

1. What does it mean that God is like a Father?
 - a. Compassion
 - i. Covenant love - *chesed*
 - ii. Tender mercies
 - b. Those participles
 - i. Forgiving like a compassionate father
 1. ALL your iniquity
 2. Remember that forgiveness is not costless, it is very costly
 3. For God to be both forgiver and just means that He, as the one who has been wronged, must pay the price for the debt of any iniquity
 - a. How can God do that with His children?
 - b. If my child started a fire in my truck, and it destroyed my truck, I have two options: I can make my child pay it down through various means, or I can forgive them and pay it down myself.
 - c. The father’s heart is for His children, so the image of a father emphasizes this compassionate response to iniquity by God towards those who fear Him.
 - d. How He pays it down was not revealed to David, only dimly signified through the sacrificial system in the Tabernacle, prefiguring Jesus as our debt-payer.
 - ii. Healing like a compassionate father
 1. ALL your sufferings
 2. “disease” means ‘griefs’ – indicating that not only is there healing of physical griefs, but inward griefs as well
 - iii. Redeeming like a compassionate father
 1. Your life from the pit
 - a. “the pit” may be a euphemism for the pit which Joseph was put into when he was sold into slavery by his brothers
 - b. “the pit” is also often used as a euphemism for the grave, or death
 2. YHWH is the compassionate father who goes out and buys his son back again out of slavery
 - a. We see this most clearly in the redemption of our lives from the pit of slavery to death at the redemption price of His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ
 - iv. Crowning like a compassionate father
 1. Your soul
 2. With covenant love (*chesed*)
 3. With compassion
 - a. This word “compassion” emphasizes one’s feelings of compassion, one’s heart towards the object of its love
 - b. The LORD wants you for His child, delights in you as His child, and crowns you, honors you, declares to all creation that you are His child with the crown of His covenantal, promising, never-failing love
 - v. Satisfying like a compassionate father
 1. With ‘good ornaments’
 - a. God ‘ornaments’ your soul, blings it out
 - b. What are these ‘ornaments’?
 - i. Jewels of His grace set into the Spirit’s ultimate work of the soul’s crowned transformation into the likeness of Christ Jesus

- i. His “palace” is not like any other palace, even the most beautiful names of men
 - iii. God’s fathering is expressed by those participles, summed up in the words compassion and covenant love.
 - 1. We go from the pit to the palace, from nothingness to crowned as a child in the home of the King over all the earth,
 - 2. He rescues us from the pit and crowns us with love and compassion
 - 3. He reconciles from our greatest enemy, sin, and restores our relationship to Him in righteousness
 - a. Even those in our modern context, who deny the concept of guilt, still struggle emotionally with guilt and shame
 - b. Sin is a huge problem which may be denied theoretically, but is always experienced existentially – and God has done something about it through His Son
 - d. God’s fatherhood is not mere sentiment, however
 - i. Note that David does not diminish God’s anger, even while emphasizing His covenant love and compassion
 - 1. “slow to anger” – “will not always chide, nor keep his anger forever”
 - ii. God is personal and unique, holy, so we should not expect Him to be simplistic or without complexity
 - iii. One of the things we see is that God does have anger, He does chide, or accuse, and He recognizes sin and rebellion and wickedness
 - 1. For God’s compassion and love to be as demonstratively great as it is, it requires God’s anger and wrath against sin, that out-of-control rebellious force which brings destruction to His beloved Creation
 - iv. Yet, God limits His anger, there is an end to it for His children
 - 1. There is a proper anger in love – a defensive and postured resistance to that which would destroy its object...you and all which God has made
 - 2. Edwin Gifford says, “The more you love your son, the more you hate in him the liar, the drunkard, the traitor.”
 - 3. Love never longs to discipline, but it longs for abundant life as God designed.
2. How Do We Get to God as Our Father?
 - a. Do not forget all His doings
 - i. We must remember God’s works – we must behold them constantly, reverently, clearly
 - 1. Begin with forgiveness of your sin – and let it draw you close to Him
 - ii. We must seek to know them, to understand them, to behold them
 - iii. This is the point of the Lord’s Supper! “Do this in remembrance of Me”
 - b. Do not forget the limitations of man
 - i. Vv15-16
 - ii. We have a demonstrative tendency to overvalue our own strength, to become delusional, frankly, and believe the lie that we are strong, capable, and good
 - iii. But, the truth is that we are sinful and need to be forgiven, suffering and need to be healed, enslaved and need to be redeemed, ashamed and need to be crowned, longing and need to be satisfied, oppressed and need to be rescued.
 - iv. We will never receive God as Father if we refuse to see ourselves as needy, limited, children in need of mercy, help, forgiveness, rescue, and God’s working for us in every way
 - c. Remember to fear Him and do His commandments

