

Part One

- Orient to Prayer Series and 40 Days of Prayer
 - Dr. Tim Robinson – being soaked in the Father
 - Andy McQuitty – Lord’s Supper Pt. 1 (Abba – Hallowed be thy name)
 - Adam Watson – Lord’s Supper Pt. 2 (Forgiveness)
 - Garrett Hall – Talking to God (Jesus in Gethsemane)
 - (BTW – How great is it that we have gotten to hear from so many different voices. Our sermon team – made up of Elders and Staff - has been working hard to make sure each teacher is prepared)
 - 40 Days of Prayer
 - Today – Talking with God
 - Main Point: **No matter what season of life we are in, God is a perfect Father who wants to talk with us and give us good gifts. (SLIDE)**
- Power of Earthly Fathers
 - This morning, as we consider the role of our heavenly Father in our lives, I want us to think about how important the role of a father is in our culture.
 - Here is what we are learning from research about the role of dad’s.
 - In a WSJ article, titled “Why Children Need Nurturing Fathers,”
 - Sociologists have found that warm, caring dads produce what they call the “good father effect.”
 - Closeness with fathers were associated with adolescents having fewer weight concerns, higher self-esteem, and fewer depression systems for both boys and girls.
 - Fathers who were involved in caregiving and play, and who reacted with warmth and greater sensitivity to a child who expressed emotions, were significantly more likely to have children with better emotional balance from infancy to adolescence.
 - Those skills in children are linked, in turn, with higher levels of social competence, peer relationships, academic achievement and resilience.
 - Boys can be especially affected by whether fathers are part of the emotional equation.
 - “Our culture often tells men that softer emotions are weak, so fathers may have to give sons explicit “permission to feel.”
 - “It’s not enough to encourage our sons (and daughters) to share their inner worlds. The men they look up to and respect need to show them how it is done.”
 - Fathers can also strive to become what Yale’s Dr. Brackett calls an “emotion scientist,” someone who shows curiosity about their children’s feelings and puts them into words.
 - Instead of listening to solve a problem – a common instinct among men – this type of active listening requires empathy.
 - The focus isn’t on offering advice but on getting a child to open up by asking encouraging questions and listening to their answers.
 - “To best protect our children’s mental health, particularly our sons, we want them to understand that being strong isn’t about being invulnerable.”
 - As we consider talking with God this morning, being vulnerable is part of the equation as we seek to share our thoughts, feelings, and emotions with God.
 - *Sidenote – men, we have a responsibility to do the necessary soul work to move past our pasts and wounds with our own fathers so that we don’t pass on the same wounds to our children.*
 - *The best way I know to do this is to be in the word, have deep community where you can be fully known, and to practice daily what you are learning, and when we make mistakes, seek to repair as fast possible.*
 - *Maybe a little counseling too.*
 - *If you’re not in community, join the men’s Bible study starting in 2 weeks.*

- *We have an extreme responsibility to give our families and those entrusted to us a model of how to be vulnerable – that helps nurture them into a deep relationship with us and ultimately points them to our perfect Father.*
 - *This is not easy. It takes courage. It's worth it.*
 - This morning, as we consider the role of Father's in our life and society, I want us to consider if an earthly Father has this much influence, how much more does a deep relationship with our heavenly Father matter.
 - **As we turn to the text, – I want to show you in scripture, what Jesus says about the Father's posture toward us - that No matter what season of life we are in, God is a perfect Father who wants to talk with us and give us good gifts.**
- Text: Luke 11: 5 – 13 (SLIDE – ESV)
 - Set the stage – he has just taught them The Lord's Prayer.
 - ⁵And he said to them, "Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves, ⁶for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; ⁷and he will answer from within, 'Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything'?" ⁸I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence^[d] he will rise and give him whatever he needs. ⁹And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. ¹¹What father among you, if his son asks for^[d] a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; ¹²or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, **how much more** will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"
 - Textual Points:
 - In verse 5, after teaching the Lord's Prayer. Jesus shares with them a parable about a friend at midnight.
 - In this story, he wants the reader to identify with someone going to a friend at midnight to ask for bread, but he quickly shifts the attention to the reaction of the friend who has been stirred from his slumber and responds to the pressure of the one who persists and keeps knocking.
 - On its face, it might seem that this text is comparing God to a friend who only responds under pressure.
 - Jesus is making a point that if our friends answer requests on our behalf, **how much more** will God who desires to give us the Kingdom, answer our requests.
 - So, we have a story that starts with a friend answering our demands and shifts to a picture about a parent and the relationship with their children.
 - Jesus reminds the reader that if an earthly parent will give good gifts, how much more will God.
 - This passage reminds that prayer – talking with God – is to be a continual asking, seeking, knocking, and that this persistence is appropriate within a child-parent relationship.
 - **No matter what season of life we are in, God is a perfect Father who wants to talk with us and give us good gifts.**
 - This reminds me of a time when I found myself coaching Rhett's soccer team . . .
 - In the middle of a game, he finds me and says his legs are tired, and he wanted to know if we could snuggle.
 - Even though we were playing a game, my response wasn't "get away from me kid and go kick the ball." My heart melted and I had really considered picking him up and holding him – and then I came out of that moment and said, "boy, go kick the ball!" HA!

