

Partaking Of The Divine Nature

by Sandeep Poonen

This sermon delves into the concept of partaking of the divine nature, drawing parallels from the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15. It contrasts the self-life represented by the elder brother with the divine nature embodied by the father. The message emphasizes choosing to partake of the divine nature daily, symbolized by the tree of life, over the tree of knowledge of good and evil. It challenges believers to shift their perspective from a works-based mentality to embracing a servant-hearted nature, prioritizing souls over earthly rewards.

Scripture: Luke 15:11, Genesis 2:9, Romans 8:38, Matthew 20:1, Philippians 2:17

Topics: "Divine Nature", "Servant-Heartedness"

Description

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Transcript

I want to share a few thoughts on partaking of the divine nature. We can turn to Luke chapter 15, where I will be speaking from Luke chapter 15. It's the story of the prodigal son and something that my dad wrote in the book, The Beauty for Ashes, was that there's probably no better picture of the self-life than the elder brother, the story of the elder brother in the story of the prodigal son.

And the contrast to the elder brother is not the younger brother, the contrast of the elder brother is the father. And the father is a picture of the prodigal son. Sorry, the father is the picture of the divine nature.

What does it mean to partake of the divine nature? It doesn't mean that we will have the divine nature. We will never be God. So we will never have the divine nature that is the only nature we have.

But we get to partake of it. What is the word partake of? Children, what does it mean to partake of something? Very simple, to take part. Partake, to take part.

So when I say come and partake of the food, it says come and take part of the food. And God, when He created Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, He gave them two trees. And He said, partake of the divine nature, which is the tree of life.

Don't partake of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Those were the two trees that we could partake of. Adam and Eve chose wrongly.

When God, Jesus died and rose again, He sent His Holy Spirit to live in us. He cleansed our heart. And the same offer now is shared for us too.

We too get to partake of one of two trees every day. And the blessed benefit of the new covenant is that we get to partake, take part of the divine nature. Every day there's the Holy Spirit offered in a cup for us to drink.

The Holy Spirit to take in the life of Jesus, to take in every situation. We get that every situation. Even if we fail the first 50 situations in the day, God is faithful.

He still says, here's the Holy Spirit. You can partake of the divine nature in every single trial. Every single trial.

Nobody's exempt from it. And for every single trial, God says you can partake of it. And we see a little bit of that in the story of the prodigal son.

So let's just read. The elder son comes in at the end of the story and he tells his father in verse 29. But he answered and said to his father, elder brother, this is the picture of the self-life.

Look, for so many years I have been serving you and I've never neglected a command of yours. Yet you have never given me a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when the son of yours came, who has devoured your wealth with prostitutes, you killed a fattened calf for him.

Now the father says, here's the picture of the divine nature. Says, son, you've always been with me and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice for this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live and was lost and has been found.

In this small three or four verses, four verses, you get the picture of the self-life and you get the picture of the divine nature. And so I just kind of did a little bit of a contrast. What does myself say? What does God say? What does the elder brother within me, my flesh, say? My evil, sinful self, say? And what does the divine nature say? Both are cups that I can drink off.

I choose in every situation, in every trial, which cup am I going to drink off? So the first one, here's the two options that I have available for me. In the next slide, the two options available for me is this. Either I have one of two answers.

When I think about my life with God, how long have you been a Christian? Think about that. What is the one sentence summary of it? For 20 years, I have been serving God. For 20 years, I have been obeying God.

Or is it for 20 years, I have had Jesus with me? For 20 years, I have had a new best friend. I've had my best ally, the best person I could ever have in my life for 20 years. The question is not what is your rehearsed response.

The question is what is your natural response to your life with Jesus in the last five years, 10 years, 20 years of being with God? What is your response today when you have a difficult trial? Tomorrow, when you find a difficult trial in life, what is your natural response to the summary of your life with God? For so

many years, Lord, I've been serving you. And then this thing happens. For so many years, I've been serving you.

And then this thing happens in the church. For so many years, this has happened. And then this other person who's coming much newer, this happens.

For so many years, I've been faithful. And then this younger brother comes and you throw a feast for him. For so many years, I've been serving you.

And there's an expectation of a reward in there. Or is it for so many years, I've had a best friend. For so many years, I've had a very soft pillow to sleep on called a clear conscience.

For so many years, I've not had to worry because I take it to God in prayer. So I don't envy the world. I don't envy those who are enjoying the pleasures of life because I have a new, I had a friend whose life is sweeter and sweeter.

For so many years, that's what God said. God, the Father says, hey, you're telling me for so many years, I've been serving you. The Father's response was, hold on, son.

For so many years, you've been with me. How are you looking at the same 20 years, five years, whatever it is. For so many years, I've been serving you.

For so many years, I've been with you. Therein lies all the difference. And my flesh comes up in different trials saying, for so many years, Lord, I've done this for you.

You've got to do this for me. You've got to answer my prayer this way. And it's the mark of an evil flesh, the mark of sinful flesh.

