

# The Mind of Christ

## What Did Jesus Teach About God - Part Two

### INTRODUCTION:

- I. Last week we began looking at the things Jesus had to say about His Father in heaven.
  - A. What we found was that Jesus taught SEVERAL important facts about the TRUE nature and character of God.
    1. First, we learned that God wants to be **known** and **understood** by man.
    2. The second great fact that stood out in the message of Jesus is that God is deeply concerned about what goes on in our lives – He is **deeply involved in the human situation**.
    3. The third important fact that Jesus came to reveal about the nature and character of God is that God is **NOT** a **selfish** God, but rather a **self-sacrificing** God.
  - B. In addition to THESE wonderful truths, Jesus also taught God is...
    1. An **INVITING GOD** because He invites us to approach Him.
    2. And a **FORGIVING GOD**.

### BODY:

- I. As we look further at the things Jesus said about the true nature and character of God, we discover even MORE significant truths.
  - A. For example, Jesus also taught that God is a “**seeking**” God – He actually **seeks** those who are lost in sin.
    1. The average Jew in Jesus’ day was willing to concede that God **might** be willing to forgive a sinner who sincerely repents – who comes crawling back on his hands and knees to God in remorse, humbly pleading for forgiveness.
    2. However, Jesus taught that God doesn’t wait for us to come back to Him – He goes seeking for us.
      - a. Jesus taught two great parables about this “never-before-heard-of” characteristic of God – the **Parable of the Lost Sheep**, and the **Parable of the Lost Coin**.
      - b. **Luke 15:4-10:** *“What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!’ I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no*

*repentance. Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? And when she has found it, she calls her friends and neighbors together, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!' Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."*

3. It's truly wonderful to know that God will accept us back when we come to Him in repentance of our sins, and it's also wonderful to know that God actually experiences joy.
4. But, it's beyond our understanding that God would actually go out and seek for those who are in sin. This is something that had **NEVER** been taught about the nature and character of God before Jesus came.
5. How does God "seek" those who are in sin?
  - a. Certainly, God seeks the lost by calling to them through the message of the "good news" (the "gospel").
    - (1). **2 Thessalonians 2:13-14:** *"But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in*

*the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

(2). This is why it is so important that we take the saving gospel of Christ through others. God clearly seeks us through the preaching and teaching of the gospel of Christ.

b. But let me suggest another way God “seeks” those who are in sin – and this is by lovingly disciplining us when we have wandered away. Let’s look at two Scriptures that seem to bear out this truth.

(1). **Hebrews 12:5-11:** *“And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: ‘My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.’ If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits*

*and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”*

- (2). **Job 5:17-22:** Eliphaz said to Job; *“Behold, happy is the man whom God corrects; Therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty. For He bruises, but He binds up; he wounds, but His hands make whole. He shall deliver you in six troubles, yes, in seven no evil shall touch you. In famine He shall redeem you from death, and in war from the power of the sword. You shall be hidden from the scourge of the tongue, and you shall not be afraid of destruction when it comes. You shall laugh at destruction and famine, and you shall not be afraid of the beasts of the earth.”*

- B. Not only did Jesus teach that God seeks those who are lost – there is another concept Jesus taught about the nature and character of God, and that is that God is the God of “**individual love.**”
1. The psalmist David answers three great questions about how much we matter to God in his wonderful **Psalm 139.**

- a. For example, we might want to ask, “How WELL does God REALLY know us?”

(1). **Psalm 139:1-6** – *“O LORD, You have searched me and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; you understand my thought afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word on my tongue, but behold, O LORD, you know it altogether. You have hedged me behind and before, and laid your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain it.”*

- b. We also might want to ask, “How CLOSE is God to us as we go through our daily activities?”

(1). **Psalm 139:7-12** – *“Where can I go from your Spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence? If I ascend into heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, you are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. If I say, “Surely the darkness shall fall on me,” even the night shall be light about me; indeed, the darkness shall not*

*hide from you, but the night shines as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to You.”*

c. And finally, let’s ask, “How UNIQUE are we in God’s eyes?”

(1). **Psalm 139:13-16** – *“For you formed my inward parts; you covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are your works, and that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.”*

d. In fact, the psalmist says we’re in God’s thoughts all the time.

