

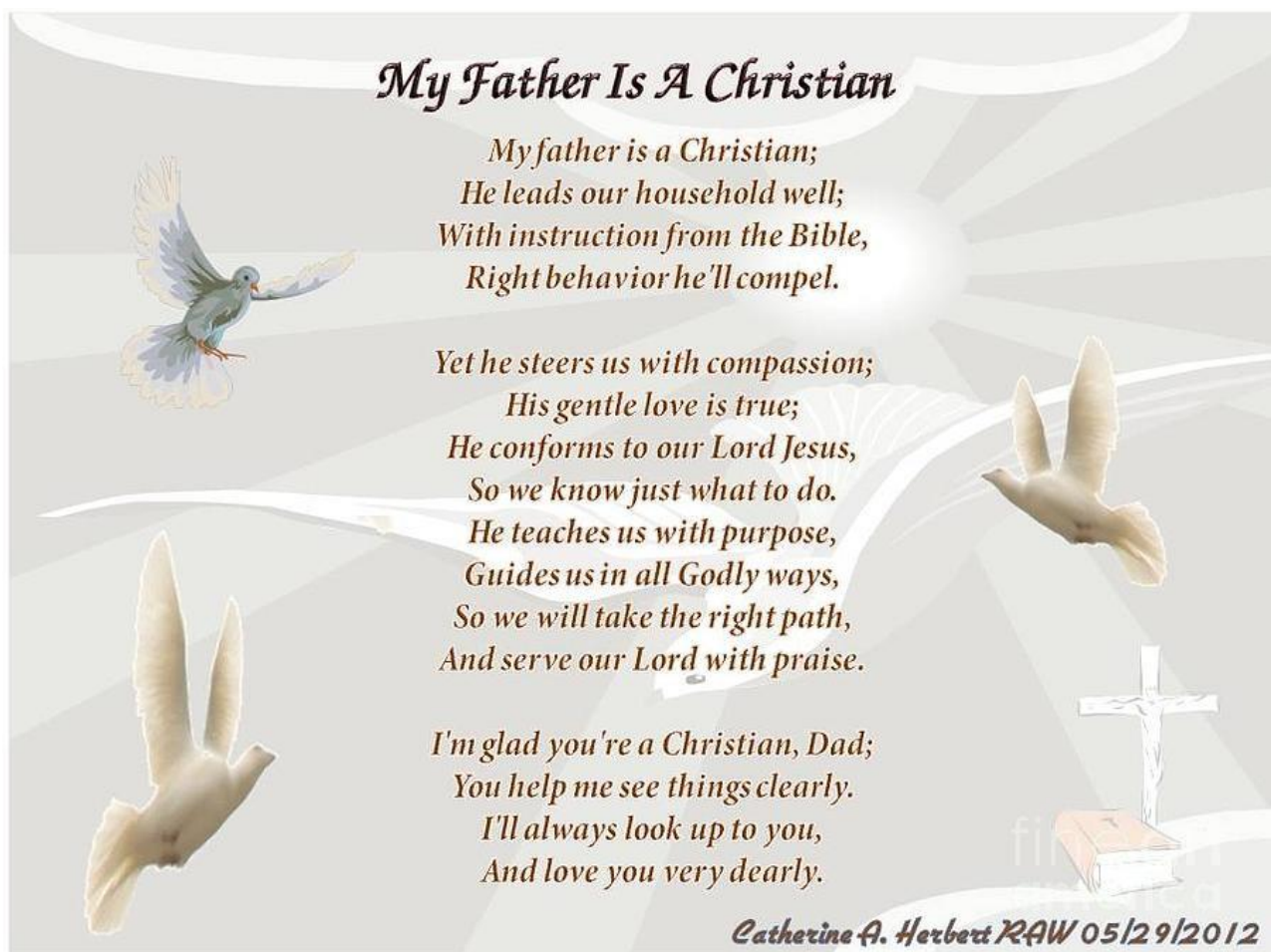
THE FATHER OF OUR FAITH

INTRODUCTION

Happy Father's Day to all our dads today. May the Lord's richest blessings rest upon you today. Fathers have such an important role to play in their families as Prophet, Priest and King. We are to be the role-models, not only to our children and grandchildren, but also to our wife.

Many of the challenges faced by society today are as a result of fathers neglecting this crucial role or, on the other hand, because of satan's relentless onslaught against families and his influence on the world to remove fathers from homes, remove the responsibilities of manhood and also to cause men to dishonour their role of being fathers by enslaving them to alcohol, fornication and pornography, and influencing them to be abusers instead of protectors. We can't however use blaming the devil as a cop-out, as men we need to take ownership of our behavior.

Catherine A Herbert wrote this poem on being a Christian father and dad:



The best picture we have of a father though, is the picture God's Word paints of our heavenly Father.

- He is the one God and Father over all.

- He is kind and loving and gives us the privilege of being called His children.
- He is a Father to the fatherless and Protector of widows.
- **Isaiah 64:8** says: "But now, O Lord, you are our Father, we are the clay, you are the potter and we are the work of your hand."
- He wants to be our father: **2 Corinthians 6:18** "And I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty."
- He is the Father of our Saviour Jesus Christ: **Matthew 3:17** " And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."
- He is the One who loves us so much that He sent His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but be saved.

But today I want to speak to you about another Biblical father, the man who is described as "The father of faith". I want to speak about Abraham and draw on some of the lessons we can learn from His life on Father's Day 2020.

MESSAGE

THE FATHER OF OUR FAITH

Romans 4:1-3(NKJV) What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."

