

OUR FATHER - DESTINATIONS WITH DAD - DESTINATIONS PART 3 Pastor Jordan Biel



Opening

Father's Day is such a special day. I LOVE being a dad.

Being a dad is one of the greatest joys if not the greatest joy in life for me.

My girls bring me and Danielle so much laughter and .. (address them) GIRLS, you are my treasure! I love you more than words could ever express!

Today as you know is extra special for me and Da

My dad was awesome. Some of you may not have had a great dad and I can imagine that if so, that today, would be very difficult for you. But I want to encourage you with something.

It's important that you know that

Jesus made it clear often - more than any other aspect of God - that He was a son - that God was His FATHER.

Think about it. When He addressed crowds big or small - when He was teaching or healing someone, He could've said "The great Creator" or "The Master" or "The great Designer" or "Sovereign King" but He didn't.

Why?

He chose carefully as the Holy Spirit LED HIM to say "The Father"

I only do what I see the Father doing.

I only say what I hear the Father is saying.

Jesus wanted us to know and still wants us to know that HIS FATHER can become OUR FATHER.

Jesus wants us to know that the relationship He shares with the Father is the same kind of relationship that we can have with Father God!

WOW!

It's been noted in the book by Dr Henry Cloud that there are 6 different types of parenting.

In his 6 types of FATHERING:

- **GOOD**
- **PERFORMANCE-ORIENTED**

FATHER	
<i>Needs to be met by fathers:</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unconditional, expressed love 2. Security and Comfort 3. Praise and Affirmation 4. Provision 5. Purpose in Life 	
Styles of Fathering	Result
Good – provides, cares for, and is present	Difficulty to distinguish from “perfect”
Performance-oriented – demand obedience and performance	Striving, inability to rest
Passive – home but not home, roommate	Lack of emotion, passion, initiative
Absentee – simply not around	Lack of intimacy, fear
Authoritarian – prioritize the law over love	Lack of identity, rules over relationship
Abusive – emotionally, physically, or sexually abusive	Shame, guilt, anger, lack of trust

- **PASSIVE**
- **ABSENTEE**
- **AUTHORITARIAN**
- **ABUSIVE**

ONLY GOD can be the perfect Father to you.
ONLY GOD!

What happened to you wasn't your fault but now it's your responsibility.

It's our responsibility now to take these memories - good or bad - and give them to the Lord in prayer and let Father God heal us - removing the hurt, exposing the lies, removing the words that entered our hearts like daggers. Let FATHER God heal us - truly heal us.

What happened to you wasn't your fault but now it's your responsibility as to what you do with that hurt or that joy - those painful memories or those good memories.

If you were ignored or even rejected, I want you to know that you can give that hurt to God TODAY and let Him start the healing process in you.

You can reject the lies that formed a negative identity in your heart.
You can replace the lies with the truth found in scripture that you ARE wonderfully made according to Ps 139! You are a work of ART in the masters hands and God will complete His work in your life according to Philippians 1:6!

Only GOD can be the perfect Father to you. Let Him become that today!

The Lord's Prayer

When we see the "Lord's Prayer" really it should've been titled The Disciples Prayer because although it was the Lord who prayed it, it was a response from Jesus to the Disciples who asked Jesus "Lord, how should we pray?"

We're going to spend our time this morning diving in to those two incredible words - the two words "OUR FATHER"... that predicated the entire prayer. Our first focus will actually be on the 2nd word "Father" and in about 10-15 minutes, we'll look closely at the word "OUR"

Turn to Matt. 6. And we're going to read

Matt. 6:1-16

1 “Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from *your Father* who is in heaven.

2 “Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. **3** But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, **4** so that your giving may be in secret. And *your Father* who sees in secret will reward you.

5 “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. **6** But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to *your Father* who is in secret. And *your Father* who sees in secret will reward you.

7 “And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. **8** Do not be like them, for *your Father* knows what you need before you ask him. **9** Pray then like this:

“*Our Father* in heaven, hallowed be your name. **10** Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. **11** Give us this day our daily bread, **12** and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. **13** And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. (Other Gospels then records - For Yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen!)

Jesus then continues to teach them about that last portion of the prayer He just gave them as a template and He says ...

14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your *heavenly Father* will also forgive you, **15** but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your *Father* forgive your trespasses.

I don't know about you, but I think Jesus in this talk with his disciples is trying to tell us something don't you!?!?

Jesus, who is the Son of God, the perfect, sinless son, who came in the form of a human body like yours and mine - this shell, this carcass if you will, He came to demonstrate WHO God is and WHO we are in light of who God is. And over and over and over Jesus talks about God in the context and verbiage of ... "FATHER". I mean in this passage alone, He calls God "your Father" 8 TIMES in just 2 paragraphs. In a talk segment of about 30 seconds depending on how fast Jesus spoke, He referenced God in Heaven as OUR FATHER 8 Times! I think He's trying to get a message to us; don't you?

