

Good Morning, I would like to begin our message today with a warm welcome to all our fathers that are here today. And also I would like to thank all of those who helped with our wonderful Father's Day Breakfast this morning. Now to keep us in the festive mood that we all shared in at breakfast I have this Father's Day joke for us. Four men are in the hospital waiting room because their wives are having babies. A nurse goes up to the first guy and says, "Congratulations! You're the father of twins." "That's odd," answers the man. "I work for the Minnesota Twins!" A nurse says to the second guy, "Congratulations! You're the father of triplets!" "That's weird," answers the second man. "I work for the 3M company!" A nurse tells the third man, "Congratulations! You're the father of quadruplets!" "That's strange," he answers. "I work for the Four Seasons hotel!" The last man is groaning and banging his head against the wall. "What's wrong?" the others ask. "I work for 7 Up!" Well, I'm glad now that when I look back to our first birth I worked for a steel company instead of Century 21 Real Estate. So as we get going with our Father's Day message I would like to bring to you my personal story about a man who was not my father, a man that I never met, but a man who helped me become who I am today. As many of you may know that I grew up in an orphanage for fatherless boys in Colorado at the age of 6 until I graduated from high school. The name of the orphanage was the George W. Clayton College for Boys. The story of it's founder George Clayton is a wonderful Fathers Day story in itself as it reflects a loving compassion for fatherless boys who will grow up without the influence of a father's love and care. George Claytons story actually begins in 1883 when he was born in Philadelphia. George learned his trade by working in his father's store until he was 26 and took off for the Gold Rush in Colorado to make his fortune. What is odd about George's idea of going to the Gold Rush was that he was not interested in mining in itself, but saw a fortune in opening a store in Denver which had only been founded a few months earlier. Clayton went on to become the richest man in Denver by the success of his store selling to the miners and railroad workers. But it was dangerous times for these workers as accidents claimed many of their lives, which left their families with out a father and a way to make a living. One of the results of these deadly accidents was the formation of a large population of "hoodlum boys" that were becoming criminals since there was not a father in the home to oversee and control them.

Besides being the richest man in Denver, George Clayton was a driven businessman and civic leader and recognized that something had to be done to help these boys

grow into useful citizens of Denver. Unfortunately, his compassion to help these boys came from his own family tragedy in the loss of his wife and child from illness. You see Clayton's driven nature was a result of this loss and he devoted his life's work to his business and his civic duty as an elected member of Denver's city council. But on August 15, 1899, Clayton was found dead at his office desk. When his safe was opened, his executors, to their surprise, found approximately 5 million dollars to found an orphanage along with a vocational school and farm for the fatherless boy's of Denver. Now 5 million dollars back then is worth about 125 million dollars today. And as we celebrate Father's Day today, I would like to give my thanks to George Clayton for touching my life with his vision to help me grow up to become a father, husband and a "contributing member of society" as he would have put it. "Thanks, Mr. Clayton". Now, that I've shared George Clayton's Father's Day story with us this morning, I would like to next share a similar story from the early 1900's, but this story will help us to answer this question, "What do Methodists Have in Common with Father's Day?" Actually would you believe that the very beginning of our traditional Father's Day celebration is related to a Methodist Church? You see, the very first observance of "Father's Day" was held on July 5, 1908, in Fairmont, West Virginia. The celebration was held in the Williams Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church, now known as Central United Methodist Church. So, how did the idea of celebrating "Father's Day" come about in the first place? What if I told you that it was indirectly related to Mother's Day. You see the very first Mother's Day was celebrated just two months earlier in Grafton, West Virginia, which was only 15 miles away from Fairmont. And it was this first celebration of Mother's Day that inspired Grace Clayton, no relation to George Clayton, to envision a celebration for Father's Day as well. In addition to the inspiration Grace received from knowing of the first Mother's Day celebration there was the fact that she was still mourning the death of her father and wanted in some way to honor his life. But the main reason that we celebrate Father's Day today was a previous mine explosion in December 1907 in nearby Mo-na-gah, West Virginia where an estimated 500 men lost their lives. And with that many fathers killed there were now around a 1000 children in the community left without fathers. So when Grace learned of the Mother's Day celebration to honor the lives of Mothers it just made good sense that there should be a Father's Day celebration to also honor the lives of Fathers. Grace quickly pursued her inspired idea of a Father's Day. She suggested to her Pastor Robert Thomas Webb that their church should celebrate a day to honor all fathers, especially those fathers who had recently died in the

Mo-na-gah mine explosion. And we are here today, many years later, doing just that. But thinking back to those early 1900s and the dangerous working conditions that existed bring me back to the very reason Clayton College for Boys was founded in the first place.