- i. This is not merely the fear of a monster which makes us run away, but the fear of a son which makes us run towards the Father in humility and neediness
- ii. It is the fear coupled with the surety that He is good, so that we run towards Him for mercy and heed His commands as good, right, true, and glorious
 - 1. Like when Gandalf frightens Bilbo Baggins in Bilbo's house, telling him to let go of the Ring of Power and leave it behind – "I'm not trying to rob you. I'm trying to help you." – to which Bilbo, who had recoiled in anger, then fear, leapt towards Gandalf and embraced him like a child.
- iii. This is the response of a son to a father, not an enemy
- d. When the lights go up in the Final Testament, the revelation of God's eternal Son who has intimate knowledge of all the rooms of God's fathering heart, we see that God has actually poured out His Spirit of sonship into the hearts of those who entrust themselves to that Son
 - i. There is a Son who is not mere dust, who has been absolutely faithful to the covenant, who has remembered to obey EVERY time.
 - 1. "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased."
 - ii. It is only this Son who brings us to the Father as children, no longer as enemies
 - 1. "I am the way, the truth, and the life. Nobody comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6)
 - 2. "But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1:12-13)
 - iii. God doesn't just "forgive" sin, nor can the blood of bulls and goats redeem us. He doesn't just "look the other way" – no! He answers for our sin. He has to redeem us – to pay a price to purchase us back.
 - 1. This price was paid to His own justice, to make the debt of cosmically-devastating sin even again.
 - 2. How do we become those who fear Him, who keep His covenant, who remember to obey His commands?
 - 3. We entrust ourselves to the Eternal Son to answer for our souls!
 - a. We are brought in *with Him!*
 - b. This is the Christian story, the well-lit room explains the "how" – through Jesus the Messiah, the forerunner and pioneer into the heart of God as friends, no longer enemies
 - c. How? Because through His death in our place, as our representative Man, He satisfied God's mercies and God's justice at once!
 - 4. We become children of the Father, not by merely being born, but by receiving Jesus as the Messiah, entrusting ourselves to His name, to His character and works and person.
- e. The Son sends us the very Spirit of God to stamp us with a seal of His own, to
 - i. "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God. (Galatians 4:4-7)

It is through Jesus, and Jesus alone, that we are made children of God, and so we are – those of us who have entrusted our souls to Him for God to forgive our iniquity, to bring resurrection healing to our sufferings, to redeem us from the death which we deserved, to crown us with God’s compassionate love, to satisfy us with goodness, to work righteousness and justice for our oppression. He is the better Moses who did not merely lead us out of slavery to a foreign power, but out of slavery to sin and death by passing through the waters of death Himself in order to bring us to the Promised Land of the abundant life of God. “He who has the Son has the life” says John. “He who does not have the Son of God does not have the life, and the wrath of God remains on him.”

So, today, there are two responses. One for those of you who have not entrusted yourselves to Jesus to answer for you to God, to bring you into the Father’s house. Those who have not believed in Him or received Him as the rightful heir, the Messiah, as your representative for reconciliation with God. The gates of the King are closed to you. The only relationship that you have with God right now is as King and Judge where you will answer for yourself for all the sin which you brought into the world as demeaning, destructive, defacing the King’s beautiful Creation. But...there is a key to the gate of God, hanging around the neck of Jesus. Fly to Him now and humbly ask Him to answer for you. He can. His answer is acceptable to God. If you will do this, you will find the compassion and love of God poured out upon you like a river of life from everlasting to everlasting, taking your sins and your defacements away as far as the east is from the west, and you will know God’s compassion and mercy as that of a Father.

For the second group – for those of you who have entrusted yourselves to Jesus as your Key-bearer and rescue – spend a long time in Father Hall. Press open every door of compassion, of forgiveness, of righteousness, of healing, of redemption, of crowning, of satisfaction, of fierce protection of the oppressed, of all His doings. You see, every door is open to you and He will never shut them. Every room is searchable for eternity, where you will find treasures of His compassionate faithful love hidden in innumerable places for you to discover. Your father loves you. Your brother loves you. He sent His Spirit for you, a down payment of the presence of God still to come.

And as God’s beloved children, set your hope fully on the things yet to come. And set your hope together. You have been placed in a family of brothers and sisters to walk in the light as God is light. He is revealing Himself to you in the face of Jesus, and we know Him together, as one family, in one temple, with one Spirit and one Father who is over all, through all, and in all. Spend some time with the Father as your father. Taste and see that the LORD – He is good. And bless Him, O your souls, bless His holy name!