

A Question for Professors

by James Smith

The sermon encourages listeners to examine their relationship with God as their Father and to trust in his care, provision, and comfort in every situation.

Scripture: Psalm 68:5, Psalm 133:1, Malachi 1:6, Matthew 6:26, Philippians 4:6, 1 Thessalonians 5:16, Hebrews 13:5, James 1:22, 1 John 3:1-2

Topics: "God The Father", "Christian Living"

Description

James Smith preaches on the assurance and comfort of having God as our Father, highlighting the care, provision, and guidance He offers to His children. He challenges believers to trust in God's promises, seek His will, and maintain communion with Him daily. Smith emphasizes the importance of contentment, confidence, and unity among God's family, urging Christians to honor their Father and share His love with others. He concludes by encouraging believers to act in a manner that reflects their relationship with God as their loving Father.

Transcript

"Do you have a father?" Genesis 44:19

Standing at my window one day, while the cholera was raging in London, I saw two corpses carried by, followed by one little child, walking alone next the coffins, with a few neighbors behind. That child was now an orphan. Both parents had been carried off by the pestilence. The sight of that child produced deep emotions, and awakened painful sympathy in my heart.

I was led to think of the sorrows and privations of orphanhood, and then of the happiness of the Lord's people to whom Jesus has said, "I will not leave you as orphans." A believer can never be an orphan, he has an ever-living, ever-loving, ever-present Father. But many of the Lord's people do not realize this, there they do not live and act under its influence. We have therefore at times been tempted to ask them, as Joseph did his brethren, "Do you have a father?" And now I am going to yield to that temptation, and actually propose the question. While I propose it, may the Holy Spirit apply it, and may every reader derive benefit from it.

First, to WHOM may this question be addressed?

There are many classes to whom it is applicable, and to whom it would come as a reproof. We will select a few.

There are professors who fear poverty. They are provided for at present. They are in tolerably comfortable circumstances. They have not lacked hitherto. But they think that times may change. Accidents may happen. Business may fail. The situation may be lost. Or old age will come. They have no stock in hand. The barrel of meal may waste, the cruse of oil may fail. They cannot enjoy the present, for fear of what may happen in the future. They are given to fear, and they encourage foreboding.

Does such a professor read these lines? If so, let me ask, "Do you have a father?" If so, will he know what you need? Will he be able to supply your needs? Will he be afar off--or near at hand? Will he forget you? Did he ever neglect any of his children? Have you any cause to suspect the truth of his Word? Did he ever break his promise? Did he ever fail one who trusted in him? If he has--then you may fear. But if he has not--then is it not wrong, is it not unkind, to doubt him?

There are some really poor, who need supplies. My poor brother, are your needs many? Are your resources exhausted? Are your means failing? Do you look around and ask, "What shall I do? How shall I obtain a supply?"

"Do you have a father?" If so--can he supply you? Has he ever promised to do so? Have you access to him? Can you get an opportunity to lay your case before him? Has he any love in his heart? Has he any pity, or sympathy, or compassion? If so, why do you droop, or give way to despondency? Is the Lord's hand waxed short, or is his ear heavy--that he cannot hear? Did he never help any in your circumstances? Will it be difficult for him to help you? Has he not helped you until now? Has he not said, "I will never leave you--nor ever forsake you?" Is it not his Word which says, "Your bread shall be given--and your water shall be sure!"

How many of his children has he starved to death? Did you ever see one of his children die from poverty? If not, why doubt? Why fear? "Cast your burden upon the Lord--and he shall sustain you." Give up anxiety, believe in your Father's love, trust in your Father's promise, and expect the hand of your Father's providence to supply all your needs.

There are believers who are always complaining of their circumstances. They are worked too hard. They are tried more than others. They have such a vexing family. Or, they have such a demanding job. Or, they have such financial losses. They have no end of things to vex, harass, and distress them.

Complaining Christian, "Do you have a father?" If so, had your Father anything to do with fixing your lot? Did he place you where you are? Is he wise? Is he good? Has he ever told you, that all things shall work together for your good? Does he know what is best for you? Has he left things to 'chance', or has he arranged all in his own infinite mind, and does he work all by his unerring providence? If he does, are you justified in complaining? Have you any real cause? Will complaining help you? Will it better your circumstances? Will it please your Father? Will it any way serve you? If not, leave off complaining, and "having food and clothing, let us be content with these!" Seek grace from God, that you may do all that is required, bear all that is sent, and endure all that is to be suffered--to His glory!

