

Discipleship - Session 20

Understanding And Receiving The Father's Love

Things we will cover this lesson:

1. How much the *Father* really does love us.
2. Jesus came to reveal the *Father*.
3. Jesus' stories reveal the *Father*.
4. Jesus' life reveals the *Father*.
5. The true motivation for living pure.
6. Returning the *Father's* love to Him.
7. Understanding the term "***Abba, Father***".

Assignment:

1. Continue ALONE prayer log. (One day -- 1/2 hour.)
2. Communing Word log.
3. Pray 2 Peter 1:1-15 into your life.
4. Pray the 6 Marks into your life.
5. Also go over the material you learned this session. Look up all the scriptures. Put this lesson to practice in your daily life.

UNDERSTANDING AND RECEIVING THE FATHER'S LOVE

1 John 3:1-3

¹ **Behold what manner of love the Father** has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

² Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

³ And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. (NKJV)

The purpose of this lesson to help the disciple understand how much God as his Father loves him. This becomes the motivation for purity (verse 3).

John 3:16 - God so loved the world.

1 John 4:16 - God is love.

Jesus came to reveal the Father.

John 17:6

⁶ "I have **manifested Your name** to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. (NKJV)

John 17:26

²⁶ "And I have **declared to them Your name**, and **will declare it**, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them." (NKJV)

Note the following about the term *Father* in the Bible:

- God as *Father* is found in only 14 verses in the entire Old Testament (NKJV); yet the name of God, "Elohim", is in over 2300 verses and "Jehovah" is in more than 6500 verses. So the *Your Name* He came to manifest was not these. The *Name* Jesus came to make known was the name of the character of God which had been completely overlooked by the Jewish people -- the name *Father*.
- Jesus begins His revelation of the *Father* in the Sermon on the Mount. He uses the term 17 times in the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew 5:16, 45, 48;----6:1, 4, 6, 8, 9, 14, 15, 18, 26, 32;----7:11, 21
- *Father* is in 151 verses in the Gospels alone and in 226 verses in the entire New Testament.

Jesus revealed the Father in two major ways:

1. By the stories and parables Jesus told.
2. By the life of Jesus Himself.

First, let us consider the parables Jesus told. I believe the parable that best illustrates Jesus revealing the *Father* is found in Luke 15:11-24. The main emphasis of this parable is **not** the prodigal son. The main emphasis of this parable is **the father of the prodigal son!** Three things are of major importance in this parable. One, note the son's feeling of unworthiness to receive his father's love in verses 18 & 19, 21. Two, note the father's reaction to the statement in verses 22 & 23! And three, note the father's reaction when he sees his son coming back to him in verse 20. The father did not meet his son with, "I told you so." or "Now, young man, let me give you a piece of my mind." No, instead he had compassion, ran to him, and kissed him. What a picture of the *Father!*

From this parable we learn a great truth. That truth is: We must learn to receive the Father's love! We can get to know God only if we receive His love! Let me use the example of a courtship to illustrate this truth. A woman gets to know a man for the rest of her life if she is willing to receive his love for the rest of her life by accepting His offer to give his love when he asks her to marry him. Twenty and thirty years later she will know this man far better than she did the day she said "Yes" to his proposal. Why? Because she has received his love all those years! So it will be with us when we learn to say "Yes" to our *Father's* offer to receive His love for the rest of our lives. Stop feeling unworthy and start receiving!

Now let us see if you are willing to receive such love. Look at John 17:23. This verse is plainly stating that the *Father* loves you like He loves Jesus! Do not react against such a statement by saying God cannot do that. God can do anything He wants! It is His nature to love. If He chooses to love us like He loves Jesus, THEN RECEIVE IT!

Second, let us consider how the life of Jesus declared the *Father*. Read John 14:6-11. Jesus clearly says, "*He who has seen Me has seen the Father.*" Do you want to know what the *Father* is like? Look at the life of Jesus and you will see. What do you think of when you think of Jesus -- kindness, gentleness, compassion, love, etc. Then this is what the *Father* is like!

With all the above in mind, look again at 1 John 3:1-3. Look at this profound love. Now look at 1 John 4:9-10 and Romans 5:8. These last two verses prove how much the *Father* loves us! How much more proof do we need? Learn to receive His love.

