

## Privilege of calling God Father (Eph 6:1-4)

### 1. Obey your parents in the Lord

This is the story when I was in Japan. I had conversation with a carpenter father and son. I still remember it, because it was very interesting.

They were building a house nearby. I saw them every day. One day, when I passed that place where they are building the house, I only saw the son, the father was not there. He was cleaning the place, which is quite unusual actually. I wondered what had happened and spoke to him.

He said his father went to another construction site, and so he was alone then. At first he had some works to do, but now he had finished them all, so he is cleaning now.

But the house is not built yet, there are materials. "You have work to do, don't you?" I asked him.

He said this: When he started to work with his father, he just did a lot of works one after another with his own judgment. His father entrusted some work to him and left for another construction site. After he finished what his father entrusted to him, he thought "I can do this here, and there", so he did many things by himself. He thought, "When dad comes back, he will be happy to see that, and praise me."

However, when his father returned, he silently removed every little bit of what his son had done by himself. His way was nothing wrong, but it was different from what his father was thinking. Father has plans in mind, looking beyond, seeing through the future. There is no waste in the way of the father. His works will not hinder other works. And the father builds a house, considering usability for the people who will live there. He even cares for the places which are hidden. When he looks at the finished work, it indeed looks perfectly in tune, well-matched and well-balanced as a whole.

After several incidents like that, he started to hear the father's direction carefully, and did it carefully. And while he is working, he is trying to understand about what his father was concerning, trying to understand how he would proceed with the work. He would like to be a good carpenter like his father.

And he said: Carpenter's work is not just half a year or one year while building the house. But is it actually 30 years or even 50 years while people are

living in the house. It doesn't matter if people forget who'd built the house, as long as they live there happily. That is his greatest wish in his work.

### 1-3

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. <sup>2</sup> "Honor your father and mother"--which is the first commandment with a promise— <sup>3</sup> "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."

"Obey your parents in the Lord." Jesus did so. "He [Jesus] went down to Nazareth with them [Joseph and Mary, his parents] and was obedient to them" (Luke 2:51).

Obey in the Lord. We obey our parents as the one who are in the Lord.

It doesn't mean children should do whatever their parents tell them to do. It means to persist in having the right attitude as the one who cloths with Christ (Gal 3:27). It means to act appropriately as dearly loved children of God, children of light.

If you just say yes, but don't do it, or do it but your heart is not there, then you are not doing it in the Lord. The Bible says, "Respond to your parents as an expression of your respect for them, then things will go well with you (Eph 6:1-3 NIV) You will live well (MSG) You will be happy (Ps 128:2 NASB)".

How that comes about?

### 4

Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

Parents place themselves in the light of the Word and training of the Lord. And they raise their children, teach and train them in the light of the Word and training of the Lord.

Parents help and encourage children so that they can understand the teaching of the Lord, and the Word of God will be their way of life. So children obey their parents. Children respect parents because they do for them all these trainings.

When we are young in age and in spirit, we cannot understand the Bible well by ourselves. We cannot realize God's will by ourselves. Because our faith is not that mature yet.

In order for us not only to hear God's word, but also to live on it, we need the model. We need someone who shows the integrity of faith and work, the integrity of everyday living. We need someone who teaches us and train us to live the life of integrity in faith and work. And for children it is their parents.

So it is important for us to respect and obey our parents. Then we can walk with God, and live in the blessings of God. That is what it means to make us happy.

Children learn far more by observing how parents live than by listening to the teaching in the bible study. When parents sincerely listen to the Word, examine themselves in the light of God and are transformed by the Holy Spirit, children see that and respect their parents, follow their way of life. And they are happy.

I think that kind of relationship between parent and child is wonderful. If we grow up in a family like that, of course we will be happy. No doubt. If there is really that kind of parent and child relationship, don't you want to see it?

Actually that parent and child relationship is very close to us. That is the relationship between God the Father and His Son Jesus.

## 2. Son of Man and God the Father

Let's look at what kind of relationship Jesus had with the Father.

### John 12:49-50

For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. <sup>50</sup> I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say."

Jesus didn't tell the people what he made up for selfish reason. He spoke what the Father had given him to say.

### John 14:31

but the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me.

Jesus didn't just repeat what he'd heard from the father. If so, he is as good as a parrot. He made the Father's will his will, because he loved his father.

### John 15:10

If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love.

Jesus listened to the Father and did what he said. As a son, Jesus listened to the Father and obeyed Him. And he didn't do it unwillingly. He was in the Father's love, he loved the Father and responded to him out of love. He was with the Father with the heart to respect and honor him.

So Jesus said, "I am in the Father and the Father is in me" (John 14:10). "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30).

