

How Much More?

by Andrew Murray

The secret of effectual prayer is to have the heart filled with the Father-love of God, and to live as a child of God in the Father's love and service.

Scripture: Matthew 7:9

Topics: "Prayer", "God's Fatherhood"

Description

Andrew Murray emphasizes the profound relationship between God as our Father and the assurance of answered prayer. He illustrates that just as earthly fathers naturally provide for their children, our heavenly Father, who is infinitely greater, will surely grant our requests when we approach Him with childlike faith. Murray encourages believers to live in a close relationship with God, highlighting that true prayer stems from a life led by the Spirit and a heart filled with the Father's love. He reassures that even in our weaknesses, a sincere desire to live as God's children opens the door to answered prayers. Ultimately, the key to effective prayer lies in understanding and embracing God's fatherly love.

Transcript

'Or what man is there of you, who, if his son ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone; or if he shall ask for a fish, will give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?'--Matt. vii. 9-11

IN these words our Lord proceeds further to confirm what He had said of the certainty of an answer to prayer. To remove all doubt, and show us on what sure ground His promise rests, He appeals to what every one has seen and experienced here on earth. We are all children, and know what we expected of our fathers. We are fathers, or continually see them; and everywhere we look upon it as the most natural thing there can be, for a father to hear his child. And the Lord asks us to look up from earthly parents, of whom the best are but evil, and to calculate HOW MUCH MORE the heavenly Father will give good gifts to them that ask Him. Jesus would lead us up to see, that as much greater as God is than sinful man, so much greater our assurance ought to be that He will more surely than any earthly father grant our childlike petitions. As much greater as God is than man, so much surer is it that prayer will be heard with the Father in heaven than with a father on earth.

As simple and intelligible as this parable is, so deep and spiritual is the teaching it contains. The Lord would remind us that the prayer of a child owes its influence entirely to the relation in which he stands to the parent. The prayer can exert that influence only when the child is really living in that relationship, in the

home, in the love, in the service of the Father. The power of the promise, 'Ask, and it shall be given you,' lies in the loving relationship between us as children and the Father in heaven; when we live and walk in that relationship, the prayer of faith and its answer will be the natural result. And so the lesson we have today in the school of prayer is this: Live as a child of God, then you will be able to pray as a child, and as a child you will most assuredly be heard.

And what is the true child-life? The answer can be found in any home. The child that by preference forsakes the father's house, that finds no pleasure in the presence and love and obedience of the father, and still thinks to ask and obtain what he will, will surely be disappointed. On the contrary, he to whom the intercourse and will and honour and love of the father are the joy of his life, will find that it is the father's joy to grant his requests. Scripture says, 'As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the children of God:' the childlike privilege of asking all is inseparable from the childlike life under the leading of the Spirit. He that gives himself to be led by the Spirit in his life, will be led by Him in his prayers too. And he will find that Fatherlike giving is the Divine response to childlike living.

To see what this childlike living is, in which childlike asking and believing have their ground, we have only to notice what our Lord teaches in the Sermon on the Mount of the Father and His children. In it the prayer-promises are imbedded in the life-precepts; the two are inseparable. They form one whole; and He alone can count on the fulfilment of the promise, who accepts too all that the Lord has connected with it. It is as if in speaking the word, 'Ask, and ye shall receive,' He says: I give these promises to those whom in the beatitudes I have pictured in their childlike poverty and purity, and of whom I have said, 'They shall be called the children of God' (Matt. v. 3-9): to children, who 'let your light shine before men, so that they may glorify your Father in heaven:' to those who walk in love, 'that ye may be children of your Father which is in heaven,' and who seek to be perfect 'even as your Father in heaven is perfect' (v. 45): to those whose fasting and praying and almsgiving (vi. 1-18) is not before men, but 'before your Father which seeth in secret;' who forgive 'even as your Father forgiveth you' (vi. 15); who trust the heavenly Father in all earthly need, seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (vi. 26-32); who not only say, Lord, Lord, but do the will of my Father which is in heaven (vii. 21). Such are the children of the Father, and such is the life in the Father's love and service; in such a child-life answered prayers are certain and abundant.

But will not such teaching discourage the feeble one? If we are first to answer to this portrait of a child, must not many give up all hope of answers to prayer? The difficulty is removed if we think again of the blessed name of father and child. A child is weak; there is a great difference among children in age and gift. The Lord does not demand of us a perfect fulfilment of the law; no, but only the childlike and whole-hearted surrender to live as a child with Him in obedience and truth. Nothing more. But also, nothing less. The Father must have the whole heart. When this is given, and He sees the child with honest purpose and steady will seeking in everything to be and live as a child, then our prayer will count with Him as the prayer of a child. Let any one simply and honestly begin to study the Sermon on the Mount and take it as his guide in life, and he will find, notwithstanding weakness and failure, an ever-growing liberty to claim the fulfilment of its promises in regard to prayer. In the names of father and child he has the pledge that his petitions will be granted.