(1). **Psalm 139:17-18** – *“How precious also are your thoughts to me (toward me), O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; when I awake, I am still with you.”*

3. No matter how INSIGNIFICANT we might think we are, no matter how UNIMPORTANT or USELESS, we are NOT insignificant, unimportant and useless to God.

- a. God is well aware of each and every one of us. And because of His great love for each of us as individuals, He sent His Son to die on the cross.
- II. All this leads us to the most important thing Jesus had to say about God. It is summed up in the name by which Jesus Himself addressed God, and a name that Jesus also taught His disciples to call God – Jesus taught that God is our **FATHER**.
- A. In His sermon on the mount, Jesus taught His disciples to approach God in a most intimate way – and we’re talking about approaching Jehovah, the great God of heaven and earth.
    1. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus constantly referred to God as “**YOUR** Father.”
    2. Then Jesus said:
      - a. **Matthew 6:9** - *“In this manner, therefore, pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. . .’*
  - B. When we use the word “*father*,” we understand that it carries two basic meanings.
    1. One is in the sense of “**paternity**.”
      - a. When we think of the word “*father*” in this manner, we’re talking about one who simply gives life.

- (1). He is one who “**fathered**” a child – he is the “*progenitor*,” the one who “*begot*” the child, or brought him into the world.
  - b. There is nothing in this use of the word “*father*” that suggests anything more than simply a physical relationship.
    - (1). There is no sense of closeness, intimacy and love – only relationship.
  - c. It’s quite common in our day and time for a father to “*beget*” a child, and never have contact with that child again – never seeing that child, and never having any regard for the child’s welfare.
2. But the OTHER use of the word “*father*” suggests “**fatherhood**” – one who is closely tied to that child through deep love and intimacy.
    - a. There is a sense of closeness here – a special relationship in which the father cares for and nurtures his child in body, mind and spirit.
    - b. There is also a sense of a tightly-knit bond that forms an inseparable link between the two.
      - (1). When the child experiences joy, the father experiences joy. And when the child suffers, the father suffers as well.

- II. Before Jesus came into the world, the only way mankind thought of God (especially among the pagan world of the Greeks and Romans), was in the sense of “progenitor” – one who is Father only in the sense that He gives life, or is simply the creator of life.
  - A. The pagan world of the Greeks and Romans thought of Zeus as the “progenitor of the human race.”
    - 1. Zeus was called “the Father of gods and men.”
      - a. He was simply thought of as being the giver of life in the physical sense – that mankind was nothing more than “the offspring of God.”
  - B. The Jews, on the other hand, thought of God slightly different – to them, God was the “Father of the nation,” the “progenitor of the nation of Israel.”
    - 1. There are two passages that were frequently used to prove this point:
      - a. **Deuteronomy 32:6** – *“Do you thus deal with the LORD, O foolish and unwise people? Is He not your Father, who bought you? Has He not made you and established you?”*
      - b. **Malachi 2:10a** – *“Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us?”*
    - 2. To the Jews, God was considered the “Father of the NATION,” not a Father to the INDIVIDUALS in it. It was the NATION of Israel

itself that was God's child, and several passages were used to show this fact.

a. **Exodus 4:22-23** – Moses was commanded to tell Pharaoh,

*“Thus says the LORD: ‘Israel is My son, My firstborn. So I say to you, let My son go that he may serve Me. But if you refuse to let him go, indeed I will kill your son, your firstborn.’”*

b. **Hosea 11:1** – *“When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son.”*

3. To the average Jew in the days of Jesus, there was no sense of a close, intimate, personal relationship with God.
- C. This concept of God as being the Father of the NATION of Israel, gave rise to another belief. It was believed that God was ONLY the Father of the GOOD and RIGHTEOUS, and that He could in no way be the Father of the DISOBEDIENT and REBELLIOUS.
1. The argument would sound something like this:
    - a. **Deuteronomy 14:1** – *“You are the children of the LORD your God; (therefore) you shall not...”* – and at this point, a whole series of commandments were given. Therefore, they assumed *“you are the children of the LORD your God,”* ONLY if you keep ALL of His commandments.

