

The God Who is Our Father

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[0 : 00] Well, let me ask a question to start out with. If you had to identify what is the most painful, the most complicated relationship in your life right now?

Oh, man, there's a lot more groaning than I expected. I won't ask you to say it out loud, okay? But the next thing, I didn't even get a chance to finish that question.

I was next to say, which would you choose? But you've already chosen, apparently, for many of you. For some of us, right, it could be a close friend or a co-worker. Most of us, I would suspect it's a family member.

One of the family relationships that tends to be the most painful, the most messy, is the relationship between a father and his children. Almost every one of us either knows someone who's been deeply hurt by their father, or maybe you are that person.

Maybe you're that person who has been deeply hurt. Now, for people like this, if that is your position, or if you know someone in that position, it can be very, very difficult to come here on Sunday morning and hear over and over and over, whether from other human beings saying it or whether from God's word, it being said, it can be very difficult over and over and over to hear God described as our father.

[1 : 35] Now, if everything that you've learned about what it means to be a father, about what a father is like, if everything that you've learned about that comes from your own childhood experience, then maybe you want nothing to do with a God who would identify himself not only as a father, but as the father.

What we're going to see today is that God's goodness, who God is, it transforms our understanding of what it means to have a father.

Now, it might be hard to enjoy the truth that for every Christian, God is our father. That might be hard to accept and to enjoy.

But we can learn to enjoy the reality that it's true for every Christian. It's not just that God is our father, but if I reemphasize that sentence, our father is God himself.

We have to learn not only to believe this, but to celebrate this. And that's hard. And I think the hurt, the depth of feelings that we have, that many of us have over our relationships with our earthly fathers, I think that shows us how deeply, how deeply we need to be redeemed, to be reconciled to our true father.

[3 : 09] It is very, very, very important to know that you have a true father and to have a genuine, heartfelt, loving relationship with him.

And this relationship between God and his people, that's about to take center stage in the book of Exodus, in chapter 4, verses 18 through 31. We've seen over the last few weeks how God has called, God has commissioned an Israelite man named Moses.

He's commissioned Moses to bring the people of Israel out of slavery in the land of Egypt. And now it's time for Moses to return from exile in the Midian desert.

Now it's time for Moses and it's time for the people of Israel to know the Lord God as their father.

And what you and I are going to discover today is our several implications.

Some of them uncomfortable. Some of them encouraging. Several implications of having the same God as our father today. And so please follow along as I read Exodus chapter 4, verses 18 through 31.

[4 : 26] Now if you're using one of the blue Bibles that our usher's handout, that'll be on page 47. Exodus is the second book in the Old Testament of the Bible, near the beginning. Exodus chapter 4, verses 18 through 31.

Moses went back to Jethro, his father-in-law, and said to him, please let me go back to my brothers in Egypt to see whether they are still alive. And Jethro said to Moses, go in peace.

And the Lord said to Moses and Midian, go back to Egypt, for all the men who are seeking your life are dead. So Moses took his wife and his sons and had them ride on a donkey and went back to the land of Egypt.

And Moses took the staff of God in his hand. And the Lord said to Moses, when you go back to Egypt, see that you do before Pharaoh all the miracles that I have put in your power.

But I will harden his heart so that he will not let the people go. Then you shall say to Pharaoh, thus says the Lord, Israel is my firstborn son.

[5 : 40] And I say to you, let my son go, that he may serve me. If you refuse to let him go, behold, I will kill your firstborn son.

At a lodging place on the way, the Lord met him and sought to put him to death. Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin and touched Moses' feet with it and said, surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me.

So he let him alone. It was then that she said, a bridegroom of blood because of the circumcision.

The Lord said to Aaron, go into the wilderness to meet Moses.

So he went and met him at the mountain of God and kissed him. And Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord, which he had sent him to speak, and all the signs that he had commanded him to do.

Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the people of Israel. Aaron spoke all the words that the Lord had spoken to Moses and did the signs in the sight of the people.

