

## 20240901 Our Good Father – Ps Bijoy

Mathew 7:7-11

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!”

When people think about God, a thousand different things might come to mind. For many, the word 'God' brings up the idea of an impersonal cosmic force, a kind of energy, or something divine that might not have a name or a face—just a source of light or power out there in the world. For others, God is more like a caricature, a grandparent figure who isn't really relevant to their lives. They don't expect this figure to have anything meaningful to say about the major issues they face. For some people, God is seen as an angry figure in the sky, just waiting for them to mess up so He can punish them. The way we picture God the Father affects how we live our lives. If you see God as someone who gets angry at every sin and is ready to send you to hell if you don't obey, then your life might become all about trying to be a better person or just avoiding being as bad as you used to be. It's like you're trying to do enough good things to escape God's anger.

But if you have a flawed view of God, you are going to end up with a flawed life because you were created by God and for God, to live in an intimate relationship with Him. Therefore, how we view God impacts how we live our Christian life. Jesus teaches us one thing about God more than anything else, and that is 'God is our Father.' This is emphasized 189 times in the four Gospels alone. For example, in the core text of the Gospels, Jesus says, 'When you pray, pray like this,' introducing the Lord's Prayer. We see the picture of God as a Father. When Jesus is baptized at thirty years old, starting His public ministry, He comes to the Jordan to be baptized by John. The heavens open, the Holy Spirit descends like a dove, and a voice from heaven declares, 'This is my Son, and in Him I am well pleased. Jesus hadn't performed any recorded miracles or healings yet because He was about to start His public ministry. Still, His Father says, 'This is my beloved Son, and in Him I am well pleased.' Our Heavenly Father was

with Jesus throughout His life and ministry. At the end, Christ prayed from the cross, 'Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit.'

Jesus is showing us how to have a personal intimate relationship with God almighty. But here's the problem: if God is primarily showing you that He wants you to know Him as Father, then the enemy will do everything he can to destroy fatherhood. The enemy knows that if he can undermine our concept of the Father by disrupting our relationships with our earthly dads, he can create a stumbling block that some people may never overcome in their relationship with Almighty God and see Him as their Heavenly Father.

Other day I was talking to my dad, and I enjoyed every minute of it especially now I'm far away from them. We as children crave for our earthly father's blessing and their love. I enjoy spending time with my dad, because irrespective of the age we crave for their love and affection. Some of you may have grown up in a dysfunctional family, or you might have been constantly trying to gain your father's approval in your life, striving to be the best in school, music, or sports, hoping that he would be happy and love you. For some of you, your father might have been absent throughout your life. For others, he might have been alcoholic or abusive. As a result, you don't know how to think of God as a Father because you have never experienced the love of an earthly father.

So, some of you might be saying, 'I appreciate the sermon, but if God is like my earthly dad, then I'm not interested in knowing Him.' Bijoy, can you relate to my broken relationships, my wounds, my disappointments, and the feeling of being left alone or mistreated? It's true—probably nobody will be able to understand or feel your pain exactly the way you felt it.

But Psalm 68: 4-5 says,

“Sing to God, sing in praise of his name,

extol him who rides on the clouds;

rejoice before him—his name is the Lord.

A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows,

is God in his holy dwelling.

God sets the lonely in families,

he leads out the prisoners with singing; ...”

Here in scripture God says, I can understand you my son/daughter. I am father to the fatherless and I have special place for you, and I love you.

Or maybe you were brought up by exceptionally loving and caring parents. Perhaps you had the best childhood you could imagine. However, no matter how much we love our dad and how loved we feel by him, we still have secrets that we keep in the deepest layers of our hearts because we don't want to disappoint him. So, if the Heavenly Father is not like my earthly father, then who is He like? What does He look like? When Jesus Christ stepped onto Earth, the scripture says He is the exact representation of the Father's glory—God personified in human flesh. So, if you want to see what God is like, you look at the person of Christ.

He is exactly like Jesus. If Jesus is compassionate, then the Father is compassionate. If Jesus is love, then the Heavenly Father is love. So, here's the beauty and the power of our Heavenly Father: He is not simply a reflection of your earthly dad. God is a million times the perfection of any perfect earthly father. He is a million times more loving and compassionate than anything you ever dreamed your dad could be. Scripture says, in Ephesians 3: 17-19 "so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God."

God as a perfect Father is something I want to believe, but I don't even know what that looks like. But can I ask you: Haven't you ever imagined a dad that loves you deeply? Who is proud of you? Or maybe you are very close to your parents but yet there is this loneliness in you, and you wish that if you could have someone with you to walk with you in this journey. The answer is yes—every one of us has imagined that.

God is saying to build on that imagination because I am on the other end of that journey. I am everything you imagined in those moments. But you have to be willing to come to the foot of the cross, the place where you know you can trust Me. You need to bring your pain to the cross of Jesus and see that He was wounded for you, forsaken for you, and forgotten for you. He died and bled for you. The power of His pain is what brings healing to our pain. It's through focusing on His wounds that we can move toward healing from our own wounds and shame and be clothed with His joy and love. And you may say, I don't really know if I measure up.

I don't really know if I'll ever be enough, or if I have what it takes to be everything God wants me to be. Here's the good news about our Heavenly Father: He knows all your flaws and failures and yet says, 'I love you. You are my son, my daughter, through my beloved Son, Jesus Christ.' Remember, you may never be enough on your own merits, but through Christ, you are eternally loved by God.

1 John 3:1, "See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!" It's Him saying to us, 'I will not leave you behind. I'm not moving on without you. I will never forsake you. On the contrary, I will be with you through all the seasons of your life.' Until we see this with our inner eyes, we can't fully cherish it.

Now let's get back to Matthew chapter 7:7, Jesus says, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened." You might be thinking, 'I don't even know if I can take a big step. I don't even know if I want to.' But I love that Jesus offers us such a simple step with a great promise: just ask, seek, and knock. Just knock and see if God won't open a door that has kept you imprisoned all your life. Just knock and see if God won't open a door that allows you to experience Him in a brand-new way. You don't need to come with a grand plan—just ask.