- No, seriously, all I wanted to do was snuggle that kid in that moment. If a flawed, selfish, competitive guy like me, can have that response, “how much more” does our heavenly Father respond this way.
 - No matter what season of life we are in, God is a perfect Father who wants to talk with us and give us good gifts.
- In this passage, the “good gift” is the Holy Spirit.
 - This gift is incredibly important in the gospel of Luke to understanding Jesus and the church.
 - Luke 3:21 (SLIDE)
 - Now when all the people were baptized and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved so; with you I am well pleased.”
 - Luke 24:49 (SLIDE)
 - And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.
 - Acts 1:4, 5, 8 (SLIDE)
 - And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”
 - Acts 2:38 (SLIDE)
 - And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”
- We see in these passages that the Holy Spirit leads and empowers Jesus.
- When the Holy Spirit comes to his followers, we too are led and empowered to continue to do what Jesus began to do.
- This gift of the Holy Spirit is not just a good gift, this gift is essential because without the Holy Spirit, there is no church.
 - Isn't it amazing that we have a perfect Father who wants to talk with us and give us good gifts!?

- Holy Spirit

- In Forgotten God, by Francis Chan, he reminds us why the Holy Spirit is so important to our journey.
 - **The spirit helps us speak when we are in precarious situations and need to bear witness** (Mark 13:11; Luke 12:12)
 - **The Counselor teaches and reminds us of what we need to know and remember. He is our comforter, our advisor, our encourage, and our strength.** He guides us in the way we should go (Psalm 143:10; John 14-16; Acts 9:31; 13:2; 15:28; I Corinthians 2:9-10; I John 5:6-8)
 - **From the Spirit we receive power to be God's witnesses to the ends of the earth.** It is the Spirit who draws people to the gospel, the Spirit who equips us with the strength we need to accomplish God's purposes. The Holy Spirit, not only initially draws people to God, He also draws believers closer to Jesus (Acts 1:8; Romans 8:26; Ephesians 3:16-19)
 - **By the power of the Spirit, we put to death the misdeeds of the body. The Spirit sets us free from the sins we cannot get rid of on our own.** This is a lifelong process we entered, in partnership with the Spirit, when we first believed (Romans 8:2)
 - **Through the Spirit, we have received a spirit of adoption as children, which leads us into intimacy with the Father, instead of a relationship based on fear and slavery.** The Spirit bears witness to us that we are His children (Romans 8:15-16)
 - **The Holy Spirit convicts people of sin** (John 16:7-11; I Thessalonians 1:5)
 - **The Spirit brings us life and freedom** (Romans 8:10-11; II Corinthians 3:17)

- By the power of the Holy Spirit, we abound with hope because our God is a God of hope, who fills his children with all joy and peace (Romans 15:13)
- As members of God's kingdom community, each of us is given a manifestation of the Spirit in our lives for the purpose of the common good (I Cor. 12:7)
- The fruit of being led by the Spirit of God includes love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These attitudes and actions will characterize our loves as we allow ourselves to be grown and molded by the Spirit (II Corinthians 3:18; Galatians 5:22-23)
- WHAT A GIFT!
- Earthly Father v. Heavenly Father
 - Now that we see, from scripture, how good God is and he wants to give us the best gifts, we must confront a hard reality this side of Heaven.
 - Disclaimer –
 - In a room this size, I can imagine that there are some of us that hearing anything about a father and good in the same sentence is not just tough, but downright insulting because of the relationship you had or didn't have with your dad.
 - It's also possible that you are a dad that has regret and guilt and feels shame about your own parenting – I can relate to this.
 - See, I can tell you all day long that "No matter what season of life we are in, God is a perfect Father who wants to talk with us and give you good gifts and I can even make a case for how amazing the gifts, especially the Holy Spirit, are . . ."
 - BUT!
 - There are many who have a hard time hearing any of this because the relationship you had or have with your earthly father has been so challenging or painful that it keeps you from even considering that any other type of Father would be any different.
 - If you had a great relationship with your earthly dad, I'm so glad. In this moment, I'd like for you to hold space for your brothers and sisters, sitting around you, that did not have that same experience.
 - Let me talk to those, men and women, who have deep wounds from your dad or other father figures in your life.
 - You are not alone.
 - It's ok to not be ok.
 - It's ok to be scared to trust God.
 - It's also ok for you to enter into a relationship delicately and tenderly with the God we see in scripture and to work this out one day, one moment at a time.
 - I'm asking you to be courageous – one moment at a time because momentum comes from a collision of courageous moments.
 - As we reflect on the truth that God is a perfect father who wants to talk with us and give us good gifts, I've asked the worship band to come out and give us space to worship – to posture ourselves before this good father and consider how much more he loves us – more than any earthly father could - and that He wants to give us good gifts and talk with us. Let's sing.

