

# Honor Your Father - Part 1

by Art Katz

---

*The sermon emphasizes the biblical mandate to honor one's father, using Noah's story to explore the spiritual implications of familial relationships and societal honor.*

**Duration:** 1:04:35

**Scripture:** Genesis 9:22

**Topics:** "Honoring Parents"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of our actions in unexpected moments. He uses the story of Shem, Ham, and Canaan from the book of Genesis to illustrate his point. When Shem unexpectedly sees his father Noah in a vulnerable state, he chooses to cover him and show respect, while Ham takes pleasure in his father's humiliation. The speaker highlights the significance of this act, suggesting that it reveals the true condition of our hearts and our relationship with God. He also discusses the need for the church to be authentic and transparent in a post-Christian era that values breaking down idols and ending the celebration of heroes.

---

## Transcript

So, Lord, again we ask for grace upon grace. We're so squeamish about such little things as if you can be affected by considerations of this kind. But we do want to, as much as in us lies, Lord, provide an environment conducive to your word and trust that this is acceptable, pleasing in your sight, and that there will be the free flow, my God, which we have been asking frequently in these days.

So now the hour has struck. We're here. We're commencing.

And we've not been this way heretofore, Lord. I really don't even know how to begin. So grant us that gracious alpha ability, that alpha character, the God of the beginnings, that you yourself are.

And take us from there, my God, session by session as you will till the whole of your so great heart, appointed for this time, has found its expression. We bless you. Thank you for the privilege.

Welcoming, my God, of course, the remarkable phenomenon of your anointing so much as it pleases you to bestow. And again, thanking you for this privilege, time and occasion, that it might bless, my God, all the church and that the blessing might find its way to the house of Israel itself and to the nations as we thank you and give you praise in Jesus' name. Amen.

So all I know is the text and a few little thoughts and suggestions to put before you. This is Genesis, chapter 9, the post-alluvial event. Alluvial is the flood.

Noah and his sons coming out of their ark in a single episode that takes place sometime after that somehow is a touchstone of very large things that have to do with the conclusion of the age and the fulfillment of the mystery of Israel and the nations that was spoken prophetically by Noah when he came out of his sleep, out of his stupor, out of his drunkenness. And it's remarkable how terse the whole description is. T-E-R-S-E, how stingy God is in his description of this little episode, seeing that it is a microcosm of a macrocosm of unbelievable dimensions and that it seems clear that Noah himself was not aware of the import of the event or even of the thing that issued out of his own mouth as he brings either blessing or cursing upon each of the three sons who are the progenitors of all mankind in all of the races that will fill the earth.

So let's look at this text beginning in verse 18 of chapter 9. The sons of Noah that went forth of the ark were Shem and Ham and Japheth, and Ham is the father of Canaan. These are the three sons of Noah and of them was the whole earth overspread. And Noah began to be a husbandman and he planted a vineyard and he drank of the wine and was drunken and he was uncovered within his tent.

And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brethren without. And Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it upon both their shoulders and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father. And their faces were backward and they saw not their father's nakedness.

And Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem and Canaan shall be his servant.

God shall enlarge Japheth, that's what the name Japheth actually means, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem and Canaan shall be his servant. And Noah lived after the flood 350 years and all the days of Noah were 950 years and he died. So, here's the preacher of righteousness falling into an embarrassing and humiliating departure from righteousness in drunkenness.

It's hard to explain how such an occasion could take place. And it's unbecoming to the man and seems to be incompatible with his character. For he was the one righteous man of his generation and yet somehow that episode provides an occasion which the sons can respond in one way or the other and reveal the truth and depths of their own hearts and evoke either blessing or curse on the basis of their response.

So, this is deserving of the uttermost attention because it's something at the beginning. This is the new creation after the flood and this is the first episode of such magnitude and yet it touches the character of the nations, the whole issue of Shem and his blessedness out of whose stem comes Abraham and Israel, the redemptive line of God and the relationship between Shem and Japheth is more than hinted at. The fact that the two participate in covering their father is almost like a statement of the one new man already being foreshadowed.

There's a lot of this symbolic foreshadowing, maybe you can help me with a better word than foreshadow the pre-something, a pre, feel free just to, I'm a high school dropout, so a prefiguring of, that's good, of things that will later have much fuller expression have its inception here. So, it's remarkable as much as the portent of the future lies in this one episode, it is described so discreetly and briefly, but it invites us to enter in and for example, it's not Shem himself who receives the blessing, but the God of Shem and so it

raises remarkable questions and deserves every examination. Well, maybe we're to begin with the sin of Noah first, because that is the occasion that gives to the sons an opportunity to show the truth of their hearts and maybe there's something for that in us, that when something untaught takes place, particularly in the man who's in a place of leadership or prominence our response to that is deeply revealing and indicative.

