



A Fathers' day reflection by Patsy Cochrane, Sunday 5 September 2021

Be still for the Presence of the Lord

Today is Fathers' Day, a day when many families gather to enjoy each others' company and celebrate the fathers in their midst. But with the Delta variant keeping us firmly "locked down" it's not possible for us to gather as families. Instead we are trapped in our "bubbles" making the most of whoever we find ourselves with and acknowledging that this can be trying at times.

Wherever you are today, it is the one day of the year when we remember our fathers – past and present. Today I invite you to also reflect on your relationship with God, Father of all.



To acknowledge the presence of God's spirit with you wherever you may be, I invite you to light a candle, to honour and remember the spirit of your dad and God with you. Place the candle on your family table as you take time to reflect on our message for today.

If there are any "little people" in your family bubble, they might like to have a go at the Fathers' Day Word search at the end of this document.

Let's begin by singing/humming/reading/reflecting on the hymn: **Be Still for the presence of the Lord is moving in this place.**

Be still for the **Presence** of the Lord, the Holy one is here.

Come bow before him now, in reverence and in fear.

In Him no sin is found.

We stand on Holy ground.

Be still for the Presence of the Lord, the Holy one is here.

Be still for the **Glory** of the Lord is shining all around.

He burns with Holy fire, with splendour He is crowned.

How awesome is the sight, our radiant King of light.

Be still for the Glory of the Lord, is shining all around.

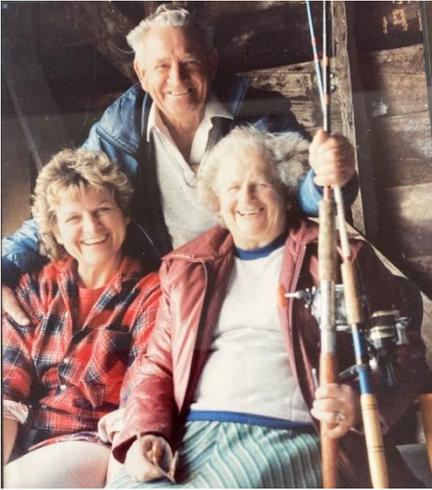
Be still for the **Power** of the Lord is moving in this place.

He comes to cleanse and heal, to minister His grace.

No work too hard for Him, in faith receive from Him.

Be still for the Power of the Lord Is moving in this place.

Reflection:



We Aucklanders can look forward to at least 10 more days of level 4 “lockdown”. This will mean many of us will have plenty of time to be still and reflect on the many events, occasions and people in our lives, including, our Fathers and the impact they have had on us.

As I write this, I am looking at a photo on my study wall. It is a picture of my Mum, Dad and me taken in our boatshed after a fishing trip we had managed to coax mum out on. The picture shows Dad behind us ‘girls’ one arm around my shoulder, and the other, while holding the fishing rods, around mum. To me, this picture represents LOVE as I have been fortunate to know it.

I’m conscious that many people will not have a loving picture on their wall or even in their mind of their Dad having fun while protecting his family.

Today I invite us to reflect on Jairus – a father, religious man and ruler of the local synagogue. A man of prestige and power, but that didn’t protect him from a desperate need. Let’s read about Jairus and his encounter with Jesus in Mark 5: 21-24, 35-43.

Jesus Raises a Dead Girl: ²¹ When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake. ²² Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. ²³ He pleaded earnestly with him, “My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.” ²⁴ So Jesus went with him. ³⁵ While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. “Your daughter is dead,” they said. “Why bother the teacher anymore?” ³⁶ Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, “Don’t be afraid; just believe.” ³⁷ He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. ³⁸ When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. ³⁹ He went in and said to them, “Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.” ⁴⁰ But they laughed at him. After he put them all out, he took the child’s father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. ⁴¹ He took her by the hand and said to her, “Talitha koum!” (which means “Little girl, I say to you, get up in Aramaic!”). ⁴² Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. ⁴³ He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

The story of Jairus is a story of a loving father and a story of faith.

One of the names used to describe God is Jehovah Shammah -The God who is **here**.

In today’s society many homes are suffering from the “Phantom Father” syndrome. The father who is not there physically or emotionally. Many fathers are so absorbed with their careers that they seldom stop to spend time with their children. The effects these “phantom fathers” have on their families and society are devastating.

Jairus was a man of high social position, a man known among his people. He has prestige and power, but he is also a man in desperate need – his little girl, the apple of his eye, was dying. Those of you who have children can no doubt identify with the feelings Jairus must have had.

Jairus was not ashamed to seek out Jesus. He did not send his manservant or his wife. He showed faith in Jesus, seeking him out, unafraid of judgement by his peers. When you take on the role of a father, you also take on the responsibilities of a father, given to you by the heavenly father.

Paul writes in Ephesians 6:4 *"And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."*

Paul encourages the early church to share the good news of Jesus with their children. And so today we too are called to do this.

Do you share your faith with your children or grandchildren? You have the power to lead your children and grandchildren to God as you can walk with them in faith and help them experience God through you. You can create God memories together. Many of our children are grown up now, yet they are still our children and we still have opportunities to show them our commitment to living the Christian faith.

When Jairus took Jesus into his home, his daughter saw her father's faith in action. He unashamedly invited Jesus – rumoured friend of sinners and even the devil – into his home.

