

:: summary

YOU are a child of God. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches how precious you are to your Father in heaven. As you discuss the message today, take note of the personal way in which your heavenly Father relates to you.

Matt. 5:43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’⁴⁴ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,⁴⁵ that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.⁴⁶ If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?⁴⁷ And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?⁴⁸ Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Matt. 6:1 “Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.”

Matt. 6:3 “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. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”

Matt. 6:6 “But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”

Matt. 6:9 “This, then, is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven ...’ ”

:: discussion

Share a time as a child where you deeply desired to please your parent or another important person in your life. What motivated you? How did the response you received make you feel?

Read the texts above.

What is the principle of behavior in Matthew 5:43-48 that goes beyond loving your enemies?

There are both negative and positive reasons why God does not reward practicing your righteousness in front of others. Name as many as you can from Matthew 6:1-6.

Matt. 6:7 And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”

If our Father knows what we need before we ask, why should we pray and ask at all?

Read Matthew 6:25-32. What is Jesus teaching as the antidote to worry? Is this realistic?

Read Matthew 7:9-11.

In the message, Pastor Mike taught that because you are God’s child, you will experience the goodness of God. How does this Scripture reflect your heavenly Father’s heart for looking after you?

:: make it personal

Jesus is pressing his followers to live in a deep, personal way of relating to God as heavenly Father. How does this reality of God as your Father and you as His child affect your relationship with Him?

You cannot be more fully loved than you are right now. How easy or hard is it for you to accept how much you mean to your Father in heaven?

How can your group pray for you in light of this message?

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