

A Deeper Walk with God

A Deeper Look into the Father's Love

Edited Transcript

Patrick Morley

Good morning, men. Please turn in your Bibles to Psalm 139, Psalm 139. As we get going this morning, let's go ahead and do a couple of shout outs. The first goes to Men of Victory, 15 men who meet with us on Thursday evenings at 6:30 PM at their church, led by Donald Robertson in Thomasville, North Carolina and Donald writes, "To become the men God wants us to be and grab life that is truly life the way God intended." What a great way to put it, Donald. So also, a shout out to one of our area directors, Larry Phelps up in Idaho. And I just love the way that Larry, excuse me, expresses himself here, "I believe that biblically men are to lead and when they do that can become an answer, not a problem. If I invest in a man, I'm investing in his marriage, parenting, church, and vocation." What a great way to put it. And so, I wonder if you would join me in giving these two, this man and this group of guys, a very warm and arousing Man in the Mirror welcome. One, two, three, Hoo-ahh. Welcome men. We're honored to have you as part of the Bible study and Larry for you to be part of the team.

Hey, this is just an aside. We're doing this series, **A Deeper Walk With God**. I ran across this week. I'd never seen it before. You may have seen this but I thought it was instructive. We're going to be talking about the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit over these next three weeks of this study, A Deeper Walk With God, and so I spotted this on a Wikipedia and so you can take a picture of that if you want to and so you can see the three persons of the Trinity. I love it. The Father is not the Son on the outside. The son is not the spirit and the spirit is not the Father. And then the lines going into the center where it says, God, the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God. I just thought that was, it was useful to me, helpful. I thought it might be helpful to you.

Okay, so we're doing the series **A Deeper Walk With God**, and this morning we're going to be talking about a deeper look into the Father's love. So, this week we have grandchildren in town. On Wednesday morning, our grandson wanted to go fishing, which means he wanted me to do everything for him except pull the fish out of the water. So, I decided that it was time for him to learn how to fish. So, we use [inaudible] polls and catch these little tiny things. And so, over the course of about an hour and a half, I poured out my love to our grandson. I'm his papa. And so, I taught him how to take a worm and cut off little pieces with a knife and get worm guts all over your fingers.

And I taught him how to thread that little worm onto the hook right through the center and then how to make sure it got passed the barb so that the fish couldn't pull the worm off the hook without getting hooked. Then I showed him how he needed to let the cork go under water for a second before he pulled it. Because you know, you get excited as a kid, you pull too soon before the fish has a chance to get hooked, taught him how to do that.

I'm not saying that he didn't know any of these things before, and then he didn't know how to take the hook out of the fish and he didn't know how not to get stuck with those fins on the back of the fish. So, I taught them how to take the hook out of the fish and it was an extraordinary experience. I did that

because I love him so much and he wanted to be with me because he loves me a lot. But because he was learning the new skill because he was experiencing the Father's love.

And because he was developing a mastery at a lower level of this project called fishing there at the end of this hour and a half, there were about 60 seconds where the look on his face was a look of such ineffable, inexpressible, beyond words, joy that it looked to me like I was looking at Shekinah glory or something like that. The joy that he was experiencing, the love that I felt from him toward me was overwhelming. The sense that he had, that he was cared about, that he was loved to him was extraordinary and exquisite. Something that he himself am sure would not be able to put into words either just completely inexpressible.

And I was struck by the verse, Verse John chapter four, verse 19, we love him because he first loved us, and I was thinking of I had loved him and then he was loving back. And then I was thinking, he's loving me back and I love him more because he's loving me back. And it was a circular thing. And then this lasted for 60 seconds. And then we went on with the day. But something extraordinary happened on that dock Wednesday morning, and I want to talk about it and then I'm going to begin today with the Big Idea. And this is it. This is the Big Idea that I hope you can take away for yourself today. **Feel the joy of that little boy who just spent the morning fishing with his papa.** Wouldn't that be awesome for us?

WHAT HINDERS US FROM FEELING LIKE MUCH LOVED SONS? "TRUST ISSUES"

Well, we're talking about engaging with the Father's love. If we could feel the joy of that little boy who just spent the morning fishing with his papa. All right, so let's take a look, a deeper look into the Father's love. Let's, let's ask the question. Okay. What is it? I mean, we all would want that. Yeah. Okay. Well what is it that hinders us from feeling like much loved sons? And so, I put up their trust issues and I think that might be right at the center of it, but we don't feel the love. Sometimes we don't feel the love. We don't feel like we're down on the dock with papa.

