



A LETTER FROM YOUR PASTOR: MAY 2022 *by Lee Shipp*

THE PATHWAY TO THE FATHER Part 1

The Father: by love, through love, and for love gives. He gives His greatest. He gives His heart. He does not give His least. He does not give merely enough. He gives gratuitously. He gives without regard to the receivers' appreciation. He gives because of His love – unconditionally. He gives not based on the benefactor's deserving His best, but He gives His best because His love can only give the best. His giving is the manifestation of His loving. He is calculating and extravagant.

His great giving is not based on the benefactor receiving or understanding the priceless demonstrations of love. He simply gives His treasures because He loves. HE loves completely and perfectly. He cannot love less. He does not love by degrees. All He does is perfect. His loving is perfect. His loving is more than enough. Whether received or crucified – He loves, and because He loves, He gives!

He does not give in stages. He does not give in degrees. His judgments are in degrees, but He does not love that way. He gives His love gifts to save what He loves. He provides it all so that the lifeline is complete and lacking nothing. The benefactors of His love will never be able to say that His love lacked. Forever His love is wounded and scarred by those who hated His heart.

He is a Father to the fatherless and a champion of the widows. The Father sets the lonely in families; He breaks the chains of those in bondage. Our Father loads us with blessings: He forgives all our iniquities. He heals all our diseases. He redeems our life from destruction. He covers us with tender mercies so as not to crush us. He satisfies us. He is the merciful and gracious Father. He is very gentle and slow to anger. He will not deal with us according to our sins. His mercy

reaches into the heavens, and He has put our sins away as far as the east is from the west. He has a Father's pity towards us. He knows us: our frame, our days, our weaknesses, our tears, the hair upon our head.

Our Lord has no equal. No god is like Him. *"Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth. There is none like ... God ... who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them. Happy art thou ... O people saved by the LORD ... "(Deuteronomy 33:26-27, 29).*

"Why sayest thou ... My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be

**"OUR WORLD IS SUFFERING
AN IDENTITY CRISIS.
PEOPLE DO NOT KNOW
WHO THEY ARE."**

weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

Our Father in heaven loves His enemies, blesses those who curse Him, and is good to those who hate him. Our Father in heaven is our provider relieving us from worrying about what we are to eat, drink, or wear. Our Father gives good things to His children. He seeks the worship of His children.

He is the God of all comfort for He has adopted us as His children and begotten us again to a living hope by the resurrection of the dead – assuring us of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that will not tarnish, and is waiting for us in heaven. Our Father will get us home. He is the God of peace and *"through the blood of the everlasting covenant He will make us perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."*

LONGING FOR THE FATHER

Jesus longed for the Father's presence. He had a habit of retreating to desolate places to commune with His Father. In the early mornings or late into the night, Jesus would be found with His Father. Jesus knows the Father. Jesus loves the Father. How wonderful must the Father be to captivate and satisfy the longing of the Son's heart. Once when Jesus was ministering to thousands, He dismissed the crowds and went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. He prayed well into the night. From the fatigue of ministering all day and caring for the needs of people, Jesus found comfort and rest with His Father; His rest was not sleeping.

Though we have this picture in Matthew, we must not assume this was a rare occurrence but the chief habit of Jesus. Luke told us that Jesus would spend whole nights in prayer to His Father. Mark describes how Jesus rose early in the morning, while it was still dark, to retreat to a desert place to pray. Luke said that Jesus often withdrew to deserted places to pray (Luke 5:15-16). Why was Jesus so passionate about prayer? Prayer was simply the means to an end, the end being His Father. Prayer was the opportunity of intimacy and Jesus often retreated for this intimacy with His Father.

Jesus wanted us to know the Father. Jesus came to bring us to the Father. It was not the goal to simply keep us from hell. God desired to bring many sons to glory! So how would the people come? What would draw them? They would be drawn by love. It must be love! We love Him because He first loved us.

Who would want to spend eternity with a God of rage? But our heavenly Father is pleasant, and this was part of Jesus' mission – to express to the world how wonderful the Father is. *John 14:31 says, "... so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded me."*

THE FATHER WANTS YOU TO BELONG TO HIM

You have to go through the Son if you want to get to the Father. There is no other way. The only way to know the Father is for the Son to reveal Him. You cannot love the Father and not love the Son. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Him (John 14:6). Jesus said that no one knows the Son but the Father. Furthermore, no man knows the Father

except the Son, and those to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him (Matthew 11:25-27).

Our world is suffering an identity crisis. People do not know who they are. People do not know what they are. The fact is we have strayed away from our Father. God called Adam his son. But Adam rebelled and his children were born alienated from the Father.

Men are born slaves. They have lost their identity. They spend their life under a cruel and evil tyrant. But God wants to adopt them, redeem them, and rescue them. Without belonging to the heavenly Father we are people without a home. We are people without a father. We have no identity. We have no one to love us. We feel abandoned and unwanted. We have no place we can call home, where we are welcomed. We are living under the curse of an unblessed life. We are craving acceptance but only experience one betrayal after another.

The good news is that there is a heavenly Father who wants to be your source, your guardian, your headship, your provider, your protector, your leader, your teacher, your helper, your encourager, and your friend. He left the door open for you. His Spirit cries for you to come! You can be redeemed!

This Father comforts His people and has compassion on His afflicted ones. Even in situations when it seems that the Father is distant and we may say, *"The Lord has forsaken me; my Lord has forgotten me,"* He cries back, assuring us of His steadfast love. God declares, can a woman forget her baby nursing on her breast? Can a mother not have compassion for the child she bore? Yes! She might. *"But," says the Lord, "Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands ... [you] are continually before Me" (Isaiah 49:15-16).*

God will not forget you. God will not forsake you. Mothers will, but God will not! When the Lord asks about the mothers who could forget their nursing babies, He declares that you cannot compare Him to the most profound bonds upon earth – the mother and her child. You cannot compare the heavenly Father with your earthly father. You must see how the Son (Jesus) so adored His Father and then know that He is a good Father.