

133. The Gospel of John—14:7-11

“The Heart of Father God”

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(2/28/21)

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John 14:7-11 (NKJV)

⁷ "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him." ⁸ Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." ⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? ¹⁰ Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own *authority*; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. ¹¹ Believe Me that I *am* in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.

As we have been pointing out, these words were spoken by Jesus in an upper room somewhere in Jerusalem the night before His crucifixion—during their Passover celebration.

That night the Lord gives His true disciples (Judas having already left to carry out his betrayal of Christ) one last teaching before His death to encourage them for the difficult days that lay ahead.

In this passage (verses 7-11), Jesus is declaring His divinity and absolute unity with the Father. He points to the miracles He did as confirmation of who He is—God the Son, Second Person of the Trinity—equal with the Father—in perfect unity with the Father—**the perfect representative of God the Father!**

In the Bible, some passages are purely *theological*, some are patently *devotional*—this passage is a beautiful *combination* of doctrine and devotion.

Let me start this morning with the doctrinal because from it flows the devotional.

In verses 7 through 9 Jesus makes some very interesting and important statements about Himself in relation to His Father—

John 14:7-9 (NLT2)

If you had really known me, you would know who my Father is. From now on, you do know him and have seen him!" ⁸ Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied." ⁹ Jesus replied, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don't know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking me to show him to you?"

Let me stop here to ask you a very important question—**“Why did Jesus come to the earth?”**

Upon hearing that question, most of you would immediately respond—**“To die on Calvary’s Cross and save us from our sins”**—and of course that is absolutely true.

1 John 3:5 (NKJV)

⁵ And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin [affirming Christ’s deity].

But that isn't the only reason Jesus came to the earth—He came to show people (especially the Jewish people) what God (the Father) was really like.

1 John 1:1-2 (NKJV)

¹ That which was from the beginning...the Word of life-- ² the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us--

The word **manifested** is the Greek word *phanerao* and means “to cause to become visible, to make appear, to cause to be seen.”

It reminds us of what Paul said about Jesus in Colossians 1:15, “He is the *image* of the invisible God”. The Greek word translated **image**, was used of an image made by *impression*—as when Caesar’s image was stamped on a coin.

Paul is telling us that God the Father “*stamped*” His image on human flesh in the Person of Jesus Christ—this allowed man to see what God is like. **God is Spirit** and is therefore *invisible* but through the incarnation the invisible God became a visible flesh and blood Man.

John 1:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared *Him* [made Him known].

Author Warren Wiersbe—

“God has revealed Himself in creation (Rom. 1:20), but creation alone could never tell us the story of God’s love. God has also revealed Himself much more fully in His Word, the Bible. But God’s final and most complete revelation is in His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus said, ‘He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father’ (John 14:9).”

So, Paul declared in Colossians 1:15, that **Jesus is “the image of the invisible God”** or in other words—**He is the perfect manifestation of the Father in human form.**

Which means, if you want to know what God the Father is like—all you have to do is look at Jesus!

Why is that so important? (and here’s where we transition from the doctrinal to the devotional).

I. The Failings of Our Earthly Fathers

When I say the word “*father*” what automatically comes to mind?

Does the word “*father*” bring to mind thoughts of:

- kindness
- love
- tenderness
- understanding
- forgiveness
- protection and
- provision?

OR does the word provoke thoughts of:

- fear
- anger

- pain
- hurt, or
- even hatred?

Many people have a distorted and even a perverted concept of God the Father because of the example of their earthly fathers. Because of it—many Christians tend to associate how their earthly fathers treated them with how they believe (in some ways) their heavenly Father treats or will treat them.

That's a big problem for them because many have experienced things at the hands of their earthly fathers that have served to damage their perception of their Father in heaven:

- *Fathers that abused them physically or sexually.*
- *Fathers that were alcoholics, selfish, angry, unloving, unmerciful, verbally abusive, constantly putting them down, impossible to please, always comparing them to a brother or a sister or someone else.*
- *Fathers whose love was predicated upon performance.*
- *Fathers who never had any time for them or who didn't accept them for who they were (you're a girl and he wanted a boy; or you're a boy and he wanted a girl; or you're a musician but he wanted an athlete etc.)*

All these things act in a person's life to distort their perception of their Father in heaven.

Because of this there are many Christians who can't relate or who find it very difficult to relate to their heavenly Father properly and positively because their earthly father failed at being a good example or in some sad instances—failed at being *any* example of what a good earthly father should be.

So, it is hard for them to see God as He really is—a good Father who loves them more than they will ever realize this side of heaven and only wants to do good for them. Let's look briefly at some of the areas where fathers often fail their children.

A. Parental Authority

Too many people have a warped concept of God the Father because their earthly fathers abused their *parental authority*.

Many fathers instead of relating to their children with love, kindness and compassion—administering discipline lovingly when needed—

Instead, are unreasonable, unloving, inflexible tyrants who use the rod not as an instrument of correction but as a club to beat them with.

But ***God the Father never acts this way towards His children***—even in the face of their rebellion and sin.