And maybe there's something in the human heart that delights in the opportunity of swelling with conceit at the expense of someone who is otherwise honored and has fallen and takes a lower place and you can delight in his predicament, but what does that say of the condition of your heart? Though the scripture does not tell us, you can almost imply when it says and he went out and told his brothers who were outside he did more than just relate a description of the event you have to imagine with Holy Ghost imagining that he told them with a certain relish a certain kind of delight, he was rubbing his hands in glee to have found an occasion to see his father was dishonored. But instead of encouraging and engaging the other two sons to join him in that celebration of the father's fall they ignored or refused to be taken in with that spirit and reacted in an altogether other way and they took the cloak, put it upon their shoulders and walked backward through the tent and covered their father and averted their gaze to look upon his nakedness. In little preliminary conversations that we have been having in these days for those who are here early, someone commented, I think it was Reggie, it was exactly the thought of my heart what would the history of the church with Israel have been if we had averted our gaze and covered their nakedness and the shame that has been their condition for these two millennia and longer but instead we have reacted the church more like Ham or Canaan than we have Japheth or Shem.

The church has taken a certain kind of perverse delight in the fallenness of Israel. You can even see that in the architecture of medieval churches where Israel is depicted as a fallen woman with a blindfold and a broken reed and the church on the other portal is the mighty and victorious overcoming figure so one is the fallen, the one into disrespect and the other the exalted church who exalts at the expense of the fallen one. Completely contrary to the spirit of what Shem exhibited and that Noah so honored when he came out of his drunkenness and recognized the quality and the character of this act and the quality and character of that act of Shem is the issue of Shem himself.

What he exhibited intuitively and instinctively in covering his father gets at the very genius, the quintessence the heart of what God calls Shem to be or else what is the virtue of Japheth dwelling in his tent what need? If Japheth is enlarged and he's a European in technology and culture civilization, what need does he have to bow to enter the tent of a man who is only spiritual but unless he dwells in that tent there's an incompleteness about Japheth and those things that constitute his virtue in enlargement become also the prospect for evil World War II, World War I, the great massacres on the battlefield where entire generations were wiped out where you can visit today in France the Ossuary where the bones have been kept they are larger than a battlefield and how many potential Beethoven's and Brahms and great writers and philosophers and theologians and men that would have aided mankind and their descendants were wiped out in a little thing called no man's land where German and French youth battled each other for a piece of scarred territory that was no consequence. That's also an aspect of Japheth Japheth is enlargement not only for good but also equally potentially for evil. So to allow Japheth to continue as Japheth is to bring not only the promise of of increase in commerce and trade and the things that prosper mankind through his ingenuity and enlargement but also equally a capacity for destruction and devastation.

40 million lives in World War II and I think a comparable number in World War I. Not to speak of the scars the psychological, social consequences of war and what it leaves that becomes the fertile ground for yet future conflict which is the character of our present generation. All of that is Japheth without the benefit that would have come to him that must come to him from one source only exclusively and that is Shem. What is this Shem that has God's provision for Japheth and the provision for us all? What is the distinctive of the line that issues from him out of which God's redemption is to come through Abraham and his sons and the sons of Jacob and the sons of Israel and the Jesus the Messiah that comes out of the Semitic line.

All of that has in its first expression how shall we say it something nuclear in this one act that is altogether spontaneous that is unrehearsed Shem exhibits something of the character that God has so blessed and will in time bless Shem, bless Japheth and bless the nations of the world. So we need to investigate what is exhibited in that act that is of the essence of the people that God has appointed to bless all the nations of the earth, all the families of the earth because I believe that it is expressed in this one significant and symbolic act. What a man does when he is taken by surprise when he has had no preparation or forethought is what he in fact is.

What we exhibit in the moment that strikes us from the blind side is telling in every way of what we in fact are in God and that's what was revealed in that moment. Ham, Canaan, the father, son somehow are labeled together in the indictment and curse that comes from Noah's lips and Shem is given an extravagant blessing. Blessed is the God of Shem.

