

Our Responsibility Towards Others

by Zac Poonen

Knowing God as a father is essential for unity, overcoming fear and anxiety, and building strong families, and it requires prioritizing family work over church work.

Duration: 56:30

Scripture: Luke 11:13

Topics: "Family Ministry", "Godly Leadership"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of knowing God as a loving father, drawing inspiration from Jesus' teachings about the fatherhood of God. It highlights the responsibility we have to reveal God as a father to those under our care, whether in our families or churches, and the impact of this revelation on unity, spiritual growth, and overcoming challenges. The speaker encourages individuals to prioritize their personal walk with God, family life, and then the church, stressing the significance of building a strong foundation in God's love and passing on this knowledge to the next generation.

Transcript

If you have heard me many times, you would have heard that I speak about the fatherhood of God very, very frequently. But ask yourself, how much do you hear that from other preachers? There are so many famous preachers in Tamil Nadu and in the world. I have heard many of them.

Very rarely do we hear about knowing God as a father. But that has now, in the last many years, become one of my favorite topics. And there is a reason for that.

From the earliest time I started preaching, I have tried to become more and more like Jesus in preaching. Because I know the perfect preacher was Jesus. Not Paul, Peter, but Jesus.

So, I studied the Gospels to see how did Jesus preach, how did he preach, I want to preach like that. He was always so interesting to listen to. And when I read the Gospels, I found Jesus, when he spoke to his disciples, he was always talking about the father.

Hundreds of times he would talk about the father. Anything he would say, what about your father? When you pray, say father. Why are you anxious, you got a father.

Your father cares for the sparrows, won't he care for you? And your earthly fathers give food to their children, won't your father give you all that you need? Even the Holy Spirit, he said, ask your heavenly

father to give you the Holy Spirit. He said that in Luke 11 verse 13. He was talking about verse 10, everyone who asks receives.

Luke 11 verse 10, he who seeks finds. And if one of you is a father and asks by his son for a fish, will he give him a snake instead of a fish? If he asks for an egg, will he give him a scorpion? If you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him? If you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him? So how should you pray for the Holy Spirit? Many of you are praying for baptism in the Holy Spirit. Good.

You shouldn't pray for it only once. I pray regularly, Lord fill me again with the Holy Spirit. Give me more gifts of the Holy Spirit to serve people.

I'm not happy even today, I want more from God. Not for myself, but to give to other people. I don't ask for earthly things.

I have never asked God for money or house or car or anything in my life. God gives, I take it. If he doesn't give, he knows I don't need it.

But spiritual things, I've asked for many things. And physical healing, I ask for. For myself, for my wife, children.

Because we want to be fit to serve the Lord. Above all, we must pray for the Holy Spirit. Now read carefully.

Please read verse 13 carefully. Whom should you ask for the Holy Spirit? You say you must ask God. Wrong.

Read again. Whom should you ask? Your father. Daddy.

Give me the Holy Spirit. Not, oh managing director of the universe, please come and turn me on. Please give me the Holy Spirit.

That is like submitting an application in the factory, you don't know when the reply will come. No, Jesus said, go to your father. And he says, if you are hungry and you go to earthly father, won't he give you? Why won't your heavenly father give you? Because you don't believe.

Oh, you think the managing director of the universe has got so many other things to do, he has no time for your little application. Your application is there in the file, it may take another 30-40 years, it will come. That is the idea the devil gives us.

When a son goes and asks his father for some food, he doesn't wait for 30-40 hours even. Not even 30-40 minutes. Jesus said, you being evil know how to take care of your children.

He was talking about food, he was not talking about ice cream and expensive clothes and shoes and all that. Essential food. So the Holy Spirit is essential for us.

It is not a luxury. So he spoke always in relation to the father. This is so important for us.

And he spoke about it again and again and again and again. That is why I speak about it again and again and again and again, because I want to preach like Jesus. I would recommend to all of you, elder brothers, please study the gospels to see how Jesus preached.