Our heavenly Father doesn't *punish* His children—He disciplines His children—one is *punitive* the other is *corrective*.

Listen to what God said through the prophets Hosea and Jeremiah as He lamented over Israel (His rebellious children)—even pleading with them to repent and come back to Him:

Hosea 11:1-4 (NKJV)

¹ "When Israel *was* a child, I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son. ² [However,]...They sacrificed to the Baals, And burned incense to carved images. ³ "I taught Ephraim to walk, Taking them by their arms; But they did not know that I healed them. ⁴ I drew them with gentle cords, With bands of love, And I was to them as those who take the yoke from their neck. I stooped *and* fed them..."

Jeremiah 3:19, 21-22 (NKJV)

¹⁹ "...And I said: 'You shall call Me, "My Father," And not turn away from Me.'... ²¹ [But] A voice was heard on the desolate heights, Weeping *and* supplications of the children of Israel. For they have perverted their way; They have forgotten the LORD their God. ²² "Return, you backsliding children, *And* I will heal your backslidings..."

Here is the heart of Father God on display—notice that His authority is not harsh or cruel—on the contrary, He is unspeakably gentle, loving and longsuffering.

In Exodus 34 when Moses asked God (the Father) to reveal Himself so that Moses could better understand Him and His character—we read:

Exodus 34:5-7 (NKJV)

⁵ Now the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. ⁶ And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, ⁷ keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin..."

Your heavenly Father will never abuse you or mistreat you—how do I know that? —Because I have the example of Jesus who is the perfect representation of the Father.

As I study His life and how He dealt with sinners—I see the compassion, love, tenderness, and patience with which He acted toward sinners—like:

- *The woman caught in the act of adultery in John 8*
- *The thief on the cross*
- *How He lovingly and patiently put up with the carnality and selfishness of the disciple whom He called "little children."*

Many Christians can't get out of their minds the concept that their heavenly Father is stern, harsh, quick to punish and slow to love and forgive—because that's the way their earthly fathers were.

But I can assure you that your heavenly Father will never treat you that way—how do I know that? —Because I have Jesus as the example of what the Father is really like.

B. Parental Acceptance

Another thing that has hurt many Christians understanding of their heavenly Father from the poor example of their earthly father—is in the area of *parental acceptance*.

We live in a society where all too often worth and acceptance are associated with performance and/or appearance.

So, if you bring home a good report card; if you look pretty; if you make the football team; if you are successful and affluent as an adult—you're accepted in society. All too often parental acceptance is based on performance as well.

Earthly fathers often love conditionally whereas the Bible declares, and Jesus demonstrated, that—God's love is unconditional.

One author put it well—

"This means that your heavenly Father loves and accepts you just as you are—whether you're: Fat or thin; beautiful or plain; talented or untalented, smart or not so smart; athletic or clumsy; artistic or non-artistic; obedient or disobedient; cheery or crabby; handsome or ordinary; gifted or average; giving or stingy—No matter what, your heavenly Father loves and accepts you for who you are just as you are faults, flaws and failures and will work with you to make you more and more into the image of His Son Jesus Christ."

But no matter what you are it never affects His love and acceptance of you as His child—that remains constant and unconditional.

Too many Christians have a hard time accepting the fact that their Father in heaven loves them unconditionally—because their earthly fathers didn't love them unconditionally.

They grew up with fathers that always judged them based on performance and or physical attributes, to the point that—they never felt they measured up in the eyes of their father so now (even as Christians) they find it very hard to believe that their Father in heaven loves them unconditionally—just as they are.

Perhaps this was because they had to constantly *earn* their earthly father's love—so they now find themselves trying desperately and constantly to earn the love of their heavenly Father.

How do I know your heavenly Father loves you despite all your failures and imperfections? —*Because of Jesus:*

John 13:1 (NKJV)

¹ Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

The statement, "**He loved them to the end**" means, "*to the last*" or "*utterly and completely.*"

In other words, "*He loved them (and us) completely, perfectly, and unconditionally—through everything in spite of their weaknesses and faults and failures.*"

The Bible teaches clearly that God loves the sinners of this world with an with a deep, sacrificial love—how much more does He love His children with a perfect, unconditional, and eternal love?!

Just look at how Jesus dealt with Simon—Simon whose name means 'shifting' or 'unstable'—whom Jesus renames 'Cephas' (Aramaic for 'stone'), Peter (Petros) is the Greek word for 'stone'.

Peter was such a composite of contradictions—he was at times: impulsive/responsible; affectionate/unloving; courageous/cowardly; self-sacrificing/self-seeking; proud/humble; of great spiritual insight/of no spiritual insight—and to top it all off he denied the Lord not once but 3 times!

Yet after His resurrection, Jesus sought him out and lovingly forgave and restored him without criticism or condemnation.

If you're earthly father rejected you—know that your heavenly Father accepts and loves you just as you are (He doesn't accept your sin—but He loves you and will work within you through the power of the Holy Spirit to make you holy).

C. Parental Absence

Possibly your earthly father didn't *reject* you—he just *neglected* you.