Well why would he say that? Why didn't Noah who is speaking now prophetically as the preacher of righteousness say blessed be Shem? If cursed be Canaan and you'll be a servant throughout all generations and a servant of servants or a servant to servants, why didn't he equally bless Shem? Why does he bless the God of Shem rather than Shem himself? These are the kinds of things that we need to draw out exegete because I think of course it has to be utterly significant. Anyone have a thought? Reggie, you had a thought on that the other day of why he blessed the God of Shem rather than Shem himself. Because from that time forward God would be distinguished, defined and known by his identification with Shem, with this one people who are the elect line, the people through whom God had chosen to mediate the revelation of himself.

So you begin from the beginning with what theologians have chosen to call the scandal of particularity and it has always been, I believe, a divinely calculated offense to a humanistic chafing at God's prerogative to choose as he will choose. Let me bring in the cats again thoughts. To what degree was Shem's act itself a revelation of his God? To what degree was Shem's act divinely inspired or grew out of the kind of communion that Shem already had with God that is not anywhere spoken in scripture but is revealed in the given moment.

That is to say what Shem did is what God himself would do. How did he know to cover his father? Why is that important? Why didn't he just let the man sleep it off and wake up naked and realize the humiliation of it? By the way, nakedness doesn't bother us, does it? I've got a sack full of articles from the New York Times that after the school is finished I'm going to proliferate for as many as remain and we're going to comment from these articles in one day before coming here I clip from the New York Times on art, culture economy, world politics, the editorial columns, the response to the editor it's a remarkable window on the world and in that particular issue was an article on nudity on the stage in Broadway that the theater what do they call them? Editors or critics are noticing now the prevalence of nudity on the platform on the stage on Broadway productions. It hardly matters what it is whether it's a musical or drama.

Nudity is becoming pronounced and they showed pictures that look like they're right out of Sodom and Gomorrah. So we are a nation that exults in nudity whereas evidently from the beginning to be revealed as naked was considered a statement of uttermost shame and for children to see their own father naked somehow was something of an uttermost kind. So the question is why didn't Shem just wait for his father to recover? Why go in backwards with that thing to drape him so that when he wakes he finds himself covered when he could have recovered and realized and just pulled up his thing about him and come out.

No, not a moment was to be lost that somehow for this father, the preacher of righteousness, you can almost say the savior of mankind, the one who begins again the human race on the new earth cannot for a moment be left in that condition uncovered. It means if we are not sensitive to what is involved in this that we have been more touched by the world than we know. My son had to give me an enema two or three days ago before I went to the hospital thinking that it would relieve whatever was my problem but I needed much more than that but you know what it means to submit to your son for an enema? But he's a nurse as well as a son so I'm grateful and of course we went through it like without any hitch because we're not living in the biblical mentality.

We're not living in a mindset that has completely dissipated in time. We're living in modernity We're living in an age where nakedness and the revelation of flesh is so commonplace that we hardly turn aside to see. So we need to go back because we are part of Shem as the church and we need to recover what other is the issue of honoring and covering although I suspect and God will one day confirm this and that it was Shem's initiative Japheth went along praise God for that and in fact in going along with Shem isn't that very suggestive of what it means to dwell in the tent of Shem.

It's more than just coming in from the rain. It's coming into an attitude, a mentality a disposition of an authentically spiritual kind. So I suspect that it was Shem who had the concept, had the thought because I think there's a significant point in the text that they averted their gaze They purposely walked backwards and averted their gaze They would not allow themselves for a moment to dwell on the exposed condition of the Father lest it would excite in them the kind of superiority and disdain and contempt that already had its expression in Canaan and Ham.

So are we that careful ourselves today? Are we covering or are we delighting in the exposure particularly of men of prominence who have been found out or have come to a moment of failing? And by the way, how do you explain the moment of failing? Why did Noah get drunk? Is that the possibility of his humanity or was God himself setting a stage for which he allowed his servant to experience a humiliation that was needful in order to bring out and bring into view and to submit either to blessing or to cursing that which would characterize all of the nations of the men in all of the history that was to follow You understand what I'm saying? That Noah himself was a servant of the Most High God and what if that servanthood should require a moment of humiliation in which your whole character seems to be contradicted in that moment by an act that could never have been imagined issuing from you that people would never have expected seeing that you're the man of God and the man of prominence and God does not tell you in advance, look, here's what I'm going to do. You need to come into a drunken condition in order to expose the hearts of your sons for in that exposure something will take place in blessing and curse that will affect all the disposition of nations and the mystery of Shem to the nations to the ends of the age. So be prepared to bear this, but to be a servant as we said in yesterday's early morning prayer time, the word servant and son are interchangeable, they're synonyms You cannot be a servant without being a son and a son without being a servant Noah was a servant and I'm just suspecting that a servant does not require explanation a son does not require explanation and if the purposes of God are served that will set in

motion an unfolding of something that ends in his eternal destiny and glory, you accept it.

