

What Is Yours as a Member of God's Household

by Bayless Conley

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Good morning. Hello, out on the plaza. I hope you're doing well, and wherever you might be viewing this from, we are glad you are here.

If you have a Bible, open it to John's Gospel. We're going to spend our time, the majority of it, between John chapter 13 and John chapter 17.

We are this week looking at the events in Jesus' life as He marched forward to the cross and to His subsequent resurrection. And today we are going to be, as I said, spending our time here in John. And I want to open it up with chapter 13:1. John 13:1. It says,

¹ Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

Jesus knew that everything was about to unfold, that His purpose for coming to this world was about to happen. And from this point, we go into the Passover meal. And then Jesus shares His final words with the disciples in John chapters 14, 15, and 16. And then He prays to the Father in chapter 17. He realizes His hour has come. He's about to leave this world. He is going to leave the disciples. And that which is most important for them to anticipate and grasp, He addresses those things in His final discourse with them. This literally is going to be their final time with Him before He is arrested in Gethsemane, where He prays, and put through a mock trial, and then executed upon the cross. This is the final thing, and He knows it. He knows it's all coming.

And so, He shares with them what are the most important things for them to know and for us to know. For them to anticipate, to grasp, for us to anticipate, and to grasp. And though He addresses a number of different things, there are two main pillars upon which everything else rests, and those two things found in this discourse are relationships. Here they are. Through His sacrifice, Jesus brought us to the Father, and He brought the Holy Spirit to us. He brought us to the Father, and He brought the Holy Spirit to us.

Now we don't have time to talk about the Holy Spirit today. But if on your own, you will prayerfully read John chapter 13 through chapter 17, you'll find that Jesus taught that when the Holy Spirit comes, He will guide us, He will comfort us, He will strengthen us, He will counsel us, He will reveal the future to us, He will remind us of the Word. And He works through us to reach a lost world as we share the gospel, as we live righteous lives, and as we demonstrate Satan's defeat by exercising our right to use the name of Jesus. But all of that is for another day.

Today, we're going to look at this other thing that Jesus emphasized over and over and over in this short discourse. And it's this. That when we believe in Him, we are brought into a family where we will have instant access to God. Only not just as God, but as our loving Father. In fact,

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from chapter 13 to chapter 17, He speaks of the Father no less than 44 times in one short conversation. Let's go to John 14:1. He said this,

¹ "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also."

Now I know that many people's mental picture of this came from maybe some childhood book or something they saw. But it's basically that Jesus is now up in heaven, and He's got a hammer and His tool belt, and He's got this saw, and He is sawing these golden two-by-fours, and He's making our mansions, and putting these sapphire and diamond windows in the bathroom. But that's actually not what Jesus was saying at all. He said in My Father's house are many mansions. The word "house" literally means household. In fact, it's translated that way throughout the New Testament. It's household or family. In My Father's household, there are many mansions. And the Greek word "mansion" just means dwelling place.

In fact, 99% of the translations of the Bible will put it that way. "In My Father's household, there are many dwelling places, and I go to prepare a place for you." Jesus is saying, "I'm going to prepare a place for you in the family." A family where God is the amazing head of this household, our Father. He's not talking at all about going to prepare a physical place for us. He's talking about a relationship. In other words, He's saying there's lots of room in this family, and I'm going to prepare a place for you in it, so that where I am, you may be also. So that where I am in my relationship with the Father, you may be also. That this same relationship I enjoy with the Father, you'll be able to enjoy. So as I go to the cross, to the grave, and as I'm resurrected, I will prepare a place for you in the family, in this household. And you can be with the Father like I am with the Father.

Verse 4 of chapter 14 (John 14:4-5), He said,

⁴ And where I go you know, and the way you know." ⁵ Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?"

Now, he basically asked two questions. Where are You going? We don't know where You are going, and we're not sure how to get there. But Jesus answers both of those questions. He does it in reverse order. In verse 6, He said,

⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

He didn't say I'm going to heaven to start construction on your mansion. He said, "I'm going to the Father, and no one comes to the Father, except through Me."