In this journey of faith, sonship is the most important thing to keep in mind for its' the joy that continues despite whether your destination is bad or good.

We said last week that Father God has destinations for us. He's leading us. His Word tells us that we are led by His Spirit and that leading relationship of His leading and our following is PROOF of our sonship.

Those that are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.

We as His children are LED by His voice - the voice of our Father - which is the Spirit of God.

ILLUSTRATE

I was at the zoo last week with my kids.

There's a difference in how I lead my 5 children based on their maturity.

Selah and Elli I just keep an eye on them - I trust them - I let them go further. They've already learned to keep me in sight and not wander off - or wander into a Bear's Den lol But Eva and Eden - I keep them closer - why? They're 6 and 8 - they still could do something totally dangerous like lean over the railing of the Lion Area.

Selah wouldn't - at least I don't think so.

Now Lukas. Dude I had a leash on that kid. He runs EVERYWHERE he goes and that little man would run right into an animal area if I let him! He'd climb over the fence and dive head first into that water with those Otters!

You know some of you are on that leash right?! LOL

The last few times He tried to teach you, you simply did NOT listen and now He's holding the reigns a little tighter - not because He's mean - not because He wants to "control you" or "make your life miserable" But rather - because He loves you and wants to protect you.

God leads you based on your maturity and growth level. He won't demand things of you that you aren't ready to do. He won't teach you 1,000 things in

one day. **He'll teach at your pace - like a perfect, patient Father. He won't compare you to the other kids. He simply loves you. He simply guides you. He simply leads you because He is OUR Father.**

God is not just your Father. He is OUR Father.

When we see God in scripture called "Father" it's usually in first person - it's usually God referring to HIMSELF as our FATHER. He likes to call us His children - not as a pet name or nickname - no, He calls us child because that's who we are.

God puts such an emphasis on this idea that we are FAMILY at the very onset. In Gen. 17, it is the vernacular of "father" and "Family" that he gives a promise to Abraham. He says in Gen. 17:4 "You will be a father to many nations... Your children - some translations say "defendants..." In fact, this is why God changed Abram's name from Abram to Abraham - to indicate the role of FATHER.

And in doing so, He's communicating that HE, GOD, will be their father. He even references this.

God's promise to Abraham - to be his father - was a promise and a blessing meant to be passed on to you and to me!

When we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, repenting of our sin, we become a child of God. Our identity is now ENVELOPED in CHRIST. God's Word says that we are HIDDEN IN CHRIST!

When God the Father sees you, He sees JESUS!

Every child wants three things from their father growing up:

Identity (you are MY son)

Affection (love)

Affirmation (I'm proud of you)

Jesus' Baptism

Now we know that we are born into sin when we enter this world. But God redeems us back to Himself by sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to die in our place and to pay for the sin of all mankind.

Romans 8 is just about the best chapter in the Bible when it comes to Theology - really understanding this study of God and God's relationship to man.

Turn to Romans 8, Verse 14 and we'll read this passage about what Christ has done in restoring the Family of God.

NEXT

The Spirit raised Jesus from the dead...

14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received

*the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" 16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 And if children, then heirs- heirs of God! NEXT 18 fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with Him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. 19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the **children of God***

We is greater than me.

Some Christians want the presence of God without the people of God. You can never reach the potential destinations God intends for you without God's people. You can not fulfill your purpose alone. God is **OUR FATHER**.

God equips you with grace gifts that enable you to do His will. What is His will? It's unique for you, yet the same for all - bring more sons and daughters back to the Father.

Seasons change. Jobs change. Financial status changes. BUT YOUR SONSHIP never changes! This revelation of sonship will drive out all fear and insecurity - the roots of 99% of our problems in life. Let the FATHER love you. It's so simple.

You and I have the greatest privilege ever - to be the children of God - to accept God as not only Creator, but as Father. To call God **OUR FATHER! What God wants of us today though is for us to get a heart for **ALL** people to find Him as their Father as well.**

It is our joy and our job to communicate and reveal to people by the way we live Jesus is the way to the Father.

I would say that 7 out of 10 prophetic words I give to people end with revealing the heart of **FATHER GOD** - I'm not sure why, but for some reason, God seems to highlight to me in our travels, people who have either a distorted view of God as Father - or simply a terrible Father-son relationship in their upbringing.

Everyone needs to know that God is their Father and that they can be restored to relationship with Him! God is not just your Father. He is OUR Father.

I want to tell you about a young man I prophesied to at a Youth Retreat. It was like 2015 I'd say. The Holy Spirit kept highlighting this young man while I was leading worship - and I knew I was supposed to open my mouth and say something, I just didn't know what.