I sort of find it a coincidence that my growing up in a boy's orphanage was so related to the beginning celebration of Father's Day. Did you know that the influence of the Mo-na-gah mine explosion not only helped to inspire the first Father's Day it also influenced the United State Congress to establish the US Bureau of Mines. And the purpose of the US Bureau of Mines back then and also today, is to investigate and inspect mines to reduce explosions and the loss of life and resources. So lets take a quick moment and review our message so far this morning. There was George Clayton who left a fortune to build Clayton College for Boys to help boys who lost their fathers due to deadly mining and rail accidents. And then there was Grace Clayton, who as the result of a horrific mining accident was inspired to establish the first celebration of Father's Day to honor both fathers that are living and fathers that have died. And then there is the US Congress who as a result of many mining accidents all over the country established the US Bureau of Mines to improve those unsafe working conditions that were killing so many workers. So, as we are here today celebrating Father's Day let's take a moment and think back to those miners and their families that paid the sacrifice to save so many lives and families in the future. So from our short history lesson today we have learned a little more about how and why we celebrate Father's Day today. We do it to honor our Fathers and have the opportunity to express a special thank-you for all they have done for us in our relationships with them. I would like for us to now to take an opportunity to publically or privately acknowledge the thankfulness and love in our hearts that we hold for our fathers. Feel free to raise your hands and express your feelings that are within your heart if you feel so moved. Also, I do understand that there are some of us who may not find feelings of thankfulness in our hearts towards our fathers. If this is the case for you, I ask that you pray for peace, understanding and closure for the pain you may be experiencing. But instead of dwelling on the negative thoughts in your prayers seek out thoughts about those who God placed in your life that you may have looked up to as a father figure. After-all fatherhood is not just about genetics. It's also about a warm and loving fatherly relationship with someone in your life that brings unconditional love and cares about you enough to offer his guidance and support as you journey through this life. You know, all this thinking about Father's day has me made think back to

several statements that I would never have said to my kids as they were growing up. Maybe some of you can recall these statements that were never to be spoken in your home, too! “Well, how ‘bout that? I’m lost! Looks like we’ll have to stop and ask for directions.” Or this one, “Here’s a credit card and the keys to my new car. Go crazy!!!” And then there’s this one “Your Mother and I are going away for the weekend. You might want to consider throwing a party.” And last but not least there is, “Why do you want to go and get a job for? I make plenty of money for you to spend.” Ok, you’ve probably figured out that my conversations with my kids didn’t really express the sentiment of those statements I just read. But reading them did bring up a question for me to ponder. “If those statements are the ones that I would never say to my kids, what are the statements or advice that I would offer my kids? So I decided to go on a search for advice that Dad’s would offer to their son’s and daughters. So here are some meaningful things Dad’s say to their daughters. Pay attention to the way a man loves his mother. That is the way he will love you. You don’t have to \*DO\* anything for someone to love you. The right person will cross a desert just for the chance to sit next to you at lunch. Peer pressure is all about insecurity. Be confident in who you are and you’ll never have to “fit in”. People will come to you. Though he may be smiling on the outside, when you leave home to begin your life’s journey your father is falling apart on the inside. Don’t forget to call him that first night to tell him you love him. Compare every single boy you ever meet to your daddy. Nobody will love you like he does. Now for some meaningful things Dad’s say to their sons; Learn to filter. Before you say anything, think about how the words you plan to use will sound in the ears of the person you are speaking to. Learn to disagree with someone without taking personal offense. There is no football game more important than a Sunday spent with your wife. Never lose sight of the fact that no matter how much you believe, no matter how convinced you may be that you are right — you might just be completely wrong. Learn empathy. In all situations be able to put yourself in the position of the person you’re interacting with. And when picking a wife, you can never do better than your mother. So with all this great advice surrounding us this morning, I would like to leave our message with one more piece of fatherly advice. We find this advice in Psalm 46:10 and it is from very special and loving Father, “Be still, and know that I am God” Now, let’s close our message, by praying together the prayer the Lord himself has taught us to pray, Our Father...