

June 17, 2007 (Father's Day)

"The Love of a Father"

Luke 11:11-13 NLT

"You fathers--if your children ask for a fish, do you give them a snake instead? 12 Or if they ask for an egg, do you give them a scorpion? Of course not! 13 If you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him."

DO ELEPHANTS REALLY HAVE MEMORIES? AN INTERESTING STORY!

I don't usually like these heartwarming stories; but this one is truly interesting...

In 1986, Mkele Mbembe was on holiday in Kenya after graduating from Northwestern University. On a hike through the bush, he came across a young bull elephant standing with one leg raised in the air. The elephant seemed distressed, so Mbembe approached it very carefully and cautiously.

He got down on one knee and inspected the elephant's foot and found a large piece of wood deeply embedded in it.

As carefully and as gently as he could, Mbembe worked the wood out with his hunting knife, after which the elephant gingerly put down its foot.

The elephant turned to face the man; and with a rather curious look on its face, stared at him for several tense moments. Mbembe stood frozen, thinking of nothing else but being trampled. Eventually the elephant trumpeted loudly, turned, and walked away.

Mbembe never forgot that elephant or the events of that day.

Twenty years later, Mbembe was walking through the Chicago Zoo with his teenaged son. As they approached the elephant enclosure, one of the creatures turned and quite deliberately walked over to near where Mbembe and his son Tapu were standing. The large bull elephant stared intently at Mbembe, lifted its front foot off the ground, then put it down. The elephant did that several times, then trumpeted loudly, all the while staring at the man.

Remembering the encounter in 1986, Mbembe couldn't help wondering if this was the same elephant he had helped twenty years earlier.

Mbembe summoned up his courage, climbed over the railing and made his way into the enclosure. He walked right up to the elephant and stared back in wonder.

The elephant trumpeted again, wrapped its trunk around one of Mbembe's legs and slammed him against the railing, killing him instantly.
Probably wasn't the same elephant.

Come on, it's Father's Day, and that was a joke males would appreciate. You expected a different conclusion. A happy or good ending. Life isn't perfect, but God is and He always gives good things.

In our text Jesus speaks to fathers. He asks the question (vs 11-12), "if your children ask for a fish, do you give them a snake instead? Or if they ask for an egg, do you give them a scorpion?" Then He answers His own question, "Of course not!" If your child asked for something good you would not give them something bad. Instead you would give them the good thing they asked for. Any parent wants to give good thing to their children. The worst of people still will love and want to give good gifts to their children.

How much more does God, who is the perfect Father / Parent give good gifts even the best and most precious gift, the Holy and Good Spirit to His children when they ask. Here's how Jesus put it (v13), "If you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him." We are sinful, God is holy. Yet, even though we are not as loving compared to God, we want to be as loving as God, we want to do right for and to our children.

As in all things our aim is to be like God. God is not selfish, spiteful, or stingy in His giving. Nothing has helped me to understand the love God has for me as when my son was born. Here was this little child, I didn't even know him that well. He was demanding, he kept me up at nights. Yet, I would give my life for him. The love I had and still have for my son is scary. I would do anything for him and only want to give him what is good and good for him. If sinful, evil me can feel that way toward my child and if God is so much more greater and more loving than me, wow! How incredible is God's love for me.

I want to show a video of what one father did for his son. Perhaps you have heard of Dick Hoyt and his son Rick, better known as Team Hoyt. Rick was disabled from birth by a loss of oxygen when his umbilical cord was wrapped around his neck. He also has cerebral palsy. Doctors told the family he would be a vegetable and should put him away. Dick Hoyt, his father refused and brought him home. Then when Rick was 12 years old he learned to use a special computer to be able to communicate. His dad using a special wheel chair ran in a benefit race. Rick, his son communicated that when they ran he forgot about his disabilities. That is all his dad had to hear. His dad who was not a runner began to train and has run in many events including the iron- man triathlon. His father carries him in a special seat up front as they bike, pulls him in a special boat as they swim, and pushes him in a special wheelchair as they run. [Watch this]. When asked what one thing Rick wished he could give his father, his reply was "The thing I'd most like is that my dad would sit in the chair and I would push him once." (one day he will).

I can understand Dick Hoyt giving himself, sacrificing himself for the love of his child. It helps me to understand how much more God loves us. What I can't understand is God willing to give up His only Son to suffer and die for the likes of me.

Perhaps you've heard me share the story of John Griffin before...

(John 3:16 NLT) "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life."

We talk much about the love of God, but not much about the fear of God. As father our child must know that we love them, but also that we must discipline them. There must be a balance. God must punish sin, therefore we must obey Him. Fathers follow God's example in this also. God gave His laws and then warned obey them and be blessed or disobey them and be punished. Follow that example, let your children know what you expect of them, what the rules are, and let them know if they obey all will go well, if they disobey there will be consequences. Because that's how it is in life. So they must learn that from a loving parent. Let them know also that God forgives when our faith is in His Son Jesus and His sacrifice for us.

If we are to love as God loves then we need His Spirit. And if we want His Spirit we need to ask for it (v13), "how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him."

Today as admit to God that you have not been living according to His laws, accept His only Son who died to forgive your sin, and ask Him to fill you with His Spirit that you might know "The love of a Father."