So in faith, after a song ended I looked at him and said "can I tell you something? You there in the black hoodie?" (Not knowing AT ALL what I was about to say =). This is where the "lead by the Spirit" thing comes in -this is where FAITH comes in - I'm believing that the Holy Spirit will fill my mouth with what HE wants to say as I begin to talk and act upon His nudge.

So I started to say "You will not be like your father. You will be a leader like your father. But you'll be a leader for God. There's a reason why everyone seems to listen to you - you have a leadership gift like your father but you will NOT become the man that your father is. You will be different. You will be a good man. You will lead people to Jesus! ..." His body started to react to this word being spoken over him. He was hunched over and crying and God said to this young man "I will be your Father! I will teach you. I will be the Father that you need..."

It was so powerful.

He came up about 15 minutes later and shared his testimony with the entire group. He said that he just became a Christian 3 weeks ago and that his dad is the leading drug dealer in their area. And that he did NOT want to become like his dad! He looked over at me and said "God just answered just about every question I've had the last few years!"

In that moment, God revealed to this young man that He calls him "son"

For us to really follow Christ, we must begin to see those around us - and their need.

~ There is no miracle unless you first see the need.

There is no powerful encounter - no physical miracle - no prophetic word - no moment of reconciliation until FIRST someone sees the need prompted the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God is drawing every person, inviting them into relationship with the Father. The Spirit points all attention to Jesus the Father's Son. Why? So ALL would be reconciled to the Father!

Again, **God is not just your Father. He is OUR Father.**

Holy Spirit, open our eyes to the needs of those around us!

The Faith of a Few Friends

the 4 men who brought the lame man to Jesus

Turn to Luke, Chapter 5

Luke 5:10-22 One day while Jesus was teaching, some Pharisees and teachers of religious law were sitting nearby. (It seemed that these men showed up from every village in all Galilee and Judea, as well as from Jerusalem.) And the Lord's healing power was strongly with Jesus.

18 Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a sleeping mat. They tried to take him inside to Jesus, 19 but they couldn't reach him because of the crowd. So they went up to the roof and took off some tiles. Then they lowered the sick man on his mat down into the crowd, right in front of Jesus. 20 Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the man, "Young man, your sins are forgiven."

21 But the Pharisees and teachers of religious law said to themselves, "Who does he think he is? That's blasphemy! Only God can forgive sins!"

22 Jesus knew what they were thinking, so he asked them, "Why do you question this in your hearts? 23 Is it easier to say 'Your sins are forgiven,' or 'Stand up and

walk'? 24 So I will prove to you that the Son of Man* has the authority on earth to forgive sins."

Then Jesus turned to the paralyzed man and said, "Stand up, pick up your mat, and go home!" 25 And immediately, as everyone watched, the man jumped up, picked up his mat, and went home praising God. 26 Everyone was gripped with great wonder and awe, and they praised God, exclaiming, "We have seen amazing things today!"

Now I want to break this passage down a bit because there may be a few things you might have missed. I know I did growing up reading this I didn't see the fact that it says "Some men came carrying a paralyzed man".

Other translations don't even say 'friends' They all literally just say 'some men'. "Some guys". Some guys who had compassion basically - what's interesting though is that it did not say "there was a lame man lying on a mat and his brothers picked him up and took him to Jesus."

Now that would make sense bc if you understand Jewish culture - in Hebrew culture - families took care of each other. When the young man was to be married, he'd build an addition onto His father's house. They took care of each their parents in their older age. They had a strong sense of family and commitment to family. BUT they also had a misguided belief that if someone was lame or had an ailment, they often believed it was because of their sin or that they were somehow cursed - so some - not all - but some would be left on the street to beg - discarded and disowned by their own family. As you can imagine, this left a deep wound in the heart of every young man or woman who was left to fend for themselves, abandoned by their father.

Someone being sick was relegated to the care of the local government or the empathy of people walking by. There was NO guarantee they'd eat every day or even have shelter.

This is why I believe we as American Christians are missing out in part on some miracles today is because when we see someone in need, we may mistakenly think... "Hey I pay taxes, the country, the state, the government will take care of them. I pay taxes. Let the government do it." That sounds cold but I wonder if it's ever been *your* thought?

But no, friend the primary role of the government is to protect you but **Government can not and will not every take the place of the local church - Christians behaving like Christians - showing empathy and real love to those in need.**

It's very possibly, in fact, likely that **this man was orphaned by his family** - rejected by his own Father and mother - left to fend for himself on the streets begging for food and money. At a loss for dignity and resources.

Can you see that we can assume here that his heart wound was greater than his physical body wound? God always cares most about our heart. This man was orphaned by his parents.

And THIS is why Jesus, addresses him as "son."

