

Our Good Heavenly Father (Father's Day 6-16-19)

Luke 11:1-13 (Special focus on verses 5-13)

Before teaching this scripture, I want you to see the big picture. Why? Because to apply what Jesus taught about God the Father we need to see the big picture.

Here's the question: What is the primary reason Jesus came to earth as the Son of God and Son of Man? You will probably say, "To die on the cross for our sins." That's true. But I want you to see the bigger picture. How does the incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ fit into the heavenly Father's good plan from Genesis to Revelation?

Jesus' primary purpose to come to earth was to reveal God the Father.

Hear the words of Jesus: John 14:8-11: ⁸ Philip said to Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." ⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? ¹⁰ Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. ¹¹ Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.

Jesus came to reveal the Father; the holiness of the Father, the love of the Father, and the goodness of the Father. Jesus did the works of the Father to reveal the heart of the Father. The greatest work that revealed the heart of the heavenly Father is the sacrifice of Christ for our sins. But also, every person Jesus forgave, healed of disease, and freed from demons was the work of his Father. All of Jesus' works were a revelation of his Father's goodness.

Jesus revealed the desire and plan of the heavenly Father to have a family of redeemed sons and daughters. This is the heavenly Father's good plan from Genesis to Revelation. In the beginning the Father created the heavens and earth and people in his image. The Father created people in his image to have a family forever. The end purpose is pictured in Revelation. There will be a new heaven and earth populated only with the Father's redeemed sons and daughters. Jesus' primary purpose to come to earth as the Son of God and Son of Man was to reveal the heavenly Father and secure for him a redeemed family of sons and daughters from every nation. This will be the Father's forever family.

Why do we need Jesus' revelation of the goodness of the Father? SIN. The absolute goodness of the Father is obscured by several realities: 1) my own sinful nature; 2) the sinful natures of other people who judge and condemn; 3) a world under the curse of sin; 4) the lies of Satan. Satan hates the goodness of God and fights it with lies. Remember cause and effect – Satan's lies deceive us. Satan lied about the goodness of the Father to Adam and

Eve in the Garden of Eden. We need Jesus' revelation of the Father to counteract Satan's lies. We need Jesus' revelation of the Father, so we can have eternal life in the Father's house – heaven. We need Jesus' revelation of the Father's heart to be persistent in prayer.

With the heavenly Father's great plan in mind, let's consider Jesus' teaching about our good heavenly Father and prayer.

Luke 11:1-4: The disciples watched Jesus praying a lot and they asked how to pray. Jesus gave them and us a model prayer. That's a future sermon.

Persistence in Prayer: Luke 11:5-10: ⁵And he said to them, "Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves, ⁶for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; ⁷and he will answer from within, 'Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything'? ⁸I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his *impudence* he will rise and give him whatever he needs. ⁹And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.

Impudence = shameless persistence. Shameless persistence means asking without embarrassment or self-conscious reservation. For the man in the parable it means being totally focused on the need of his guest. He has no bread to offer his tired friend. He wants to show hospitality. So, he shamelessly knocks on his neighbor's door until he gets up. Maybe this is a picture of how we ought to pray for the needs of others.

Ask, seek, and knock reinforces the shameless persistence of the man in the parable. Ask, seek, knock are verbs in the GR present imperative tense. Present imperative is a command. It means, "Ask and keep on asking. Seek and don't stop seeking. Knock and keep on knocking." We ask expecting our request to be given. We seek expecting to find. We knock expecting the door to open. "It will be given... you will find... it will be opened to you" are future passive verbs. This means it will happen sometime in the future and the Father will do it. The Father will give. The Father will allow you to find. The Father will open the door. It may happen sooner or later. It may happen tomorrow or next year. Our good heavenly Father controls the timing.

This parable of the persistent friend teaches that prayer will be answered. If one friend will answer the request of another friend even though it is an inconvenient time, how much more will our heavenly Father, for whom there is no inconvenient time, answer our requests. (*New International Biblical Commentary: Luke, Craig Evans*)

The whole context makes it clear that our good heavenly Father is eager to give. So, why the need for persistence? "But if we do not want what we are asking for enough to be

persistent, we do not want it very much. It is not such tepid prayer that is answered.” (*Tyndale NT Commentaries: Luke, Leon Morris*) If you are praying for me, then do not pray a tepid prayer. Pray for me with faith and persistence.

We are not persistent in prayer to overcome resistance in the Father to answering our requests. There is no reluctance or resistance in the Father toward his faith children. The Father desires to bless his faith children. This is what Jesus is revealing about the Father. Do not let Satan steal this seed of the word from your heart!

Ask for the Holy Spirit: Luke 11:11-13: ¹¹ What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a snake; ¹² or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

Jesus reinforces our heavenly Father’s goodness to answer prayer.