Not how he preached to the Pharisees, how he preached to the disciples. Don't stand in front of the congregation and think they are all Pharisees. There may be a few Pharisees.

Maybe you are a Pharisee yourself. But study how Jesus preached to his disciples. Sometimes he was very strict with them.

Why can't you believe you unbelieving generation? One of them he said, get behind me Satan, you are telling me not to take up the cross. But most of the time he was so gentle and patient. He never talked to the Pharisees about the father.

But when he spoke to his disciples, he was always speaking about the father. The father, the father, the father, the father. And then at the end of his life, he prays.

John chapter 17. And he tells the father. Verse 4. I have finished the work you gave me to do on this earth.

He didn't say, I have met all the need on the earth. No, there was still a lot of need in India and in Tamil Nadu in those days, 2000 years ago. Jesus never came to Tamil Nadu 2000 years ago.

He didn't go to China, Japan, Africa. How can he say, I have finished the work you gave me to do? Because the father gave him a particular work to do. He did that.

And he left. In 33 years he finished. So you don't have to live a long life to finish the work God gave you to do.

So you don't have to live a long life to finish the work God gave you to do. The father has given me a work to do, he has given you a work to do. You must know what he wants you to do.

He has got a different work for me and a different work for you. But I will tell you something. The father has got a work for every single person sitting here.

If you ask him and pray, he will tell you. When you are a young boy or a young girl, that's the time you must pray. Dad, what is the work you have for me? I am only 16 years old.

But you called people who were 12 and 2 years old. Samuel was only 2 or 3. And you called him. You got a work for me, I want to know what it is.

What was the main work which God gave Jesus? Now listen, you will get a surprise. I have finished the work you gave me to do. And I have glorified you like that.

Now father, because I have finished my work. Please glorify me again with the glory I had with you before the world was created. See he is saying, I was equal with you before the world was created, you and I were there.

Some people say that Jesus never said that he was equal to God. Here it is. Before Genesis 1 verse 1, the glory I had with you there.

Now he says, what is the work he completed? What is the work? I have manifested your name to the men you gave me. You have chosen me out of the world. What was that name? Father.

They never knew such a name. They only knew Jehovah, Lord. Managing director of the universe.

Creator. But I came. And I revealed to them.

He is a father. That is the work which the father sent Jesus to do. See John chapter 1. And verse 18.

No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten son who is in the bosom of the father. He revealed him.

What did he do? He revealed him. He explained him. It is like some mathematics problem, you don't know how to do it.

When you are in a small age, you don't know multiplication. And one very good teacher comes. And he uses some balls or something like that.

And explains to you very simply multiplication. And you understood it. And you come home and say, daddy at last one teacher taught me.

I understood multiplication today. All these other useless teachers, they could not explain it. Jesus came like that.

And explained. God is a father. And he wanted all preachers in 2000 years to explain that to people.

But do you think all the Christian preachers have explained that to the poor people? What are we hearing today? You don't give your 10%, God will curse you. You don't give your 10%, God will curse you. What a terrible message.

It is like paying income tax. You don't pay your income tax, income tax officer will come and catch you. As if God is some income tax officer sitting in heaven.

Now when all this type of preaching is going on. Where are the people who explain that God is a loving father? That is your job and my job. Or other people are not doing.

There are some people who are saying, God is a good father. God will give you a good house. A good marriage.

A good car. A lot of money. Good job.

All these unimportant things he will give you. But most important things. Like overcoming your anger.

Overcoming your lust. He can't do all that. Most important things he won't do for you.

What type of father is this? Who gives you all the unimportant things. And does not give you the most important things. I don't want a father like that.

No. I want a father who gives me the most important things I need in life. You know I can go to heaven even living in a small house on the earth.

I can go to heaven even if I don't own a bicycle. But you can't go to heaven if you lose your temper. You read that in Matthew chapter 5 verse 22 onwards.