So, it can be many different things for each of us. It might be the that you carry around the pain or the sorrow of the one that got away or maybe it is school debt that you just haven't been able to figure out how to resolve and it's a weight on your shoulders. Maybe it is that you would love to have a child, but you haven't been able to conceive or maybe it's that you have a child than you wish that maybe you hadn't conceived. Maybe it is that you became a Christian and your friends dumped you or maybe it's that you got bullied a little bit as a kid and you thought that that would go away, but then you grew up and you realized that the bullies grew up too and there are bullies out there. They're a little bit more sophisticated now, but they found a wonderful medium in social media, some of them. Social media is great, but there are a lot of bullies out there too.

Maybe it's you work so hard to get a promotion and then the promotion went to somebody else. Somebody that you think is less deserving, maybe they are, or maybe it's that you always wanted to pursue a particular career field, but somehow you got off on a side track and you have never been able to get back over to that place where you wanted to be or any number of relationship problems and you just don't feel the love. You just don't feel like you're down on the dock. And when that happens, it can make us feel doubts about God, about whether or not He really does want to be with us. Or maybe you feel like you showed up on the dock, but God didn't show up to be with you. You really wonder if He cares. You maybe believe, but you also don't believe. You have some doubts.

Or maybe it's because of hurts that you've had, church hurts. A pastor or a priest that let you down, or an elder or a deacon who let you down. Or maybe it's a small group of guys who you thought really cared about you, but then when you got in trouble, turns out they were not there for you. And so, this problem, this existential problem of suffering, Alvin Plantinga, Christian philosopher, does believe that suffering is the greatest argument of the atheist, the inability to explain suffering in a way that's psychologically satisfying. Theologically, I can cover this for you and I have. Theologically, I can cover suffering, but psychologically the problem of suffering. Sometimes you come here and you feel like you're on top of the mountain. Sometimes you come here and you feel like you're down in the valley, but sometimes you come here and you feel like you're down in the valley under a pile of rocks and you want to know why you feel that way? Because you are. Because that's really what's going on. And so, we wonder, is this a God that I can trust? Can I do the Big Idea? Can I feel the joy of that little boy who just spent the morning fishing with his papa? I believe we can. Even when we are under the pile of rocks.

HOW DOES THE FATHER FEEL ABOUT US?

And so I want us to talk a little bit about that. How does the Father feel about us? So, I hope for most of you, this is a reminder. Psalm 1:39, now what we're not going to talk about when we talk about God the Father, we're not going to talk about the attributes of God. We're not going to talk about all the communicable attributes of God, like His love and His mercy. We're not going to talk about His incommunicable attributes like His infinity, His eternity being all powerful or omnipotent and all knowing. We're not going to talk about all those things.

We could talk about all of these things, all those things, but if we really want to have an understanding of God is someone who's in it with us, who will meet us on the dock. It's the idea that he is our Father that I want us to look into. "You have searched me, oh Lord. And you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise," Psalm 139, "You perceive my thoughts from afar. Discern my going out and my coming in and my lying down. You're familiar with all my ways before a word is on my tongue, you Lord know it completely." Drop down to verse 13, for you created my inmost being. You knit me together in my mother's womb... Worm. Got worms out of the mind.

Just let that one sink in. Drop down to verse 16, "Your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to pass. How precious to me are your thoughts, God, how vast is the sum of them where I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand. When I awake, I am still with you. When I'm down on the dock, you are there with me."

And then turn to Romans chapter eight, verse 15, Romans chapter eight, verse 15. So, this idea that God is Father. Jesus calls him Father. It's not just analogy. He actually is our father. Romans 8:15, "The spirit you received does not make you slaves so that you live in fear." Again, for those of you who do fear not getting the promotion, getting overlooked, that the project wasn't appreciated. You don't get that spirit, rather the spirit you received brought about your adoption to son ship. You are sons of God. He is your Father, "And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.'"

Abba is just the Aramaic word for father. So, an Aramaic word and the Greek word, "And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.'" We have been given this spirit of son ship. We've been adopted as a son. That means that all legal rights to be our father now are vested in our adoptive father. He is actually our father, John 17:23. How does the Father feel about us? Well, he has adopted us as his sons. He created us. He knit us together in our mother's womb. He loves us so much that he has adopted us and taking responsibility for us. John Chapter 17 verse 23, Jesus is speaking here, and Jesus said in the second part of the verse,

"Then the world will know that you sent me," and speaking to the Father. He's praying to the Father, "Then the world will know that you sent me and you have loved them even as you have loved me."

So just think about the love that the Father has for Jesus. And then Jesus is saying, but you love Fred. You love Blake, you love Scott, you love Aubrey, you love Daniel, you love Daniel even as you have loved me or in the same way or equal to or just as, depending on the version that you have, in the same way that you have loved me, you have loved them. That's a lot of love.