[6 : 41] And the people believed. And when they heard that the Lord had visited the people of Israel and that he had seen their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshipped. This is the word of the Lord.

Now, on our first pass, it's kind of hard to make sense out of all that, isn't it? It first sounds like this mishmash series of events that, yeah, it advances the general story of Exodus.

It gets Moses from the desert of Midian. It gets him back to Egypt. But it seems like this doesn't necessarily contribute to our theme of knowing the Lord our God.

It seems like it doesn't contribute to that. But if we start in the middle, if we start in verses 21 through 23 there in the middle, what we're going to find is a central truth, a fundamental truth, that shapes and controls all the other events that take place here.

So the shaping, controlling truth, that's found particularly in verse 22. When God says this, Israel is my firstborn son.

[7 : 51] Israel is my firstborn son. God is identifying the people of Israel as his firstborn son. He has chosen them uniquely as his own.

Unique from all the other nations on the earth at that time. Now we can learn from this passage what it means for God to call Israel his son.

Because we see all the way down in verse 31 that the Lord had visited the people of Israel, that he had seen their affliction. And so we learn from that that God calling them his son, it implies first of all an intimacy.

It implies that God knows them. God cares for them uniquely. He's not like many earthly fathers who fail, who do not care for their children, who do not pay attention to their children.

God pays close attention. That's what it means for him to be a father. He has a close eye on each and every one of them. He knows everything that they've gone through.

[8 : 59] His heart is moved with pity for his very own son. That's what a good father is like. That is the very heart of the Lord our God.

So to call Israel his son is to imply intimacy. And second, it's to imply resemblance. I mean, how often? This is something we understand. How often have you said of a child, right, you look just like your father.

I see, you know, I see his father's eyes in him. We say that about their mothers too. How often have you said, have you ever said this to someone or heard someone say this to you?

You're a chip off the old block. Right? Sometimes that's, sometimes you take that as a compliment. Sometimes, I don't know, you know, do I really want to be a chip off the old block? Moms and dads, how often have you caught yourself giving your children the exact same lectures that your parents gave you that you swore you would never say to them?

And before you know it, you're doing the exact same things that your parents did for you. For God to call Israel his son. That suggests that God expects the people of Israel to resemble him, to represent him to the other people, to the other nations in the world.

[10:20] God's goodness is going to spill into the world through the children of Abraham. Because God made this promise in Genesis chapter 12. I will make of you a great nation and I will bless you and make your name great.

so that you will be a blessing. And then in Genesis chapter 17, the Lord God, he defined his promise even further to Abraham.

I will make you exceedingly fruitful and I will make you into nations and kings shall come from you. And so let's trace that out.

In the centuries following Abraham, following the time of the Exodus that we're reading about today, in the centuries afterwards, God is going to raise up a line of kings from the people of Israel, a dynasty from the tribe of Judah.

And to be such a king, to be a descendant of the great King David, that meant you were crowned with words like these from Psalm 2. The Lord said to me, you are my son.

[11:25] Today I have begotten you. Ask of me and I will make the nations your heritage and the ends of the earth your possession. And each of these kings reigned as the head of state.

They represented the whole people of Israel. And so to be a king of Israel was to be, in a sense, to be a son of God, much as God calls Israel his firstborn son.

To represent Israel was to be that firstborn son. And this isn't just some sort of dusty history lesson. I'm not just tracing this out because it's interesting. This makes all the difference for you and for me today, for all the people sitting here in this room.

Because the descendant of Abraham, the ultimate king from the line of David, that is Jesus Christ, our Lord, the son of David. He reigns over the nations, over the ends of the earth as a son of God. The true son of God. And he perfectly resembles God his father. And he is perfectly intimate and close with God his father.

[12:35] Because he is also God by nature. He may be a different person from his father, but he is the same God. God the son. He perfectly represents God his father.

And he brings God's blessing to the world. And so when Jesus is baptized at the beginning of his ministry on earth, God the father says to him in Matthew chapter 3, this is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased.

And this final king, this son of God, he lived a good, a perfect, a sinless life, and he was crucified for it.

