

MATTHEW 6.1-18

OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN . . .

LIVING IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

REPENT!

*The kingdom of heaven
is near!*



I need to emphasize, friends, that our natural, earthy lives don't in themselves lead us by their very nature into the kingdom of God. Their very "nature" is to die, so how could they "naturally" end up in the Life kingdom?

1 CORINTHIANS 15.50 MSG

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. . . . The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.

1 JOHN 2.15, 17

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”

MATTHEW 7.21

“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.”

MATTHEW 7.13-14

THE FATHER AND HIS CHILDREN

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know Him. . . . All who have this hope in Him purify themselves, just as He is pure.

1 JOHN 3.1, 3

- ▶ The most wonderful result of repentance and embracing the kingdom of heaven is that I become a child of God! Jesus opens the way for us to experience by adoption the wonderful relation that he possesses with the Father by right and by nature.

He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

JOHN 1.11-13

- ▶ Speaking to those who forsake the “kingdom of here” and embrace the kingdom of heaven, who are born again by the Spirit of God and given a new heart, Jesus embraces them in this family relationship; 15 times in this sermon he identifies us with God in this Father/child relationship; 10 of those times are found in this teaching on giving, fasting and prayer.

- ▶ “you will have no reward from your **Father** in heaven” (v. 1)
- ▶ “your **Father**, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you” (v. 4)
- ▶ “close the door and pray to your **Father**, who is unseen” (v. 6)
- ▶ “your **Father**, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you” (v. 6)
- ▶ “your **Father** knows what you need before you ask him” (v. 7)
- ▶ “This, then, is how you should pray, ‘Our **Father** in heaven’” (v. 9)
- ▶ “if you forgive . . . your heavenly **Father** will also forgive you” (v.14)
- ▶ “if you do not forgive . . . your **Father** will not forgive your sins” (v.15)
- ▶ “obvious . . . only to your **Father**, who is unseen” (v. 18)
- ▶ your **Father**, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you” (v.18)

WHEN YOU . . . THEN YOUR FATHER . . .

When you give to the needy . . .

When you pray . . .

When you fast . . .

- ▶ Jesus makes each of these a matter of personal relationship with God as my Father. If God is truly my Father, this is what I will do—proof of the Father's DNA in me.
- ▶ Notice that Jesus said *when*, not *if*. These are kingdom expectations, not options; practices, not occasional activities.

- ▶ Concern for the needs of others is a primary test of whether I am an authentic child of God.

This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not God's child, nor is anyone who does not love their brother and sister. . . . If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

1 JOHN 3.10, 17-18

- ▶ Above everything else, prayer is primarily a matter of relationship. A lack of prayer in one's life reveals a lack of relationship with God.
- ▶ Fasting reveals awareness and priority of spiritual issues over everyday matters and options. It reveals that I long for God's will to be done on earth.