That you can get angry and go to hell. You can lust with your eyes and go to hell. That's what he said in Matthew 5 verse 25 onwards.

But those things people don't tell us. So what type of father is this? Who gives me all the unimportant things and doesn't give me the most important things. Jesus said he will give you food and clothing.

Those are the only earthly things he talked about. That is for sure he will take care of that. But Jesus never said he will make you a rich man and give you a big house and all.

But he told us that your father can give you the Holy Spirit. And he will make you holy. So Jesus prayed, Father I have revealed your name to these people.

And because they know your name, they can become one with each other. See he says in verse 12. In your name I kept them.

And now I want them, I am praying for them. And I am praying verse 21 that they all may be one. So you see, our unity depends on knowing God as a father.

You know among believers, even in our churches, there is a lot of competition and jealousy. Why is that? Why do you want to show that you are a better elder than somebody else? Why do you want to show that you can pray better than somebody else? Or you can preach better than somebody else? Or that you are better than somebody else in playing the music or anything? Any area where you want to show that you are better than your brother or sister, I am better than you. I am superior to you.

That is because you don't know God as your father. When you know God as your father, you will never again want to show yourself as better than anybody else. How do I know? Because it happened to me.

Before I knew God like this as my own father, I also wanted to show I am better than this and can do a better work than others. Look at my church and look at all those other churches. It has all gone out of my life.

I am not interested in saying, look at my church and compare it with other churches. No. I am happy with the ministry God my father gave me.

All competition, jealousy and all trying to show that I am better than anybody else, it has all gone. Are you jealous about some other family that is better than yours? Are you jealous about somebody else's children who are better than yours? Why? Because you don't know God as your father. And that is why your own children are also suffering.

Do you know what is the greatest inheritance that you can give to your children? It's not one lakh rupees. Something better than that. That those children can also know God as a father.

When I think of all the evil there is in the world today, I look at small children in our churches. And I say, how are these children going to grow up in such an evil world? I mean, when I brought up my children 25 years ago, it was so much easier. When I brought up my children 25 years ago, it was so much easier.

There was not so much evil in schools. Nowadays, all types of rubbish the children are talking in the school, even in 3rd, 4th standard. They have seen so much of evil on television by the time they are 7, 8 years old.

It was not like that 25 years ago. The cinemas were cleaner. And still, 25 years ago, it was difficult for me to bring up my children.

It is much more difficult today. When I think of these small children, how are they going to grow up in this evil world? The only solution is, they must know their father. I tried to make my children know God as their father.

I want to encourage all of you fathers and mothers. Young mothers, older mothers. Show God as a father to your children.

Show that God is a very loving father. That will be better than giving them 1 lakh rupees when you die. Because, maybe they can do much with 1 lakh rupees, but so many problems cannot be solved with 1 lakh rupees.

When they get married and they have a fight with their wife, how will 1 lakh rupees help them? That won't help them. More money means they may have more fight only. But if they can know God as father, then they will select the right person to be their husband or wife.

Jesus was so burdened that he should explain the father to his disciples. Because, if only they know that and I give them the Holy Spirit, I can safely go back to heaven. I have finished the work you gave me to do, father.

When are you going to finish the work that your father gave you? Listen, that all the people for whom you have responsibility, you have revealed God as a father to them. Who are the people you have responsibility for? If you are a father or mother, just your children. Very small.

2 children, 3 children, that's all. Small group you have. Explain God as a father to them.

If you are an elder in a church, and maybe you have 50, 100, 200 people there, don't be, don't decide to have a big church. Let God take care of that. Don't be proud, I have got 200 people in my church.

200 people, can you make them all know God as their father? To make even 3-4 people know God as their father is so difficult. Jesus worked with 12. He succeeded with 11 of them.

That's all he says here. Oh father, these 11 people, at least I showed them God as their father. You know what I prayed once? I said Lord, if I can show 11 people in my life, really show God as their father, I would have done a great work.

