

July 15, 2007 (a sermon by Dr. Stanley W. Reeder)

“THE PROGENY OF JESUS”

A Study of Matthew 6:9

#2 of 8 in the Series: “The Prayer of Jesus”

INTRODUCTION:

There was a church where the preacher and the song leader were not getting along. This began to spill over into the worship service.

One week, the preacher preached on giving and how we should gladly give to the work of the Lord. The song leader then led the song, “Jesus Paid It All.”

The next Sunday, the preacher preached on gossiping and how we should watch our tongues. The song leader then led the song, “I Love to Tell the Story.”

The preacher became very disgusted over the situation, and the next Sunday he told the congregation he was considering resigning. The song leader then led the song, “Oh, Why Not Tonight.”

As it came to pass, the preacher resigned and the next week informed the church that it was Jesus that led him there and it was Jesus that was taking him away. The song leader then led the song, “What a Friend We Have in Jesus.”

We don’t always agree on everything in the church.

A man was stranded on the proverbial deserted island for years. Finally one day a boat sailed into view, and the man frantically waves and draws the skipper’s attention. The boat comes near the island, and the sailor gets out and greets the stranded man.

After awhile the sailor asks, “What are those three huts you have here?”

“Well, that’s my house there.”

“What’s that next hut?” asks the sailor.

“I built that hut to be my church.”

“What about the other hut?”

“Oh, that’s where I used to go to church.”

We don't agree on everything, but one thing we agree on is prayer . . . The Prayer of Jesus. The foundation of our faith in "The Prayer of Jesus" is wrapped up in the first 6 words of the prayer.

THE FOUNDATION OF OUR FAITH IN "THE PRAYER OF JESUS":

1. Our Father: The relationship.

The best summary of the two words "Our Father" is: **"relationship."**

The first two words of "The Prayer of Jesus" describe our relationship with God.

Many people today have religion about God but no Father-relationship with God.

QUESTION #1:

Do you have the Father-relationship with God?

My own Father will soon be 80 years old. For many years I was my Dad's pastor. There were times when the responsibilities of being a pastor would be heavy or perplexing. On a Sunday night, after church, I'd go over to Dad's and Mom's. Mom would be out in the kitchen fixing something to eat. I'd sit in the Living Room with Dad. He'd be in his chair; the surroundings were the comfortable, familiar furniture I'd grown up with. There was security there. I'd talk about the things that concerned me; he'd listen. He'd give words of comfort and wisdom. I knew that whatever I told him, he loved me as his son. I would emerge from those times with clarity, increased strength and resolve.

And . . . it didn't hurt that Mom would feed me. There was a security, a source of help, a friendship, an oneness that I had with Dad. I truly enjoyed the father-relationship.

I now live over a 1,000 miles from my Dad. I can't drop over to Dad's. But every morning I can drop to my knees. I enter into my Heavenly Father's presence. I enjoy the warmth of His love; I feel the support of His arms. He speaks His wisdom and direction to me. He gives hope when things are bleak; faith for the future. I soak in the security, the resources, and the clarity that comes from my Father in heaven.

Do you have that kind of personal, Father-relationship with the Almighty God?

This "Father-relationship" is the foundation of the Lord's Prayer. The first two words of "The Prayer of Jesus" are "Our Father". Unless you have the "Father-relationship" you can't even begin to pray the prayer.

What keeps us the "Father-relationship"? Sin.

Joke: Day dreaming in Church.

Now listen . . . don't drift off on me here. Don't be like the little boy who asked his father what was the highest number he had ever counted. The boy's dad said that he really didn't know, but asked his son, "What's the highest number you have counted to?" "973."

"Why did you stop there?"

"I stopped counting because the pastor stopped preaching."

What keeps us from the "Father-relationship"? Sin.

Your iniquities [sins] have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear (Isaiah 59:2).

How can we overcome the sin problem? It starts with Jesus. ***For Christ died for sins . . . to bring you to God (1 Peter 3:18).***

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

Once our lives are forgiven and made pure we become a fit dwelling for the presence of Jesus.

Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in (Revelation 3:20).

to all who received him, . . . he gave the right to become children of God (John 1:12).

Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father" (Galatians 4:6).

With the presence of Jesus' Spirit inside us we come into the same relationship with Almighty God that he started: the "Father-relationship".

The most literal translation of "Abba" is: Daddy

The "Father-relationship" that Jesus started was revolutionary.

With the help of my assistants, I have examined the prayer literature of ancient Judaism...The result of this examination was, that in no place in this immense literature is this invocation of God as "Abba, Father" to be found...No Jew would have dared to address God in this manner.

- ***Joachim Jeremias¹***

Jesus said: ***"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).***

¹ Joachim Jeremias, The Prayers of Jesus (New York: SCM Press, 1967) 57, cited in Max Lucado, The Great House of God, (Dallas: Word, 1997) 14.

