

Teach us to Pray (1)

Introduction

- What our earthly fathers are like, good and bad
image of father, mother and infant child from the back
– sometimes earthly fathers disappoint...
image of a mother and a daughter (father missing...)
- Move on to what, specifically, our own father was like...
- Note and explore how that will shape our personal understanding of what God is like
– perhaps give a personal example?
– a distant father makes for a distant God

Father pointers

- *image of dad and two sons on the beach*
- There is already fatherly concern in v.8 - he knows what we need, but delights in us
- Only disciples can call God "Father"
- In Luke's account (11:2-4), the word for "Father" is "Abba", dad, a word of intimacy, of confidence in approach, and reflecting Jesus' own relationship with his dad
– (how odd we'd find it calling God "dad", yet this is precisely what Jesus is doing!)
- *Pointers here to a wider truth about God as Father*

We come to God as Father with Confidence

- *image of father throwing child in air*
- Your dad should be the one who is absolutely dependably **for** you:
– on whom you can utterly depend
– to whom there is no question about whether you get to come and speak to him
- West Wing fan...
– everyone, even close friends, have to call the President "**Mr President**"
– the only exceptions are family... children are allowed into the Oval Office...
famous picture of JFK on phone to some foreign leader, one of his kids playing round his feet...
image of JFK and son in porticos of White House
- We are as welcome, as at home, in God's presence as that

We come to God as Father knowing his Care

- *picture of Father and son, "Knowing his care"*
- Don't just know we can come to God with confidence, we also know his love and care for us:
– see v.8, and in similar vein **7:9-11**

Conclusion

- Wider than just prayer
– affecting all our life in Christ, our discipleship
- *Read Philip Yancey's retelling of the parable of the prodigal son from the end of Mark Stibbe's book, "The Father you've been waiting for"*
– and encourage people to read it, asking God to be to them a true father, and they might know him as that father...