

Our Father

We begin our study with **John 20:11-17**. Today's focus isn't on the power of the resurrection (though we would be lost in our sins without it). Nor will we focus on Mary (though we will consider something we have in common). Today, we consider Jesus' description of God. He was Jesus' Father. He is our Father. Furthermore, we are reminded of Jesus' words to Philip after he asked Jesus to show them the Father. "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen Me has seen the Father." **John 14:8-9**.

Yes, it was Jesus that Isaiah said would be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. **Isaiah 9:6**.

I don't mean to distract from today's study but understand that when we consider the character of God the Father, we are simultaneously discussing the character of the Prince of Peace, Mighty God, and Everlasting Father we call Jesus. What do we have in common with Mary? The way God has dealt with us all. The fact that we share a loving Father.

So, you've asked me to discuss God as our Father to our young people. God is called our Father because of a father's critical role in one's life. A wonderful father gives you the world. A failing father tears it apart. To appreciate your earthly father because of his goodness and love is to get a glimpse at our heavenly Father, who gave us the world. He, for sure, is not the one who tore it apart. Appreciating our heavenly Father will help us appreciate you our earthly father is trying to imitate. So, where to go for such a study? Where to begin?

I found myself coming back to one of my favorite Psalms. It encourages me, and I pray it will you as well. It reminds me of who He is. I think about when Moses asked to see God. Do we remember what God said to Him? "I will make all My goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you My name 'The Lord.' And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." **Exodus 33:19**. And when the Lord passed before Moses, He said, "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation." **Exodus 34:6-7**.

This is the God that Moses knew.

This is the God that Jesus reflected.

This is the God of Psalm 103.

Psalm 103

1-2 Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits,

- Today's lesson is not about praising God, but let's take note.

- It's not shallow to know and consider the benefits of the Lord. He has shown Himself to be beautiful.

3-5 who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

- Forgiveness is where it begins. There's no hope in a cured disease, freedom from depression, love and mercy, or a renewed life if, in the end, it ends its separation from God. I don't want to be loved from afar when I die, brethren. I want to enjoy the love and mercy of the Lord in His presence.
- Does He not heal our diseases anymore? I know He doesn't heal everyone. That was true back then, as well. But do we think He no longer heals? He no longer cares? He no longer provides ways to make our lives better? Will we serve Him either way? Yes! But let's not rob Him of His goodness. Only God knows all the people He's healed.
- The life that God offers is realized in the Kingdom to come and now. How many have been pulled out of the dark pit by God? How many have experienced a renewal of life? If you've ever said, "I just want my life back," and have gotten it, you know what I'm talking about.

6-7 The Lord works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed. He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the people of Israel.

- He does what is right and fights for those who are oppressed. He is a protective Father in all the right ways. He is not weak. He has skin in the game. He can be trusted. He will fight for you. He did fight for you.
- God specifically communicated with Moses in a unique way. After showing His "back" to Moses, he told Moses that He would do an "awesome thing" for His people.
- Deuteronomy tells of this great help from the Lord: **Deuteronomy 1:29-31** Then I said to you, 'Do not be in dread or afraid of them. The Lord your God who goes before you will Himself fight for you, just as He did for you in Egypt before your eyes, and in the wilderness, where you have seen how the Lord your God carried you, as a man carries his son, all the way that you went until you came to this place.'
- Jesus did that as well. **Luke 4:18-19**, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

8-12 The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always chide, nor will He keep His anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His steadfast love toward those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does He remove our transgressions from us.

- His temperament. He is not a God who woke up on the wrong side of the bed. He's not unpredictable. He's not in a state of irritation. He's not a God who has to put up with you.
- He's not looking to strive with you forever.
- He's not looking to hold on to anger if it's present.
- Will God show us mercy on judgment day? Really let this sink in, brethren. Are we seeing something He doesn't? Are we more kind, gentle, patient, or understanding than Him? Will judgment day catch Him off guard? Will there be information missing that He'll need to be aware of on that day of judgment? NO!

- We don't love like He does. When He says He's forgiven, He means it's gone. It cannot be found. David believed the only separation he would experience would be one of his sins being carried far away. So far, they can't be detected.

13-14 As a father shows compassion to His children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.

- He's more than reasonable, brethren. He remembers that He made us and what He made us from - dust.
- This has become one of the most comforting passages to me because, in my fear and lack of faith, I begin to think that God won't be reasonable.

15-19 As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field; for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more. But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children, to those who keep His covenant and remember to do His commandments. The Lord has established His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom rules over all.

- And this loving Lord has commanded His people to honor your father and mother. They're not Him. That's for sure. Consider Jesus' statement in [Matthew 7:9-11](#). Fathers are called evil by Jesus, yet they give good gifts to their children, so they not? Your father was made in His image and has been given a role. He's the one who seeks to imitate God.
- We are to obey our fathers. Especially after considering the good our earthly fathers seek to do for you.