Because, I know that all the thousands of people who listen to me, they don't know God as their father. They nod their heads and say, that was a good meeting, that was a good sermon. Oh dear, we were greatly challenged.

Oh, wasn't that a good conference we had? I am not bothered by all that. How many of them came to know God as their father? How many of them have eliminated fear from their life completely? How many of them have stopped being anxious in their life? How many of them have stopped competing with others or showing off that they are better than somebody else? How many of them have stopped being jealous

like Cain was jealous of Abel? Those are the people who know God as their father. The rest of the people who are afraid and anxious, they don't know God as their father.

So, it's not easy. I'll tell you honestly, I do not want a large church. Because, it increases my responsibility.

I have to say, Lord, all these people have to know God as their father. Otherwise, I have not finished the work you gave me to do. Let me not take work which God has not given me to do.

I want to tell all of you in Jesus' name. Don't take on a work God never gave you to do. Even earthly work.

Yes, get enough work to earn your living and take care of your family. But think of the spiritual work God has given you to do. For the people who are within your circle.

If you are only a father and mother, very easy, just your two or three children. Please, take time with them. Pray with them.

From the time they are one year old, teach them to kneel down in your home and pray. Even from one year old, they start imitating their father and mother. They should see you kneeling down.

Do your one year old children see that? Kneel down. Let them see you opening your Bible. He can't even speak, can't understand, but he sees you opening some black book and reading it.

Every day, that little one year old sees his own daddy opening some black book and reads it. He doesn't understand what it is. And then he makes us all kneel down and says something.

I don't know who he is talking to, but he is talking to somebody. Little by little, it gets into his head. They are talking to somebody, they can't see.

That is how we come to know God. From the age of one. We have to teach God as a father to our children.

But if you just watch cinemas and television and talk all types of useless things in your home. And read all types of dirty books. How are you going to bring up your children in this evil age? Or you are so busy talking to all your friends.

Or even church work. You know, in your life church work must come after family work. Somebody asked me.

I was in an elders meeting in Kerala and they were asking me. Which is first, family or church? I said family. God first.

Second, family. Third, church. I said that is what I have followed, that is what I have preached.

Church is not more important than your family. Some people do that. I remember in one of the churches all the people after work would go to the young brothers, the married people, they would go to the church for fellowship before going home.

And they would not go home till about 9 o'clock at night. Poor wife is struggling with the children from morning till night. And what are the husbands doing after they finish work at 5 o'clock? They are going to the church to have fellowship and prayer.

Every day. I said you please stop that. This is not spirituality.

I said you finish your work, please go home. Have fellowship with your wife first. Help her with the children.

Otherwise you will lose your family. You will lose your children. Then what is the use of the church? There is no church then.

How strong is a church? The church is as strong as the families are strong in that church. How strong spiritually is your family? Do your children obey you? Do they respect you as father and mother? Do they fear God? Do they not cheat in their school? My children went to a good Christian school in Bangalore. And I asked one of my sons one day when they were in school.

I said you got 50 students in your class. Even if the teacher does not know, you know who all are cheating in the examination. Teacher does not know, but the students all know who are the cheaters.

He said dad, everybody cheats except two of us. And those two are CFC children. I said, praise God for the testimony of our church.

Because I used to teach my children at home. I don't care if you fail. See their difficult subject for them was Hindi.

I said I don't care if you fail in Hindi, but don't cheat. For some people it may be mathematics. It doesn't matter if you fail, but don't cheat.

But work hard. You know sometimes the children before the examination will come to me and say, Uncle Zach, can you pray for us for the examination? So I asked them a question first. Before I pray, I've got to ask you something.

Supposing a farmer comes to me. And says brother Zach, this is harvest time. Please pray that I'll have a good harvest.

I will ask them during the sowing time, did you work hard and sow the seeds? Did you water the field? You didn't do all that? You never sowed any seed? Now you want a good harvest? I can't pray. But God does not do such miracles. Because I said the Bible says that.