The first word out of Jesus' mouth when he saw this man was the ONE WORD that this man longed to hear since he was a child ... "Son"

"Son... You have a father..." "Son... You have someone who cares". "Son... You have a family!..." "Son... You ARE, LOVED!"

When we see ourselves correctly - as people who were orphaned and brought back to God through our perfect older brother Jesus Christ, then we will see OTHERS around us as our brothers and sisters in need of knowing the love of our Father!

Jesus said to him "Son, your sins are forgiven." Wow! He called him "**son**"!!! It's likely he hadn't even heard that term - that precious word - that endearing title - that word "son" that carries with it so much respect and love and weight - the word "son"! It's likely he hadn't heard that in YEARS - since he was a boy! And EVERY man longs for the approval of his father. Even non-Christian psychologists can tell you that - it's simply a fact.

Why is this a psychological phenomenon?

Why is it an integral part of so many film plots and sub-plots? BECAUSE - maybe, just maybe **GOD PUT IN US an intrinsic need to know Him as Father and to be loved by Him as Father - to be known as a son or daughter of Father God. To be accepted by our father is every human's greatest need. This is why our heart is not at rest until we let Father God love and accept us.**

Now we could preach on the disdain of the stupid Pharisees here for an hour but we won't - we don't have the time. I'll just make ONE comment. Notice the Pharisees says "He doesn't have the authority ...". In other words "He doesn't have the title or the position! He's not been licensed and ordained by the seminary!"

Pharisees, People caught up in the spirit of religion will always be more concerned with position than with hurting people.

Now listen again to the end of this passage that you may have missed. Notice what Jesus says to the man after he is healed.

*Jesus turned to the paralyzed man and said, "Stand up, pick up your mat, and go home!"
Go "HOME"*

Go to the very people who disowned you and rejected you and give them the same forgiveness I am given you!

WOW!

In those few little words - as only Jesus can do - He looked straight into the heart of this man and addressed his greatest anger - his greatest need and his greatest desire.

Although angry and bitter no doubt at his family, we can also assume he had a great desire to be reconciled to them and just BE part of the family.

God, not only heals us, but He then asks us to be apart of the healing process of others.

He always wants His blessing in our lives to be abundant and exponential. He wants ALL to experience His love and blessing and healing!

One thing I've also always loved about this passage is that tiny little phrase that says "When Jesus saw *their* faith"

Jesus saw the faith of the 4 Persistent Compassionate Relentless men, NOT the lame man - not the hurting but He saw and responded to the faith of the 4 random men who were filled with compassion.

What if you lived that way?

What would happen in Trumbull country if you had compassion on the hurting around you?

What would happen, teenagers, college students, if you had compassion on those around you in class who were ostracized or outcast or simply in need of a physical miracle?

What would happen Rock of Grace if you asked God to reveal to you those who were hurting around you at work? What if THEN you brought them to Jesus?

By simply inviting them to your house and befriending them - at the right time, bringing up the conversation of Jesus. Or simply asking "What do you think about eternity?" Do you think there's life after death? Do you think we can really know?

These are the questions I've had with my neighbors and these are the questions you need to be having with those around you.

I believe God can heal you! Can I pray with you about that?

These are the kind of words that should be coming out of our mouths often.

NOT just who won the finals game?

Brothers & Sisters, Not Competitors

Remember when Jesus comes off the mountain with the 3 disciples after they'd had this crazy encounter with Moses and Elijah? They come down from this supernatural encounter and you know Peter and John are already feeling privileged, feeling closer to God, feeling more in the "in crowd" with Jesus and then to make this feeling even greater, the other 9 disciples come up to Jesus and they're like "We couldn't heal people, we couldn't cast out the demons... We couldn't..."

Next thing you know they're comparing themselves to one another asking WHO is the GREATEST in the Kingdom.

Now some of you may not think this happens but oh my friend, I've been traveling for 11 years to churches of every color, size, denomination and believe me, this STILL happens. I'm glad this is in the Bible. You know I'm thankful the Holy Spirit didn't edit this out. Because I mean, the Holy Spirit could've said "you know God, this is kind of an ugly part - with all the staff bickering and stuff, can't we just remove this from the text - it doesn't reflect what we want... And Father God is like "Nope, keep it in there because this is a universal problem that will NEVER end until all things are made new in the New Heavens and New Earth."

Now that little dialogue is made up - that's not in the Bible =>. But I wanted to shed some light on the fact that God KEPT this ugly picture of His Followers IN the BIBLE!

The disciples are ARGUING WHO will sit at the right hand of Jesus! Who is going to be like "GOVERNOR" of Heaven - Ok Jesus, yeah we get that you'll be like King, yeah yeah yeah, but what I'M concerned about is where MY NAME will be printed. What's the TITLE after MY name? What will I be credited for?

Church, when you use the word "I" too much in your conversation, there's a problem.