And we have to drink of the divine nature which says, for so many years, I've been with you. That's what it means to partake of the divine nature, to shut off those voices that have any expectation and to say my Christian life, no matter if I have a horrible situation at home, even if I have a horrible situation in life, my life is glorious because I have Jesus. Romans 8, what's going to separate me from the love of God? Nakedness, peril, sword, famine, difficult boss.

I have my best friend with me. For so many years, I've had my best friend with me. Next, the elder son says, I have never neglected a command of yours.

These were not my commands. These were your commands. And everything is like a command.

And we can interact with God's word as a bunch of commands. Don't get angry. Command, lust, command, always forgive, command, never get, never be worried, a command, never be anxious, a command.

And we live with God and God becomes, to steal an analogy from another story, a hard taskmaster. That's who the father was to this elder son. He had become a hard taskmaster because all of the commands from God, the father's told the elder son, go do this today, son.

Go do this today. Go do that today. It was a bunch of commands.

Of course it was commands. The problem was the elder son interpreted as a command. Command, do this, do this, thou shalt, thou shalt, thou shalt.

And the new covenant has a bunch of commands. It used to be don't commit adultery, now it's don't lust. It used to be don't murder, now it's don't get angry.

And the new covenant becomes a heavier weight and God becomes a heavier taskmaster in the new covenant. Spirit of the elder brother, what does this partaking of the divine nature says? Oh, that's what the father said. Hey look, all that is mine is yours.

This is no me and you. There's just head and body. And that was the best picture I could think of.

When the hand moves over here, it is moving as a result of the head telling the hand, go there. And when my leg goes there, it is because of the head telling the leg, go there. And the leg just goes.

And the body can complain to the head saying, for so many years I've been just listening to you head. All you do is tell me what to do. Tell me where to go.

Body doesn't do that. The body and the head are one. All that is mine is yours.

There's no me and you. What was the father telling the elder son? Go do this. Go do that.

For whom? For the elder son. He was going to get the inheritance. Father was not storing it up for his own pleasures.

And he was trying to teach the elder son, hey, I am a servant. My nature is to serve. My nature is not to serve.

My nature is to be a servant. There's a very big difference between serving and being a servant. Many people who serve don't have a heart of a servant.

My nature is to be a servant. And I want you to have my nature. To be a slave.

That's why I give you these commands. But all that is mine is yours. There's no me and there's no you.

And the body, every one of the head's command for the body is for the body's good. The head never gives a command that is not for the body's good. But unfortunately this body part, the elder son in this story, never picked that up.

And it's like the finger resenting the head. Constantly having a bitterness against the head. Never understood that the head was only interested in the body's welfare.

And that's the spirit that we need to partake of through all the commands. When God tells me to forgive my enemies, when God tells me not to be bitter, when God tells me to watch and to pray, to guard my mouth, to have a spirit of praise, even in difficult situations, it's for my good. God is not going to gain anything except He wants to gain something through me.

It's for my gain and for the together gain. And I need to see that. That every one of the commands of God is for my good.

Not for His good. It's for my good that will end up being His good. There's no disconnect.

And we don't understand that picture because every person is outside of us. But God said, you don't understand. It's head and body.

That's the picture. Everything I do, every single thing that has happened in my life, in your child's life, in your spouse's life, is for my good. I have to partake of that divine nature.

You can see why Adam and Eve did partake of that. They wanted a pleasurable life. They wanted their own self-life.

Maybe the tree of life fruit wasn't as pretty as the tree of knowledge of good and evil fruit. Maybe that's why they didn't pick up on it. Next, you've never given me a young goat so that I may celebrate with my friends.

We had to celebrate because this brother of yours was dead. God, all these other brothers and sisters in Christ, they get all the easy life. They all, they get all the benefits in this world too.

They get all the promotions. They get all the fancy things. They get all the things just go easy for their children at school.

It just comes naturally for them. But for me, it's so difficult, so challenging. I don't have anything to celebrate in my life.

No big celebrations. No big vacations. No big, life seems to be one big struggle.

That's how the elder brother was thinking of it. But the father was trying to teach this elder brother, look, if you want my nature, it's to be a servant. It's to be with me.

It's to feed that goat. Who fed the calf? Sorry, it wasn't a goat, it was a calf I think. Who fed that calf? Probably the elder brother.

There's many commands of the father saying, go feed that calf. Next day, go feed that calf. And that calf went from thin to becoming fatted.

Who made that calf fatted? A lot of hard work from the elder brother. Who enjoyed the fatted calf? The younger brother. Did no work, enjoys the fatted calf.

Reminds me of that story in Matthew chapter 20. Let's turn there briefly just to Matthew chapter 20. I want to show you this one verse.

Matthew chapter 20 is one of those tremendous stories that you can, it never gets old meditating on it. It's Matthew chapter 20 is the story about the laborers in the vineyard. And different laborers came at different times in the day and labored in the vineyard.

And at the end of the day, God calls the ones who came at the very last hour and paid them a full days wages. And then went backwards and paid everybody the same amount. And the people who worked all day said, that's not fair.

But God had told them, look, you're going to work all day and you're going to get a whole day's wages. The people who came on the last hour didn't get promised anything and God out of his generosity gave them a full day's wages. But the people who worked all day were resentful.

