

Show Us the Father

by H.J. Vine

The Father is revealed through the Son, who is the only way to know the Father and experience His love and glory.

Scripture: Matthew 28:19, John 1:18, John 14:6, John 14:8, John 14:11, John 17:4-5, John 17:8, 1 John 2:13

Topics: "God The Father", "Holy Trinity"

Description

H.J. Vine preaches about the profound revelation of the Father through Jesus Christ, emphasizing that seeing Jesus is seeing the Father, and knowing Jesus is knowing the Father. The Father's glory, love, and eternal life are fully manifested in the Son, and believers are enabled by the Holy Spirit to appreciate this divine favor. The sermon explores the distinctions and eternal perfections of the Father, the significance of His Name, and the deep joy and fullness found in understanding the Father's nature and attributes.

Transcript

These words expressed the height to which the desires of the Lord's disciples rose.

They had seen His wonderful works, they had heard His gracious words, they had observed His perfect life, and they had contemplated His glory--as an only one with a father;--and now, Philip says to Him, "Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us" (John 14:8). After all the disclosures which the One who had come in the Father's Name had made to them, if this were added, then satisfaction would be theirs.

The revelation of the Father is made that our "joy may be full," and that in spite of the failure of men in the assemblies on earth, as well as in every other position in which they have been placed--but Jesus replied, "He that has seen Me has seen the Father." It is vain to look elsewhere therefore, or for some advance on what has been made known in Him. We are limited to the Son for the knowledge of the Father, and in Him He is fully revealed.

Creation may declare a measure of God's glory, and manifest His eternal power and divinity, rendering inexcusable those who do not seek Him; but no one had seen God Himself at any time, until the One who is in the bosom of the Father declared Him (John 1:18). Indeed, in Matthew 11:27 we are told, no one knows the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son may be pleased to reveal Him. This clearly confines us to the Son for the revelation of the Father, and that too, according to His Divine pleasure. "No one comes to the Father except by Me" (John 14:6).

Those who are begotten of God and have the Holy Spirit--those who are "the children of God,"--are enabled to appreciate this Divine favour of the Son. In beholding Him they behold the Father; in hearing His words,--recorded for us in the Gospels--they hear the Father's words (John 14:10; 17:8); in seeing His works they see the Father's works (9:4; 14:10); and in knowing Him they know the Father (14:6). The Spirit gives the power for this, and the favour is indeed both high and holy; nevertheless, it must be pointed out, even the babes in the family of God know the Father (1 John 2:13), for they have, as begotten of God, the nature and the life for this, as well as the power.

Seeing, therefore, the revelation of the Father and of the things of the Father is for all God's children, we may proceed with confidence in our consideration of this. It is truly great and glorious, but the anointing which we have received is all-sufficient to guide into all truth. The Spirit of truth has come for this purpose. May we therefore on our side be diligent in responding to His leading, and thus become enriched in spiritual understanding, being filled with the wealth of the disclosures which have been made by and in the Son. To this end we will look first at that which has come from the Father, then at that which is with the Father, and afterward at the Name of the Father, for that tells us what He is in Himself,

That Which is From Him

We speak of what proceeds from Him first of all because this will provide us with clear evidence of that which distinguishes the Father and of the eternity of His most glorious Person. In the inspired writing by John, we are told over and over again that the Father sent our Lord Jesus Christ--that He came from the Father--that He came in His Name--to represent Him, and to be the world's Saviour. Varied and subtle as are the many attacks upon the Person of our Lord Jesus today, nevertheless the incomparable greatness of Christ is admitted even by those who would rob Him of some of His distinctions. They own the moral superiority of Jesus as towering above all others! What then must be predicated of the One He represented? the One from whom He came?--"I came out from the Father and have come into the world" He said (John 16:28);--and, speaking as a man amongst men, He also said, "My Father is greater than I" (14:28).--The exalted perfections of the Representative necessarily therefore enhance the glories of the One represented. How great is He who came from the Father! How great, then, must be the Father from whom He came! We will not follow this further at present.