Still today in our secular world it may be frowned on to invite Jesus into our homes, but as Christian parents that is what we are called to do. Jesus should not just be a picture on the wall of our homes, but a real presence that is evident in our every word and action.

Do people meet Jesus in your home? Is God the father's name honoured and his word taken seriously?

If your home a place where your family and friends can come and know they are loved, nurtured and accepted unconditionally? A place where they encounter the spirit of Jesus?

Jairus' daughter was healed of her illness, even though people thought she was dead, her father's faith in Jesus is what healed her.

So, what does the story of Jairus daughter teach us? It reminds me that I am held in my heavenly father's hand and that even when I doubt, I trusts that He has a plan and will never abandon me. Sometimes we have to experience hardship and fear to discover that God is there too.

An old hymn comes to mind: *"I know not what the future holds, but I know who holds the future, it's a secret known only to him."*

We can plan and organise to our heart's content, but we need to remember that we are children of God, and He is our father. May our faith be evident in all we do and say and who we are, now and always. Amen.

Prayer: Dear Lord, bless every father, grandfather and all people assuming the role of fatherhood this Fathers' day. Let them know they are not alone as they provide for and support those under their care. Show them how much you delight in their work and empower them to respond to your love by sharing it with those who call them father and/or grandfather. May they know that they too are your beloved children who can trust you and depend on you to lead and guide them as they seek to protect those who depend on them. Reassure them that every unconditional act of love and encouragement is a gift to you. Hear their prayers and help them live their faith making a difference every day. Bless them and encourage them in their witness to you. Amen.

A song to reflect on: The servant song

Will you let me be your servant?
Let me be as Christ to you
Pray that I may have the grace
To let you be my servant too

I will hold the Christ light for you
In the night time of your fear
I will hold my hand out to you
Speak the peace you long to hear

We are pilgrims on the journey
We are travellers on the road
We are here to help each other
Walk the mile and bear the load

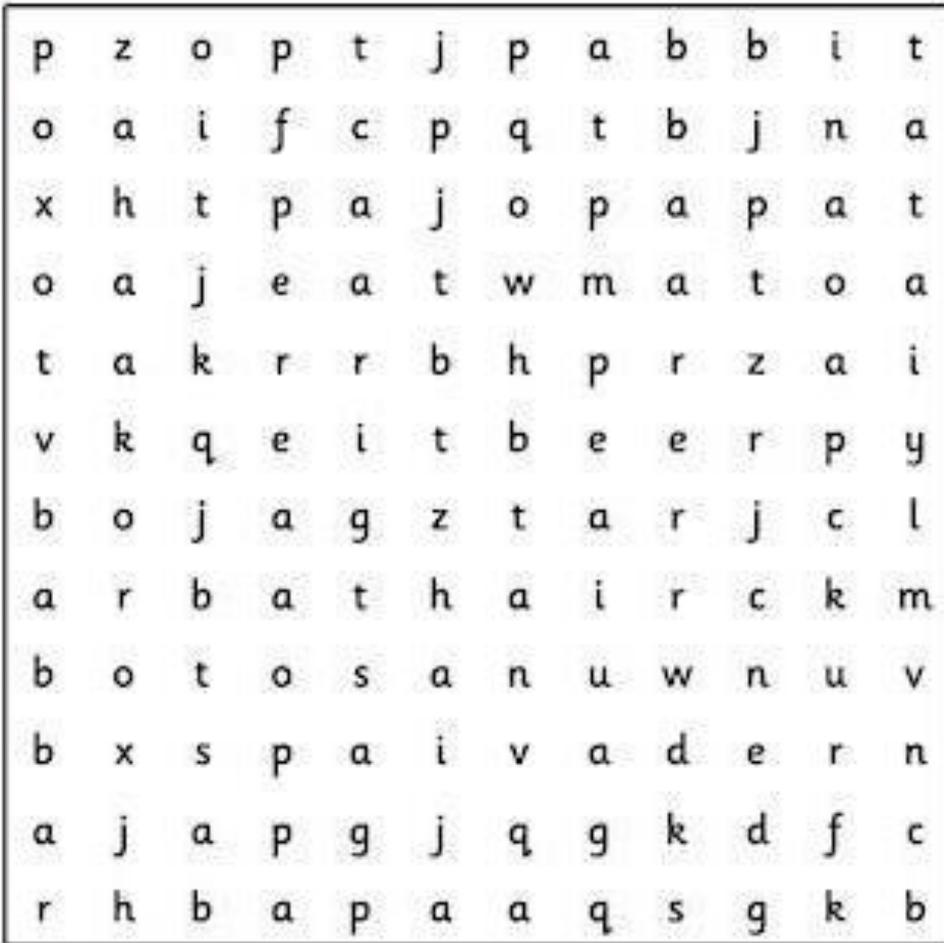
I will weep when you are weeping
When you laugh, I'll laugh with you
I will share your joy and sorrow Till we've
seen this journey through



Father's Day Wordsearch



Can you find the word for Father in all these different languages?



Abba (Hebrew)

Athair (Irish)

Babba (Arabic)

Bapa (Malay)

Father (English)

Haakoro (Maori)

Otosan (Japanese)

Pabbi (Icelandic)

Pai (Portuguese)

Papa (Russian)

Pater (Latin)

Pere (French)

Tata (Polish)

Tatay (Filipino)

Vader (Dutch)