And see this expression in verse 12, Matthew chapter 20 verse 12. The person, the people who came in in the first hour and worked all day said this, these last men have worked only one hour and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the scorching heat of the day. That's what you get for being gripped with the truth early in life.

You want to get gripped with the truth early in life. You want to be part of building the church when it's in its infancy. You want to be walking with God from a young age onwards.

This is what you get. You get to bear the burden and the scorching heat of the day. The guys who come in five o'clock don't get to bear that.

They get to enjoy the fatted calf. They get to enjoy all the good things. The ones who start early get to bear the burden and the scorching heat of the day.

The problem is we start resenting that. We start resenting it because we have, we see God as a barter system. I do this for you.

You do this for me. For so many years I've been serving you and I find that to be the benefit rather than Lord I was with you. I had you all these years.

That is the benefit and we've missed it all these years. Amidst the bearing the burden, amidst the scorching heat, who was with you? That's the question. As you bore the burdens, who was with you in the scorching heat? The bridegroom, your best friend who never allowed you to bear, to have something that you couldn't bear.

And it wasn't just commands. All that I have is yours. It was the head and the body working together.

I do my part, you do your part. He's up in heaven interceding for us. We're here on down on earth executing on what he wants us to do.

And he came and laid out an example for us. We have to reconcile ourselves that those of us who remain in the father's house, who've been in the father's house, we get to bear the burden. We have to deal with the scorching heat of the day.

All the challenges that come. We don't get the fatted calves. No fatted calves for the elder son.

Because the heart of Jesus is not interested in fatted calves. The heart of the elder son is not interested in any payoff here on earth. The heart of the flesh wants some privilege here on earth.

The heart of the divine nature, the heart of Jesus says, Lord, I despise all that is big and great in the sight of man. Any vacation, any benefit that the earth considers is trash. My only inheritance and reward are souls.

That's what God came to this earth for, for souls. And we who have the partake of the divine nature discard promotions for one soul. Lord, let me never be promoted, but give me one soul.

Don't give me one dollar increase in my salary. Let all the other co-workers take a credit for what I'm doing, but give me a soul at the end of it. Partaking of the divine nature comes at a cost.

Scorching heat. And God's going to test us at our workplaces and others. What do you really do? Do you really love money or do you really love souls? Children, you can apply this in your class.

You're going to be teased. You're going to stand out. Lord, let me be teased.

The scorching heat of the day for me is being teased. Standing out is different. Standing out for my faith.

What do I get? Give me a soul, Lord. Give me one boy, one girl in my class who can be gripped with your love because of me. That's what I want.

That's my prayer at VMware, at where I'm working. Lord, don't take me to another job until I see the fruit of it through one soul who can be in eternity because of the witness that I had here on earth. And it's being tested in difficult meetings that I'm a part of.

And my attitude when I come across conflict. It's being tested. And God needs to say, what are you interested in? A promotion? Making yourself look good in front of your boss or in a soul? In redemption, we get to celebrate because of souls that were lost, that are found.

Souls that are dead, that are alive. Dear brothers and sisters, let's check our priorities. God wants to make us disciples who are fishers of men, not good at our jobs.

That'll come along the way. We are hardworking. You know that.

You must excel in what we do. But what's your priority at work? Promotions, career advancements, or souls? God's my witness. But the Lord's been transforming my heart.

The last point over there, the elder brother says, this son of yours, the heart brother says, this is my family. These are younger brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ. Which one are we? When newcomers come, when new people come into our church, I don't know about that child of yours, Lord.

I don't even know. I'm embarrassed. Talk to him.

Or is the heart that says, I want to reach out. I want to draw them in. I want them to be part of this love that I've experienced.

Let me prepare them for scorching heat. Let me show them from my life that I'm not exempt from bearing the burdens and the heat of today. But I got a best friend.

You won't see a complaint come out of my mouth. You won't see self-pity come out of my spirit. You won't even smell it.

How could I feel sorry for myself when I have the greatest person who ever lived as my best friend? How could I feel sorry for myself? How could I feel sorry for myself when everything that the head does is for my good? The only thing I want is souls. Lord, I want to celebrate every time I see something that I do, something that I suffer in. The fellowship of my suffering, that result of the fellowship of his suffering, that results in a soul being drawn closer to God and willing to welcome everybody.

Brother and sister of mine, come in. Come closer. Come and be a disciple.

Come into the fold. Let us celebrate you. Let's not celebrate me.

Let's celebrate you. I don't want any celebration. I don't want any fatter calf.

I feed all the calves so we can celebrate you. I've been poured out, Paul said, as a drink offering for you so you can be to the praise and glory of God. He said that to all the churches.

This is converts to disciples, to disciple makers, to being like Jesus. This is the road in which we need to go in. We get to partake of the divine nature of your brother and sister every day.

The rest of the day, you've got two cups. You've got two trees in front of you. We get to partake of it.

Let us learn from the elder brother, the filthiness of the elder brother and see it within ourselves and to hate it, the filthiness of self-life. And let us seek to have the divine nature, always something that we're eating off, partaking of, drinking it in, the heart of the Father. May God help us.

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