Among other things which have come into this world from the Father are His words--words of vital and surpassing import--words which bring eternal blessing and present comfort to those who receive them in faith,--words which nevertheless contain depths of meaning which the strongest minds fail to fathom. These words were given to us by the Son as the anointed Prophet of God, and the voice which spake from the excellent glory upon the holy mount, when He received from God the Father honour and glory, said, "Hear Him." They asked John the Baptist. "Art thou that Prophet? What Prophet? The Prophet promised by Jehovah, of whom He said, I will put "My words" in His mouth (Deut. 18:18). That One was Jesus, not John. He said of Him, "He whom God has sent speaketh the words of God"; and Peter said to Him, "Thou hast the words of eternal life." Many of the people, too, exclaimed--when he fed the five thousand in the desert and spoke God's words to them,--"This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world!" Moreover He Himself said to the Father concerning His disciples, "Now they have known that all things whatsoever Thou hast given Me are of Thee, for I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me" (John 17:7-8). These Scriptures clearly identify the Father with Jehovah of the Old Testament, just as others identify the Lord Jesus with Jehovah. The words are Jehovah's in Deuteronomy and they are called the Father's in John.

Along with the words were the wonderful works of the Father, and they were works of such a nature, that never had the like been seen in the world before. They also bore witness to the Divine origin of the words. The words and the works were together. The Son, by whom both came, said, "If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not; but if I do, though ye believe Me not, believe the works that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in Me, and I in Him" (John 10:37-38). When they sought to stone Him He said, "Many good works have I showed you from My Father; for which of those works do ye stone Me?" They replied, it was not for the works, but the words! Surely the origin of the one bore evidence to the origin of the other! They were too blind to see this; and, having referred to both, the Lord showed that their sin was inexcusable, for in these things they had seen and hated both the Son and the Father (John 15:24). This was a serious matter, for so awful does it reveal the condition of man to be, that, even along with the outward advantages of religion, he nevertheless hates God. Yet, in spite of that hatred, the works of the Father done by the Son showed forth the mercy, the kindness, the grace, the compassion, the tenderness and the love, as well as the power of the Father, in a way that faith could appreciate and rejoice in. The Lord was desirous that His own should fully recognize this, for it was to them He said, "The Father that dwelleth in Me, He does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me: or else believe Me for the very works' sake" (John 14:11). Surely they amply expressed the abounding goodness of the Father.

The Apostle Paul spoke of Him as the Father of mercies or of compassions, as well as the God of all comfort or encouragement. These things find their source in the Father, and flow from Him. James, too, reminds us that every good and perfect gift comes from Him who is the Father of lights, and who Himself knows no variableness nor shadow of turning, whatever may be said of the lights He has given. Again, however great may be the splendour and the magnificence which shall yet fill all things, with Christ as the Centre--as the Epistle to the Ephesians discloses--He Himself is said to be "the Father of glory" (1:17). All comes from Him. Moreover, the Lord spoke of the promise of the Father,--the gift of the Spirit (Acts 1:4). All these things eloquently proclaim His infinite grace and His Divine greatness; but how vast must be the durable riches and wondrous wisdom of the Father also, for has He not given constitution and distinctive being to every family in the heavens and on the earth? therefore all are separately named of Him, as Ephesians 3:15 tells us. Finally, does not 1 Corinthians 8:6 clearly show that He is eternal, when it says, "There is one God, the Father, of whom are all things"? Elsewhere we are told that "all things were created by the Son of His love (Col. 1:16); and the Holy Ghost is said to be the eternal Spirit (Heb. 9:14); yet this Scripture plainly declares the eternity as well as the deity of the Father, for how could "all things" be of Him were He not before all? The Father's counsel, the Son's work, and the Spirit's power, explain for us the relative activities of Him who is first called in the Bible by that Name of plural majesty,--"ELOHIM" (Gen. 1:1). This is He who said, Let us make man; and again we read in Luke 15, "Let us make merry". There the relative activities of the Son, the Spirit and the Father in relation to redemption are vividly and beautifully illustrated for us. Great and eternal are the joys resulting from the Father's counsel of blessing.