And then Luke chapter 15 verse 20, Luke chapter 15 verse 20, so in the story of the prodigal son, when the son comes to his senses, it says, I need to get back on that dock. I need to get back down where my father is. So, he comes, and he has a speech prepared. But in verse 20 it says that when the Father saw him, he got up and says, "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him. And was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him," and that was before the son ever said a word, just unconditional love. So, the father was down on the dock waiting for the son to come to his senses and come back.

So, if I could just say this, some of us think that God doesn't want to really be with us because we will not go to him. This father was waiting for the son on the dock, but the son would didn't think that the father really cared about him because the son wouldn't go to him. If you will go to him, you will find that he really does want to be with you.

First John, chapter three, verse one. Take a look, first John, chapter three, verse one, "How great is the love the father has lavished on us that we should be called children of God. And that is what we are." So how great is this father's love for us? Jesus says, your father knows what you need before you even pray, Matthew six, verse eight, "Therefore you should pray our father in heaven," and then he begins the Lord's Prayer.

How great is our father's love? Two sparrows are bought and sold for a penny, yet not one of them falls to the ground apart from the knowledge of the father and we are worth more than any sparrows. You are worth more than many sparrows. Matthew 10, verse 29, and then take a look with me at Ephesians chapter two starting at verse three. Just a reminder, all of us lived among them. Who are them? Those are the people who are not living righteous lives, good lives, who are not pursuing God.

All of us. Also, by the way, I always use this as a way of helping church leaders understand that you shouldn't be angry at men because they're not more spiritual. They'll be angry at guys because they're not more spiritual. First of all, it comes through, the anger comes through, but second of all, you used to be like that. All of us also lived among them at one time, so we should have a little bit more sympathy and empathy for them. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the desires of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts like the rest. We were by nature, by our very nature, we were objects of wrath, but because of His great love for us, God who is rich in mercy has made us alive in Christ. That's a lot of love. That's a lot of love and so how do we feel it? Do you feel it? I hope you're feeling it. I hope you're feeling it. I hope you feel the joy of that little boy who just put the morning fishy with his papa.

THE 60 SECONDS THAT WILL LINGER ALL DAY

Finally, let's talk about those 60 seconds. Those 60 seconds, the fragrance of those 60 seconds, is something that can linger all day long even when the septic tank overflows. And to have the

understanding that you can live out of the overflow of that 60 seconds or however long it is that you have that experience with God. But the idea is to make this a daily disposition to, you know, will you meet me on the dock? Wherever your dock is, wherever you can spend time and relationship with the Father and my own personal, in fact, Ed Kobel said something similar when he was here as a guest speaker, but my own practice is that that I do not leave my time, and my dock happens to be a chair in our living room.

I have a personal practice that I do not get up until I have experienced, well, I call it the moment of humility. It's just that moment when I'm over sin, overwhelmed with a sense of the presence of the power of the holiness, the love, the grace, the mercy, the kindness of God. I just basically, I don't want to get up until I feel the joy of that little boy. That's what I want every day. And then the residue of that, the residue of the fragrance of that all day long, it's enough. You put a little on, you put Old Spice on still? He still wears Old Spice, but when he comes over to my home office there for a meeting and so forth.

It's there all day long. It's there all day long. That's the way that this could work. This is how it's designed to work. That we have the 60 seconds of this incredible experience. The culmination, we build up to it. It's a high point but it doesn't have to be the end of it either. That is the point. And so, the action step here today, it's just to make the decision. Will I meet Him on the dock? Will I go to Him because He's there waiting for me? Will I come to my senses? Will I go back down to the dock? Because when we do, as the Big Idea says today we can feel the joy of that little boy who just spent the morning fishing with his papa and wouldn't that be a great thing?

Let us pray. Our dearest Father, we come to you this morning, Papa, Abba, Father. Some of us are on top of the mountain this morning and feel tremendous joy. Some of us are in the valley today struggling through something. Some of us have had things happen so severe recently that we feel like we're in the valley under a pile of rocks and we not only want to know about your love, but we actually want to have an existential experience. We want to feel your love too. We want to experience your love because Lord, we don't want a theological relationship with you. I shouldn't say that. We do want a theological relationship with you. There is great comfort and confidence in studying the attributes and understanding more about your omnipotence and omniscience and all and all of your other attributes.

But Lord, the thing that will allow the fragrance of all that knowledge to remain is not a theological relationship with you, but a personal relationship with you. And so, Lord, we want to be men who feel the joy of that little boy. You just spent the morning fishing with his papa. We want to be men, Lord, who will have a daily disposition to come and meet you on the dock and Lord, we will not. We choose not to think that you don't want to be with us because we won't go to be with you. We will take the action or we want to take the action to go and be where you are, and we pray that you would give us each a deep sense of the joy of that little boy this day, that the fragrance of that would last all of this day. In fact, we pray, Lord, that the fragrance of that, the residue of that, would remain for the rest of our lives. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.