Each child is different. Each child is 100% loved!

Come on, as parents we know this. This is Elliana - we call her Elli for short.

There's things I would ask of Selah that I would never ask of Elli. Like the request to "throw a ball". Throwing a ball - at this point anyway, is simply NOT a kind request for me to ask of Elli. The girl is NOT coordinated! SHE's beautiful! I mean I can't go ANYWHERE without people literally stopping me and saying 'man, she is about the most beautiful little girl I've ever seen!' And SHE'S KIND! She's like the kindest, sweetest little girl on the planet! She's compassionate and patient and makes friends with people. But the girl is NOT an athlete. She runs about .00004 miles per hour, ok.

So as her Father who knows her best, I'm not going to ask something unreasonable from her! I'm going to ask Elli to maybe clean up or just paint her nails or Eva's nails - or go say hi to a new friend that's spitting alone in the back yard. I'm going to ask of her a responsibly that she is designed to do - something she even enjoys.

Now Selah, is athletic! She is FAST! She can throw a ball just like all the boys in our culldasack - on our street. She's tough and rugged. She's beautiful but she is also athletic and so I can ask her to shoot basketball with me and throw the baseball to me or kick the soccer ball and I can expect her to score and by the way I can hold her accountable if she doesn't BECAUSE I know she has the gifting and natural ability to do so.

We're adopting Lukas in two days!

WOW this has been a HUGE step of faith for me and Danielle. It's been a challenge because he is one FAST little dude! But man do we love him SO MUCH!

We began foster care journey 3 years ago.

God put it in our heart ...

God confirmed it through ...

On Jan 12 we got a call from the agency that a little boy named Lukas was just born and in need of a home. (Picture up)

It's been remarkable to feel such incredible love for this child that isn't biological. It's been super natural!

When we adopt him on Tue, his name will be Lukas Leroy Biel! (Pictures up)

BIEL

He takes on MY last name, my identity and MY inheritance!

Come on now! GOD adopts as His children and gives us HIS name, HIS identity, HIS approval and HIS inheritance!

What's His is ours!

WOOOOO

Come on!

GOD LOVES YOU AND HE IS NOT JUST YOUR FATHER HE IS OUR FATHER!

This is how God sees us. He is OUR Father and HE knows best. He knows our strengths after all He gave them to us. He knows our giftings after all He gave them to us. He even knows where we kinda fall short and that's OK to him! It's OK that you don't have all the same giftings and talents as the other guy! It's OK! You weren't meant to!

You just be YOU for the Kingdom of GOD! You work hard and you give God a good return on the investment he's placed in YOU! .

A good way to start to defeat this competition thing is to simply see yourself as brothers and sisters of OUR FATHER God. More than you are "workers in a field" you are siblings in a home. You're sons and daughters at the table of the Lord! That's how virtually ALL of the epistles address you and me. *Dearly beloved children of God...*

A practical way to apply this to your living is to intentionally rejoice with those who have a victory.

A good sign of whether someone is having the character of Christ formed in them is how quickly they rejoice with you when you have something good to share.

The person who questions you and belittles the victory shows their insecurity.

The person who spontaneously rejoices with you - genuinely smiles and congratulates you - now that's a friend to keep - that's someone who genuinely sees you as a brother or sister in Christ.

Why? Because right emotions follow right behavior.

Just start doing the right thing because you know it's right - because you know it pleases God and next thing you know, you'll enjoy doing that thing God asked of you to do - even the simple things. The little things in conversations - those moments when God says "Shhh, just listen to them and be excited with THEM about what's happening in THEIR life."

You know people just wanted to be loved and by loved I mean listened to.

Sometimes they really don't want to know what happened to YOU or what YOU accomplished. Sometimes just listen to THEM and be in THEIR WORLD only. If they are excited about a promotion at work, celebrate with them - in fact, take them out to eat and ask them questions about it!

If they are sad, LISTEN to them and ask them questions about the details - this SHOWS them that you care - that someone cares - that GOD cares. This demonstrates to them in living color that they are a part of a FAMILY - a Family in which we all have the same FATHER God whom we can call OUR FATHER.

We should be so Christ-like that we reveal the Love of OUR FATHER! God is not just your Father. He is OUR Father!

We should be SO KIND, SO LOVING to not just believers WITHIN our little group of like-minded people, but no, we should be SO KIND, SO LOVING, SO GENEROUS to every person who stands before us - our community - to the friends in our schools, teenagers, to the coworkers that we don't get along with - we are FORGIVING and PATIENT AND KIND-HEARTED... WHY? TO SHOW THE LOVE OF OUR FATHER to them.

THINK

What can God CAN do through you to show the world that HIS LOVE is GREAT and that He is an amazing Father? Who can you invite to know OUR FATHER?