So that in Noah's drunkenness is a man suffering the humiliation for which he had no pre- awareness it came upon him. How did it come upon him? He grew a vine, he planted a vine, he was a husbandman, built a great ship and then he was a farmer and he planted evidently a plant that had never had an existence in the earlier creation and no one knew of it and he took its fruit and made of it wine and in the drinking of it he became drunk so what would you say of his sin? It's almost like, if you accept the expression, a sin of innocence, it's not a sin of forethought premonition, calculation it's something that came inadvertently, who would know that to drink wine means to get drunk?

Well this is the first instance and of course it left him in that helpless condition and stupor in which the whole episode has its origin so we need to say something about Noah, who needs to be honored, he's actually the father of humanity, the father of mankind. There's a haunting verse in Malachi I think it's chapter 1 verse 6, it's an indictment of Israel, if I am your father, where is my honor? We need to contemplate the word honor, because it's totally fallen out of use this is an age without honor and if you read the New York Times 10 or 12 of the leading Wall Street firms were indicted for malpractices of an actual criminal kind, but instead of taking these CEOs to jail which they fully deserved, they only gave them a minor flick on the wrist, they paid a 1.4 billion dollar fine, and one of the Jewish CEOs of the leading Wall Street community even publicly made a statement that what's causing all the furor, what's all the big deal it's only a minor indiscretion and we're paying for it financially so that the head of the stock market had to publicly rebuke him for failing to understand the magnitude of that with which they were caught in the act corporate crime today is one of the scandals of our generation at the highest levels of corporate life and those agencies that monitor corporations, what do they call them? that do the bookkeeping, Anderson the CPAs, they themselves are implicit in the crimes and know how to arrange the books in such a way and how to give these men very generous allowances and even corporations that are going bankrupt and they know they're going bankrupt by their own malpractice and their own egotism, their own greed before they get out, in their board meetings they grant to each other a lifetime what do you call it?

I've never heard that phrase, a bonus a going away bonus, a pension that runs to the many millions of dollars while the stockholders are left with a whole collapsed value, these men are coming out smelling like a rose and it's a collusion between the agency that does their books and the men who profit from it, it has never before happened in American finance to this extent, why? because the whole moral climate of the nation has fallen and men who formerly would never have condescended to allow themselves to be part of such practice even if it meant millions for their personal aggrandizement are now doing so because they have no sense of honor and therefore no sense of shame, so if Shem is to be what God intends it to be for Japheth to be a redemptive presence in all the earth honor needs to be restored, the sense of honor, the sense of covering, the sense of shame and the question is how did Shem know these things, how did Joseph know that to lie with Potiphar's wife would be to violate one of the commandments, thou shalt not commit adultery how did he know that before the commandments were given how did Shem know that before the advent of law is a remarkable question because it means that one can have a proximity to God's heart and the sense of the moral heart of God that does not require law as I think Paul says somewhere law is for the law breaker and if that's true then one of the issues between us and the orthodox Jewish community now is the issue of law keeping and my rabbi with whom I see weekly never fails to put his finger in my chest and say well since I've seen you less have you been keeping the law and for whatever your profession of having been found of God and you know God by the spirit and you even

speak a heavenly language and he's used you here and there are you keeping the law, that's the question but if the law can be kept without the law in the way that it was understood and kept by Joseph and exhibited by Shem we have something in which to boast not in a boastful way but to say we don't need the requirement of an overt legalism what we need is the same union with the God of Shem that Shem himself enjoyed of which the scripture says nothing but it is implied for how else could Shem have known to do what he had done except by a proximity to the heart of God that was evidently in the very character of the man.

Acting out of a nature instead of a code. Oh great put that in your notebook and the statement that what a man does is what he in fact is all the more when it's what he does comes without preparation comes surprisingly takes him from the blind side what he does in that moment is what he in fact is and we're going to have such a moment or many such moments in the last days when something will come upon us in an untoward way and an unexpected way and our response or our reaction in that moment will be absolutely telling we'll either make or break a situation we'll either convey the reality of God as Shem conveyed it or it will reveal that we ourselves are not in the relationship in which we boast. So we need to give the attention to the fact that what Shem does he does in the moment that takes him by surprise in which he could easily have been drawn in to the same response as Ham Canaan that is to say enjoy seeing the father humiliated and that raises the question why would a son enjoy that why would an inferior or weaker member delight in seeing the stronger the more powerful the more prominent brought down and brought to a place lower than what they have known.