Other human beings killed him for it. But in dying, far from being defeated, far from being an end to God's blessing, his death brought that blessing because he took the punishment that you and I deserve for our sins, for our rebellion against God, for the corruption that we bring to God's world. And we who believe in Jesus Christ, we who are Christians, we are now united to Jesus Christ by faith to be raised to life just as our Savior was raised to life again after his death.

[14:00] And so Jesus' death, it has reconciled us to God. In Romans chapter 9, the apostle Paul, he uses the words of an Israelite prophet to speak God's promise to you and me, the promise that has come through Jesus Christ.

Those who were not my people, I will call my people. And her who is not beloved, I will call beloved. And in the very place where it was said to them, you are not my people, there they will be called sons of the living God.

And so no matter, no matter whether you feel like God is your father, no matter whether you understand what it means for God to be your father, it doesn't matter what you feel, it doesn't matter what you understand, if you believe in Jesus Christ, God is your father.

And he has chosen, just as he chose Israel as son, you have been united by faith with the true Israel, with Jesus Christ, and now you are his daughters, you are his sons.

You belong to him. The Lord has chosen to love us as our father. The Lord has chosen to love us as our father. He didn't have to be. He was entirely free not to have this relationship with us, but he chose us.

[15:23] He chose those of you who believe in him. What's even more remarkable is that back in Exodus 4, God called Israel not just his son, he called him his firstborn, his firstborn son.

Now that doesn't really make a ton of difference to us today, but in the ancient Near East, the firstborn son, that was huge. To be the firstborn meant that you were the one who would carry on the family legacy and the family name.

It meant that you would receive a double portion of your father's inheritance and that you would have a leadership position in the family. This was a position to be the firstborn.

It was a position of tremendous dignity, tremendous responsibility, and that's why in Colossians 1, the apostle Paul writes about the true Israel, writes about Jesus Christ. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

And he is before all things, and in him, all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent, for in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.

[16:44] And so because Jesus is the head of the body, the head of the church, that's us, who are Christians, we too belong to Jesus Christ. We belong to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the firstborn.

Now he isn't firstborn in the sense that we might think of it, in the sense that, you know, somehow he's the first being to be created. I mean, we see at the end of this verse that in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.

Jesus is fully God. God the Son is just as much God as God the Father is. They are both fully God. He is uncreated. He is firstborn in this sense, the sense that he is the preeminent Son of God, the one who has first place in all things, who is supreme over all.

The Son who truly represents God and truly represents God's family. The people that God has a special, unique love for. Now back in Exodus chapter 4, God intends to drive home to his people his love for them.

He wants them to know how much he loves them. And here's what God wants Moses to tell Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. verses 22 and 23.

[18:04] Thus says the Lord, Israel is my firstborn son. And I say to you, let my son go that he may serve me.

If you refuse to let him go, behold, I will kill your firstborn son. Pharaoh is not only doing something evil by keeping a people in slavery, by oppressing them, by killing them off.

That's bad enough. But what makes this especially bad, what makes this a special insult and a special outrage in the eyes of the Lord God is that Pharaoh has been holding as his hostage and his slave, God's dearly loved firstborn son.

And because God is a God of love, because God burns with a passionate love for his firstborn son, God is going to respond with wrath.

Now, sometimes you hear people say things like this. God is a God of love. How can he be a God of wrath? What we see here is this.

[19:29] If God is a God of love, he has to be a God of wrath. He must be both. It's absurd to think of someone who loves his children who will not also be angry at those who would harm, who would kill, who would destroy the ones he loves the most, the ones he has a special love for.

He's a God who will bring ruin on anyone who threatens, anyone who harms the son that he loves. So the Lord is delivering an ultimatum here to Pharaoh. He's saying, give me back my son or I will take away your son.

Give me back my firstborn son or I will take away your firstborn son. This is one of the ways that God is demonstrating his love for his son, his love for Israel, his love for Jesus Christ, and his love for you and me who are in Jesus Christ.