"No one comes to the Father." The Greek word translated "to" literally means next to; it means to be in close proximity. It speaks of a close relationship. No one comes next to the Father, no one comes in close proximity, in a close, intimate relationship with the Father, unless they come through Me. That's what Jesus is trying to get across to them, and that's what He's trying to get across to us. That was the purpose of redemption to bring us into the Father's family, to bring us in proximity, into relationship with His heavenly Father.

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Now think about the relationship Jesus had with the Father that where I am, you may be also. This relationship that I enjoy, He said, I want you to have the same relationship. Think about it. Following these words, Jesus goes into the Garden of Gethsemane, and we find Him there with the disciples, and He's praying. And I read to you from Mark 14. It'll be on the screens. It says, Mark 14:34–36

³⁴ Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch."

³⁵ He went a little farther, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. ³⁶ And He said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will."

In agony, as He's praying in the garden, He cries out, "Abba, Father." The word 'Abba' means Daddy; Papa. It's the word that a little girl or a little boy would use as they crawled up into daddy's strong arms looking for protection, looking for solace, looking for comfort, Papa. Jesus was able to abandon Himself to the will of God because He knew the Father loved Him. And He expressed it through saying the word 'Abba.'

In fact, W. E. Vine, the great Greek scholar, in his dictionary of New Testament Greek words, says this of the word Abba. He said it is the word framed by the lips of infants and betokens unreasoning trust.

In the most critical time of Jesus' life and ministry, He had never been under more pressure. In this time of spiritual, emotional, and physical crisis, He abandons Himself to the Father by saying, Papa; Daddy.

Now looking back on Christ's finished work and what we have and what He's provided, the apostle Paul says these words in Romans 8:15 (ERV). He said,

¹⁵ The Spirit that we received is not a spirit that makes us slaves again and causes us to fear. The Spirit that we have makes us God's chosen children. And with that Spirit we cry out, "Abba, Father."

"Papa." "That where I am, you may be also," Jesus said.

When I was a little boy, probably six years old, I had ridden my bicycle to a friend's house. He lived about a block and a half away. And we're there in his bedroom, and I'd never been to his home before. And he had this little cheap plastic-like pinball game that maybe cost \$5. We were sitting on the floor playing this little pinball machine, and his dad walked in. I've never met his dad before. His dad looks down, and he says, "Kid, you break that game, I'll break your neck." His dad left the room, and I said, "Can we do something else? I don't think I want to play this game anymore." He looks at me and said, "Okay, let's go in the garage and goof around." I said, "Okay."

So we go in the garage, and his dad has this whole wall with all of his tools hanging on the wall, everything in its place. So my friend climbs up on the workbench and takes down a coping saw from its place. If you don't know what that is, it's a saw with a little thin blade on it. He puts a block of wood in the vise, and he starts sawing on it with the coping saw. He said, "Bayless, do you want to try?" I said, "Yes." Boom, and I broke the blade. He took it, and he says, "I'm going to have to tell my dad." I fled the scene. I jumped on my bike, my little legs going so fast all the

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way home. And I remember dumping the bike in the driveway, running in the door back in my bedroom and curling up in a ball on the floor, and crying because that big man was going to break my neck. I was convinced of it.

My dad came in and said, "What is going on, son?" And I told him. And he went and had a little discussion with the other boy's father. My view of that man is typical of many people's view of God. That He's angry and threatening, just waiting for you to screw up so He can make something bad happen in your life or withhold some good thing from you.

Now in the very next verses in John where we left off, Jesus said, "If you've known Me, you would have known My Father also. And if you've seen Me, you've seen the Father." The mercy and compassion we see displayed in the life and ministry of Jesus is the exact expression and representation of the Father's heart. We see a picture of it as we move on.

John 15:1. He said,

¹ "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

Now I used to read that and think, man, I better be fruitful because He's going to take me away. Whatever it is, that doesn't sound good. Every branch that doesn't bear fruit, He takes away. But actually, the Greek word is actually a Greek verb translated, "take away," and the meaning of that word is to lift or to raise; to lift up, to raise up.

If you know anything about vineyards, vintners, or winemaking, if a branch flops on the ground or drags in the dirt, it attracts mold, and fungus, and insects. And there's no circulation around it. It cannot be fruitful.

And so what the vinedresser does is he builds a trellis or an arbor, and he lifts that vine up out of the dirt, with all of the things in there that will impede its fruitfulness where it can get circulation all around it, and it can become fruitful again.

