

# The Father's Embrace

07 - The Art of Rest

Church on the Park | Father's Day, 07 September 2014

**Text:** Deu. 33:12; Luke 15:11-32

**Theme:** The greatest place of rest is in the Father's embrace.

**Intro:** Over the last couple of months we've been doing a series on rest. Last week we talked about removing the obstacle of unforgiveness from our hearts. Unforgiveness keeps us from entering into God's rest. Today, we are going to focus on intimacy with the heavenly Father since it's Father's Day. But I'm not speaking this just because it's Father's Day; it's a message that has been on my heart for a few months now.

## 1) The greatest place of rest is in the Father's embrace (Deu. 33:12)

- Deuteronomy 33:12 is one of my favourite verses of Scripture. Moses was just about to die, but he left these **parting** words for the tribe of Benjamin: "About Benjamin he said: 'Let the beloved of the Lord **rest secure** in him, for he **shields** him all day long, and the one the Lord loves **rests** between his **shoulders**.'"
- Benjamin means "son of my **right hand**," but it **wasn't** his **first** name. His first name was **Ben-oni**, meaning "son of my **sorrow**." Rachel **died** just after she gave birth to him and gave him a name connected with sorrow as she was dying. But **Jacob** stepped in and **changed** the curse into a blessing.
  - **Fathers** have the ability to change curses into blessings by the **words** they speak and the **identity** they impart to their children
- The promise of Deuteronomy 33:12 was spoken to a tribe that began in **sorrow**. But God knows how to **comfort** us in the deepest of losses.
  - This week I thought I might lose my **wife** as she became violently ill. It was a good thing I didn't go to Burma/Myanmar. **Everything is Father filtered!**
  - The Father closed a door for a higher purpose
- "The one the Lord loves rests between his shoulders."
  - We are **loved** by the **Father** and this is shown through **Jesus Christ**
  - Jesus Christ is in the **closest intimacy** with the Father and through Jesus we have that **same** intimacy with the Father
  - Through the **cross** we have been brought near to the Father and can rest between the Father's shoulders. In other words, there is **no obstacle** that is holding us back from the **Father's embrace**, from **living** in his **arms**.
  - This is the place of the **greatest rest**, peace and security.
  - The **more anxious**, worried, insecure and jealous you are the **further** you are drifting from the Father's embrace.

## 2) You were created for the Father's embrace (Luke 15:11-32)

- This story is about **two sons**. So I'd like to speak about both of the sons.
- Early in my Christian walk, during the **first few years** of my **salvation**, I was kneeling by my bed and the Father began to **pour** his awesome **love** over me and into my heart.
- I was a pool of tears and the Holy Spirit kept telling me that I was **created for the Father's love**

- I had this kind of experience **many times** in the first five years of my walk with God. I was just coming to the Lord and the Father was revealing to me the **foundation** of his love.
  - Those experiences **transformed** me and they are the **whole basis** of **my love** for my wife and children and for this church.
  - Through the Father's love I was **healed** and **restored**—it was a time of **feasting** and **celebration** because I, a **prodigal son**, had come to the Father. It wasn't a one off feast. It was a **feast** of joy and honour for about 5-7 years.
    - After that I went through "hell"
  - My **eulogy** to my Father in **public speaking** class
- To be **called** a **child** of the prodigal (**extravagant** Father) is the greatest of all **privileges** (John 1:12; \*1 John 3:1-3)
  - We can't **appreciate** being a child of the Father unless we realize what we **were** before (Eph. 2:1-7)
- Just last week I received my **first passport** as an **Australian citizen**. This means a lot to me; I have the **right** and **authority** to go in and out of the country and to live here with all the **benefits** of a naturally born citizen.
- But at one time I **didn't** have this right. In **2007** I was stuck in **JFK** because my permanent **resident visa** expired. They weren't going to let me go back to Australia, except we prayed.
- As believers we are not just permanent residents (tolerated occupants) but **citizens** (Eph. 2:19). And more over, we are **children** of the king.

### 3) As a child of the Father, everything the Father has is yours (Luke 15:31)

- This brings us to the older brother of the prodigal son.
  - Notice his **struggle** and **jealousy**
  - He **lost sight** of what it **means** to be a **child** of the **Father**
  - Like a New Yorker who never visits the **Statue of Liberty** because he or she lives there
- In our **early** walks with the Father we encounter **unspeakable joy** as the Father rejoices over us. But then, we **move** on to **daily enjoying** the Father without the big party being about us. Often believers don't do well with this **transition** into manhood or womanhood.
  - We don't do well with the **weaning** phase of our walks
  - Encounter vs. Daily Enjoyment
- In this season, we need to cultivate the **everyday presence** of God and **access** to all he has, as well as focus on seeking and saving the lost. This is about us **growing** in the Father's heart for the poor, lost and dying.
- We have **access** to every **precious promise** in God's Word—every **good thing** is ours.
  - In the **hospital** I read the first **10 Psalms** to Anna
- **\*\*The promises** of rest are ours. The promises of God's presence are ours. The promise of wellness is ours. The riches of God's Kingdom is ours. We have access to the Father's secrets, his teaching and his power. Nothing is withheld from us.
  - It is all **accessed** through faith, prayer and fasting.

**Conclusion:** First, know that the greatest place of rest and security is in the Father's arms—you've been created for his embrace. Run into the Father's arms and live in his presence. Realise every good thing he is and has, is yours. Experiencing this transforms how you live.

## END NOTES

Mainly for future message:

Moses word to Benjamin. "The one who the Lord loves rests between his shoulders."

To be a good father you need to intimately know the best Father

You can't learn fatherhood from just a book. You need to know the heavenly Father.

There is a verse of Scripture I have always found fascinating. In Isaiah Jesus is called the "Everlasting Father." Now I thought Jesus was the Son of God and his Father was the Everlasting Father. But here, Jesus is called the "Everlasting Father."

Why is this so?

When you spend so much time with someone you become like that person. Jesus has always been in communion with his Father, and consequently he is also a Father.

It takes being a son to be a Father.

You'll often hear new generation Christians apologize to their children for being bad fathers. They say something like, "I never had a father and didn't know how to be a father." This is an accurate description of the problem. You can only learn fatherhood through relationship.

But here is the good news. Through Jesus Christ we can all have an intimate relationship with your true Father.

And the Father gives special grace to the fatherless, overcompensating for what they have missed in the natural. The Father reveals himself to every diligent seeking soul.

You have been created for the Father's embrace, to walk in daily close communion with him.

Focus on being a good son and you will be a good father

Knowing the Father will also is the key thing to empower your motherhood. We can apply this message to all.

Encountering the Father and Enjoying the Father daily

ecstasy to daily experience

The Prodigal Son