Romans 4:11(NKJV) And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also,

Here we see that Abraham became the father of our faith. In this context, the Jews are referred to as the circumcised, and the Gentiles, the uncircumcised.

LESSON 1: SALVATION BY FAITH AND NOT BY WORKS

Romans 4:2 - 3 makes it clear that Abraham was not justified by works. He believed God and this was accounted to Him as righteousness.

The Jews, under the law believed they were justified by works.

- If they were circumcised, they believed this earned them salvation.
- If they were descendants of Abraham, they believed this earned them righteousness.
- If they worked hard to obey the law and commandments, they felt this justified them.
- But all this is the work of man- no work can ever justify, and no ancestral lineage can save anyone.

We are called into a relationship with God through faith like Abraham had. This will be accounted to us as righteousness. We can never earn our salvation; we receive it freely by grace through faith:

Ephesians 2:8 (NKJV) For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,

1. This is the single greatest lesson we can learn from our father Abraham – to have faith in God. This is the only way we can be righteous!
2. Faith is what makes us children of Abraham.
3. We become Christians by faith, not because our parents are Christians, not because we are good people, not because we attend church, we are grafted into the family of God through faith in Him.

The only way to get to heaven by calling on the Lord by faith, by receiving Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior by faith and by living a life of righteousness by faith.

Have you been trying hard at trying to be good? Have you been trying hard to give up some form of addiction? Have you been trying hard to earn God's favour? It's time to stop trying and start trusting! We overcome all these obstacles by faith.

Lesson 2: ABRAHAM WAS OBEDIENT BY FAITH

James 2:21-23 (NKJV) Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? 22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? 23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God.

Although Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness, it also led to him being justified by works when he was willing to offer his only son Isaac on the altar. It says his faith was perfected through his works!

But Abraham was obedient long before that event. He was obedient when God called him.

Hebrews 11:8-10 (NKJV) By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; 10 for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Abraham, our father of faith set the example of obedience. He went when a God he didn't even know called him to a place he didn't know, later he was willing to sacrifice his own son in obedience.

The result of Abraham's obedience:

1. God made an amazing covenant promise to Abraham that in him all the nations of the earth would be blessed. He later sealed it with an oath, and we are recipients of that blessing in Jesus Christ our Lord.
2. Abraham dwelt in the land of promise.
3. God provided a ram for sacrifice in the place of Isaac.
4. God called Abraham his friend.

Can you imagine any greater compliment than to have God call you His friend? **John 15:14** You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.

What about you and I?

- ***Do we want to partake in the blessings of God like Abraham did?***
- ***Do we want to enter the land of promise? Hebrews 11:16 (NKJV) But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.***
- ***Do we need God's provision today?***
- ***Do we want to be called God's friend?***

Then let us follow in our father Abraham's footsteps by walking in obedience to God's word.

Lesson 3: ABRAHAM WAS BLESSED THROUGH THE TITHE

In Genesis 14 we find the account of Lot, Abraham's nephew being taken captive by enemy kings. Abraham and his servants pursued and defeated them, rescuing Lot and all that the enemy had stolen from the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Genesis 14:17-20 (NKJV) And the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley), after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him. Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. 19 And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; 20 And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tithe of all.

In **Hebrews 7**, Jesus is likened to Melchizedek. It also speaks of Abraham bringing the tithe and says this:

Hebrews 7:7-10 (NKJV) Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better. 8 Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives. 9 Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, 10 for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.

Before the Law, Abraham gave a tithe to one that is a picture of Jesus Christ, our Perfect High Priest.

- Under the law, mortal men received tithes.
- Melchizedek is described: **Hebrews 7:3** "without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually." He is a type of Christ!
- Melchizedek was the king of Salem, which means "peace". Jesus is our Prince of Peace.
- Melchizedek brought out bread and wine. In Christ we celebrate Holy Communion, remembering Him with bread and wine.
- As children of our father Abraham, by faith we tithe to the King of Righteousness and the King of Peace, the One who is everlasting and eternal when we tithe to Jesus Christ our Lord.
- The first thing Melchizedek did was to bless Abraham. It says in verse 7, "Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better".
- Even those under the law were blessed as a result of Abraham, their forefather's tithe (**Heb 7:9**)

Even though Abraham was the one who brought the tithe, he was the one who received the greater blessing!

When we tithe by faith as Christians, we bring ourselves to the place where we are blessed, "the lesser is blessed by the greater".

As we follow in Father Abraham's steps, even our children are blessed through our tithes.

Do you want Jesus to say of you, "Blessed is (Keith, Neil, Cathy, Conrad, Karen, etc.) of God Most High? Then follow in father Abraham's footsteps of faith and tithe to the High Priest in the order of Melchizedek, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. He will bless us; He provides all we need through the new Covenant we celebrate through the bread and the wine.

CONCLUSION

We have the most amazing heavenly Father, but we also have in Abraham, a fantastic "Father of Faith".

As we choose to follow in his footsteps, we will participate in Abraham's blessings:

1. We no longer rely on works for righteousness, we receive our salvation through faith, and we are justified by our resulting works.
2. We walk in obedience to God's word and release the blessings of:
 - An eternal covenant of grace.
 - An eternal home in a city prepared by God.
 - God's provision for our needs
 - Friendship with the Most High God.

3. We tithe to Jesus and He blesses us, the lesser being blessed by the greater.

One final thing, Abraham was victorious, He brought the spoils from the battle when God gave him victory.

As we walk in the faith of Abraham, God will lead us in victory over all the power of the devil and we bring back the spoils of battle. All that the enemy has stolen from us!