In fact, the Passion Translation of this verse, I think, gets it right. It says this,

² He cares for the branches connected to me by lifting and propping up the fruitless branches. . .

At the very end of John chapter 13, Peter is boasting, and he says, "Lord, even if I have to die with You, I'll never forsake You. I'm all in Jesus." Jesus said, "Peter, listen. Before the rooster crows, you're going to deny that you even know Me three times." And, of course, we know that Peter did exactly that. He ended up wallowing in the dirt of sin and remorse.

Well, did God abandon him and take him away? No, He lifted him and restored him to fruitfulness.

And if you are wallowing in the dirt of regret, and shame, and sin, God wants to lift you up, my friend. He wants to restore you and bring you back to fruitfulness. He's not through with you. The Father is not through with you. He loves you.

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There's a man that God used in a significant way in my life at a very pivotal point in my life. I never met him personally. I heard him speak. I was in the audience. And I read voraciously most of what he wrote. He was a prolific writer. And I would go so far as to say this that this time in my life was so pivotal. God used him to help me be a voice rather than an echo. Absolutely. I did correspond with him some in the mail. There was no such thing as email or even personal computers then. Some of you are too young to even believe that, but yes.

And I was very surprised one day, as I was reading an article that he had written. He was extremely candid, and I hadn't known this about him. Before he came into my life, and God used him to impart some things to me that I needed, he had been the pastor of a very large church in a mainline evangelical denomination. And he had gotten swept up in an adulterous affair with a woman in the church. He broke it off, but then he stumbled again with another woman. And after that, a third woman. And he was so laden with guilt. He came and confessed to his wife, repented, but basically lost just about everything. He lost his ministry, lost his church, lost his reputation, almost lost his family, and almost lost his wife, but because his repentance was so genuine, she decided to stay with him and to try and work it out, which they did.

And for years, he walked a very straight line of restoration and was accountable. And he talks about how later on in the mid-60s, he got filled with the Holy Spirit, and it changed his whole world. He ended up pastoring another very significant church again. And his finest writings actually came after that. And all I can say is I'm glad God didn't leave him in the dirt. I'm part of the fruit of his life. The Lord lifted him up and supported him, and helped him become fruitful again.

Jesus went on in this same verse, John 15:2, He said,

. . . and every branch that bears fruit He prunes . . .

That is, He takes the shears, and He cuts away unnecessary and harmful things, things that will impede our fruitfulness, things like wrong attitudes, bad habits, and sins.

Listen to me. He doesn't prune us through car wrecks, an illness, and tragedy. He does it through His Word. The branches that are unfruitful, He lifts them up and supports them, and helps them become fruitful. And the branches that are producing fruit, He prunes them, and He does it through His Word.

The very next verse, verse 3 of John 15. He said,

³ You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

The word translated "clean" there is the identical word translated "prunes" in the previous verse. Every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it that it brings forth more fruit. Jesus said, "Now are you pruned through the Word."

The Amplified Bible, Classic Edition, puts it this way. It says,

³ You are cleansed and pruned already, because of the word which I have given you.

Now, it is unfortunate that sometimes we have to get into a crisis before we will listen to and obey His Word, but it is still the Word that He uses as His shears to prune us, not the crisis.

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In fact, in John 17:17, in His prayer to the Father, He said, "Father, sanctify them through Your truth. Your Word is truth, sanctify them, set them apart, get them ready for service, and make them holy through Your truth. Your Word is truth."

He prepares us and sanctifies us, and makes us ready through the Word, not through the crisis. The crisis doesn't sanctify and prepare. The Word does it.

And I know plenty of people, and you probably know some as well, that are full of bitterness, full of resentment against God, and against life because of tragedy. They didn't get better. They got bitter.

My friend, it's the Word that does the work. If in a tragedy you look to the Word, God uses the Word to deal with you, and to make you better, and to qualify you. If you're not in the middle of a crisis or tragedy, God uses the Word. Those are the pruning shears. It's not the problem. It's not the crisis. Jesus made it clear that the Father prunes every branch that bears fruit to bring forth more fruit, and He says, "Through the word you are pruned."

Now I know I just kicked over some people's apple cart but too bad, so sad. You needed to hear that, my friend. If I'm rubbing the cat's fur the wrong way, let the cat turn around.