In 2 Timothy 2. It says here. Verse 6. The hard working farmer will be the first to receive a share of the crop. So I asked the children.

Have you studied for this exam? The hard working student will get the good result. So don't think prayer will solve every problem. But if you have worked hard.

Then I can pray that God will help you in a special way when you are sitting in that examination. So. We have to teach so many things to our children.

That God is a loving father. And if you are an elder brother, God you have a responsibility for a bigger group of people. You have to teach them that God is their father.

Teach them that in their families, they have to bring up their children in a proper way. The church is like a three story building. The foundation is God's perfect love for us.

On that foundation we build three stories. Number one. My own walk with God.

That's why I said God is first. That's the first story. Nobody can join me there.

Even my wife cannot join me there. How can my wife keep my conscience clean? How can I keep her conscience clean? Only I can keep my conscience clean. That is just me and God.

That's all. That is the first story. That you cannot build your family, you cannot build the church.

That I build my own life by keeping my conscience clear. By trusting my father for everything. Getting rid of all anxiety, all fear, all jealousy, all impurity, all anger.

Cleaning my own life. This takes a whole life time. But this is number one.

Priority. Then on top of that number two priority is my family life. How I relate to my wife.

How I bring up my children. Very important. That is second story.

And that is what we build on the first story. That is not that you must have a very wonderful family life. That depends on your wife.

But your wife may not be spiritual. Your husband may not be spiritual. That doesn't matter.

You be spiritual and bring up your children in a good way. In the Bible we read of a woman called Eunice. Her son was Timothy.

Eunice had a very God fearing mother called Lois. You read about it in 2 Timothy 1. So this God fearing woman Lois had a daughter called Eunice. But when Eunice was a teenager maybe 18-19 years old she back slid.

And gave up the faith of her mother. And she went and married an unbeliever. Yeah.

You know those days the Jews were not allowed to marry people who were not Jews. But we read in Acts 16.1 that she went and married a Greek. She could never have done that unless she was a back slider.

Such a God fearing mother's daughter became a back slider? Can you imagine how Lois felt when her own daughter went and married a Godless unbeliever? Who was just a businessman making money. But then this Eunice got a little baby. And I tell you when you get a baby you begin to take your Christian life more seriously.

Because the child gets sick and then you have to pray and the doctor cannot help you sometimes. Anyway something happened and Eunice repented. Oh God I am sorry I back slid.

I married this unbeliever who has no interest in God. He doesn't bring up the house in a Godly way. And now I have got a child and I think this child will go to hell.

Oh I repent to God forgive me. Bless me. I want to bring up this child in a Godly way.

I want to bring up this child in a Godly way. Single handedly. Without the help of her father.

Father was all making money. Only mother and son would go to the church. And she would teach him 3,2,3,4,5 years old like taught him taught him you must be faithful to God.

3,2,3,4,5 years old like taught him taught him you must be faithful to God. By the time Timothy became 18,19 years old he had such a good testimony in the church. He was praying.

Just testifying. Going to other churches. And every church people saw that young brother Timothy.

Wonderful brother. Every church people saw Does he have a good father? No. Father is a godless man.

How did he become like this? He had a God fearing mother. Who was backslidden but came back to God. And one day Paul came there.

And Paul met this young man. And Paul met this young man. Paul was a man with great discernment.

Paul was a man with great discernment. And he heard in Acts 16.2 And he heard in Acts 16.2 So Paul said, In 2nd verse 16 In 3rd verse he says Timothy, come with me. One woman One woman in 20 years brought up somebody to become an apostle.

Without any help from her earthly husband. So take an example from that. Timothy did a fantastic work for God.

Paul said he's my best co-worker. One day after Paul died, Timothy carried on the work. One day in heaven when Jesus comes back, he will call Timothy to give him a reward.

And when he calls Timothy, he will say, Eunice, you also come. Because you also deserve this reward for bringing up this young fellow like this. And Lois, you also come for praying for Eunice when she backslid.

