisfy, it defiles. I’m looking for a few good men who like Daniel will resolve not to defile themselves with sin and instead will continue to serve God, regardless of the circumstances. Joseph was another man who refused to be sidetracked by his

circumstances or seduced by sin. Daniel was enslaved by a conquering army. Joseph was sold into slavery by his own brothers. He finds himself in Egypt, working as a slave in the house of Potiphar. The bible tells us Joseph was handsome and Potiphar’s wife was attracted to him and began to entice him, trying to seduce him. The bible says day after day she invited him, “Come to bed with me!” Day after day he refused to go to bed with her or even to be with her. Joseph said, “Your husband trusts me. How could I betray him?” More importantly, Joseph asked, **“How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?” Genesis 39:9**

“Come sleep with me” she said. Come on, everyone is doing this. Besides, who is going to know? You aren’t going to tell and I’m not going to tell my husband. No one will ever know. Come on. What’s wrong with having a little fun? It won’t hurt anything.” Remember what I said, ultimately sin doesn’t satisfy, it defiles. “It won’t hurt anything.” No, sin hurts everything. It hurts everyone. “No one will know.” God will know. Joseph said, “How could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?” We sin against God. We take action against God and harm ourselves and others in the process.

I’m looking for a few good men and women, like Joseph, who will say no to sin! I’m looking for a few good men who won’t give in regardless of the pressure, regardless of the temptation. Day after day she spoke to Joseph and day after day he refused. He wouldn’t even be around her, he wouldn’t put himself in a position of being tempted. Joseph ran out of his jacket to get away from her. The bible says to resist the devil but flee temptation and Joseph literally, physically fled from temptation.

We live in this sexually charged culture where anything and everything goes. I’m looking for a few good men – young and old alike – who will refuse to compromise and who will

choose to live a sexually pure life. I'm looking for a few good men like Joseph!

Joshua is another example of the kind of man I'm looking for. He was the assistant to Moses and would become the successor to Moses, leading the Israelites into the promised land. Prior to that, Joshua was one of the twelve men sent in as spies to look over the promised land. When they returned the men said it was indeed a land flowing with milk and honey. They showed examples of the fruit that was growing – grapes and pomegranates and figs, but then they spoke about the powerful people and the walled cities. Ten of the spies said “we look like grasshoppers compared to the residents of the land.” Caleb offered the minority report. “We should go up and take possession of the land for we can certainly do it.” Numbers 13:30. The majority report began to spread throughout the camp until finally the people began to cry, “If only we had died in Egypt!” They said “We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt.” Good plan.

Moses and Aaron fell face down on the ground before the people and Joshua and Caleb tore their clothes as in mourning over what they were hearing. They said, **“The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. If the Lord is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey and will give it to us. Only do not rebel against the Lord. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will swallow them up. Their protection is gone, but the Lord is with us. Do not be afraid of them.”**
Numbers 14:7-9

You know what happened. The people refused to trust God and wouldn't listen to Joshua and Caleb. They ended up dying in the wilderness. Joshua however, refused to go along with the majority. He feared God more than he feared the people. In fact, the bible says the whole assembly talked about stoning Joshua and Caleb, but Joshua was willing to die rather than rebel against the Lord. He refused to fear the Israelites and he refused to fear the people in the walled cities of the promised land. Joshua feared the Lord and determined in his heart he would obey God and trust him, regardless of the outcome.

I'm looking for a few good men who will fear God more than they fear losing their reputation or their job or their social standing. I'm looking for a few good men who as someone once said, will do right and fear no man. I'm looking for a few good men who will base their decisions not upon what is popular, or what the majority says, but based upon what God has said

in his word. Joshua was prepared to trust God and walk by faith and leave the outcome in God's hands. And what was the outcome? Joshua and Caleb were the only two of that generation who were allowed to go into the promised land.

Joshua knew the importance of trusting God, of obeying God and walking by faith. He would lead the people into the promised land after the death of Moses. At the end of Joshua's life he says to the Israelites, **“Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness. But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the river, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”** Joshua 24:14-15

Joshua knew that serving God was a choice. All those years before, the ten spies chose to fear men more than they feared the Lord. They made a choice and it cost them. Joshua made a choice and at the end of his life he was still making that choice. “As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.” You have to make a choice, every day. Someone said we don't drift in a God-ward direction. We have to choose to move toward God. Left on your own you will drift away from the Lord. Choose to serve him.

I'm looking for a few good men who will choose to serve God with all their heart and soul and mind and strength. I'm looking for a few good men who as fathers will say with Joshua, “As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.” You'll have to make that choice daily. You'll have to reinforce that choice with your children. You will have to model that choice and sacrifice for that choice. You'll have to lead by example but it will be worth it. Just ask Joshua.

Among the few good men mentioned in the bible were the men who came to David at Hebron to turn the kingdom over to him. It mentions the **“...men of Issachar, who understood the times and knew what Israel should do.”** 1 Chronicles 12:32.

I'm looking for a few good men, like the men of Issachar, who understand the times in which we live and know what to do. It's time to choose, to serve God and live for him. Now is not the time for compromise. It's not the time to back down, it's time to stand up, to choose God's word, God's truth, God's way. Remember Paul said we had to hit a distinct note so people will know what tune we are playing. It's time to hit a distinct note. It's time to point

out the brokenness of this world to your children and point out the difference that serving Jesus makes. It's time to let your light shine so that your family sees it, your co-workers see it. It's time to live without compromise. We need men like Daniel, and Joseph, and Joshua and like the men of Issachar, who will choose to serve God, regardless. Who will resolve not to be defiled by this world and its sin but who will live for Jesus and serve him. Unreservedly, undeniably, sold out to Jesus.

I'm looking for a few good men, but more importantly, the Lord is looking for a few good men. Isaiah wrote, **“Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?’ And I said, ‘Here am I. Send me!’”** **Isaiah 6:8** He's looking for a few good men, and women. What do you say? Are you willing to say, “Here am I. Send me!”