The man who is the preacher of righteousness where is your righteousness now? Hot shot seems to be the spirit that took hold of Canaan and Ham. So we need to examine the anatomy of this phenomenon of delighting in the fall of a saint. Because I can remember from my earlier days in Yugoslavia how a woman had a dream that 20 years before the vice president of this Pentecostal organization had had an adulterous affair and on the basis of that dream totally unsupported as an allegation the man was drummed out of office and removed scandalously and I watched these Serbian saints delighting in his discomfort.

So and I've seen it in my own life and with my own sons that there is something that gives a son how shall I say there is something in the heart of the weaker and the younger that has opportunity to be gratified at the expense of the fall of the one who enjoys the place of prominence in God. And we need to examine that because that potentiality is with all of us but what does it mean to be a son of Shem? What is the distinctive that Noah so honored in addressing Shem by blessing the God of Shem because Shem is the fruit of that God. Let me read a comment from a commentary on Genesis.

But it is the conduct of Ham and Canaan on this sad occasion that is emphatically stigmatized it would seem that Canaan had some share in the offense committed as he certainly had a principal share in the doom pronounced. By the way Noah says when he wakes from his drunkenness he saw what his son had done to him. It gives a kind of an impression that he was taken advantage of in his drunkenness and in his nakedness in more than being left uncovered and even the hint in Talmudic literature and Midrashic commentary through the ages is that some kind of sexual violation took place and some suggestion even to a castration.

Because what could be more humiliating to a father than to be castrated? You've gotten at the very nexus of his power in his fatherhood by seeing to it that his fatherhood will be henceforth and forever annulled by the act that you have performed in his helplessness. It's an interesting thought to consider but the text

does say when he saw what his son had done to him that something was performed upon him in his nakedness of some kind of either a sexual act or as some of the Jewish commentators suggest might actually be a castration which is the ultimate humiliation that can be brought upon a man because to be a eunuch, remember those servants who are in the courts of noblemen and kings but were castrated so they would not have ever an occasion to take advantage of the accessibility of the harem that belonged to this potentate and Christ even speaks of those eunuchs who are eunuchs for Christ's sake were cut off so that they could never aggrandize or take for themselves any of the benefit that comes from their service to the king. So to be a eunuch is the lowest state into which a servant can be brought and by the way it's a son of Ham or Canaan who saved Jeremiah out of the pit who was a servant in the household of the king and was a eunuch and I can't get away from that being a prophetic man that when my time comes to be cast into a pit and into the mire which is not just a little dispatching of the man for a moment is being consigned to death of starvation and what's the word of want of water that this black eunuch was the only one who had a sensitivity to the plight of the prophet being cast into the pit and had the bravery to consult the king and say ought we to allow God's prophet to expire in that condition and the king said you're right you go and take men with you and bring them out and so they knotted a rope out of rags which is not incidental of what it is that provides the saving provision for God's prophetic man and drew him out from his armpits but it took a servant of servants so even at the curse of Noah on Ham to be a servant of servants may be in the last analysis the ultimate honor that can befall a person because servanthood is what Jesus himself was and exemplified and Shem exemplified servanthood in covering his father so praise God for those who will bring us out of pits when others are quite content to leave us there to expire and even to throw us into that but this black man who was castrated was willing to bring the suggestion to the king which might have meant his head in order to save Jeremiah he had to risk his own life and maybe that's a definition of what servanthood is.

Okay so let me continue reading this where precisely the offense was can scarcely be gathered from the narrative that's why I'm complaining to God why are you so stingy in your text why haven't you given us greater amplitude of what in fact took place why are you so sparse because you've given my Jewish kinsmen great opportunity for rabbinical commentary of every kind and maybe that was your intention it was obviously an instance of flagrant filial irreverence irreverence is disrespect it is dishonoring and I have no way to assess to what degree that characterizes the present church of Jesus Christ even at its best irreverence disrespect and I've suffered very small measure of it but sufficient to know that it's there hey I even have received it at Ben Israel from Ben Israel so evidently

