There will be a lot of people in our Church who know what the deal is with having Children. My main experience at the moment is through watching others have kids and being an observer on the side.

It all starts with that exciting announcement. The baby is on the way! Before you know it there’s an artistically created picture on social media, usually featuring a baby scan picture and a baby grow. Perhaps with an expected arrival date made from those alphabet blocks.

Then the day comes nearer and there’s all the excitement. The Baby showers start happening, maternity leave comes around and the husband goes to work checking his phone every 30 seconds just in case.

And then the Baby arrives and the realisation of how life has changed hits both parents square in the face.

A lot of my friends go from people full of energy, to Zombie like creatures who drink unnatural amounts of caffeine to get through the day.

The baby is all demanding all encompassing.

And then the baby grows into a toddler, and when the toddler is not outwitting the tired parents, there are tantrums to get through.

Then School comes around, and they start costing a bit more money as they outgrow uniforms faster and faster – seemingly by the hour. They eat everything in the house as they begin to grow into young adults.

They then go to university – only returning when they have a pile of clothes that need washing!

Then they may fall in love, move out and get married and the parents might think – at last! We have our lives back! But no, because a little while later they have children of their own, and before you know it, as grandparents, you become the auxiliary babysitting service that’s conveniently available at all hours!

The point is this, when you have children, you lose your life. And yet, most parents preserve because they realise that the prize of watching their family grow, of watching their kids achieve and seeing all the joy that family life brings is worth it. Parents lose their life, yet somehow find it.

As we celebrate Father’s Day today there will be many dads who know first hand both the death of some of their immediate dreams and bank balance, but the joy of hugging their smiling children.

It requires a selflessness and sacrificial way of living for the betterment of others.

And if we look at the passage in Matthew’s gospel, it’s this way of living that in many ways Jesus is asking of his own followers.

To follow Christ is to live for his sake and not our own. It’s to be able to see God’s purposes – sometimes these are beyond our own immediate dreams!

What we see in the reading from Genesis is the result of this. It’s actually a distressing moment in the life of Abraham. He is distressed greatly at having to lose his Son. But the truth is Abraham and Sarah had tried to control their life for their purposes. Abraham had tried to find his life – but here in this moment lost it.

If they had just given up control of the whole thing to God, trusted in his purposes and moved forward in his timing, this wouldn’t have been the case.

But giving up control to God isn’t always easy and it’s certainly not comfortable. However, doing it always leads to life.

I don’t think I ever planned to be ordained when I was younger. Certainly in my early twenties I was trying to find ways of incorporating my passions into some form of a future career.

When the idea and suggestion came up that I could look into ministry I laughed. I didn’t think I had any of the skills, and more importantly it meant giving up some of the dreams that I had.

But as time went on, in many ways I realised that I was, in some ways, losing my life. Things weren’t coming off the way I wanted with my career and I found myself becoming unhappy in life. I shouldn’t have been really – things in many respects were going ‘well’, but something was missing.

I realised that the nagging in my heart that surrounded going forward for ordination would not go away unless I did something. In going forward I would have to lose a lot of things in life in order to find life. A steady income, my home church and leaving close friends and family – it was all on the line.

Now that I am where I am and doing what I’m doing, I know that I have found my life. But it has meant those sacrifices.

It’s meant that I’ve had to enter into the paradox of Christ’s statement at the end of this morning’s passage. It’s meant that I’ve had to learn for myself the concept of not fearing. And it’s also meant that I’ve had to learn that my worth is more than two sparrows! And that ultimately my worth is not what about what I can perceive in an earthly sense, but in what my Father in heaven perceives of me.

So this Father’s day, I would encourage you to pursue the things of God, the things that our father has in store for each and every single one of us. Live with his priorities and know that if he asks you to sacrifice something for his sake, then it is ultimately worth it. We are called as God’s children to grow more into his likeness each and every day, and we must always remember that our father sacrificed himself through the son that we might live. He was self giving and outward looking for the sake of others.

Today our challenge is to grow into the likeness of this – into the likeness of our father.