The sad testimony of too many children today is that—*"Dad was too busy with work or hobbies or friends to spend any time with me."*

Several years ago, there was a survey taken using 300 seventh and eighth graders. They were asked to keep a record of how much time they saw their dads over a two-week period. Most reported they only saw their fathers at the dinner table.

Many said they didn't see their fathers for days at a time—either he was traveling or by the time he came home they were in bed.

The average amount of time that those fathers spent with their children over that two-week period was 7-1/2 minutes per day!

(One of the 'blessings' of COVID lockdowns and fathers working from home is that they are spending more time with their families—which won't last forever.)

Statistics like that have given birth to songs like Harry Chapin's "Cat's in the Cradle."

One well known author said this—

"Many of you may recall the popular song "Cat's in the Cradle" sung by Harry Chapin. The words always bring a tear to my eye because I am a father, and over the years I have had to travel so much. The song unfolds as follows:

*My child arrived just the other day;
He came to the world in the usual way,
But there were planes to catch, and bills to pay,
He learned to walk while I was away.
And he was talkin' 'fore I knew it and as he grew,
He'd say, "I'm gonna be like you, Dad.
You know I'm gonna be like you."*

*And the cat's in the cradle and the silver spoon,
Little Boy Blue and the man in the moon.
"When you comin' home, Dad?"
"I don't know when, but we'll get together then;
You know we'll have a good time then."*

*My son turned ten just the other day.
He said, "Thanks for the ball, Dad, come on, let's play.
Can you teach me to throw?"*

*I said, "No, not today,
I got a lot to do."
He said, "That's okay."
And he walked away but his smile never dimmed.
It said, "I'm gonna be like him, yeah,
You know I'm gonna be like him...."*

*My son came from college just the other day;
So much like a man I just had to say,
"Son, I'm proud of you, can you sit for a while?"
He shook his head and he said with a smile,
"What I'd really like, Dad, is to borrow the car keys.
See you later, can I have them please?"*

*I've long since retired, my son's moved away.
I called him up just the other day.
I said, "I'd like to see you, if you don't mind."
He said, "I'd love to, Dad, if I can find the time.
You see, my new job's a hassle, and the kids have the flu,
But it's sure nice talkin' to you, Dad,
It's been nice talkin' to you."
And as I hung up the phone
It occurred to me,
He'd grown up just like me.
My boy was just like me.*

*And the cat's in the cradle and the silver spoon,
Little Boy Blue and the man in the moon,
"When you comin' home, Son?"
"I don't know when, but we'll get together then, Dad.
We're gonna have a good time then."*

The melodrama of this song was played out in Chapin's own life almost like a self-fulfilling prophecy. I have been told that his wife, who wrote the words of the song, asked him one day when he was going to slow down the torrid pace of his life and give some time to their children. His answer was, *"At the end of this busy summer, I'll take some time to be with them."*

That summer, ironically and tragically, Harry Chapin was killed in a car accident.

It is not possible to read that postscript of Chapin's death and miss the larger point—that something was known, believed, and even "preached," but never lived. When we chase man-made crowns and sacrifice the treasured relationships for which God has made us—life loses its meaning."

When children are neglected by their earthly fathers, they grow up to feel that their heavenly Father doesn't have any time for them either.

That He is too busy to be bothered with their problems—yet just the opposite is true:

Psalm 139:17-18 (NLT2)

¹⁷ How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered! ¹⁸ I can't even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand! And when I wake up, you are still with me!

Jesus even said that the Father cares about us so much that He even keeps track of the number of hairs on our heads.

He is always with us, He is constantly thinking about us and is concerned with the smallest details of our lives—our lives are of the utmost importance to our heavenly Father—He always has time for us.

Peter said, "***Let Him have all your worries and cares, for He is always thinking about you and watching everything that concerns you.***"

II. The Forgiving of Our Earthly Fathers

If you can see that your relationship with you heavenly Father has been damaged due to the mistakes and failings of your earthly father—then you must take these things to the Lord.

You must find forgiveness in your heart for anyone who has hurt you—if you don't your bitterness will destroy your walk with God and rob you of the peace of God.

Realize too that **you're not alone**—there is no such thing as a perfect parent—every parent makes mistakes—yours did and so will you. Everyone has suffered some kind of hurt in their life at the hands of their parents.

The secret to healing is found in forgiveness even as God has forgiven you. Don't resent the failings of your parents—they are just kids that grew up and had kids.

Your real Father is in heaven and He is the perfect Parent! He *always* disciplines in love—He is faithful, generous, kind and just. He loves you for who you are and longs to spend time with you—because you are special to Him.

So, let's stop looking at our earthly fathers as an example of what our heavenly Father is like— because earthly fathers are human, fallible and mistake prone.

Let's love them, forgive them, respect them, honor them, pray for them and encourage them.

But if you want to know what your Father in heaven is truly like—look at Jesus who said, "***If you've seen Me you've seen the Father...***"

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower, and not an earth-dweller— please reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Reach out to us [here](#). Want to know more? Click [here](#).