it's deeper than we know and we need to be made aware of its existence and our disposition for it what would you say would safeguard us from a disposition toward irreverence and disrespect that would allow a man of God not only to be dishonored but to enjoy his predicament to take delight in his being uncovered how can we guard ourselves how can we move toward a Shem-like reverence and respectful authority because the attitude of Shem toward his father is the attitude of Shem toward God because our earthly fathers are the statement of the heavenly father whether it's a natural father or a spiritual father how we respond to the fathers that God has given us is the statement of our truest heart to the father who is in heaven and that's why God is so jealous over that and that's why Shem

could not wait for a moment to cover his father because the issue of his father was the issue of the heavenly father that if his earthly father was dishonored the heavenly father is dishonored and the son of Shem could not tolerate that for a moment that's reverence you could almost say that the erring son Ham-Cain and I put them together as one had opportunity by observing what Shem and Japheth did in

honoring the father to recognize how unbecoming his own attitude was and to repent of it on the spot and maybe if that repentance had come it might have saved him the curse that was spoken but evidently he was so hard in his own heart that even their act could not affect that change so how long had he had that heart and how many days were they in the ark together and the years that preceded

it how long was this attitude of disrespect being generated and nurtured waiting its opportunity for expression so we have to keep our hearts with all diligence and when the occasion comes we do not exhibit that and we need to express repentantly our failure to cover Israel for her nakedness in these past millennia and to whatever degree we have gloated over her predicament and rubbed our hands in glee and elevated ourselves at her expense or else we cannot become the sons of Shem in truth so although precisely the offense can scarcely be gathered from the narrative we may partly guess its motive it was obviously an instance of flagrant filial irreverence for not even the last degree of unworthiness in a parent will justify the levity or cruelty of a son I'll read that again I love this

comment it's got to be a flagrant filial irreverence for not even the last degree of unworthiness in a parent will justify the levity the lightness or cruelty of a son which is to say no matter what the cause no matter what the occasion whether it's drunkenness or anything else nothing can ever justify the irreverent attitude of the son Cain and Ham toward that father's nakedness that a father has got to be honored no matter what failing that there's no failing sufficient to justify our irreverence and our disrespect because the commandment that Shem already knew before it was ever pronounced is thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother and you know that we say yes but look at the father I've had or look at my mother that I've had now if they had been different if they had in any way

treated me as I ought to have been I'm still suffering from their neglect I'm suffering from their mistreatment I'm suffering from their abuse they don't deserve my honoring God says you're failing to keep the law you're a lawbreaker because there's no condition that will justify the loss of your honoring I have commanded you to honor irrespective of what is the condition of your father or your mother thou shalt honor and there's a promise that thy days may be long upon the land as the Lord thy God giveth thee there's a promise for honoring father and mother that somehow he'll extend your days upon the earth I mean you gotta get that yeah that's the only obedience that brings such a promise that your days might be long upon the earth the spiritual death of a believer they dishonor a

spiritual father and they disrespect or irreparably despise him for anything they spiritually die from that point of contact we're not going to get out of here alive today we're going to be on our faces in repentance before this session is over did you catch what Dan just shared repeat that again you're saying that not just the issue of physical death a termination of your length of days but a spiritual death commences from the moment that you break that commandment and fail to honor your father or your mother I understand that the phrase that has been current in the Jewish speech over the ages with regard to the church labeling us the arrogant kingdom that's almost to say the people who are without reverence and in fact if they had opportunity to see the kinds of things that we have

occasion to observe in our charismatic posture and demeanor they would have it confirmed the way that we carry on manufacturing our own worship and supposedly in the name of the Lord but really for our own delight and many such liberties that we take that show we lack a sufficient reverence the fear of God is absent from us we have lost the regard for the father and maybe it goes back all to the time that we did not honor our father, our corporate father, the ancestor of us all which is to say the Jewish nation itself which is to say Judaism itself that there's a father there from which we are derived that we have not

acknowledged nor honored but have trampled him in the dust in our superior terminology and doctrines of faith which I'm not saying are in any way wrong but something of our

attitude toward that father still lingers and has removed from us something that ought to be resplendent in our character that would show the evidence of Shem to our Jewish kinsmen we're not sufficiently persuasive to them let alone moving them to jealousy we're just a gentile culture of a kind that they can easily disdain or ignore or dismiss and it may go back to the fact that we fail to recognize the progenitor of our Christian faith which is the Judaism which Jesus honored and walked in in his own earthly lifetime and in fact said that not so much of one tittle of this law shall fail until all be fulfilled and that he who is the least in the kingdom I want to get this right that he who both hears and does all the law is blessed so Jesus had an attitude toward the origins of our

Christian faith much more honoring and deeply respectful than what we ourselves have known historically as the church and I think we have lost something a certain kind of spiritual death has come in from the time that we have not adequately honored our father that is to say the Jewish origins of our own faith yes we have come to a more glorious dispensation and revelation of the son which they yet refrain from acknowledging or being able to see there is a blindness that is yet upon them in the complex purposes of God but that doesn't free us from the honoring that is still due them because as the commentator said there is no act of the father that justifies the disrespect or irreverence of a son thou shalt honor and by what means shall we honor?