Because even in our culture, we understand this. This is not something that's somehow an ancient thing and that we've forgotten about this. We get this. I mean, we create books, we create movies that honor a father's wrath against those who harm their children.

An obvious example, if you've ever seen the movie Taken, we've got Liam Neeson and he utters these iconic lines, right? that he utters these lines of threats against his daughter's kidnapers. I will look for you, I will find you, and I will kill you.

[21:01] And everyone thinks, wow, that's so cool, right? And we're right to think that. Why? Because we see the glory of a father. We see it not because we think that violence and killing people is a great thing.

It's not. But we see the glory there of a father's fierce love for his daughter. And in this threat that the Lord delivers against Pharaoh, we see the glory of a father's fierce and undying love for his

firstborn son.

Now this threat is directed not only against Pharaoh, it's also directed against Pharaoh's son and maybe you're reading that and maybe that troubles you. Because it would be wrong for you and me to respond to someone who sins, someone who rebels against God by responding by killing their son.

That doesn't seem fair to us. It's inappropriate for you and for me to take into our own hands the life of somebody else.

The reason it's inappropriate to kill, to murder, is because it's not our place. Precisely because that is God's place.

[22 : 18] To kill another human being is to try to take God's place as judge, as creator, as owner of all human life.

It is an act of rebellion against not only other human beings, not only as an act of hatred towards human beings, it's an act of hatred and rebellion against God himself who made man in his image. Life comes from God. The Lord gives and the Lord takes away and he has the right to do both. He is well within his rights to do both.

And what's more, God is also well within his rights to accomplish this thing through Pharaoh. To bring Pharaoh, to lead him along, to direct him towards this point of decision.

Verse 21, God promises Moses that leading up to this ultimatum that he's going to give to Pharaoh, here's what God is going to do to bring Pharaoh to this ultimatum. I will harden his heart so that he will not let the people go.

[23 : 27] Now what we're going to see is that this is not happening as though Pharaoh is like, I would just so badly want to give in but I'm being forced to hang in there.

Pharaoh doesn't want to give in. God is going to reinforce the stubbornness, he's going to reinforce the self-will that Pharaoh has chosen. That stubbornness, that self-will that would otherwise be crushed under the weight of the terrible signs and wonders under the first nine plagues that God is going to send on Pharaoh and on the land of Egypt.

Pharaoh is only a man, psychologically vulnerable. It reaches a point where any human being just breaks. All the people around Pharaoh break but he doesn't.

Why? Because the Lord hardens his heart. Proverbs chapter 21 verse 1 tells us, the king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord.

He turns it wherever he will. He turns it wherever he will. And so God has willed to enable Pharaoh. To enable him to endure until the choice must be made, until the ultimatum comes between losing God's son and losing his own son.

[24 : 53] And Pharaoh makes a choice that results in him losing both. Now this may trouble us if we look at God and we think, why didn't God just make Pharaoh repent?

Why didn't God just make Pharaoh, you know, when Moses comes to him, let my people go, why didn't God just direct the king's heart as a stream of water and get Pharaoh to say, okay, go? You know?

We're used to thinking of God as though he's just a human being. Maybe a superhuman. Someone who's bigger and stronger and knows a little bit more than we do, but fundamentally he's just like us with the same rights as we have and the same authority that we have.

But God is not like that. God is the one who fundamentally is. I am who I am. He is the one who creates, the one who gives life. And has authority over all life.

The apostle Paul, he explains it this way in Romans chapter 9 as he's talking about this very situation with Pharaoh. He says, the scripture says to Pharaoh, for this very purpose I have raised you up.

[26 : 05] That I might show my power in you. And that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth. So then he has mercy on whomever he wills.

And he hardens whomever he wills. Has the potter no right over the clay to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?

What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory.

Even us, whom he has called, not from the Jews only, but also from the Gentiles. God is doing this to Pharaoh to make his name known.

To reveal his power and to reveal his wrath because in doing so he reveals his love. We know through this the fierce love that God has for his people, this desire to show them the glory of a father's love for them.