There are saints who contend with their brethren. Some contend about trifles. Some contend in an angry bitter spirit. Some while contending call names, anathematize, and treat their brethren contemptuously. They castigate their intellect, sit in judgment on their motives, and unmercifully denounce their conduct,

though it is not sinful. They separate from them, refuse to speak with them, and deny them all the charities of life.

Contending brethren, "Do you have a father?" Does he witness your conduct? Does he hear your contemptuous expressions? Does he see the disdain with which you treat your fellow-professor? Can he approve it? Will he justify you in it? Can he commend you for it? Is it not possible that he loves the very person whom you despise! That he pities the very person whom you censure! That he has pardoned the very person whom you condemn! Your erring brother may be weeping before your Father--while you are reproaching him! He may be praying for you--while you are speaking to others against him!

Should you not bear the infirmities of the weak, and not please yourself? Should you not forbear with your brother, and forgive your brother, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you? Should you not love your brother, be full of pity, and treat him just as you wish one under similar circumstances to treat you?

Let contention, then, give place to love; and let all bitterness, and wrath, and evil speaking be put away from you; and be "merciful, even as your Father, which is in heaven is merciful."

There are some Christians who are unhappy, who lack comfort. Comfortless one, "Do you have a father?" Can he comfort YOU? Is he not the God of all comfort? Has he not said, "As one whom his mother comforts--so will I comfort you?" Did he not comfort his people of old, under all their tribulations?

Go to him, then, and tell him all your troubles, all your sorrows, and all your crosses; ask of him with the simplicity of a child--for that comfort which you need. Believe his Word, look to his crucified Son, rest on his precious promises, and seek communion with him on the throne of his grace--and he will fill you with joy and peace.

There are some professors who are idle--they do nothing for God. Idle professors, "Do you have a father?" Did he bring you up in idleness? Has he not taught you to work? Has he given you no talents? Can he find you nothing to do? What, are there no sick brothers and sisters for you to visit? Are there no lost sheep for you to seek after? Are there no poor ones for you to feed?

Idle! What--in a world like this?

Idle! What--in times like these?

Idle! What--when souls are perishing!

Idle! What--Satan is triumphing!

Idle! What--hell is filling!

Idle, and yet God works by means!

Idle, when the Lord says,

"Son, go work to day in my vineyard!"

Idle, when everyone is to be rewarded

according to his works!

Idle, when industry is honor, employment pleasure,
and labor for Christ is bliss!

Idle professor--what will your Father say to you? What will the Judge of all say to you? Oh, if he should say, "You wicked and slothful servant!" If he should give the command, "Cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, there shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth!" Look to it, slothful professors, for evil is before you!

Secondly, how may this question be satisfactorily ANSWERED?

"Do you have a father?" Is it uncertain? Are you not sure? Do you doubt it? Let us try and ascertain whether God is your father or not.

Just answer a few questions for me.

To whom do you go in your troubles? The child goes to his father, do you go to the Lord? Does trouble bring you to your knees? Does it endear a throne of grace? Does it make the promises precious? Do you seek to have it sanctified, as well as removed? Do you desire that God may be glorified by you in every trouble? Then you have a Father!

To whom do you look in need? Do you run to man, or look to your own strength? Or do you look to the Lord, pleading his promises, and expect him to send you supplies? Does it seem natural to you to go to the Lord for what you need? The child looks to his father for the supply of all his needs, and if you naturally look to the Lord for yours--then you have a father!

To whom do you cry in danger? If the father is near, the child naturally cries out, "Father! father! save me!" So do the children of God. If they are in danger from sin, from Satan, from the world, or from themselves, they cry out without stopping to think, "Lord, save me!" Danger awakens fear, and fear prompts to prayer, and prayer is directed to the Lord, and to the Lord alone. If therefore in every season of danger you naturally cry to the Lord--then you have a father!

What do you principally desire? Is it God's favor, God's smile of approbation? If so--then you have a father.

What do you most fear? Is it God's displeasure, God's frown? If so--then you have a father.

What do you daily seek? Is it God's blessing? His blessing on your person, family, business, interests, and all in which you are engaged? If so--then you have a father.

What do you most dread? Is it banishment from God's presence? Is the bitterest ingredient in the cup of torment in your estimation, the idea of being separated from God, and being deprived of the presence of God? If so, doubtless, God is your father, and you are his well-beloved child.

Thirdly, what the answer in the affirmative should produce.

If God is your father--then you should exercise confidence in your father's care. He cares for you. He cares for the very hairs of your head, therefore he has numbered them. He bids you not to worry about anything--but to cast all your cares upon him. If God is your father, if he has promised to care for you--then you ought to exercise confidence in his care, and so enjoy peace.