All right, let's go on. It's also the Word dwelling in our hearts that makes prayer fruitful. John 15:7, Jesus said,

⁷ If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. ⁸ By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

He's talking about prayer fruit. John 15:16,

¹⁶ You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.

And Jesus continues on. Look at this verse, John 16:23, "And in that day," everybody say, "that day."

²³ "And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you.

In that day, the day of salvation, the day that you become members of the household, the day you become family with a place at the table, you can go directly to the Father yourself. In fact, listen to how strong this gets. The next verse, John 16:24,

²⁴ Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

²⁵ "These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you plainly about the Father. ²⁶ In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I

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shall pray the Father for you; ²⁷ for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God.

The Amplified Bible puts it this way, He said, "I don't need to go to the Father." He said, "It will be unnecessary for Me to ask the Father on your behalf because you are family."

I spent a good part of my summers as a boy in Florida. Almost all of my relatives on my mother's side of the family still live in Florida. And we had an uncle that most of the cousins were sort of afraid of. Whether that was justified or not, looking back, I don't know, but that was just sort of the thing. And so everybody is sort of afraid of this one, sort of, big bad uncle. And all the cousins got together with me, and they said, (I'm 12 years old), they said, "Go to him and ask him if we can use the boat and go waterskiing."

I said, "Why should I ask him?" They said, "He'll never say yes to us. He'll give us a hard no, or he'll just ignore us. You go. You're the cousin from California. He might listen to you." And so they send this little 12-year-old kid in. A lot of my cousins are older than me, some are my same age, some of them younger, and I'm going to my uncle to ask if we can use the boat and go waterskiing because they had no confidence whatsoever in their own ability to approach him and to ask.

Jesus is telling us, "Listen, you can go directly to God because your Father loves you." As He's praying, John 17:23, Jesus said this, He said, "Father, You love them as much as You love Me."

It is hard for the heart to take that in. Jesus suffered for our sins and died to bring us to the Father, so we could know the Father and be part of the family. Not as some barely tolerated stepchild, not as some unwelcome guest that has overstayed their welcome, not as an outsider, but as a member of the household. Paul put it this way, Ephesians 2:19,

¹⁹ Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

The same Greek word used in John, where Jesus said, "In My Father's house, My Father's household there are many dwelling places." You realize what Jesus has been saying to the disciples. He said, "Look, this is the whole reason I've come to this world. This is the whole reason I'm going to suffer. This is the whole reason I'm going to the cross and to be raised again is to make you a family member. To prepare a seat for you at the table. That where I am in relationship to the Father you can be also because the Father loves you just as much as He loves me. And in that day, in the day when I've accomplished the work, I don't need to go to the Father on your behalf, you can come yourself because you're a family member, you belong, you have a chair at the table. And whatever you ask the Father in My name, He'll give it to you." It's unbelievable, but it's believable.

Listen, the Father loves you no less than He loves Jesus. The Father does not love Jesus any more than He loves you. It sounds almost crazy to say that, but it's what Jesus told us. It's true. I belong at the table. I'm not a beggar. I have great respect and reverence for my Father. Absolutely I do. We're talking about the Creator of the universe who forms the stars and flings them out. But to me, He's also Papa; Daddy.

And I can abandon myself in complete trust to Him because He is my Papa. He's my Father. He's your Father. It's why Jesus came.

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And if He's not, then you know what, He can be your Father. Jesus said, "No one comes to, no one comes next to in this close relationship, in proximity to the Father, except through Me." And it's what Jesus offers. You can't earn it. If you think you have to get good enough and get your act together before you come, you'll never make it. You can never qualify on your own. It's strictly by grace through faith, not of works, lest any man should boast. Not about what you do, not about what you fail to do. It's about you putting your trust in Jesus Christ.

When you realize the position that He's given you, when that dawns upon your heart, it'll change the way you live. It'll change the way you pray. It'll change the way you interact with others. It'll change the way that you look at problems. It'll change everything. The only way into this relationship is through Jesus Christ. He was sinless. He was perfect. He was born of a virgin, lived that sinless life, worked miracles, healed the sick, and lifted the broken and the downtrodden. He said, if you've seen Me, you've seen the Father. This is what the Father is like. He's not some cold, clinical God off in the distance that occasionally glances at the world and says I've had enough of them. No, He's a loving Father that's willing to pay everything and trade everything to get you back in the family.