I walked yesterday morning the spirit of revelation was flowing and the thought came to me thou shalt I wrote it in caps here somewhere thou shalt and that there is an energy in the command that the ability to obey is already implicit in the command itself because to honor is contrary to our nature our nature is more disposed to dishonor our nature is more to go is to take advantage of seeing the father exposed and to exulting in his unhappy condition and exulting ourselves at his expense that's natural that's man but to honor is altogether a godly phenomenon honor is God himself to honor is the heart of the divine nature and God says I'll impute that to you I'll give you the ability to honor when every condition would have encouraged you to exactly the opposite in your very act of

obeying that there is an energy of force and enablement to enable you to honor a father who has been a drunken bum and a mother who has been a harlot and on drugs and has treated you with unbelievable degradation and you're suffering the scars of it to this very day and you cannot even bring yourself to conceive that you can honor such parents but because you say so Lord because you have commanded me because you say thou shalt I will and in that moment the power of that thing that has kept you in bondage to the past is broken by the energy to honor given in the commandment it's almost like when you talk about psalms 110 in the day of my power my people shall be willing thou shalt honor we need to honor the fathers of the past and we need to honor our present fathers both the natural and

the spiritual despite their track record despite their failures despite their inability to live to our standard and to what degree is our standard valid and are we raising standards that invite failing we have an imagined idealism that they somehow are required to fulfill which is altogether not from God and not in the realism the reality of what a father is to be a father is after all shows the vulnerability of his humanity and all of the foibles to which all humanity is heir he is of necessity not always going to be the letter perfect epitome of fatherhood and in fact his willingness to be a failure before his sons and to show his humanity and to encourage their own humility is maybe the greatest statement of fatherhood someone has said you're not an elder what? what have I been then

for these past 29 30 years at Ben Israel if I'm not an elder well you don't have that pastoral ability you're the prophetic man you're not I can see that but I can also see occasions when I know that God has allowed me to be dishonored before the sons of the congregation to give them the same occasion as Noah gave his sons by his dishonoring and that I realize that that is part of the fatherly designation part of the fatherly requirement and that I must not shun it and not only must I not shun it I must not explain it I have simply to bear it and in bearing it because it serves redemptive purposes I am acting as father and how much has God the father suffered loss in having to be to us what he has in order to bring us into the stature of sons and how much has he suffered reproach and

backlash and the condemnation of the uninformed because of what being a real father is so a real father is not to be a squeaky clean epitome of perfection but somehow to exhibit the kinds of things that are needful in the growing up of sons in the testing of them and the bringing them into collision experiences that could not be had except at the expense of your humiliation as father and if you're unwilling to do that you're not a shepherd and you're not a father when I think of the pastoral mystique that has prevailed in churchianity where the man comes on the platform of faith of power and faith and brings his message and his voice and his bearing has a certain majesty and then as soon as he's finished he's off the stage you never see him as frailty you never see him as weakness and

they learn that in their seminaries there is a pastoral mystique that needs to be maintained because we cannot afford to allow the congregation to become disillusioned with its leaders they have to carry a certain aura of something greater than what the congregation could ever hope to obtain and keep that distance or your word will not be credible nor your ministry before them we have a real choice here of which way to go what is real fatherhood what is real bringing sons to maturity and to glory is it by maintaining a false appearance of something that they can never hope to attain and the idea is you're not supposed to attain it you're supposed to remain in an inferior congregational condition and look up to the platform that is higher and exalted and be in that kind of dependent

relationship that does not encourage growth or maturity but the father who is at your level and even falls beneath your level probably serves the purposes of God more in encouraging the maturity of sons than the one who hides behind and self aggrandizes himself at the expense of elevation you know what the remarkable thing is? is what we're hearing this morning that is totally unrehearsed but have been lingering thoughts and observations that are somehow finding outlet and expression through the examination through this text I like that you like that? that's what we mean by prophetic school isn't it remarkable that these sons can live with this father for how many decades in the building of the ark and evidently there's no inconsistency in the father's character revealed throughout all