Hearing the phrase "the Son Jesus", we may have the impression that he was born from God the Father, or made by God the Father. But if we look at the Bible carefully, we will find that is not true. Jesus is 100 % God and 100 % man.

When we look at Jesus on his human side, we can see how close a man can spend time with God. When we look at Jesus on his human side, we can understand what it means for a man to obey God, respect God, love God and worship God. And we can understand the happiness of a man who can call God father and fellowship with Him.

Jesus called God "Father". That shows intimacy, affection, warmth, genuineness and sincerity. And amazing thing is, it is not just for Jesus. Each one of us, who believes in Jesus, and who was made a child of God can also have the same relationship with God. And we are already in that relationship. That is amazing!

Just like Jesus called God "Father", we can also call Him "Father" and draw near to him. We can also have the same relationship Jesus had with God the father as a man. This is not merely teaching by words, or an ideal picture in theory. This is the reality in which we are living every day. We can have this relationship with God in the midst of our actual daily life.

How does it happen? God the father will speak to us, like He had spoken to his Son Jesus. And just like Jesus loved the Word of the father, we also love His Word. Just like Jesus listened to the Word of the father joyfully and carefully, we will also listen to His Word joyfully and carefully. Just like Jesus followed the Word of his father whole heartedly, we will also trust in the Word of God and follow Him whole heartedly. Just like Jesus talked to His Father sincerely and honestly, we will also talk to God sincerely and honestly. Through prayer, we will make our heart united with the father's heart. In that moment, you will know deep in your heart, "I am in the Father and the Father is in me." You don't want to go anywhere else.

We, humans, feel at secure and peace when we know that we are in God's presence. Anxiety will disappear. Problems may be still there. Challenges may come. But we know that we don't have to worry about it because God will take care of it (1 Pet 5:7). And we are in his presence, embraced in the father's arms.

A little child had a fight with his friend. He came back to his father or mother, crying. For a while he was held in his father's arms. And then he restored his calmness and goes out again to play. That's what it means to feel secure and peace in the Father's love.

And this relationship with the Father will not end when the time comes. It will continue for eternity.

It is the parents who lead children into this relationship, who bring children in this kind of life, who teach us how to use our life through their own life examples. So children obey parents, we respect them.

### 3. We can call God "Abba father"

Obey our parents and respect them in the Lord. That is deeply related to our happiness. Let's read today's passage one more time.

#### 1-3

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. <sup>2</sup> "Honor your father and mother"--which is the first commandment with a promise— <sup>3</sup> "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."

There are some people who have rather complicated circumstances. Nevertheless, we are here because our father and mother have been there before us. And there is only one father, and one mother. Some people have their true parents and their adaptive parents. They are the people God prepared for us to be born and grow. If we ignore our parents, and just do what we want to do, without caring about how much that might make them sad or cause them trouble, then it is impossible for us to be truly happy.

In Luke 15, there is a story of a son who asked for and received his share of inheritance while his father was still alive. He thought, "It will be mine anyway, so it wouldn't make much difference whether I receive it now or later." When he received his share, soon he left his father. "I have my own way of doing things." He lived as he wanted, having his own way. He might have been convinced that he just took a first step into happy life.

However, what happened? He squandered his wealth in wild living. And he began to be in need. So it's not good not to respect and not to obey your parents.

Some of you might think, "But my parents are not Christians. They are just like that prodigal son grown-up. How can I respect them? If I obey them, I will be in danger." Or some of you might think, "I am annoyed just by looking at my parents. If I listen to them, the happiness I have now will be ruined." The fact of the matter is I am talking about myself, and I'm working on it. It's on the progress.

There is only one condition as we obey our parents. That is "in the Lord". In the Lord, we respect our parents and serve them.

In the Lord, we put off our old self which is being corrupted. We were made new in the attitude of our minds. We are clothed in the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness (Eph 4:22-24). In the Lord.

So God says, "You are to relate to your parents as God's dearly loved child. They are precious for me as ones made in my image. I love them. You are to be an imitator of God as His dearly loved child. You will love them even though they are the parents whom you feel difficult to respect, right? You will love them "in the Lord", as you are connected with me, covered by me, closed in me, right?"

It's easy to say that. But it's challenging to do it actually. I cannot do it by myself. We cannot do it without the help of the Holy Spirit. If we do it today, it

doesn't mean we master it now. Failing many times, we learn to protect our heart and act, trusting in God. We will do it in Christ.

When you don't want to respect and accept parents or others, what kind of feelings do you have inside? For me, there may be bitterness, hatred, grudges, hostility, dislike, judgmental feelings, desire to argue or blame. How can we be happy, while we have those kind of feelings? While we leave the cause of unhappiness in our heart, it is impossible for us to be happy.