This is the one chief thought on which Jesus dwells here, and which He would have all His scholars take in. He would have us see that the secret of effectual prayer is: to have the heart filled with the Father-love of God. It is not enough for us to know that God is a Father: He would have us take time to come under the full impression of what that name implies. We must take the best earthly father we know; we must think of the tenderness and love with which he regards the request of his child, the love and joy with which

he grants every reasonable desire; we must then, as we think in adoring worship of the infinite Love and Fatherliness of God, consider with how much more tenderness and joy He sees us come to Him, and gives us what we ask aright. And then, when we see how much this Divine arithmetic is beyond our comprehension, and feel how impossible it is for us to apprehend God's readiness to hear us, then He would have us come and open our heart for the Holy Spirit to shed abroad God's Father-love there. Let us do this not only when we want to pray, but let us yield heart and life to dwell in that love. The child who only wants to know the love of the father when he has something to ask, will be disappointed. But he who lets God be Father always and in everything, who would fain live his whole life in the Father's presence and love, who allows God in all the greatness of His love to be a Father to him, oh! he will experience most gloriously that a life in God's infinite Fatherliness and continual answers to prayer are inseparable.

Beloved fellow-disciple! we begin to see what the reason is that we know so little of daily answers to prayer, and what the chief lesson is which the Lord has for us in His school. It is all in the name of Father. We thought of new and deeper insight into some of the mysteries of the prayer-world as what we should get in Christ's school; He tells us the first is the highest lesson; we must learn to say well, 'Abba, Father!' 'Our Father which art in heaven.' He that can say this, has the key to all prayer. In all the compassion with which a father listens to his weak or sickly child, in all the joy with which he hears his stammering child, in all the gentle patience with which he bears with a thoughtless child, we must, as in so many mirrors, study the heart of our Father, until every prayer be borne upward on the faith of this Divine word: 'How much more shall your heavenly Father give good gifts to them that ask Him.'

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

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Blessed Lord! Thou knowest that this, though it be one of the first and simplest and most glorious lessons in Thy school, is to our hearts one of the hardest to learn: we know so little of the love of the Father. Lord! teach us so to live with the Father that His love may be to us nearer, clearer, dearer, than the love of any earthly father. And let the assurance of His hearing our prayer be as much greater than the confidence in an earthly parent, as the heavens are higher than earth, as God is infinitely greater than man. Lord! show us that it is only our unchildlike distance from the Father that hinders the answer to prayer, and lead us on to the true life of God's children. Lord Jesus! it is fatherlike love that wakens childlike trust. O reveal to us the Father, and His tender, pitying love, that we may become childlike, and experience how in the child-life lies the power of prayer.

Blessed Son of God! the Father loveth Thee and hath given Thee all things. And Thou lovest the Father, and hast done all things He commanded Thee, and therefore hast the power to ask all things. Lord! give us Thine own Spirit, the Spirit of the Son. Make us childlike, as Thou wert on earth. And let every prayer be breathed in the faith that as the heaven is higher than the earth, so God's Father-love, and His readiness to give us what we ask, surpasses all we can think or conceive. Amen.

NOTE.1

'Your Father which is in heaven.' Alas! we speak of it only as the utterance of a reverential homage. We think of it as a figure borrowed from an earthly life, and only in some faint and shallow meaning to be used of God. We are afraid to take God as our own tender and pitiful father. He is a schoolmaster, or almost farther off than that, and knowing less about us--an inspector, who knows nothing of us except through our lessons. His eyes are not on the scholar, but on the book, and all alike must come up to the standard.

Now open the ears of the heart, timid child of God; let it go sinking right down into the inner most depths of the soul. Here is the starting-point of holiness, in the love and patience and pity of our heavenly Father. We have not to learn to be holy as a hard lesson at school, that we may make God think well of us; we are to learn it at home with the Father to help us. God loves you not because you are clever not because you are good, but because He is your Father. The Cross of Christ does not make God love us; it is the outcome and measure of His love to us. He loves all His children, the clumsiest, the dullest, the worst of His children. His love lies at the back of everything, and we must get upon that as the solid foundation of our religious life, not growing up into that, but growing up out of it. We must begin there or our beginning will come to nothing. Do take hold of this mightily. We must go out of ourselves for any hope, or any strength, or any confidence. And what hope, what strength, what confidence may be ours now that we begin here, your Father which is in heaven!

We need to get in at the tenderness and helpfulness which lie in these words, and to rest upon it--your Father. Speak them over to yourself until something of the wonderful truth is felt by us. It means that I am bound to God by the closest and tenderest relationship; that I have a right to His love and His power and His blessing, such as nothing else could give me. O the boldness with which we can draw near! O the great things we have a right to ask for! Your Father. It means that all His infinite love and patience and wisdom bend over me to help me. In this relationship lies not only the possibility of holiness; there is infinitely more than that.

Here we are to begin, in the patient love of our Father. Think how He knows us apart and by ourselves, in all our peculiarities, and in all our weaknesses and difficulties. The master judges by the result, but our Father judges by the effort. Failure does not always mean fault. He knows how much things cost, and weighs them where others only measure. YOUR FATHER. Think how great store His love sets by the poor beginnings of the little ones, clumsy and unmeaning as they may be to others. All this lies in this blessed relationship and infinitely more. Do not fear to take it all as your own.

1From Thoughts on Holiness, by Mark Guy Pearse. What is so beautifully said of the knowledge of God's Fatherliness as the starting-point of holiness is no less true of prayer.

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