

TOPIC: EMBRACE THE LOVE OF FATHER-GOD

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SUMMARY OF MESSAGE

Introduction

How many of you have ever heard your father say to you that he loves you? (From the congregational response, there seems to be an apparent lack). Could it be the Asian culture where the fathers see themselves as being mere breadwinners with no need to affirm their children verbally? Could it also be that the fathers themselves come from dysfunctional families that do not have proper parent and child relationship themselves?

Other reasons which might have affected our relationship with Father God:

#1: Wrong image of God

Is our relationship dysfunctional because we do not know the love of God? Could it be that we have a wrong image of God?

#2: Performance treadmill

Some people fail to relate to God because they may feel the need to perform to be accepted. They may carry with them guilt for failing to do their Quiet Time, for sinning, quarreling, etc. Our God cannot be simply manipulated nor be bought over by our sin offering. We live by grace.

#3: Bad experiences

Some people may suffer trauma, emotional and verbal abuse or come under iron-fisted discipline. Some may hate their fathers while some may have 'astronaut (aka absentee) fathers'. Given the bad experiences with their earthly fathers, they are unable to relate to the Heavenly Father.

#4: Negative experiences of God that have become strongholds

Strongholds are mindsets and patterns of thoughts comprising human arguments and pretense; barriers to the true knowledge of God. Consequently, because of these, we fail to see the goodness and mercies of God.

2 Fundamental truths:

A) Father-God is love. 1 John 4:16.

Even children born out of wedlock are precious in His eyes. God loves them.

1. Love is His nature. Ex 34:6. 5 things that God said of Himself: merciful, gracious, longsuffering, abounding in goodness and truth. Just as we are receivers of grace, we need to release grace to others too.

2. His love is consistent with His attributes. Psalm 97:2.

He is the righteous and just God (Mt 6:15, Heb 12:15). If we do not forgive, neither will He forgive. Sin has consequences. Are we merely hearers and not doers?

3. The mercy and the love of God make Him unwilling to judge John 5:22,27.

God did not send the Son to condemn the world (John 3:17) but to save it (John 12:47-48). The Word is a law to itself (John 6:63) and its life principle are perfect and complete in itself. God does not independently, haphazardly intervene in our lives.

The source and origin of wickedness, sickness, accidents and earthquake are due to the fallenness of man. We need to correctly understand the biblical view of God and of all that is happening.

B) The love of Father-God is abounding to man, for him to respond during the days of his life on earth (before His 2nd coming as Judge).

His love abounds all the days of our lives but when He returns, that window of grace will be closed. Fear the wrath of the Lamb, and not that of the anti-Christ. We are in the dispensation of grace; the love of God is to be demonstrated through us as His hands, feet and mouthpieces. We are vehicles for the grace of God to flow to the various needs.

1. His love abounds to the point of sacrifice. John 3:16 says He so loved the world and 1 John 3:1a tells us about the greatness and lavishness of His love. Hence when we come together corporately, we celebrate.

2. His love reaches out and awaits our response. Jesus died to reconcile and save us even when:

- we were powerless and ungodly. Rom 5:6
- we were sinners. Rom 5:8
- we were His enemies. Rom 5:10

Romans 2:4 says the good news of God leads you to repentance.

Example of God's love and goodness could be seen as follows:

Example #1. 2 Chron 33: King Manasseh

God says that the first-borns belong to Him. The devil also counterfeits this. For Manasseh, sons were sacrificed to Molech by fire. In our day, the spirit of Molech is seen in abortion and in suicide bombers. Manasseh practiced sorcery and divination. He did more evil than the nations. However, in his distress, he sought God's favor. He humbled and repented and God was moved by his entreaty. God listened and restored him back. That is the mercy and goodness of God. Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Example #2. Luke 15. Parable of the Prodigal Son

The defining point for him was when he came to his senses. On returning, the Bible says that when he was still a long way off, his father saw him. His father was filled with compassion and He ran to his son. He embraced and kissed him. This is the only occasion when He ran. The father clothed the son with a robe that is symbolic of being clothed with His righteousness. This means we have right standing with God. Next, He put a ring on his finger. That signifies our authority as sons and daughters of God. Sandals were then put on his feet. Only sons and daughters wear sandals. Slaves go bare-footed. That signifies our status as children of God.

Conclusion: The story of 2 men in the Bible:

1) King David

David was a man after God's heart yet he killed Uriah, one of his mighty men. In his youth, his father had left him out in the selection for a king. In his old age, he needed a young girl to keep him warm in his sleep. We see that David lacked his father's love. There was a void in his life and that was one reason why he committed adultery with Bathsheba.

2) Joseph

Joseph was very loved by his father and was given a coat of many colors. When he was sold away and was tempted at Potiphar's house, he did not succumb. There was no void in his life.

When we are rooted and secured in the Father's love, we will not covet the lust of the world, the pride of life and the lust of the flesh. There is no fear in love (1 John 4:18). How are we made perfect in the love of God? It is to embrace the Father's love, allowing His love to fill up every gap and void in our lives.

Rom 5:5 says 'Hope does not disappoint because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.' We are to enter into the restedness of the Father's love with nothing to prove or to hide. When we know we are so deeply loved, we will have that intimacy with God.

Embracing the Father's love is the beginning to solving the issues of life, relationships, and problems. Take His yoke which is light, be secured to rule and reign in Him.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. As fathers are the closest representation of God as our Heavenly Father, what do you think is your child's (children's) impression of Father-God?
2. How would you assess your relationship with God? Is it dysfunctional, breaking down or you would give it a healthy rating? You may want to share more about it.
3. In what ways have you experienced the love of Father-God?
4. What are some things that you could pick up from the story of the prodigal son & Mannaseh or of Joseph and David?

No condemnation, no comparison, no competition but only encouragement...