CLOSING

SALVATION CALL

If today, you know that you need to come back to OUR FATHER - if you need to come back to God as a child in need of forgiveness, then I want to give you a chance to do that right now. If you need to repent of your sin and be forgiven by Father God, I want you to know that God is not angry with you - that God has not forgotten about you - that God has not written you off - no, just the opposite! God has been waiting with bated breath - ready to receive you back into His open arms. He's ready to put a ring on your finger, a family robe on your back and call you His own!

If that's you and you'd like to get your heart right with God, I'd like you to raise your hand and acknowledge to the Lord that you need Him right now.

WORSHIP RESPONSE

Today, we're going to close with a song we sang earlier "Author Of My Story" a song I wrote with Daulton Reese a worship leader friend of mine. We wrote it from the pain of Daulton's childhood and desire to know God and experience Him as FATHER.

I want to ask you to sing it out as loud as you can - declare with your voice what you know in your heart - that God is YOUR Father and in that truth you can know that HIS LOVE has defeated ALL FEAR - and that you are no longer a slave, nor even an acquaintance, but a SON and DAUGHTER of Father God!

We have to ask ourselves, "What does OUR FATHER in Heaven see when He looks down on Kinsman, on Gustavus, Vienna, on Cortland on Warren, on Hubbard and Girard?"

I'll tell you what He sees. Yeah, He sees a great church in the middle of nowhere and he sees some great people who are loving and serving Him, **but He also sees a lot of hurting people!**

He sees couples fighting over the fact that they can't pay their bills. He sees moms and dads both working to make ends meet and they're stressed over their finances and because they're working so much, they don't have the energy for their kids and then they have strained terrible relationships with their kids.

Their kids don't want to even be around them and this BREAKS God's heart. These after all, if we see people through the lense of scripture, these are HIS CHILDREN!

These are the very people He has created - people He has designed to be loved by HIM and by YOU. YOU as a Christ-follower are now an ambassador for King Jesus! You are a City on a Hill, a LIGHT to them Jesus said!

You have the hope of the world and 1 Timothy says you ARE the hope of the world - the local church - YOU. Do you see what OUR FATHER sees when He looks at Trumbull County?

He sees teens who are searching for a friend - for attention - for popularity - for the attention of a guy or girl - just something to make them feel like they have value. They're searching for love and will find affection but the wrong kind of affection if they don't get that genuine love from Father God and YOU have the ability to tell them about Our Father's love!

He sees men working 50-70 hours a week so they can "get ahead" and retire with enough money - he sees people in need of His love and He's wondering when are MY Children going to tell them about Me?

When is the last time you went out of your way - when *you* changed your schedule - to befriend an outsider - to love someone into the Kingdom? I mean if we take a practical approach, love always has a cost of time associated with it. Love always includes sacrifice. So who are you loving? Who are you sacrificing time and money? Who are you willing to sacrifice some time and energy to show the LOVE of OUR FATHER to?

Is it a co-worker that's been on your heart? Is it a neighbor across the street? Who is it? Is it a friend on Facebook that you can tell from recent posts just isn't doing well? Maybe you noticed they weren't doing well because God wants YOU to reach out to them and offer to pray with them.

God is not just your Father. He is OUR Father.

When is the last time you made an effort - I mean a REAL effort to bring someone along WITH you in life?

It is our job and our joy to communicate to those around us that Jesus is the way to the Father! That Jesus, in turn, is a way to living a life of joy and peace and spending eternity in the Heavenly home that God has built just for them!

~People wanted to be listened to, not shouted at.
let's take that a step further.

People deserve to be listened to, not shouted at. Why? Because they are created wonderfully and beautifully by OUR Father God.

Make friends with "nobody's". Discover beauty in everyone. Assume the best of people. Value the differences in other believers. Pray for them; don't gossip about them. Do everything in your power to get along with everyone." That's what the Bible says!

2 Cor. 1-5

Paul says "*Grace to you and peace from God **our Father** and the Lord Jesus Christ.* Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God!"

Listen if you've ever been comforted by God, then give that same comfort to someone else!
Take a look around you - ask God to show you WHO is in NEED of comfort and go out of your way to show them comfort and encouragement.

Have you ever received undeserved love or forgiveness from someone? From God? Of course you have, now turn and make this thing that has been inward become outward - ask God to

open your eyes to see the need around of you of those who need forgiveness and love and go out of your way to show it to them!

Have you been healed? Then take a look around you and ask God to HEAL those who are physically hurting around you. If someone says their back hurts, pray! If someone says their neck hurts, pray! If anyone at any time, tells you of a need they have, that is God's way of giving you an opportunity to pray and reveal the love and compassion and POWER OF GOD TO HEAL to that person!

I mean remember when Jesus and the disciples had a HUGE crowd gather around them and He spoke this great eloquent lessons on like the basics of life as someone following God - we call it the "Beatitudes" and what did He say at the end "You must be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate!"