Again 1 John 3:3. I do not believe there is any greater motivation to live pure than by understanding and receiving the *Father's* love. Especially when it is tied to an assured faith that Jesus is coming back soon. I use the following formula for purity: Verse 1 + Verse 2 = Verse 3. Receiving the *Father's* love + Expectancy of Jesus' return = Purity!

Let us now consider Paul's expressing how God reaches out to us because of love in Ephesians 2 & 3 (Note: 2:1-3 are like the "hog pen" and 4-8, & 19 are like the "ring & robe" in the Luke 15 story of the father of the prodigal son.)

Important: note verse 4 - "*because of His great love with which He loved us.*"

Now read closely 3:14-19. Notice that Paul prays this at the conclusion of chapters 2 & 3. Paul makes it very clear that we must be "*rooted and grounded in love*" if we are going to "*be filled with all the fullness of God.*"

Next, let us understand the term, "***Abba, Father***".

Mark 14:32-39 ³² Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, "Sit here while I pray." ³³ And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed. ³⁴ Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, *even to death*. Stay here and watch." ³⁵ He went a little farther, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. ³⁶ And He said, "**Abba, Father**, all things *are* possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You *will*." ³⁷ Then He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch one hour? ³⁸ Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak." ³⁹ Again He went away and prayed, and spoke the same words. (NKJV)

Abba is a Hebrew and Aramaic word for “father”. It corresponds in meaning to our word, Daddy. *Abba* is the word framed by the lips of infants and speaks of unreasoned trust. It is very much like the words, “DaDa” or “PaPa.” The word “father” expresses an intelligent understanding of a relationship. The word *abba* expresses child like trust. The two words together (Abba, Father) express a child’s love and confidence from an intelligent perspective.

The expression *Abba* here is not the same as when an adult uses the term Papa or Daddy. It is when a child uses the term Papa or Daddy (*Abba*) that is the important concept in this expression.

Next, let us consider the only other times this expression is used in the Bible.

Romans 8:14-17 ¹⁴For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. ¹⁵For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "**Abba, Father.**" ¹⁶The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, then heirs -- heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together. (NKJV)

Galatians 4:4-6 ⁴But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. ⁶And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "**Abba, Father!**" (NKJV)

Jesus used this expression and the Holy Spirit directs us to use this same expression because we have the same Father!

Now let us consider each of the following points:

- Notice it is the Holy Spirit in us that brings us to the place where we are able to cry out from our innermost being, “**Abba, Father**”. Therefore, this is a work of the Holy Spirit. Read Romans 5:5.
- In Mark 14:36 Jesus uses the term **Abba, Father** as he speaks of drinking the cup. It takes a baptism into the understanding of Father as **Abba, Father** to be able to drink this cup of the Father's will.
- Jesus talks about His having a baptism in Mark 10:38-39. What baptism is this? This is present passive indicative in the Greek which means it is something that Jesus already has. Notice it is tied to drinking the cup.(See Mark 14:36 above again.) (Luke 12:50 is a future suffering baptism.)
- Notice how the Model Prayer begins (Matthew 6:9-10) by tying the Father to His will being done here on earth.

Therefore, as we understand our heavenly Father as *Abba*, we will be able to go through the deepest traumas and tribulations of life because we know the nature of our Father. He is like a *Papa* to us. Trust Him as Jesus did.

Finally, we must learn to return His love to Him.

Remember Mark 12:28-31. These are the greatest commandments! How do we get to the place where we can honestly love God with an *agape* love? Answer: **By loving others!** - Read the following: 1 John 4:12 (then 4:20-5:1); 4:16-19.

This is the bottom line of Christianity: **IS THE LOVE OF GOD BEING PERFECTED IN YOU?** As it is you are being conformed to the image of Christ.

RECEIVE THE FATHER'S LOVE AND RETURN IT! -- This will change your life forever! Now you are beginning to live the two greatest commandments!

SUMMATION STATEMENT: God is not only our God; He is also our Father! Jesus came to make this very clear to us. Jesus demonstrated the Father to us. Jesus trusted the Father completely. Have you received the love of your heavenly Father? Papa God loves you!