[27 : 19] A father who will fight for them. A father who will defend them. A father who shows his power and wrath against those who would harm them. The Lord has chosen to love us as our father.

And he shows this love to us through his sovereign control of the mighty king of Egypt. The king may be the leader of the world's greatest superpower at the time. He's just a stream of water in the hand of the Lord.

And so this sovereign control of all things, it brings us to our first, this is our first encouraging implication of our father's love for us. First, the Lord has chosen to love us as our father by ensuring our security.

The Lord has chosen to love us as our father ensuring our security. Because the God who protects Moses, he is the same God who protects you, who protects me today.

And we see him working sovereignly on Moses' behalf, especially in verses 18 through 20. Exodus 4, verses 18 through 20. First of all, verse 18, Moses is given his father-in-law's blessing.

[28 : 31] Jethro is blessing him to take away his daughter, leave the family business, abandon the family business, and take the family back to a land of danger, back to the land of Egypt.

That is not a given that his father-in-law would do that. Verse 19, God reassures Moses, all the men who were seeking your life are dead. So God is already beginning to rescue his people.

This is just the very beginning of that. First of all, he's bringing to an end the danger that Moses would have been facing when returning to Egypt. And then in verse 20, we see Moses responding to this security.

Moses steps out boldly in faith because he knows that God loves him, because he knows that God protects him as a good father. Verse 20, we read, Moses took his wife and his sons when leaving for Egypt.

That tells you a lot, doesn't it? Instead of leaving them back in Midian, Moses decides he feels secure enough to bring his family with him as he proceeds headlong into danger, into what seems like danger.

[29 : 48] Because Moses considers it more important to identify himself and to identify his family with God's firstborn son, with Israel, to accept his identity with the people of God.

And that is a bigger priority to Moses than keeping his family safe. Moses feels secure because in verse 20, Moses took the staff of God in his hand.

Moses has with him this marker, this sign of God's power and authority. His father's power. This is something that you and I, we can really stand out, especially right now in our culture, in this day and age, we can really stand out this way.

We can show the world that our father loves us. Because our, I just see and hear from so many people around me, people who are just immersed, saturated in fear and paranoia.

We're afraid for our financial future. We're afraid for our children. Can I bring children into this world? We're afraid of what will happen to them. We're afraid of those outside who will infiltrate and harm us.

[31 : 03] We're afraid of political opponents on the inside who are going to harm and oppress us. You know, and I wish I could say that Christians are standing up and are showing that they are immune to that, but I don't see that. I see many people who confess the name of Jesus Christ, speaking, acting, thinking as though we don't have a father who loves us.

As though we don't have a father who protects us. As though the only way we're going to be safe is to get the right people in government and get control and somehow get the money that I need and get the retirement savings I need and get my kids in the right, set them up in the right situation. Oh no, oh no. What will happen if I don't get all that? Do we not have a father who loves us? Do we not have a father who secures us?

Nothing can separate us from the love of God. The apostle Paul reminds us, Romans chapter eight. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword, as it is written, for your sake we are being killed all the day long. We are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.

[32 : 12] Notice that Paul says that might happen. That might happen to us as Christians. But then he says, no. In all these things we are more than conquerors.

In all these things. When they happen, we are more than conquerors. Through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

The Lord has chosen to love us as our father, ensuring our security. That is the first implication of our father's love for us that we see here.

The second implication is this one. The Lord has chosen to love us as our father, thereby defining our responsibility. The Lord has chosen to love us as our father, defining our responsibility.

And we see this in Exodus chapter 4, verses 21 through 26. Notice. Remember verse 23.

[33 : 40] God's message to Pharaoh. Notice he doesn't just say, let my son go. He has a purpose. Let my son go that he may serve me.

Here's the way God sees it. Here's how a commentator, Douglas Stewart, sees it. Explains it. Their liberation came not in being freed from having to work, but in being freed from working for the wrong master.

They are freed from working for the wrong master. And God is freeing them to work for a good master. It is not just a master, but their father.