That Which is With Him

We have seen that all things are of the Father, but the Holy Spirit in 1 John 2:16 excepts two things: "Because all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (N.Tr.). These two world-energies--lust and pride--have not--nay, could not--have their origin in Him, for with Him are righteousness, holiness and love in infinite perfection. Such things, therefore, could not have their source in the Father.

In John 17, our Lord Jesus Christ addressed Him as righteous Father (v. 25), and as holy Father (v. 11). We read, too, of the love of the Father (1 John 2:11). In all three passages the world is contrasted and exposed. First as ignorant, then as evil, and finally as that which excludes the love of the Father.

Constant familiarity with terms is apt to cause us to lose the sense of the importance of that which they express. In a world of unrighteousness and ignorance of the true God, it should surely be a strong stay to be assured that the One to whom we belong is righteous. Amidst the unholy scenes, too, through which we pass, how comforting to our trusting hearts it is to know that He is holy! And, if the love of the world shuts out His love, we can surely rejoice that the love of the Father filling our hearts expels the other. Nor need we allow the sense of our sinful condition as children of fallen Adam to cause fear and distance. It is rather a cause for thanksgiving that the truth has enabled us to discover this, and to behold the grace which has provided a perfect Saviour and Deliverer in the Son, giving us to avail ourselves also of His all-prevailing sacrifice, so that the righteousness and holiness and love, which are with the Father, are all for us, who through the Son have access to the Father by the Spirit (Eph. 2:18). The work of perfect love casts out fear (1 John. 4:18).

In speaking of that which is with the Father we must again remind our hearts, only One who knew what was there could tell us. The Son alone could "all its secrets tell." And it is in the abiding ministry of the Spirit through John, given after failure had invaded the assemblies, that these riches are fully unveiled for us. It is there "THE FATHER" is so named 88 times: 72 in the Gospel and 16 in his epistles; whereas Matthew gives but 3 (11:27; 28:19), Mark 1 (13:32), and Luke 2 (10:22). It is also in John's writings we have "THE SON" so named 22 times, and only ONCE in the Old Testament (Ps. 2:12), and but to times in the rest of the New. These figures speak for themselves, and are consistent with the fact that the Spirit gives us the perfect revelation of the Father and His things in and by the Son through John. The Son was with the Father, and shared along with Him in Godhead glory before the world was (John 17:5). He came forth from the Father, and, as a Man, the Son of the Father, declared what was with Him from whom He came.

Pre-eminently He made known the love which was there, and though He Himself was truly a man, nevertheless He was still the Son in the bosom of the Father (John 1:18), and the Father who sent Him was both with Him and in Him (16:32; 14:11), as He too was in the Father; therefore, that love which He knew so well could be revealed by Him in perfection; and when He speaks of it as that which the Father had for Him before the foundation of the world (17:4), we may well rejoice; but when He further says that the Father loves us, who have believed on the Son, as He loves Him, we can only bow in adoration. How marvellous! and yet how true! for the Son has disclosed the fact--The Father loves us as He loved the Son before the world's foundation!

With the Father was also life--eternal life. This, too, He would have made ours along with the love; therefore He sent the Son in view of this, and the Son came that we might have life, and have it abundantly (10:10). This, however, necessitated His death, for we were sinners. He therefore died that we might live, and all who appropriate His death have eternal life; but the life itself, "which was with the Father (1 John 1:2), has been shown in the Son for our contemplation and delight--in Him, "the Word of life,"--its embodiment and expression,--who was seen and heard by the disciples, What they saw and heard they passed on to us, and it is in that way we who have believed receive the truth, and with that abiding in us, we "abide in the Son and in the Father; and this is the promise which He promised us, life eternal" (1 John 2:24-25). "He that has the Son has life" (1 John 5:12), for in having the Son we have the Father also. The Son brought the life which was with the Father into manifestation here, as well as the love, and both are

now the portion of His own. This is surely heaven upon earth. No wonder it is said to be made known to us that our "joy may be full" (1 John 1:4).