And so Jesus, taken by wicked jealous hands, put through a mock trial, beaten without mercy, executed on a cross. There He took our place. And the penalty for our sins came upon Him.

My friend, I don't believe that we will ever fully, not even through the eternity of eternities, will we fully grasp the depth that Jesus went to, to lift us up. Isaiah said His very soul was made an offering for sin. The penalty for our sins fell upon Him, and He took our place. After three days and three nights, the claims of God's eternal justice were forever satisfied. Jesus was raised from the dead. And here's what the Bible says. If you believe it, if I believe that, and we're willing to confess Jesus is Lord, it means boss. It means I die to my rights of independent living. And I'm stepping under Your authority. You're my leader. If we do that, God brings us, by His Spirit, into this relationship called salvation. He makes us family members. He gives us a seat at the table. He won't turn you away.

If you've never made a prayer like that, if you've never talked to God like that, if you've never embraced Jesus as Lord, I'm going to give you an opportunity to do it in a moment.

But as well, if you've encountered Christ at some point in your life, maybe as a young person, maybe later in life, and you know He is real, but right now you're that branch that's wallowing in the dirt. Shame, sin, maybe some familiar sin has ensnared you, and your life is just riddled with condemnation, and you can't seem to get free of it. Maybe just spiritual laziness, and you haven't tended to spiritual matters at all. Do you know what? If you're not sliding forward, you're sliding back. Everybody's sliding somewhere all the time. If you're not a front slider, you're a backslider—no two ways about it.

And you realize, man, my life's down in the dirt right now. Well, you know what He wants to lift you. He wants to prop you up and make you fruitful again. But prodigal son, you've got to come home. You left your seat at the table. Prodigal daughter, it's time to come home, and the Father wants you. There will be a celebration in heaven when you come back. It's time to get restored back to your rightful place in the family.

Never lose your respect and your awe of who God is. But at the same time, you realize He's Papa. He's Papa. He won't leave you. He won't forsake you. He won't abandon you. He loves you more than you have the ability to understand. You just can't get your head and heart around it, but it's true.

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Now I'm going to lead you in a prayer. If you're that backslider that needs to come home, pray the prayer. If you've never made Jesus the Lord of your life, if you'll pray from a sincere heart, I can give you the words. On the plaza, wherever you might be listening, or in this auditorium, if you'll tie your heart around the words and be sincere, God will meet you. We're going to pray.

But for right now, if you need to make Jesus Christ the Lord of your life, I just had everybody bow their heads and pray in the first service, and truly God looks at the heart, and that's what's important. But right now, every head up, every eye looking around, if you know you need to pray this prayer, maybe you're that branch that's been flopping around down in the dirt. Maybe you just, you need to recommit your life to Jesus. Maybe it's the first time. I think sometimes it's good when we close our eyes in reverence because it is a certainly personal thing, and we don't want to be distracted by others. But sometimes I think we just need to take into view the fact that, hey, this is a celebration. You're coming to be part of a family. When the prodigal son came home, that daddy said, "Hey, kill the fatted cow, put a ring on his hand, put a robe on, start playing the music. This is a celebration." And so this is really, it's a happy day. And we celebrate with you.

But if that's you, if you're saying, "Pastor, I'm going to pray that prayer when we pray. I'm not ashamed to admit it. I'm going all in because I believe God loves me." I'd like you to do something. Just lift your hand up right now, all across the auditorium. Just lift it up and keep it up. I'm not ashamed. I don't care who's looking at me. Come on. Just put it up. Come on. Express your new faith. God bless you. Hands all over. Thank you. Outside as well in the plaza, just put your hand up. All right, now put it down. Why don't you put your hand on your heart. Everybody in the house, let's pray. Just say,

Oh God, I come to You. With my whole heart, I believe that Jesus Christ is Your Son, that He died on the cross for me. That through His death, He paid my debt in full. I believe that on the third day, Jesus was raised from the dead. And I confess Him now as Lord and Savior. And, oh God, I embrace You as my Father; Papa.

James said that every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there's no variation or slightest shadow with turning. If it's not good and perfect, it didn't come down from above. Our Father is good and perfect. He gives good and perfect gifts.