Part 2

- We've established, through scripture, that no matter what season of life we are in, God is a perfect Father who wants to talk with us and give us good gifts.
- It's not enough though to just know a truth – we also must put it into practice.
- As we think about what it means to talk with God, to express ourselves vulnerably, how do we learn to do that – how do we learn to talk with God.
 - Just like Jesus gave his disciples a template with The Lord's Prayer, we too have some templates that we can look to and learn from.
 - Scripture is a great way for us to see how humans have interacted with the Creator.

- One of the best books on seeing how to talk with God is the book of Psalms, in the Old Testament.
 - Walter Bruggeman breaks the Psalms into 3 categories.
 - 3 Categories
 - Psalms of Disorientation (Seasons of Survival where you find yourself in the Wilderness)
 - Psalms of Orientation (Seasons of Thriving)
 - Psalms of Re-Orientation (Seasons of Reviving)
- Let's turn to the book of Psalms and read 3 different passages from this book that represent the 3 types of season people find themselves in and how they talked with God.
 - Disorientation
 - Some of us are in this season – so much pain, a lack of hope.
 - All of us have been in this season and will be again at some point.
 - As we read this Psalm, put yourselves in the place of the one who is crying out to the Lord. Listen to the pain. Remember a time when you felt this pain.
 - Psalm 22:1-11 (SLIDE – ESV)
 - **No matter what season of life we are in, God is a perfect Father who wants to talk with us and give us good gifts.**
 - Orientation
 - Some of us are in this season.
 - Some of us think we will never be in this season again.
 - As we read this Psalm, put yourself in the place of the one who is crying out to God and praising Him.
 - Go back to a time when you felt this kind of joy.
 - Psalm 40:1-11 (SLIDE – ESV)
 - **No matter what season of life we are in, God is a perfect Father who wants to talk with us and give us good gifts.**
 - Reorientation
 - Some of us are in this season. We've been in a pit but have been rescued.
 - We feel so much relief because we believed that we would never get out of that pit, but we are well on our way.
 - We see renewal on the horizon. The dark clouds are dissipating, and the sun is peeking through.
 - We have repented of our sin. We have hope, again!
 - Psalm 32:1-7 (SLIDE – ESV)
 - **No matter what season of life we are in, God is a perfect Father who wants to talk with us and give us good gifts.**
- These Psalms give us examples of how humans have interacted with God.
- These Psalms remind us that we will go through seasons of life – from Survival to Reviving to Thriving.
- These Psalms give us permission to cry out to the Lord and be vulnerable.
- I'm so thankful that we have these templates and words – when words fail us – to talk with God.
- I'm so thankful that God is a perfect Father that has given us the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- It's because of this Spirit that we have the church – the gathered body of Christ.
- Because we have each other, we can be with each other and share life with each other.
- This morning, I'd like to use some of our time to minister to each other.
- Communal Prayer Time
 - If you are in a season of Orientation – Thriving, would you be willing to raise your hand? Stand up.
 - If you are in a season of Disorientation – Survival or a season where you have been in Survival but are moving to reorientation or reviving – would you be willing to raise your hand? This takes courage. You are not alone. Please stand up.
 - I'd like for us to practice crying out to the Lord on behalf of each other.

- As the band plays a song over us, would those of you who are in a season of thriving find someone who is in a season of survival or revival and meet them and pray for them.
 - We will have Elders and Pastors available as well toward the front.
 - As the band plays this song, cry out on behalf of your brother or sister – pray out loud to the perfect Father who wants to talk with us and give us good gifts.

Part Three

- As a church, we are in 40 Days of Prayer. We are also in a leadership transition as a church.
- We are all feeling different emotions during this process.
 - Excitement
 - Fear
 - Joy
 - Angst
 - Frustration
 - Anticipation
 - Anger
 - Regret
 - Peace
- This is a season of expectation where we seek the Lord for His renewal and direction.
- Today, our corporate prayer is for . . .
 - Let's pray together.
- Fellowship Dallas, No matter what season of life we are in, God is a perfect Father who wants to talk with us and give us good gifts.
 - May we apply this truth to our lives and seek him vulnerably.
 - Matthew 6:25-34
 - May Fellowship Dallas be known as a group of people who courageously seek first the Kingdom of God and talk with God - the gracious King who desperately wants to give us good gifts.