- b. **Psalms 103:13** – *“As a father pities his children, so the LORD pities those who fear Him.”* Therefore, they assumed they are God’s children ONLY if they *“fear Him.”*
- c. Unfortunately, this concept of “sonship” (of being a child of God ONLY if you’re loyal, devout and obedient) has even carried over into some of the teaching we hear today from some pulpits in the Lord’s church.
  - (1). Some say there’s no such thing as an “unfaithful child of God” – meaning you can’t be a child of God if you’re unfaithful to the Lord: you cease being His child.
  - (2). We will deal with this misconception in a moment.

III. When we take a closer look at Jesus’ concept of the fatherhood of God, we not only see something far more meaningful, but we also see two very significant facts.

A. First, Jesus presented God not simply as the “progenitor” of the human race, but more so as our loving, caring Father who is inseparably linked to His children.

- 1. God has formed such a close-knit bond between Himself and us, so that everything that affects us also affects Him.

- a. He feels what we feel – He experiences joy when we experience joy, He feels sorrow when we feel sorrow, and surely He weeps when we weep.
- b. How do we know this? All we have to do is look at the attributes and characteristics we see in Jesus – His love and compassion, His joy and sorrow, His kindness and mercy.
- c. Jesus said if we truly know and understand Him, we will also know and understand the Father.

(1). **John 14:7-9** – *“If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him.” Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”*

- d. And don’t forget the passage we’ve mentioned several times, where the Hebrew writer speaks of Jesus as our High Priest:

(1). **Hebrews 4:15** – *“For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”*

(2). Jesus is touched with the feelings of our infirmities – He has compassion on our weaknesses.

e. This is also why Jesus said there is “joy” in heaven over one sinner who repents.

2. These kinds of emotions don’t come from a Father who is DETACHED from his child – who is only the PROGENITOR, or the one who GAVE LIFE to his child.

a. These emotions can only come from a Father who DEEPLY LOVES and CHERISHES his child – one who is INSEPARABLY linked to his child, and who has formed a close-knit BOND between himself and his child.

b. That’s FATHERHOOD – and that’s the picture Jesus painted of God!

B. Now, let’s answer the question does God have UNFAITHFUL CHILDREN – in other words, if we turn from the Lord in disobedience, and return to the world, do we CEASE being a child of God?

1. I know this subject is often debated between brethren – some who see our sonship limited only to those who CONTINUE to be faithful to the Lord, and others who see our sonship continuing DESPITE our disobedience.

2. I personally believe we continue to be a child of God, even after we’ve turned our backs on the Lord and returned to the world.

3. Here's why. Right after the apostle Paul told the Galatian Christians:
  - a. **(Galatians 4:7)** – *“Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.”* Paul went on to say:
  - b. **(Galatians 4:9)** – *“But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage?”*
4. The Scriptures picture God as the PERFECT FATHER – He's the PERFECT PARENT. And yet, even God has unfaithful children.
  - a. However, let be add: ***I firmly believe we will lose our inheritance of heaven*** by remaining an unfaithful child of God, but He never stops being our Father, nor will He stop loving us as His child.
  - b. Next week, when we conclude this three-part lesson of what Jesus taught about God, we're going to take a close look at a passage that I think proves beyond doubt that God keeps loving us as His children and keeps longing for our return, even when we've abandon Him.

**CONCLUSION:**

- I. If you've never obeyed the gospel of Christ – never been baptized into Christ for the remission of sins, then you need to do what Paul said the Galatian Christians did.
  - A. In **Galatians 3:26-27**, Paul said, *“For you are all **sons of God** through faith in Christ Jesus. For **as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.**”*
    1. You become **“sons of God”** through a faith that leads you to be **“baptized into Christ.”**
    2. Are **you** ready to commit your life to Jesus Christ – to live for Him every day of your life?
      - a. There is simply no other way for you to become a child of God, nor is there any other way for God to truly become your Father in heaven.
      - b. You need to be baptized **into Christ** for the remission of your sins.
- II. If you've done that, and yet haven't lived faithful to your Father in heaven, then you need to remember the promise the apostle John gave.
  - A. In **1 John 1:9** he said, *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*
    1. All you need to do is come confessing your sins to the Lord out of a heart moved by genuine godly sorrow to repent.