And so God's dearly loved son will be bought back, redeemed from slavery, redeemed to serve the good master, God our father.

And we can see in the following verses that this is a lesson that Moses is still learning. Verses 24 through 26. This very strange event takes place here.

[34 : 50] When I read this, it makes me feel like, you know, this is an episode of Star Trek where we've landed on this weird alien planet and just like something weird happens that we're just trying to make sense out of, right? I really like the King James Version for these verses.

Simply because the King James Version doesn't try to smooth out what's genuinely a confusing series of events. Many modern translations smooth it out a little bit.

Here's how the good old King James translates these verses. And it came to pass by the way in the inn that the Lord met him and sought to kill him.

Then Zipporah, that's Moses' wife, took a sharp stone and cut off the foreskin of her son. This isn't a story for the squeamish, by the way. Some of you guys out there are writhing in awkwardness.

And cast it at his feet and said, surely a bloody husband art thou to me. So he let him go. Then she said, a bloody husband thou art because of the circumcision.

[35 : 53] Now, I like that because you can see very clearly, it's not even clear from this passage who exactly the Lord is threatening to kill. It's not clear. Is it Moses? Is it Moses' son?

You know, we're coming right on the heels of God's talk about firstborn sons. So I personally would suspect that this is a move against Moses' firstborn son. But, you know, if you put a gun to my head, I'd be like, I don't know.

That's okay. Because what we do know, what is clear from this passage is what we need to know. And this is one of the good things.

We talk about God's word being clear. The clarity of God's word. What's clear in God's word is what we need to know. The clarity of God's word doesn't mean that we can know every single thing that we read in the Bible with absolute perfect clarity and you have no trouble understanding it.

It means that everything that God wants us to know in scripture, everything that's vital to obeying him, to following him, to understanding him is made clear. And here's what's made clear in this passage.

[36 : 58] At least one of Moses' sons hasn't been circumcised or at least hasn't been properly circumcised. And that's important because circumcision was the sign of God's covenant relationship with Israel.

The circumcision of the sons. From whose body would come descendant after descendant after descendant leading to Jesus Christ.

Circumcision was the sign that the people of Israel were set apart as God's son. That their descendants were also set apart. If you want a little bit of an extra credit assignment, if you want to understand what exactly is going on here and to read the commandment in this covenant relationship, you can read Genesis chapter 17 for some extra credit.

Let me know and I'll add that to your test scores next week. All right. So what we learn here, Moses had failed to circumcise his son. And so his wife Zipporah, once again, this is, what is it?

It's like the fourth time in the book of Exodus that the women step up. And God saves a man's life through women stepping up. All right. So women, you know, this is your girl power moment, right?

[38 : 14] A woman takes a knife and says, a bloody husband thou art. Or if you've got a modern translation, a bridegroom of blood to me.

Those were, best we can tell, those were most likely ritual words spoken at a circumcision. It's possible that one commentator I read said in the Midianites, the Midianites, they also had circumcision.

And they would circumcise a man just before his wedding. So there's something to look forward to. So maybe that's what this whole bridegroom of blood thing is about, right? No matter what.

Zipporah, she saves the life of, it's either her son or her husband. But she saves his life by marking her son with the sign of God's covenant. And that's important.

Because it shows that God's relationship not only gives, God's fatherly relationship, that not only gives you and me incredible dignity, incredible security, but it also gives us incredible responsibility.

[39 : 21] Because we represent our father. Because we are meant to resemble our father's character.

And so we must be set apart as his people. And we who are Christians, under the new covenant, we are no longer circumcised physically and outwardly.

The Old Testament prophets spoke of being circumcised in our hearts. Inwardly. The core of our being is changed. Is transformed.

Our hearts set apart for him. Loving our father. Following his commandments. Living holy lives. So that a watching world will know what he is like.

Because they're watching us. And they're watching the way that we live. The Lord has chosen to love us as our father. Ensuring our security.

