

THE BIG IDEA: Unwavering love will hold us whenever doubt tries to control us.

The Take-Off

More than most days, today's a day when I'm so glad we're not doing a series, but rather an "anti" series. Some days you just need the freedom to exhale and process, and Father's Day is one of them.

For obvious reasons, this is a big day for us. Either we are dads, wish we were dads, miss our dads or wish our kids could see a dad. For better or worse, this day brings out a lot of baggage.

I've prayed so much this week in preparation and have asked God if there's an "UN" word that would be appropriate for today - one that could fit the emotional and spiritual context of the day - and I believe He gave me one.

Today's word is "UNwavering."

1. Dads are unwavering to a point

- a. There's a lot of things that make dads unique (SHOW PICS)
- b. Funny, nerdy, corny - we hate it for a while but then we want to be like them when we grow up!
- c. One of the things that we love about dads is that they can seem like our rock
- d. It's one reason why Chevy used the Bob Seger song "Like a Rock" for so many years - men want to be rocks
- e. We watch movies like "Taken" and want to be that guy - the go-to guy that everyone can count on
- f. But we get that confused with stubbornness and so we never bend, never yield
- g. We do what we want in MY house - regardless of what that means to others
- h. In the sinful world, being unwavering often becomes hard and unbearable
- i. Dads are unwavering to a point, but God? God is...

2. God is unwavering to a fault

- a. All the proof we need of this is found in a story with the wrong title
- b. It's found in Luke 15, and many know it as the story of the prodigal son
- c. Today we'll see that it's really the story of the prodigal Father
- d. 2 sons, one rebels and squanders his resources and finds himself far from home and far from his dad
- e. There are 2 important phrases in this story:
 - "When he came to his senses" in v. 17 - literally means repentance, he started realizing that who he was wasn't a pig feeding foreigner in a distant country
 - "But while he was still a long way off" in v. 20 - look what the unwavering love of the father did BEFORE THE SON GOT HOME
 - ▶ He saw him (because he was looking for him) - This was the point of the previous 2 parables (lost sheep and lost coin) - esp. Luke 15:4
 - ▶ He was filled with compassion for him
- f. What do we take away from this unexpected display of unwavering love?
 - One, no one can love like our heavenly Father
 - ▶ We want to, of course, but even the best men waver
 - ▶ David was a great man - He did the things that they make man movies about
 - ▶ But he wavered when he saw a young woman bathing
 - ▶ Dads fail, even the best ones - 43% of children in America are in a fatherless home
 - Two, no one loves longer than our heavenly Father
 - ▶ You and I will give up on people well before God will!
 - ▶ Jeremiah 31:3 captures this: God coming to us as foreigners and loving us with an everlasting love
 - Three, that means that no one can go too far away from our heavenly Father
 - ▶ The fact that the younger son couldn't out-sin the father's love was eye-opening
 - ▶ It meant that he couldn't earn it with good behavior
 - ▶ Neither can we. But we can accept the full power of it (Romans 8:31-39; Ephesians 3:18)

The Landing

Nothing feels worse than being the disappointing son, fatherless in a foreign place

It's in those times that our Big Idea is so powerful: **Unwavering love will hold us whenever doubt tries to control us.**

Let's pray.