I'm smart enough to know that what I shared today, if the Holy Spirit does not make it real to you, it's just that it's not real. It's just some pretty words. I've been praying that God would give us a spirit of wisdom and illumination in the knowledge of Him. If the Holy Spirit makes it real to you, your life will never be the same. Never ever, never be the same.

We read the verse in John 15:7, Jesus said, "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask what you will, and it'll be done for you." Another brilliant Greek scholar, who, by the way, has a fabulous translation of the New Testament, Kenneth Wuest, translates the Word this way from the original Greek. He said, "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, I command you to ask, at once, and for yourself, whatever you desire, and it shall be yours." That's a very safe prayer to pray. If you're abiding in Him and His Word's abiding in you, the inclinations and the desires of your heart are going to be in line with His will. You're not going to ask for something that's outside of the parameters of a godly lifestyle.

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I'm going to share a story with you. Many of you probably heard this before, but we had a guy in, I think, for almost a full week doing a prayer seminar every night. And each night, he taught a different type of prayer, and then we did that as a church after he got through teaching. And one night, the whole thing was on John 15:7. He said, "Now I want you to pray something just for you, that your joy would be made full." And we did it.

And I'm standing there on the front row thinking about it. And I said, "Well, God, Father, I would really like a boat." And I got real specific. I said, "I want a boat with two swivel chairs," if any of you know it, like a track or bass boat, something like that. "I want a boat with two swivel chairs. And it needs to be big enough to get me and Janet and pile the kids in it." And so, I said, "Father, I just ask You for that in Jesus' name." Not another human being in the world knew I'd prayed that prayer, no one.

Two days later, I get a call from my dad. He said, "I was looking in the paper, and I found this ad for a boat." Now, you need to understand my dad was never a boat guy, ever. He hadn't used the word "boat" with me in a conversation in 40 years. He says, "I saw this ad for a boat that's for sale. I'm going to go look at it, and I just thought I'd call you. Do you want to go?" "I think I will."

So we get there. This old man comes out to greet us. He's got this trailer with a boat sitting on it on his driveway. It's a 14-foot aluminum boat with two swivel chairs in it, just big enough to get the whole family in. And I go, "Dad, I'm going to buy this boat." He goes, "No, you're not." I go, "Why?" He says, "I'm buying it for you." So, 48 hours after I prayed that prayer, I had my boat.

Now I realize me getting a little boat with two swivel chairs, in the grand scheme of eternal things, is not real high on the priority list. I get that. I understand that. Yet I think it reveals the Father's heart toward us. And I had a lot of joy in that boat. The family had a lot of joy using that thing.

We had some adventures, and we had a little nine ancient Evinrude motor on the back, and we ran that thing into the ground. In fact, John Kim and I, one night, were out fishing at one of the offshore oil islands. You remember that, John? He and I are out there and catching calico bass, and the engine conked out, and we drifted through using the oars to keep us from hitting the pilings out there. Eventually, I MacGyvered the thing and got it going again, but it was a lot of fun. I had a lot of fellowship, a lot of fun on that little boat.

And what I want to do is I want us to pray. Jesus said, "I command you, at once, ask, and for yourself, whatever you desire, it'll be yours." I just want to ask.

Now it may not be something like that for you, maybe you're in the middle of a rough patch right now, and you really need to see something happen; it's fine. Pray concerning that. But listen, your Father loves you as much as He loves Jesus. You have a seat at the table. He hears your voice when you pray. He sees your heart when it's broken. He knows you, and He loves you. He wants to help you. So if it helps you to close your eyes and do it right now, let's just offer those prayers to the Father. He's listening.

Father, we come. We come not as beggars but as children, and we ask right now for these things.

What Is Yours as a Member of God's Household

Go ahead, make your request to Him. Ask Him. Don't be afraid. The Spirit that we've been given doesn't make us afraid, but through the Spirit, we cry Abba, Papa. Father, we bless You. We bless You.

If you've made your request, just lift your hands for a moment, just thank Him—just an act of faith. Father, thank You that You've heard. Thank you that you've dispatched the answer. We put it into Your hands completely and totally, in Jesus' name. We bless You, Lord. We bless You. Amen.

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