[40 : 19] Defining our responsibility. And so those are the first two implications of our father's love for us. Here's the third and final implication. The Lord has chosen to love us as our father.

Thereby stirring up our reverence. The Lord has chosen to love us as our father. Stirring up our reverence. And that's what's especially prominent in the final verses here.

In verses 27 through 31. When Moses and Aaron, when they gather the leaders of Israel together. We read in verse 30. That they perform the signs that God gave to Moses.

That we learned about last week. These signs that authorize their message from the Lord. And then in verse 31. Here's how the people responded. It says two things about how they respond.

The people believed. And when they heard that the Lord had visited the people of Israel. And that he had seen their affliction. They bowed their heads and worshipped.

[41 : 22] So first of all. The people respond to God's words and signs. And they respond by trusting him. By believing.

They believe that Moses and Aaron are telling them the truth. But this is a. You can tell from verse 31. This isn't just a.

You know. Yes I believe you're telling the truth. And then you just go back to living your life the way you always did. This is not merely an academic sort of belief. They not.

Moses and Aaron win over. Not only. The people's intellects. They win over their very hearts. It's their second response that's the most encouraging.

Because when they hear that the Lord is mindful of them. He has seen their affliction. He knows what they're going through. He cares for them. And he intends to rescue the son that he loves.

[42 : 20] They respond by worshipping the Lord. Notice. Their worship. Is a response to what God. Is doing for them.

Right. They aren't showing reverence for the Lord. In order. To win. His favor. And care. You know. It breaks my heart. How many times I hear people say. Say things like this. Like. You know. I. Yes. I'd love to. I'd love to come back to church. But I need to get right with God. First. I need to clean up my life.

First. Before I come back to church. What are you thinking? What kind of a father do you think you have? I mean.

It breaks my heart. Because people like that are talking about God. As though. He were some sort of abusive father. Who doesn't care for them. Who doesn't love them. Don't you know. You cannot

win over your father.

[43 : 18] By the good things that you do. He has won you over. By the good things. He has done. By his son. Whom he has given for you.

Stop trying to manipulate God. And win over his love. The people get it. They're worshipping God. Because they know. Their father. Already. Loves. Them. So it is for Jesus. We have already. He has heard. How Jesus was secure. He knew. His father loved him. His father had said to him. You are my beloved son. With you. I am well pleased. Jesus was assured. Of his father's love. He rested in it. And he responded. By honoring. His father. By directing his. Attention. And by pointing people. Towards his father's.

[44 : 16] Goodness. His father's. Purposes. And we who are in. Jesus. Jesus Christ. We are also. Loved. By our father in heaven. How the father.

Has lavished his love on us. Calling us the children of God. And so we are. And we respond. To this love. If we know.

That God our father loves us. We respond. By worshipping. Him. By devoting. Ourselves. We don't just believe in him. Say yeah yeah. I believe in. I believe in God. We give our lives.

We know him. We want to know him more. We ache to know him more. To know the father who loves us. To love him. To serve him with all of our hearts.

The Lord has chosen to love us as our father. Stirring up our reverence. Let me. Appeal to you today. Do you.

[45 : 18] Know. God. As your father. Do you have God. As your father. Do you know him personally. Do you imitate him. As his child.

Do you rest. In that fierce. Unbreakable love. Let me urge you. If you do not. If you have not. Yet turned from your life of sin.

From your independence. Against God. I urge you. Urge you. Repent. And believe. Turn away. Turn back. Believe. In his son.

Jesus Christ. Christ. So that you will not face. The wrath. Of an angry father. Who is going to bring to ruin. In hell. Everyone. Who harms. Everyone. Who corrupts.

Everyone. Who destroys. The people. And the world. That God is giving to his son. Repent. And believe. In his son. Jesus Christ. So that you will find.

[46 : 11] That good life. That eternal life. Of knowing God. As your loving. And gracious. Father in heaven. The Lord has chosen.

To love us. As our father. He's ensuring our security. Defining our responsibility. Stirring up our reverence. That is the Lord our God.

Let me pray.