Galilee fishermen like Peter, James & John, would catch water snakes in their nets. When rolled up a scorpion resembles an egg. Modern version: *Fathers... if your son or daughter asks for a doughnut with chocolate icing and sprinkles would you give him/her a doughnut with arsenic icing; or if he/she asks for a peanut butter and jelly (P&J) sandwich would you give him/her a P&J with shards of glass in it.*

“If you then, who are evil...” I don’t like to be called evil, but I am. When I served as a chaplain for 3 months at the Baptist Hospital in Pensacola, I chose to serve in the Youth MHU = Mental Health Unit. I talked with youth who had attempted suicide. I heard horror stories. I heard stories of very evil fathers who abused their children – verbally and physically. It broke my heart. I learned to feel empathy for them. I tried to point them to a good heavenly Father, but it’s very hard to see him when your earthly father hated or abandoned you.

You and I are not that evil, but we are sinners. We are sinners who want to give the best to our children. How much more will the Father give good gifts to his faith children!

I thought about this when I served as a chaplain in a Baptist hospital in Pensacola. I visited patients in the oncology ward of the hospital. I prepared myself to answer the questions, “If God is good... If God is love... Why cancer? Why me?” I wanted them to know God didn’t give them cancer. It’s a matter of cause and effect. Cancer is an effect. I don’t know if the physical cause has been discovered yet. (*If you work at St. Jude’s then you can inform my ignorance.*) The spiritual cause is a world under the curse of sin. It’s the world we chose when we rebelled against God. Our good and merciful God loves you and wants to make you whole.

God the Father is good and only gives good gifts to his faith children. Heavenly Father doesn’t punish his faith children with disease. The Father doesn’t give cancer to his faith

children. Would you, fathers, give a disease to your children? NO. And, as Jesus said, we are evil. God is completely good. God is the definition of good. The Father doesn't give snakes and scorpions. He loves his sons and daughters. I love my children. I would lay down my life for them. If I am evil and love them that much, can you comprehend how much more the Father loves his faith children; how much he loves you? Do you know how to walk every day in the love of your heavenly Father? I've been a Christian for over 40 years and I'm still learning to walk every day in the love and goodness of my heavenly Father.

The best gift the Father gives his faith children is the Holy Spirit. The one thing you can ask for and you will always receive is the Holy Spirit. And when we ask for the Holy Spirit we have no fear of receiving an evil spirit. Jesus referred to evil spirits as "snakes and scorpions" when he gave us authority over the power of Satan. Luke 10:19: *"Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you."*

We need the HS! The book of Acts has many references to the believers "filled with the HS." Paul admonished believers (Ephesians 5:18), *Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit.* The GR verb "be filled" is passive present imperative. Imperative is command. Present means "be filled and keep being filled." Passive means we don't fill ourselves. We ask the Father to give us the good gift of his Spirit. We ask the HS to continually dominate and control our lives and no other bodily appetite. I don't know about you, but I leak and need a continual refill.

Application: Ask for the HS without fear. I pray each day: "HS fill me with the fruit of your character – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control – and empower me to walk in the good works that you have prepared for me to do today." I pray scripture. This is a scriptural prayer.

- Galatians 5:22-23: *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*
- Ephesians 2:10: *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

I challenge you to pray it for a week. If you have reservations praying it, then there's something head or the heart that is motivating the reservations. You may have reservations about giving control of your life to the Holy Spirit. If you ask for the Holy Spirit, then the good heavenly Father will not give you a spirit that will harm you.

I need this prayer – especially the fruit of the Holy Spirit. I have violated Ephesians 6:4 with one of my daughters. I did not give instruction and discipline from the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 6:4 (NASB): *Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.* When my daughter was in high school, I caught her shoplifting. I was very angry and yelled at her and we had a terrible argument.

I provoked my daughter to anger. The GR word means to provoke to a deep-seated anger. That means to provoke someone to anger with bitterness and resentment. This happened years ago, and we have forgiven and love each other. She is a beautiful, honest young woman now.

Jesus reveals to us the absolute goodness of our heavenly Father. Therefore, Jesus encourages us to ask, seek, and knock in prayer. The good heavenly Father will not give anything to us that will harm us. No snakes or scorpions. He gives the Holy Spirit to live in us, so that we can share in the love the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have for each other.

The final question is "Are you sure you're one of the Father's faith children?" You become a faith child by receiving the Father's Son, Jesus Christ, as your Savior and Lord. (Share the Gospel)

Father's Day joke:

Four men are in the hospital waiting room because their wives are having babies. A nurse goes up to the first guy and says, "Congratulations! You're the father of twins."

"That's odd," answers the man. "I work for the Minnesota Twins!"

A nurse says to the second guy, "Congratulations! You're the father of triplets!"

"That's weird," answers the second man. "I work for the 3M company!"

A nurse tells the third man, "Congratulations! You're the father of quadruplets!"

"That's strange," he answers. "I work for the Four Seasons hotel!"

The last man groans and bangs his head against the wall. "What's wrong?" the others ask.

"I work for 7 Up!"