Over and over and over we see Jesus reminding us of two things 1 - that God is OUR FATHER and He knows how much that revelation in our hearts will changes things and 2 - that we are live our lives after the example of our Father in Heaven. As He is compassionate so we are to be compassionate. As He has forgiven us, so we are to forgive others. As He believes the best for our futures, so we we are to believe the best of others and encourage them to reach their full potential. God is OUR FATHER!

Now this concept of us all being in need of God together and in need of community didn't begin as a new concept in the NT. It wasn't like God finally said in the NT, "hey, y'all need to get along!"

God made Himself crystal clear all the way back to when He released Noah and his family from the Ark!

Then God blessed Noah and his sons and told them, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth. ... 5 "And I will require the blood of anyone who takes another person's life. If a wild animal kills a person, it must die. And anyone who murders a fellow human must die. 6 If anyone takes a human life, that person's life will also be taken by human hands. For God made human beings in his own image. 7 Now be fruitful and multiply, and repopulate the earth."*

God basically said here "DON'T KILL EACHOTHER!"

It's like the sound of every father at some point, right? Especially on like a long road trip! =).

Come on, parents you know we've all been there! =) You're like...

"You hit your sister one more time, I swear! I brought you into this world and I can take YOU OUT!" LOL

God is saying right at the very onset - LOOK, I just RECREATED THE EARTH - I just hit the reset button of mankind on the earth because it had become so vile and so evil now I'm telling you, VALUE one another. VALUE the life of one another.

VALUE another persons hopes and dreams and concerns and worries. Be a good listener!

Don't fight. Don't argue.

Look, I'm telling you this because you're all so different and you WILL Disagree on things but it doesn't mean you have to become violent - with your hands OR your words!

This of course is echoed LOUD and clear by the Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul in the New Testament encouraging us to love another - to value one another- to befriend everyone we can.

To welcome into our lives people who are different from us...

It is our joy and our job to communicate to people that Jesus is the way to the Father!

Now let's apply this concept of OUR Father to us as believers - only in the context of the church.

Brothers & Sisters, Not Competitors

Remember when Jesus comes off the mountain with the 3 disciples after they'd had this crazy encounter with Moses and Elijah? They come down from this supernatural encounter and you know Peter and John are already feeling privileged, feeling closer to God, feeling more in the "in crowd" with Jesus and then to make this feeling even greater, the other 9 disciples come up to Jesus and they're like "We couldn't heal people, we couldn't cast out the demons... We couldn't..."

Next thing you know they're comparing themselves to one another asking WHO is the GREATEST in the Kingdom.

Now some of you may not think this happens but oh my friend, I've been traveling for 11 years to churches of every color, size, denomination and believe me, this STILL happens. I'm glad this is in the Bible. You know I'm thankful the Holy Spirit didn't edit this out. Because I mean, the Holy Spirit could've said "you know God, this is kind of an ugly part - with all the staff bickering and stuff, can't we just remove this from the text - it doesn't reflect what we want... And Father God is like "Nope, keep it in there because this is a universal problem that will NEVER end until all things are made new in the New Heavens and New Earth."

Now that little dialogue is made up - that's not in the Bible =>. But I wanted to shed some light on the fact that God KEPT this ugly picture of His Followers IN the BIBLE!

The disciples are ARGUING WHO will sit at the right hand of Jesus! Who is going to be like "GOVERNOR" of Heaven - Ok Jesus, yeah we get that you'll be like King, yeah yeah yeah, but what I'M concerned about is where MY NAME will be printed. What's the TITLE after MY name? What will I be credited for?

Church, when you use the word "I" too much in your conversation, there's a problem.

Each child is different. Each child is 100% loved!



Come on, as parents we know this. This is Elliana - we call her Elli for short.

There's things I would ask of Selah that I would never ask of Elli. Like the request to "throw a ball". Throwing a ball - at this point anyway, is simply NOT a kind request for me to ask of Elli. The girl is NOT coordinated! SHE's beautiful! I mean I can't go ANYWHERE without people literally stopping me and saying 'man, she is about the most beautiful little girl I've ever seen!' And SHE'S KIND! She's like the kindest, sweetest little girl on the planet! She's compassionate and patient and makes friends with people. But the girl is NOT an athlete. She runs about .00004 miles per hour, ok.

So as her Father who knows her best, I'm not going to ask something unreasonable from her! I'm going to ask Elli to maybe clean up or just paint her nails or Eva's nails - or go say hi to a new friend that's spitting alone in the back yard. I'm going to ask of her a responsibly that she is designed to do - something she even enjoys.

