

GREATER THINGS - FATHERS DAY!

Scripture used: [Acts 28:3-6 \(NLT\)](#)

OVERVIEW

Pastor Hurmon spoke a powerful message to the fathers and father figures of our church, and to everyone who loves them. He started by acknowledging how complicated Fathers Day can be for us. That's because our relationships with our fathers are complicated. Each father is broken in different ways, yet many do not share their stories with others. Because they are hidden, these private wounds are ignored. But they still have a huge impact in our lives. The wounds of our fathers connect directly to their behavior. We cannot truly celebrate them, support them, or break negative patterns of behavior until we hear these stories. Pastor Hurmon used the story of Paul being bitten by a viper to explain how important it is for us to make our wounds public and to accept God's invitation to overcome death. Today is an opportunity for all of us, especially fathers, to break old patterns and follow Jesus.

KEY POINTS

- 1) **Our fathers are all wounded men.** Paul was on his way to be tried and possibly executed by the Romans. That alone is traumatic enough. Then he was shipwrecked and almost died! Paul didn't allow that to overwhelm him, though. Like so many fathers, he tried to help others. He was picking up wood to throw on the fire so it could dry off. That was when this snake wounded him once more in such a short time. Like Paul, our fathers have all suffered greatly even if we haven't heard them talk about their pain.
- 2) **We can offer our fathers the gift of care.** This means listening to them. Let the fathers in your life share their stories. That includes celebrating the high points and mourning the losses. Help them feel comfortable enough to show their wounds. It's hard for men to trust others enough to be vulnerable, but that's exactly what Paul did. In [Acts 28:4 \(NLT\)](#) he showed them the viper hanging from his hand before he shook it off into the fire. Everyone knew he had been bitten and was wounded.
- 3) **We can offer our fathers the gift of grace.** Fathers face extreme stereotypes. It can often feel like they are put on a pedestal, or can never do anything right. We need to develop the discipline of staying away from extremes. Once they knew Paul was wounded, the villagers immediately assumed he was a murderer. That was the only way they could make sense of what happened. Then when Paul survived the snake bite the same group of people wanted to worship him as a god in [Acts 28:6 \(NLT\)](#).
- 4) **God can break the harmful patterns.** Paul didn't accept either role: murderer or god. Paul knew he was a man, and more importantly a beloved child of God. This faith allowed God to work supernaturally through him as Jesus promised in [Luke 10:19-20 \(NIV\)](#). We too can go through life without "swelling up" in pride or "dropping dead" and abandoning others. We can be healed and a source of healing for others! We are all blessed with the same intimate relationship with the Almighty. We can overcome patterns, defy stereotypes, and help be a part of God's plan for redeeming the world.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - The wounds that our fathers suffered are probably invisible to us. We probably never heard the stories of their pain. That means we cannot understand the full story of why they treated us certain ways. These patterns tend to repeat unless we invite God to work on us. Do you know a story from your father or father figure that has affected your life?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Think about your own relationships with father figures in your life. How have you been wounded by them? And what kind of unhealthy patterns resulted? What's one pattern that you need God's help to break?
- 3) **DO** - Pastor Hurmon challenged all of us to exclaim "I will be a pattern breaker!" That means reaching out to our father figures. Offer them the gift of care by listening to their full story. Offer them the gift of grace by treating them as imperfect person, not a "murderer" or a "god." Happy Father's Day!