We are told, too, that glory was with Him before the world was. In that glory the Son shared, for in John 17:5 He speaks of it to the Father as "the glory which I had along with Thee before the world was." That surely was Godhead glory. But all true glory finds its source there; and counselled glory through redemption shall soon be fully established. "The Father of glory," "the Lord of glory," and "the Spirit of glory" shall be all in all in a suitable realm of "eternal glory." "The God of glory" shall rejoice eternally in the glorious results of Divine counsel, service, power and love. Foreknowledge (1 Peter 1:2) too, being with the Father, along with perfect wisdom, He could elect and predestinate accordingly without flaw.

There is one undisclosed secret, which remains with the Father. It concerns the time of the Son of Man's return in majesty and power (Mark 13:32; Acts 1:7). This is by Divine arrangement clearly, and only emphasizes the Son's Omniscience, for it was He who told us of it, and how could He have done so had He been less than He was?

Moreover, all the Father's things are the Son's! This is twice mentioned (Isa. 16:15; 17:10). The Spirit makes them known to us. Here again we find evidence of the eternal relations of the Father, the Son and the Spirit. Speaking of the Son as man we read of the Father giving Him to have life in Himself, as the Father had; also of Him giving all judgment, and all things, into His hands (John 5:26-27; 3:35). And it was the Father's will that those who saw the Son and believed on Him should have eternal life (John 6:40). This was His promise, as we have seen, and His commandment too (John 12:50). How unspeakably wealthy then are those who "continue in the Son and in the Father"!

Space and time fail us to speak of the home, the best robe, the ring and the shoes of Luke 15; and of the music, the dancing and merry-making, where light and love and life and glory dwell.

The Father's Name

Anticipating His ascension as a man to His Father, our Lord Jesus Christ spoke certain things in the world in the hearing of His own, that they might have the peculiar joy which was fulfilled in themselves (John 17:13). Among other things, they heard Him tell the Father He had manifested His Name to them (v. 6); and again He said, "I have made known to them Thy Name, and will make it known; that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them and I in them" (v. 26). Of all the disclosures which the Son made when here on earth, none surely surpassed the supreme blessedness of this.

After He had opened the way of life for us through His death, and when He was about to ascend to His Father as the risen man,--the Son of God,--He made it known to those He called His brethren, that a new relationship was now theirs,--His Father was their Father, and His God was their God (chap. 20:17). In the life and power of this wonderful relationship, we shall be in liberty to rejoice in the revelation of the Father's Name. Nor must we overlook the fact that though Christ is here seen in John 20:55 the risen man, yet in verse 28 He accepts homage as LORD and GOD, because He never ceased to be the Son who was one with the Father (10:30). Had He only been man, His very perfection as such would have refused this; but He saw that the faith of Thomas had taken in who He was, and He therefore received from him this expression of the dignity and of the deity which were truly His. Moreover, had He not been one with the Father, how could He have fully manifested His Name?--told out what He is in Himself, for that is what it means.

There is an elevated sense of apartness from the world in the truth made known concerning the Father, so Jesus prayed to Him thus regarding His own: "Sanctify them by Thy truth, Thy word is truth." Here in John 17 we have what may be truly called "the Lord's prayer"; but in the prayer after the "manner" of which He taught His earthly disciples to pray in "secret," and not with "vain repetitions," He expresses the same thought of sanctity, "Hallowed be Thy Name" (Matt. 6:9; Luke 11:2). That which energizes and glorifies the world in its own eyes is in no sense of the Father, and the love of it is exclusive of the love of the Father, as we have seen. The Son said to Him, while He was in the world, He kept those whom He had given to Him in the Father's Name. Here lies the great truth of preservation as we go through a world of moral evil. So Jesus asked, "Holy Father, keep through Thine own Name those whom Thou hast given Me." If in the Name "Holy Father" we have preservation from the world, so in the Name "Righteous Father" we have the exposure of its ignorance--"the world has not known Thee" (v. 25). Judaism was worldly, so is Christendom; where then is righteousness to be found?--With the Father!--With God! and for the revelation of it we are dependent on the Son. He has made known His Name. The voice from heaven said, "Hear Him," He came in His Father's Name, and the religionists of that day received Him not (John 5:43), but in the same verse we are told of "another," He will come "in His own name" and the world-religionists will receive Him, but only to be led into blackness and darkness and wrath. From the present tendencies in this direction there is preservation as we have seen, thank God, in the knowledge of the Father's Name.

