

Treating Others Like Abba Treats Me Matthew 7:7-12

I. Jesus encourages us to pray.

- A. Prayer is making requests of our good Father in heaven.
 - 1. Ask for what you need.
 - 2. Seek what you are looking for.
 - 3. Knock on the door you want to have opened to you.
 - 4. If you do, you will receive, find and have doors opened to you.
- B. He uses the analogy of children asking human parents.
 - 1. What do you give them? (Matthew 7:9-10).
 - (a) A stone is useless. A snake is harmful.
 - 2. No, you give them what they need/desire, what will be good.
 - (a) So, you know how to give good gifts to your child.
 - (b) And you do that even though you are evil (Matthew 7:11).
 - (c) In contrast to you, your heavenly Father is good!
 - (d) So, of course he knows how to give good gifts.
 - 3. Does a good parent always give what a child asks for?
 - (a) These are the certain questions we ask ourselves.
 - (b) We do that to determine if it really is good.
 - (c) Is this really a need?
 - (d) Is it good for my child?
 - (e) Is it good for our family (can we afford it?)
 - 4. Similarly, God doesn't always give us what we ask for.
 - (a) But it's never because he is not good.
 - (b) On the contrary, he withholds and provides because he is good.

II. The Gospel is embedded in the passage.

- A. Jesus says to all his hearers, "You are evil."
 - 1. Notice it's not, "if" you are evil.
 - (a) The "if" is connected to, "you know how to give good gifts."
 - (b) If you can do that, even though you are evil...
 - 2. Notice he doesn't say, "some of you are evil."
 - (a) He assumes that both his disciples and the crowd are evil.
 - 3. Is he being judgmental?
 - (a) No, he is speaking about the post-fall condition of people.
 - (b) Our sin is not just something we think or do.
 - (c) Our nature is corrupted and fallen.
 - (d) We are all sinners.
- B. Yet, God provides for us.
 - 1. God is loving, kind, and generous toward us.
 - 2. But, if we are evil, God's generosity is not based on our merit.
 - (a) We haven't lived in a way that deserves God's goodness.
 - (b) We have not earned it.

- (c) In fact, since we are evil, we deserve God's judgment.
 - (d) God provides for us by grace.
- 3. God can forgive sinners like us because Jesus took our place.
 - (a) Our evil and rebellion called for justice (judgment).
 - (b) Jesus was condemned to die in our place.
 - (c) As we trust in him and his sacrifice, God forgives us.
 - (d) He raises us up from sin and death, gives us a new life.

III. Be like your Father in heaven!

- A. Children are sometimes treated as not important.
 - 1. An old saying, "Children are to be seen and not heard."
 - 2. Jesus' disciples acted out of their cultural norm.
 - (a) Children are coming to Jesus.
 - (b) "Get away kids. The Messiah has important things to do."
 - (c) This probably shows us how children were thought of.
 - (d) They loved their kids, but kids were secondary to adults.
 - 3. Children are sometimes dismissed because they are seen as having little wisdom, no money, no power, little status.
 - 4. But Jesus, said, "don't keep the children from coming to me."
 - (a) He values the children.
- B. When you ask, seek, knock, you want your heavenly Father to give you what you need.
 - 1. He does so very generously because of love and grace.
 - 2. You know how to give good gifts to your children.
 - (a) A fish, not a snake.
 - 3. Do for your kids what you want God to do for his kid, you.
 - (a) Do unto others (the Golden Rule) (Matthew 7:12).
 - (b) "Others" includes even children.
 - 4. God is kind, generous, and gracious to us, his children.
 - (a) As his child, you want him to be that way.
 - (b) You be that way to your kids, too.
 - (c) But not only to your kids, "in everything, do to others..."
 - (d) Be gracious, loving, and kind in all relationships.
 - (e) That summarizes the Scriptures. Be like your Dad!
 - 5. Are there people that we treat like the disciples treated the children? People we see as less important because they don't know enough, or, they don't have money, power, status.
 - (a) In other words, what could I possibly get from them?
 - (b) Do we devalue people because we don't think we'll get enough from relationship with them?
 - (c) What if God assessed relationships that way?
 - 6. So, Jesus says, "in everything, do unto others..."
- C. How do kids ask? They are persistent!
 - 1. Ask, seek and knock are in present continuous tense.
 - 2. Literal translation: "Ask and keep on asking..."
 - (a) "Everyone who perseveres in asking receives..."