No Jesus, no Father-relationship. You can only call God your heavenly Father if you have invited Jesus into your life. Remember QUESTION #1? **Do you have a Father-relationship with God?** You can have that “Father-relationship” if you confess your sins and invite Jesus’ presence into your life.

Now here is more good news! Once you have the relationship with the Father, you have access to the one

2. Who art in Heaven: The resources.

The best summary of “Who art in Heaven is found in the word “resources.”

The LORD is a God of Majesty and might who is worthy of our worship. He is the glorious King, surrounded by the angelic host. He sits on the throne of majesty. Think of all the pomp and circumstance you know in this world, multiply it by a thousand times a thousand, and you haven’t touched anything of the glory and majesty of the Father who is in Heaven. As one author wrote a few years ago:

It seems in these days that God is enjoying keeping the astronomers on the edge of their seats with new glimpses of his power. Not long ago (Fall, 1989), newspapers reported the discovery by two Harvard astronomers of a “Great Wall” of galaxies. The wall is supposedly some five hundred million light years long, two hundred million light years wide and fifteen million light years thick. In case your high school astronomy has grown fuzzy, a light year is a little less than six trillion (6,000,000,000,000) miles. This Great Wall consists of more than fifteen thousand galaxies, each with millions of stars, and was described as the “largest single coherent structure seen so far in nature.”

I say “was described” because three months later (in February 1990), God opened another little window for tiny man to marvel again. This time, astronomers discovered more than a dozen evenly distributed clumps of galaxies stretching across vast expanses of the heavens, suggesting a structure to the universe that is so regular and immense that it defies current theories of cosmic origins. The newly found pattern of galactic matter dwarfs the extremely long sheet of galaxies, dubbed the “great wall” (now written without caps!), that was reported to be the largest structure in the universe. They now say the great wall is, in fact, merely one of the closest of these clumps, or regions, that contain very high concentrations of galaxies.

What is this universe but the lavish demonstration of the incredible, incomparable, unimaginable exuberance and wisdom and power and greatness of God? What a God he must be!

To think that we have a Father-relationship with the one who art in heaven! With this relationship we have access to tremendous resources.

Through the progeny of Jesus we have access to the power of God.

Jesus promised us power in Acts 1:4, 8: *wait for the gift my Father promised, . . . you will receive power when the Holy Spirit come on you; and you will be my witnesses.*

The actual word in the Greek that we translate power, is *δυναμος* . . . from which we get the word, dynamite.

δυναμος = power = dynamite

“Our Father, who art in heaven’s” desire for us is to have tremendous power.

Jesus’ desire is for us to have a Father-relationship like he had with the LORD. *Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe (John 17:21).*

Now there is no question that we receive the Holy Spirit when we invite Jesus’ presence into our lives. Romans 8:9 says: *if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.* But there is a further work of fullness that our Father has for us. In fact when the servers of the early church were selected in Acts 6, they were to choose those from among you . . . who are known to be full of the Spirit. (Acts 6:3).

QUESTION #2

Now let me ask you another question. Not just - “do you have a father-relationship with God” - but now, “Are you FULL of the Spirit.” Is there such fullness that when people see you they see the Spirit of Jesus?

D. L. Moody preached at the New York Hippodrome (site of the current Madison Square Garden) in 1876:

*God has got a good many children who have just barely got life, but **no power** for service . . . The Holy Ghost coming upon them with power is distinct and separate from conversion. . . . I believe we should accomplish more in one week than we should in years if we had only this fresh baptism.... A great many think because they have been filled once, they are going to be full for all time after; but O, my friends, we are leaky vessels, and have to be kept right under the fountain all the time in order to keep full. . . Let us keep near Him.*

-D. L. Moody (1876)²

Ephesians 6:10 commands us: ***Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.***

"Pray the largest prayers. You cannot think a prayer so large that God in answering it, will not wish you had made it larger. Pray not for crutches but wings."

² D. L. Moody quoted from Jim Cymbala, Fresh Power (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001) 110.

-Phillips Brooks

Please, God, send the Holy Spirit upon us and revive your people.

Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down . . . you did awesome things that we did not expect, . . . Since ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who acts on behalf of those who wait for him (Isaiah 64:1-4).

How long has it been since God “did awesome things that we did not expect?”

Father, stir our hearts in faith to reach out for all that you have promised us. Forgive our dependence on human strategies and resources rather than on progeny and power of Jesus' Spirit. Teach us to pray and wait upon you in humility and faith; send the wind and fire of your Spirit upon us. Transform us into men and women who bear powerful witness in word and deed to the reality of the full, father-relationship. We ask this in the precious name of Jesus. Amen.