To pretend to honour Jesus Christ, as many do today, and yet to remain indifferent to the supreme revelation made by Him, does not savour of genuineness. When He Himself drew near to the hour of the great expression of His love to the Father (16:31)--when He was about to lay down His life according to the Father's commandment--when in lowly obedience He would drink the cup given to Him by the Father, He said, "Now is My soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour. But for this cause came I to this hour. FATHER, GLORIFY THY NAME." That is what filled His thoughts amidst the scenes of rejection and betrayal through which He was passing, and can a true believer today be callous as to the glory of that holy Name? The crowd that stood by thought it thundered when the voice from heaven answered, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again," while others thought an angel had spoken to Him; but it was the response of the Father to Him who at all costs to Himself sought the glory of His great Name. We do not wonder, therefore, that--after He had laid down His life to this end, as well as for our eternal blessing--He was raised again from among the dead by the glory of the Father (Rom. 6:4), for He thus expressed His deep delight and satisfaction in the One who had fully sustained the honour of His Name.

It was the Father who sent the Son, to be the world's Saviour (1 John 4:14); and, in keeping with this, although men crucified Him between two malefactors, He prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And when risen, He sent the Gospel to every creature, telling the disciples to baptize in the Name of the Father as well as that of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19). Grace, therefore, beams forth in the Father's Name--forgiving grace--saving grace--grace for the guilty--grace Divine, as well as holiness and righteousness and love. It has been said, The Father is God in grace. What a proof of this we have in Luke 15: "I have sinned," confessed the prodigal! "Let us make merry," said the father, "for this my son was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found!"

Infinite and varied are the moral splendours that combine to show forth the living glories of that Name of sanctity and grace. Jesus spoke of Him as "the living Father" (John 6:57); and the eternal life, the eternal glory, and the eternal love known in light and liberty, as we "continue in the Son and in the Father" by the Spirit's grace and power, are more than sufficient to make our cup run over in the darkest days of the

assemblies' failure; but what will it be when "God is all in all"?--when all that the Father counselled, all that the Son secured, and all that the Spirit gave power for, is fully established in eternal blessedness?

Do we read of Him being addressed as "Father, Lord of heaven and earth (Matt. 11:25)? and again, in James 3:9, of Him who is "the Lord's Father" (NT.)?--Do we confess Jesus as Lord (Rom. 10:9, N.Tr.)? and "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. 12:3).--Do we also read of "the Lord the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:17-18)? Do not these and many other Scriptures identify these three ever-glorious Persons, not only with "ELOHIM" (Gen. 1:1, etc.), but also with the "LORD our Lord" ("JEHOVAH our ADONAHY"--plural) of Psalm 8:1, 9? His Name of excellence is to be spread abroad over all the earth, and His glory is above the heavens. "In that day shall there be one Jehovah and His Name one" (Zech. 14:9); but this is HE who put all things under the Son as Son of Man (compare Ps. 8:6; and 1 Cor. 15:27-29); and He came to do the work necessary that God might be all in all, and also to show us the Father as we have seen. Moreover, consequent upon His ascension to the Father, the Spirit has come to make good to our adoring hearts that which has been revealed in and by the Son. Even in this we see the mutuality and oneness of the Persons of the Godhead the Spirit has been sent by the Father as the Comforter in the Son's Name (John 14:26); He was sent by the Son from the Father as the great witness (chap. 15:26); and He came Himself to guide us into all truth (chap. 16:13). It was concerning the very day in which we live--the day of the abiding presence of the Spirit--Jesus said, "In that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you" (chap. 20).

Redeemed by the Son, it is in Him as man we are brought to the Father, whom He has revealed; and the Father has received us with rejoicing in life and light and love and liberty where there is fullness of joy; and the Spirit ungrieved leads us into all truth and deepens our joy in the Father and the things of the Father.

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