

GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide

THE FATHERS BLESSING

MATTHEW 3:13-17 (SB 06.18.2022)

Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles, or observations stood out to you from this week's message? Discuss with your group.

In some ways, our understanding of what makes a good dad has been shaped by the images we see of dads in the media and on TV. For instance, I was thinking about the way that fathers have been depicted on television and how it has changed over the years. In the 50's and 60's, sitcom dads were usually portrayed as kind, calm, and wise. They always gave good advice and seemed to know just what to say. Shows like Father Knows Best were popular at the time. In the 80's and 90's things started to change. Fathers began to get portrayed as bumbling fools and idiots. Ward Cleaver gave way to Homer Simpson. If you ever watched The Simpsons, you'll recall how Homer was always drunk and clueless. The depiction revealed the prevailing cultural view of fathers. i.e. Dads were basically seen as idiots who didn't really do anything or know anything. Thankfully, in more recent years, things have started to change as science and research have irrefutably shown how important fathers are to the overall health of a family. Countless studies in this field have confirmed that having an involved father in the picture leads to better outcomes in almost every conceivable category. One article I read said, 'Children who grow up with involved fathers are: 39% more likely to earn mostly A's in school, 45% less likely to repeat a grade, 60% less likely to be suspended or expelled from school, twice as likely to go to college and find stable employment after high school, 75% less likely to have a teen birth, and 80% less likely to spend time in jail.' Let's get into our study...

1. What spoke to you from Pastor Daniel's sermon?
2. What are some ideas our culture has about what it means to be a father?
3. Why do you think Jesus referred to God as Father so often?

In the Old Testament, God is referred to as Father 13 times. However, in the New Testament the Fatherhood of God becomes a central theme. Jesus referred to God as His Father 175 times. It was His favorite title for God.

Digging Deeper in God's Word: Life Lessons

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 3:13-17

1. Eighteen years had passed since Jesus, at the age of twelve, went to the temple and listened to the religious teachers. Why do you think He chose to go to a river to announce the start of His ministry, rather than back to the temple? What did He accomplish through this action?
2. Why was Jesus baptized, even though He didn't need to repent of His sins? Why is baptism an important symbol of your commitment to God?

This baptism signaled the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. Jesus was not baptized for the forgiveness of sins, like all the other people John baptized. Rather, Jesus was baptized to identify Himself and His ministry with the ministry and message of John the Baptist. By being at the river that day, He associated with sinners who repented and believed. Likewise, we associate ourselves with the people of God and share our commitment to Him when we are baptized.

3. In your own words, how would you describe the importance of Jesus being both fully God and fully man?

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In what ways is Jesus a bridge between God and us?

In His baptism, Jesus shows He is fully man when He obeys God and identifies with sinners. In His baptism, we see that Jesus is also fully God by the presence of the Father and the Holy Spirit. In His baptism, Jesus, both man and God, proves to be a bridge between God and man, making us at peace with God. God's plan of salvation was centered on Jesus. The Father's words as well as the Holy Spirit coming down in the form of a dove show us that He really is God and has authority as God on earth.

4. Re-read Matthew 3:16-17 – What can we learn from God the Father in this passage on how to be a good father? Name as many lessons about Fathering as you can from this passage?

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 6:9-13

1. Most Jews did not pray to God as "Our Father." Why didn't they pray to God this way?
2. How does Jesus make us able to relate to God in a personal way?

Most Jews did not pray to God as "Our Father" because they, like Jesus, recognized that God is holy and they are not. Therefore, they were uncomfortable addressing Him in such personal terms. Jesus, however, made it possible to approach God in an intimate manner because in dying for our sins, He reconciled us to God and adopted us as His children (Gal. 4:4-7).

3. Read through the list of petitions made in verses 11-13. How does God provide all of these needs for us? How is His desire to meet these needs related to His fatherhood?
4. When have you experienced God meeting these needs for you?

Though all analogies about God break down at some point, we can learn about what it means for God to be a Father by what we know about earthly fathers. A good dad takes care of his children's needs, and that is what God promises to do for you. He gives you what you need and forgives your indiscretions and sins. The whole Lord's prayer is a series of fatherly requests, and our prayers to our heavenly Father should model the type of requests that Jesus makes here. God cares for us as a father cares for his children.

5. How would praying to God as Father change the way that you pray?

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ROMANS 8:14-17

1. What rights did a child have that a slave in Jesus' day did not have? How does this help us understand what it means to be a child of God?
2. What do we stand to inherit as sons and daughters of God? How has this inheritance been achieved for us?

The Spirit of God makes us children instead of slaves. While slaves feared for their daily provision, children had an inheritance to look forward to. To the modern reader, inheritance might not seem like such a big deal, but to Paul's audience it would have been a huge deal. Anyone who has read through the Bible even casually will notice the genealogies sprinkled all throughout Scripture. These exist because lineage and inheritance were very important. When we become Christians, we are adopted into God's family as children, with all the rights and privileges that belong to the firstborn Son, Jesus. All that belongs to Jesus belongs to us, and as we grow, we grow up into His image.

BREAKTHROUGH! in 2022

3. Re-read verse 15. What does the Holy Spirit allow us to call God? How is this even a level of intimacy beyond fatherhood?
4. Why should knowing God is your Father give you assurance in every area of life?

The word “abba” is a term of endearment that is more akin to what we would think of as “daddy.” God is not a cold and distant Father, but a kind and loving daddy who eagerly and joyfully chose to become our dad. God did not have to choose us, but in His grace and wisdom He did. When you pray to God as Father, do not lose sight of what you are doing. You are laying bare your needs before a Father who loves you, chose you, and promises to meet your needs. He is unlimited and inexhaustible in His grace and resources. God sought you out because He wants good things for you. Love Him and serve Him because He loved and served you first.

Applying God’s Word

What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.

The first thing God said was, ‘This is My Son.’ In saying that, God conferred on Jesus the blessing of identity. When He said, ‘Whom I love’ He conferred on Him the blessing of affection. And when He said, ‘With Him I am well pleased’ He conferred on Him the blessing of affirmation. Those are three things every kid needs from their father. Kids need to be reminded of who they are. There is so much confusion out there right now surrounding this concept of identity. Kids need to be taught about who they are and where they came from. Kids also need to know that they are loved. They need to hear it from you. But they also need to feel it. The third thing kids need from us is to be affirmed. They need to hear that you are proud of them and that they are doing a good job. Sometimes as dads I think we forget to say the things we think and feel in our heart. We get busy. We assume they know how we feel. This story reminds us that we should constantly be looking for opportunities to publicly affirm our love of our kids.

1. What are a few things you can be sure to receive from God because He is your Father?
2. How can we point each other back to the love of our Father when we are going through troubling and difficult times?
3. Over a billion people around the world do not know God as Father. Why would we want them to know God in the way we do, as a loving Father?

PRAYER: Thank God that He is your Father who has adopted you and cares for your every need. Pray that God would use you to show His love to others.

“This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased. Listen to Him.” {Matthew 17:5}