Now Selah, is athletic! She is FAST! She can throw a ball just like all the boys in our culldasack - on our street. She's tough and rugged. She's beautiful but she is also athletic and so I can ask her to shoot basketball with me and throw the baseball to me or kick the soccer ball and I can expect her to score and by the way I can hold her accountable if she doesn't BECAUSE I know she has the gifting and natural ability to do so.

We're adopting Lukas in two days!

WOW this has been a HUGE step of faith for me and Danielle. It's been a challenge because he is one FAST little dude! But man do we love him SO MUCH!

We began foster care journey 3 years ago.

God put it in our heart ...

God confirmed it through ...

On Jan 12 we got a call from the agency that a little boy named Lukas was just born and in need of a home. (Picture up)

It's been remarkable to feel such incredible love for this child that isn't biological. It's been super natural!

When we adopt him on Tue, his name will be Lukas Leroy Biel! (Pictures up)

BIEL

He takes on MY last name, my identity and MY inheritance!

Come on now! GOD adopts as His children and gives us HIS name, HIS identity, HIS approval and HIS inheritance!

What's His is ours!

WOOOOO

Come on!

GOD LOVES YOU AND HE IS NOT JUST YOUR FATHER HE IS OUR FATHER!

This is how God sees us. He is OUR Father and HE knows best. He knows our strengths after all He gave them to us. He knows our giftings after all He gave them to us. He even knows where we kinda fall short and that's OK to him! It's OK that you don't have all the same giftings and talents as the other guy! It's OK! You weren't meant to!

You just be YOU for the Kingdom of GOD! You work hard and you give God a good return on the investment he's placed in YOU! .

A good way to start to defeat this competition thing is to simply see yourself as brothers and sisters of OUR FATHER God. More than you are "workers in a field" you are siblings in a home. You're sons and daughters at the table of the Lord! That's how virtually ALL of the epistles address you and me. *Dearly beloved children of God...*

A practical way to apply this to your living is to intentionally rejoice with those who have a victory.

A good sign of whether someone is having the character of Christ formed in them is how quickly they rejoice with you when you have something good to share.

The person who questions you and belittles the victory shows their insecurity.

The person who spontaneously rejoices with you - genuinely smiles and congratulates you - now that's a friend to keep - that's someone who genuinely sees you as a brother or sister in Christ.

Why? Because right emotions follow right behavior.

Just start doing the right thing because you know it's right - because you know it pleases God and next thing you know, you'll enjoy doing that thing God asked of you to do - even the simple things. The little things in conversations - those moments when God says "Shhh, just listen to them and be excited with THEM about what's happening in THEIR life."

You know people just wanted to be loved and by loved I mean listened to.

Sometimes they really don't want to know what happened to YOU or what YOU accomplished. Sometimes just listen to THEM and be in THEIR WORLD only. If they are excited about a promotion at work, celebrate with them - in fact, take them out to eat and ask them questions about it!

If they are sad, LISTEN to them and ask them questions about the details - this SHOWS them that you care - that someone cares - that GOD cares. This demonstrates to them in living color that they are a part of a FAMILY - a Family in which we all have the same FATHER God whom we can call OUR FATHER.

We should be so Christ-like that we reveal the Love of OUR FATHER! God is not just your Father. He is OUR Father!

We should be SO KIND, SO LOVING to not just believers WITHIN our little group of like-minded people, but no, we should be SO KIND, SO LOVING, SO GENEROUS to every person who stands before us - our community - to the friends in our schools, teenagers, to the coworkers that we don't get along with - we are FORGIVING and PATIENT AND KIND-HEARTED... WHY? TO SHOW THE LOVE OF OUR FATHER to them.

THINK

What can God CAN do through you to show the world that HIS LOVE is GREAT and that He is an amazing Father? Who can you invite to know OUR FATHER?

CLOSING

SALVATION CALL

If today, you know that you need to come back to OUR FATHER - if you need to come back to God as a child in need of forgiveness, then I want to give you a chance to do that right now.

If you need to repent of your sin and be forgiven by Father God, I want you to know that God is not angry with you - that God has not forgotten about you - that God has not written you off - no, just the opposite! God has been waiting with bated breath - ready to receive you back into His open arms. He's ready to put a ring on your finger, a family robe on your back and call you His own!

If that's you and you'd like to get your heart right with God, I'd like you to raise your hand and acknowledge to the Lord that you need Him right now.

WORSHIP RESPONSE

Today, we're going to close with a song we sang earlier "Author Of My Story" a song I wrote with Daulton Reese a worship leader friend of mine. We wrote it from the pain of Daulton's childhood and desire to know God and experience Him as FATHER.

I want to ask you to sing it out as loud as you can - declare with your voice what you know in your heart - that God is YOUR Father and in that truth you can know that HIS LOVE has defeated ALL FEAR - and that you are no longer a slave, nor even an acquaintance, but a SON and DAUGHTER of Father God!