that time a perfect obedience to God in making something that had never been made before for which he's daily experiencing the reproach and jeers of those who are observing him who are soon to perish in the flood that will come and yet steadfastly honoring the requirement of God at doing it and yet one failure after a lifetime's consistent faithfulness is enough to set in motion the disrespect of the son what do you think of that? a lifetime of credibility is to be brought down by one failure? look at Moses striking the rock not being able to go into the thing it's a lot deeper is that a statement applicable to Noah? in that act of Moses he said you did not show me forth you did not represent me when you acted in your intemperate irritation and so the penalty is you cannot come into the

land but that one act what I'm going to get is our human disposition to clutch that one act even to anticipate it and welcome it when it comes and maybe at the worst of us even to desire it secretly are we

that perverse that we would secretly desire the fall of a preacher of righteousness and when it comes we delight in it and take full benefit of what we had all along been secretly desiring why put such a weight on one failure when after all who would have known before the time that wine produces drunkenness it's not a major sin that a man calculated by foreknowledge so it deserves the most gracious kind of understanding and dismissal rather than a delight and going outside and telling brothers have you seen what dad did you have to suspect that there's something in the heart of Cain and

Ham that desired such a moment desired such a failing and it only for them required one one failing and they go to town on it and how many of us have that constituency in our own souls that we have not the grace and magnanimity and forgiveness and understanding to cover a fallen brother rather than to harp upon it.

Maybe that fall reveals something that we need to see and that we could not have seen except by it and for it and unless we see it and unless we attend to it with the deepest kind of acknowledgement and repentance how shall we be to Japheth what we ought how shall we be to Israel what we ought because Israel does not even know that it has a tent of Shem calling and destiny to the nations unless it is first exhibited to them by the church that is moving in the reality of the character of Shem but if we have in our hearts lingering things of the kind that I'm describing it forbids and nullifies and it's contrary to the mentality and spirit of Shem.

Not sentimental slobbering not looking the other way as if forget it that's no major sin that's okay you're okay and you have a wonderful ministry let's go on that's not what God is after not condescension nor censure but compassionate identification that his sin is our sin and we're one with him we understand the frailty of men and even of ministers so we're not dismissing the significance of sin as not the kind of worldly sentimental slobbery thing that passes something over as being light and of no consequence that would be dishonoring God yet at the same time recognizing the solemnity of sin we're yet in identification with the sinner in a way that is not condemning but supportive.

It's interesting that if you read Jimmy Baker's book as his world began crashing down upon his ears and before the whole thing was scandalously exposed he knew already that he was in a terrible plight and he describes being in his car and driving around his property and into the local communities and passing by the saloons and the bars tempted to go in because he knew that in those places there was some kind of macho masculine fellowship where men could express their hearts and be heard by others that was not available to him in the church why wasn't it not available? Because of the false kind of demeanor that men in ministry are required to project where you cannot acknowledge that I have this problem and therefore must suffer the outworking of it to an uttermost humiliation that might have had another remedy had you been able to communicate to those close to you I need your prayer, I need your counsel, I need your help. So he was a victim of a kind of churchianity that kept its skirts clean and didn't want to acknowledge that even a minister can have problems of this kind and can express them in an environment in which he'll not be shot down he'll neither suffer censure condemnation nor will he be be lightly passed over as what's the word that I used? Condescension it's an environment of reality that understands and can receive and bear these weaknesses and provide the encouragement prayer and support until a brother is brought out from it. That's the church so Jimmy Baker was a victim of the failure of the church to be the church because it has adopted a false kind of confidence of a bright white teeth smiley kind of a thing in which it cannot be conceived that a man would have to struggle and that he would be sharing the kind of things that we face we're living in the post-christian era in which iconoclasm, the breaking of idols the ending of the celebration of heroes the bringing down is characteristic so we have all the more to guard ourselves

against the spirit of the age find our way back to the book of Genesis in the place of beginnings and know what it is that God honors and cherishes and to find that reality as Shem had it not by law not by requirement but by union so that's a precious thought in itself and if illusion keeps us from that reality we need to wage war against illusion because illusion is a lie.

We have an illusion about what we ourselves are that needs to be guarded or that we commend to others and we're afraid to speak the truth or acknowledge it even of ourselves we're living a terrible unreality and what is the church if it is an unreality it's the one thing that comes down from heaven as reality it's the plumb line from heaven to be a place against which all things can be measured because it's utterly real because God himself is real so let's come back to that thought after break

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/3/SID3163.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/art-katz/honor-your-father-part-1/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**