If God is your father--then you should be content with your Father's allotments. He has fixed the bounds of your habitation. Whether master or servant, poor or wealthy, learned or illiterate, healthy or sick--all is of the Lord's wise appointment. Now if God is your father, if he is infinitely wise, if he loves you with an everlasting love, if he has called you to his kingdom and glory, if he is training you up for everlasting life, and if he has promised to explain and make the present plain to you by and by--then you should be contented. Hence said the apostle, "Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said--Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you!"

If God is your father--then you should be concerned to DO your Father's will. The father's will--is the child's law. Our Father is holy, just, and good. In all that he requires, as well as in all that he does--he aims at our holiness and happiness! Satisfied of this, we should in everything prefer his will to our own!

If God, the infinitely good One; if God, the infinitely holy One; if God, the infinitely just One--is your Father--then you ought in all things, in all places, at all times, to make it your one concern to do and suffer his most righteous will.

If God is your father--then you should commune with your Father daily. He is about your path, and about your bed. He is ever, and everywhere with you! When you lie down at night--he is at your pillow, and your last word should be spoken to him. When you awake in the morning--he is by your bedside, and your first utterance should be directed to him.

What should we think of a child sleeping in the same room with his father, and knowing the father to be awake, who would go to sleep without uttering a word, and arise and leave the chamber without a recognition! Yet how many who would wish us to think that God is their father, actually do so! If I live with my father, work with my father, sit at the same table with my father, walk ever in the same road with my father--shall I not hold fellowship with my father? Shall I not consult him on all difficult points, and speak to him on all pleasant subjects?

Just so, if God is your father--you ought constantly to commune with him.

If God is your father--then you should be in union with your family. Every Christian should be a member of a Christian church. Believers should walk together in the same road, work together in the same field, sit together at the same table, and live together in the bonds of holy brotherhood.

Brethren, if God is your father--see to it that you love the brethren; that you love all your Father's family, the young and the old, the rich and the poor, and let your daily prayer be, "Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

Reader, "Do YOU have a father?"

If so, what is his name--and what is his Son's name? Can you tell? Do you know his new name, LOVE! Do you know his Son's name, JESUS! Do you know him so as to trust in him, love him, surrender yourself to him, and obey him?

Where is his residence? God has a home in heaven--and a home in the believer's heart. Are your affections in heaven as your home? Is your heart the home of the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity?

What are his resources? If God is your father, his riches are immense. The wealth of the universe is his! You are his heir! You may be poor now--but you will have enough soon. Indeed now, "all things are yours," only you are not come of age, and therefore cannot take possession.

When did you hear from him? God speaks once, yes, twice--but man perceives it not. Man, as such, perceives not when God speaks; but the sheep of Jesus hear his voice--they know and follow him. Our heavenly Father speaks to his children often, not merely to the ear but to the heart. He speaks by his providence. He speaks by his Word. He speaks also by his Spirit.

The child in nature cannot be satisfied without hearing from his father--and neither can the child in grace. If you are a child of God, you will want to hear from God, therefore I ask, When did you hear from your Father? Have you had any sweet communion with him of late? Has he brought you into the wilderness, and spoken to your heart? Are you sighing out now with one of old, "O that God would speak!"

What are your expectations from him. When children have a wealthy father--they expect much from him. What do you expect from God? Methinks I hear the Christian say, "Oh, I expect great things. I expect a mansion, a kingdom, a crown, an incorruptible inheritance. I expect a white robe, a golden harp, and a glorious triumph awarded me in the New Jerusalem. I expect to be like my father's only begotten Son, and that he will fill me full of joy in his presence. I expect more than eye has seen, than ear ever heard, or than has ever entered into the heart of man to conceive."

Finally, if you have a Father, why do you act at times as if you had none? Where is the difference between you and the poor fatherless worldling? What mean those fears, those doubts, those misgivings? Why do you fret? Why do you murmur? Why do you complain? Surely you can have no just cause.

If God is your father--keep your eye on your Father's honor. He says, "If I am your Father--then where is my honor?" Aim to honor him in all you purpose, in all you speak, in all you do! Remember that he has said, "Those who honor me--I will honor; but those who despise me--shall be despised."

If God is your father--then pity poor orphans, and try to lead them to your Father's house. God is a father of the fatherless. He picks up the poor child which is cast out into the open field, and adopts it for his own. He receives and places among his children--all who come to his feet confessing their sins, and craving pardon in the precious name of the Lord Jesus.

Poor fatherless sinner, hasten to the throne of grace, cast yourself on God's mercy--and he will receive you, accept you, clothe you, and send the Spirit of adoption into your heart!

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