You think sisters don't have a ministry? What a fantastic example. What did you think Eunice taught Timothy? I think I know. She taught Timothy that God is a good God.

He's a loving father. Don't think of your earthly father as God. God is not like that.

God, you must respect your earthly father because he's your father. He's working and providing for your food and clothing and all that. But God, he's your father.

You know we can bring up our children like that? Even if you're alone as a mother, you can do that. It's a tremendous responsibility. So on top of this second story, third story is the church.

Now you tell me, can you build a third story before you build a second story? No. That's why the Bible says in 1 Timothy chapter 3, 1 Timothy 3 it says, verse 5, the qualifications for an elder. If a man cannot take care of his own, manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church? Verse 4, one who controls his household well.

That means he knows how to manage the finances of his home. That means you should not be in debt. Now if you borrowed money to build a house or borrowed money to buy a scooter, that's okay.

But please pay it back because you've got something there for the money you've spent or the money you borrowed. But even that, pay it back little by little. But don't borrow money for unnecessary expenses which you can avoid.

Don't borrow money to have expensive food. If you can't eat non-vegetarian, eat vegetarian and don't get into debt. Eat simple food.

Because if you cannot manage the matters of your own family, how can you manage the church? It says if you cannot control the three children you have at home, how will you control these 60 children in the church? So from that, tell me which is more important, family or church? Family. That is the training ground to build the church. God gave me four children to practice on, to take care of many thousands of children.

But if I can't even bring up my four children properly, how can I take care of all the others? So what did I do? I used to spend time with my children even when I was traveling. I would travel so much here and there and then when I come back home, I'll spend time with the children. I would sometimes play with them because I did not want any of my children to say this.

Oh, daddy was so busy traveling, serving the Lord, he had no time for the family. Don't let your children say that. Daddy was so busy working that he had no time for the family.

Or daddy was always going for meetings in the church, he had no time for us. Oh, he prays so much in the meeting at home, he doesn't pray at all. Don't let your children say that.

So that's very important to reveal God as a father to all the people for whom we have responsibility. So all of you please think right now. Have you got responsibility for somebody? You say, I'm only 15 years old, I don't have any responsibility.

Have you got a 10 year old brother or sister? That is your responsibility. Anybody younger to you, you say, no, I don't have anybody younger. No, you still have somebody in the church who is younger to you.

Look at all these children, they are younger to you in the church. Why don't you make friends with some of them? You 16, 17 year old boys and girls, don't you see some 7, 8 year old children in the church? They are not your sisters or brothers. Go and make friends with those brothers, those small children.

I mean, if you are a 17 year old girl, you look for some 7, 8 year old girls and try to be friendly with them. And if you are a 16, 17 year old boy, look for some boy 6, 7 years old. Go and become friends with him, so that you can tell him about Jesus, so that you can bring him to salvation.

It's very easy. And some of you, if you have started earning some money, go and give a little chocolate to that little 6 and 7 year old. He will listen to you more after you give him a chocolate.

And you can change a person for life. So, I want to encourage all of you to take this responsibility seriously. First of all, you must know God as your father.

And you must share that knowledge with all people who are younger than you, who are in your circle, that means in your church or in your home. Not everybody you meet in the conference, but in your church, in your home, whom you meet throughout the year, say, the father has given me a responsibility. I reveal him as a father to all the children who are below my age.

Do you know that you young people can have a ministry in the church? Not to stand up in the pulpit, that will come later, but to talk to the little children. Please do that. And let's all of us take this responsibility, so that when we come to the end of our life, we can say what Jesus said.

Father, I have finished the work you gave me to do. I have revealed you as father to all the people whom you gave me as my responsibility. Not to the whole world, but to the ones whom you gave me.

That is your family and your church. May God help us. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, thank you for your word. Help us to fulfill our responsibility, to glorify your name, to finish our task before we leave this earth. We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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