### The Way to the Father

Jesus most common description of God is “FATHER”.

The traditional preamble to Jewish prayers begin with, “Baruch a ta Adonai” blessed are you Lord God). This has been recited for thousands of years. Yet when Jesus taught us to pray he started with these two words; “*OUR FATHER*” which are in Heaven.

*The Hebrew translation of those words are “Avinu shebashamayim”.*

However, most scholars believe that when He prayed that prayer in Hebrew, he began with the word: “Abba” – it’s what Jewish kids call their dad…you can too! The closest translation is “*Daddy”* .

"**Abba, Father"**

### Jesus the Way to the Father

In John 14, When Jesus claimed that he is the Way, the Truth and the Life, what was He the way to?– *to the Father*.

This takes place at the Last Supper, just after Jesus told them that he was going to be leaving them soon, and they were upset.

**JOHN 14:2-6** “**2**My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? **3**And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. **4**You know the way to the place where I am going.”

**5**Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

 **6**Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Jesus purpose on earth was to make *a way to the Father* for those who believe.

**John 1:12-13**  “to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— **13**children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.”

**John 15 - “My Father is the gardener”**

The word “Father” appears 10 times in this 27-verse chapter.

The Vine and the Branches

**15**“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. **2**He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. **3**You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.

What were the branches in Jesus that did not bear fruit? Who are the ones that *did* bear fruit?, and who is it that is already clean?

I believe he is referring to Judas as the one who is not clean and has been cut off.

**John 13:10-11**“**10**Jesus answered, “Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.” **11**For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was *why* he said not every one was clean.”

The rest of the disciples were about to go through a pruning in the coming days. As Jesus went to the cross, rose again but did not walk with them daily anymore, they would be cut back in size over the next 50 days, only to burst forth in power and number on the day of Pentecost. Their season of pruning would lead to a tremendous season of fruitful to follow.

Have you ever had to prune a plant or a tree?

It seems so counterintuitive. You try so hard to get *any* growth, that he idea of cutting what you have makes no sense.

[Our giant houseplant: We inherited a giant houseplant from the previous owners that sits in the corner of our family room. It’s about 12’ tall and had three or four huge leaf stalks growing from it. Over time the giant leaves got brown and developed some type of fungus. A plant expert came to our house and told us some of the stalks needed to be cut-off and others needed to be pruned. We did not want to accept that. We were trying so hard just to keep the thing alive. Yet, we allowed her to chop down several stalks and severely cut back the others. It looked paltry and pathetic for a few months, but soon after that it began to grow tall healthy leafy stalks. We realize now that the cutting and pruning was the best thing we ever did for that plant.]

Sometimes the Lord does that in us. If there are things in our life that are taking up space and resources but not bearing fruit, or worse yet, bearing bad fruit. He will prune them or cut them off. Not to punish us, or even necessarily to discipline us, but so that we can bear fruit in every area of our life, our relationships, our work, our health, our family and our ministry.

**REMAIN IN ME**

**4**Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

**5**“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. **6**If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. **7**If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. **8**This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

I cut a branch off of a tree in my front yard the other day because it was hanging onto my driveway. It was amazing how quickly the leaves began to wither as soon as it was cut off. I laid it on the driveway for just a short time, when. I came back the leaves looked smaller, limper and began to shrivel up.

This is how we are when. We are not abiding in Jesus. Spending time in prayer, worship, fellowship and studying His word.

**9**“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. **10**If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. **11**I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. **12**My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

Jesus lays it out very simply; If we keep His commands, we will remain in His love. If we do this, His joy will be in us and our joy will be complete.

That’s sounds easy IF we know what His command is. What’s His command?

“**12**My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.”

*(Same as the new commandment he gave in John 13:34)*

If we love one another as He loved us, our joy will be complete!

He then goes on to describe the way He loves us;

**13**Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. **14**You are my friends if you do what I command. **15**I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. **16**You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. **17**This is my command: Love each other.

*“Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends”*

This is true, selfless, sacrificial love. The greatest form of love “Agape love”.

The definition of this type of love is; “willing the highest good for the other, regardless of self”.

Sometimes it’s easy to describe a word by its opposites.

The opposites of love are *sin and selfishness.*

This is the love that motivated Jesus to endure the suffering, pain and excruciating death on the cross. He laid down His life for us, because he *loves us.*

**1st John 3:16 “**This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.”

**Jesus then talks to them about the “World”, that hates them**

**18**“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. **19**If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. **20**Remember what I told you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. **21**They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the one who sent me. **22**If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. **23**Whoever hates me hates my Father as well. **24**If I had not done among them the works no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. As it is, they have seen, and yet *they have hated both me and my Father*. **25**But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: ‘They hated me without reason.’ *(Ps.35 & 69)*

**What Is the World?**

Scripture generally uses the word "world" to refer to more than the physical planet on which we live.

It includes all our human-oriented activities: politics, economics, entertainment, education, conflict, and so much more. Everything that we as humans engage in, apart from God, is a part of this world.

Colossians 1:13 identifies this world as the dominion, or kingdom, of darkness. In John 12:31, Jesus refers to the prince of this world.

And Paul, in Ephesians 2:2, refers to "the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient."

**1st John 5:19“**We know that we are children of God, and that the whole *world* is under the control of the evil one.”

None of these passages mention Satan by name. But it is clear this world is under his authority and influence.

**They have hated both me and my Father**

Jesus just told his disciples, *"If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you."*

What Jesus told the eleven here is that *we do not belong to this world. And the world hates us for that.*

**2nd Timothy 3:12** “everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”

If you are living for Jesus, and prioritizing God’s will in your life, you will probably be persecuted by the world. If you are not living your life fully for God, they may leave you alone.

**James 4:4** “friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.”

The world is a hostile place for the one who is looking to live as a faithful follower of Jesus.

Our job is not to make friends with the world, do things they deem commendable, avoid saying things they disagree with, and bend over backwards so as not to offend them. Jesus didn’t do that. But he loved them.

We are to love them as well, but how do we do it?

God showed us how to love the world in John 3:16

**John 3:16 “**For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

God loved the world by offering them Jesus, and prioritizing their eternal life above all things.

You and I can do the same by giving them Jesus, and telling them that the way to eternal life is by believing in Him.

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Jesus then tells them that just as the Father sent His Son, he is now sending the Holy Spirit.

**The Work of the Holy Spirit**

**26**“When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. **27**And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.” <>

Jesus continues to teach them about the Holy Spirit. Their lives are about to change;

* Tomorrow He would die.
* Next week He will be resurrected but no longer walking with them daily.
* Next month He will ascend from their presence, and no longer be with them
* In 50 days, they will be filled with the Holy Spirit who will be sent from the Father. They will be empowered by Him, taught by Him, directed by him, comforted, counseled, and convicted by Him.

All He asks is to remain in Him, and if they do they will receive all that the Father promised.

This is for us. If we remain in Him we will receive everything that God desires for us. We will be blessed in every area of our life that is connected to the vine and we will bear the most wonderful fruit imaginable.

This is why it’s so important to be completely devoted and dependent upon the Father for everything we seek and desire. If we aren’t, we will become fruitless branches that need to be pruned back so that we may someday again be fruitful.

Don’t look to the world for things that the Father wants to give you.

**James 1:17“**Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from *the Father* of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. **18**He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first *fruits* of all he created.”

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