For example, I want to stay comfortably in my room. I put drawings, put flowers. I hung my favorite color curtains, and put a nice lamp and so on. But the leftover food is still on the plate. The garbage bin is full of garbage. Then, no matter what I decorate my room, the room will become smelly. Cockroaches will thrive. Flies fly around, and mice run around. If I want to stay comfortably in my room, I must throw away garbage, unless smelly garbage makes you feel good.

God, you say "respect your parents", but can't you see they did this to me, they treated me like that? I was so troubled because of them. I was so hurt. How can I respect them? No way!

We may be tired emotionally or heartbroken in our human relations. If that is with parents or close friends, the wounds may be all the more, deep and great.

Robert Mulholland Jr. shares this story in his book "The Deeper Journey."

He was speaking at one event and invited for dinner by one couple. Over the dinner, the wife shared her life story.

She was the daughter of a prostitute. She was literally a job-related accident! She'd been raised by aunts, uncles, grandparents, even her mother from time to time, who continued to ply her trade. As a young teenager, she discovered the love of God in Christ and responded to that love. She went to a Christian college, and there she met a young man; they fell in love and were married.

But her beautiful home, her wonderful marriage and her family were being destroyed because of her compulsive need to know who her father was. She was spending every single energy and all the resources to find out who her father was. Of course, it was impossible.

One day she was standing at her kitchen sink, cleaning some dishes. She was alone. In the pain and anguish of her heart, her tears running down her face

and dropping into the dishwater, she cried out, “Oh God, who is my father?” She heard a voice say, “I am your Father.” The voice was so real she turned around to see who had sneaked into the kitchen behind her. No one was there. She heard the voice again, “I am your Father, and I have always been your Father.”

In that moment she was released from that obsessive need to know who her biological father had been. She learned that, in spite of the strange dynamics surrounding her conception and birth, she was a person spoken forth out of the heart of God’s love before the foundation of the world.

That is who we are.<sup>1</sup>

Earlier today, we learned about the relationship between Jesus the Son and God the father. Jesus and the father shared such a strong bond of love. Jesus was so sure, “The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him” (John 8:29).

This is Jesus’ conviction. My father sent me and he is always with me. No matter what happens, he will never abandon me. There is no fault in me, I have nothing to hide before the father. There is no disagreement with the father. I will obey His will even if it means death, even death on the cross.

He had the conviction that the father loves him and is always with him. That sustained him. That was his standpoint.

Matthew recorded the crucifixion of Jesus as follows:

#### Matt 27:44-46

In the same way the robbers who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him. <sup>45</sup> From the sixth hour until the ninth hour darkness came over all the land. <sup>46</sup> About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” --which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

Jesus cried out in a loud voice. He had no other choice but to cry out. When he most needed the support and love from the father, he couldn’t help crying out “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” He couldn’t even call Him father any longer. I cannot be forsaken. I lived the father’s will. Then why God? And the father cannot forsake me, but now I am forsaken by the father. “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

---

<sup>1</sup> M. Robert Mulholland Jr., *The Deeper Journey*, IVP, 2006, pp..72-73

And by this cross of Jesus, the great exchange happened. Jesus became sin for us and we were made children of God. We are made children who can call God “Abba father.”

Jesus was forsaken by God the father on the cross. So Jesus can relate to all kinds of pains, sadness and sufferings we experience in our human relations. He understands very well all kinds of unfairness, injustice, and inhumane treatment as his own pain.

“Jesus reveals a God who is not indifferent to human agony, a God who fully embraces the human condition, and plunges into the thick of our human struggle.”<sup>2</sup>

### 1Peter 2:24

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

Jesus never tells you to just forget about the pains you experienced. He received your pain on the cross. And he will heal you. He will help you not to hurt others because of your pain, sorrow and suffering, but rather he will transform you into Christlikeness, restore the image of God in you, help you to live for righteousness.

We will experience this in the relationship with God where we call him “Father”. As we call God Father, as we experience again and again how much God loves us, the work of God’s healing will progress. As we call God Father, love him and love people he loves, we will mature little by little and start living for righteousness. We do it together, because he is our Father. “Experiencing the Life, Changing Lives.” We can call God Father, how blessed we are!

For LifeNet groups and personal reflection:

1) In Mark 1, how is Jesus’ human side described? What kind of relationship can man have with God?

---

<sup>2</sup> Brennan Manning, *Lion and Lamb*, Chosen Books, 1986, p. 128

- 2) On the cross Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matt 27:46). What does it mean to you?
- 3) As you can call God Father, what kind of time would you like to have with him? Describe as specific as possible.
- 4) If you are a parent, is there anything you want to change in your life as a model of integrity of faith and work/daily living? What will you do? How will you start?