

Weaving the Word

Our Father, In Heaven

Part 35 – June 14, 2015

Welcome to a place where we're looking to Jesus to learn to pray.



Recap: ***The Lord's Prayer is not a prayer. It's a pattern. A template. An organizer. You recite a concise segment and personalize it.***

And, it's the way Jesus told His reluctant young apprentices that we're *supposed* to pray (though it took 'em 2.5 years to adopt it).

"In this manner, therefore, pray: 'Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.'" – Matthew 6:9 NKJ



But, *Abraham* (2000 years dead) had become the Jewish father figure; and *the Father* was formally referred to as the God of Abraham. And, many of the Jews treated their salvation as an entitlement because of *Abraham's* faith.

And, this really perturbed John the Baptist.



Do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as **our father.**' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. – Matthew 3:9 NIV

And, it greatly perturbed Jesus.



"Abraham is our father," they answered. ***"If you were Abraham's children,"*** said Jesus, ***"then you would do the things Abraham did."*** – John 8:39 NIV

750 years earlier, it perturbed Isaiah too. The prophet boldly declares that Abraham ain't a middle-man, or rather, *middle-father*.

You are our Father, **though Abraham does not know us** or Israel acknowledge us; you, O Lord, are our Father ... – Isaiah 63:16a NIV

And this passage, I believe, is what Jesus bases the opening of His prayer pattern on.

Ever hear the term ***"blanketed in prayer"***? Jewish men thrice daily blanketed themselves in a tallit – a prayer blanket – to recite the pre-approved, 10-minute, Amidah prayer, which they felt safely covered all their bases with God.



And this greatly perturbed the Father!

The Lord's Prayer Pattern was given as an antidote to their impersonal memorized prayer blanketing ritual. *Anybody see the irony here?*

So, Jesus says, "Get under your blanket and spill your heart to your true Father."

You often hear that Jesus introduced the concept of God as an affectionate Father. Not true.

He came to restore, reveal, and fulfill what was already there – every jot and tittle.

This O.T. perspective of God as "our Father" had been all but lost. But, it's there.

Jesus simply fleshed it out ... *literally*.

Any idea how many days the Gospel of John covers, out of Jesus' 3.5 years of public ministry? 21. Three weeks. **God is referred to as "Father" only 15 times in the 39 books of the OT (that span 1000 years).**¹ Then Jesus comes along and, **in John's 21-day Gospel alone, refers to God as "Father" 120 times!**



The NT is written in Greek, but Jesus spoke Aramaic; so, the word He would've used was "Abba", an affectionate term of warmth and intimacy, used by young children and adult children alike.

For us, it's close to a name like: Papa.

Only three times is Jesus' Aramaic "Abba" quoted verbatim; and when you hear it from His heart, it can break yours.



Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. "Abba, [Papa] Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will." – Mark 14:35-36 NIV



Did you know that **every prayer Jesus prays in the New Testament, except for just one, begins with Him saying, "Father"?**

Which one doesn't begin with "Father"? "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mat 27:46)

And why didn't He say "Father" that time?

¹ Old Testament verses specifically referring to God as "Father": Deut 32:6; 2 Sam 7:14; 1 Chron 17:13, 22:10, 28:6, Psalm 68:5, 89:26; Is 63:16 (twice), 64:8; Jer 3:4, 3:19, 31:9; and Mal 1:6, 2:10.

He was taking on *our* sin and separation, as our *Redeemer*, so that we could be adopted by *the Father* to live with Him *in Heaven*.

Why do you think Jesus includes God's "address" in His temple?

It's a reminder of our Papa's place ... *and ours*.

He's seated in heaven, on the sovereign throne as the almighty, all-knowing Authority, whose fiercest foes only exist by His will, within His perfect plan, for His children's eternal best.

Papa-God is fearsome, awesome, *and then some!*

Whereas, *we're* stranded on earth. Severed from our Father by sin.

Let's rewind that Isaiah scripture one verse further back.

Look down from heaven and **see from your lofty throne**, holy and glorious. Where are your zeal and your might? Your tenderness and compassion are withheld from us. But **you are our Father**, though Abraham does not know us or Israel acknowledge us; **you, O Lord, are our Father** *[in heaven]* ... – Isaiah 63:15-16a NIV

Jesus includes God's *address* to balance His intimacy and authority.

On the one hand is fatherly love that requires relationship. We should personalize this with the intimacy we share with Him. On the other hand is supreme authority that requires reverence. We should personalize this with the respect we hold for Him.



If we don't balance God's intimacy and authority in our prayers, we'll begin to see Him as either an indulgent dad or a harsh judge.

Many believers have a big barrier when it comes to relating with our Heavenly Father. Any guesses to what it is? *Our earthly* fathers!

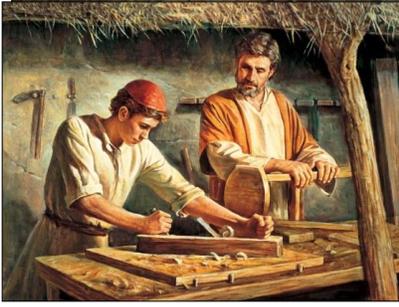
Bad dads give God a bad rap; because, we tend to project their faults and flaws onto God, especially with the aspect of *fearful respect*.



C.S. Lewis strikes a balance between the fear of the Lord and the love of the Lord with Aslan, **the fierce and loving lion**:

"They were terribly afraid it would turn and look at them, yet in some [strange] way they wished it would." – *The Magician's Nephew*

I have first-hand experience with this very thing; not with a prayer blanket, but with a 50-year-old "monster blanket". My dad used to cover himself with this and we'd play monster. I'll never match the ecstatic thrill of jumping from couch to chair, terrified of his strength and speed, yet secure in his love. **I was simultaneously fearfully and joyfully overwhelmed!**



Jesus wasn't looking for a warm, fuzzy metaphor to humanize an indescribable, all powerful, fierce, and frightening force.

He didn't look back on happy childhood memories of His step-dad, Joseph and think, "Yeah ... that's what we should think of God like."

God isn't *like* a father; just the *opposite*. Everything great about fatherhood is a mere reflection of *Papa-God!*

There's only one genuine definition of Dad.

And hallowed be His name! But what *is* His name?



Jesus said that He came in the Father's name. (John 5:43) And, on the night He was betrayed, Jesus said to His disciples ...



"If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him." Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, [**"I am your Father."**] (Oh, I wish this was *Luke!*)] even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?" – John 14:7-9 NIV

And, a little later that night, He prayed to the Father ...

... I have made Your name known to them ... - John 17:26a NAS

So, what's His name?!

It had been written down for 750 years.

Let's rewind Isaiah's prophecy and read eight words further.

Look down from heaven and see from your lofty throne, holy [**hallowed**] and glorious. Where are your zeal and your might? [**Heading toward the cross!**] Your tenderness and compassion are withheld from us. [**No more!**] But you are our Father, though Abraham does not know us or Israel acknowledge us; you, O Lord, are our Father, **our Redeemer from of old is your name.** – Isaiah 63:15-16 NIV

Before Abraham was, "I Am".

The one and only genuine portrait of our Papa, is our Redeemer.

And hallowed be His name!