

引言 INTRODUCTION

Like father, like child. More than likely, you inherit something from your dad as you grow up. My wife has met my dad for only a handful of times. But she notices that I share some similarities with him. Once in a while, she may say: “You’re just like your father. You tend to hide your feelings inside.” She pointed out another time when we were eating: “You like to tap your finger on the table just like your dad did.” Whether it is good or bad habits, through genes or modelling, we copy something from our father. Besides our earthly father, we also have a Heavenly Father. As Jesus’ followers, do we share certain characteristics God has? Do you think the way He does? Do you practice His values? Do you treat people with love, patience and kindness like He deals with you? When we discuss Kingdom living in this series, we learn about how to live as heavenly citizens in the fallen world. What Jesus teaches us are not just good moral principles to consider. Those lessons are practical instructions for God’s children to obey. Parents hope that the lessons children learn at home will impact their adult life. In the same way, God desires for us to be doers of His truths every day. We are more blessed if we follow what He says. Jesus talks about prayer in our passage today. We must pray with a right intent that pleases God. Prayer is not to get what we wish, but it is to know God’s will.

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 預期的結果 Expected Results

Jesus begins with a promise. We will get expected results when we pray to God. As we shall see, this assurance must be grounded on God’s terms. Jesus says in verses 7-8: **7 “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.”** Is there anyone who always get what you pray for? If not, is Jesus giving us an empty promise? This is a good example that illustrates we have to interpret a passage in light of the general teaching of the whole Bible. We should not take words out of context. Otherwise, an incorrect understanding will lead to inaccurate applications. God gives us the freedom to ask for whatever it is in our hearts. But He will only give us what He thinks we need. We can refer to a cross-reference passage in 1 John 5:14-15 – **14 And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.** God will hear us if our prayer aligns with His will. How can we know God’s will? It is all in the Bible. For example, God hopes that everyone will receive Jesus. Therefore, it is definitely God’s will when I pray for the salvation of my family members overseas. The more we read the Bible, the more we will know how to pray. Think of it in terms of a parent and children relationship. When my boys were little, they played outside with neighbors’ kids. Sometimes they asked me if it is okay to share their snacks with friends. I would say yes. Generosity and kindness are good virtues, even when they gave away items that were bought with my money. Similarly, God will love to grant our wish if the results will bless others and glorify Him. He will not answer our prayers if we ask with a selfish intent. James 4:3 tells us: **You ask and do not receive, because you**

ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. God supplies our needs, but He will not fulfill our wants. For example, why should He give you a million dollars if your desire is to live large? He will not give you a new car either if your motive is to show-off to your friends. That points to an important spiritual principle. Getting what we hope for should not be the final goal. We need to ask how to use what God gives us to honor Him. Suppose God sends you to a well-known college with a nice scholarship. Perhaps He wants you to share the gospel with the people you will meet. He may also use campus life to prepare you to serve Him in your future profession. God bless you a job with a decent salary. You can pay bills and raise a family. But will you use your career as a platform to witness for Jesus? You should thank God if He heals you from a major disease. Perhaps He gives you a good health so that you can serve Him more in and outside of the church. You see, prayer is not a process to get what we want. It is a means to know God's will. Many people abandon the Christian faith when they did not get what they asked for. They think that prayer works like a vending machine. They put money in the slot, and expect a specific item to come out. They get mad if the machine malfunctions. They will bang on it or shake it until they get that what they pay for. Prayer works more like a suggestion box. We sincerely submit our opinions, hoping that some officials will consider our concerns. Of course, it is impossible to fulfill the requests of all the people. In comparison, our God is full of wisdom and power. He can take care of our needs, the needs of billion other people and oversee what is happening in the world at the same time. That is why He is God and we are not. He invites us to commit our requests to Him. We then accept by faith that the outcome is what God sees as the best for us. He is our Master and we are His servants. He listens to our prayer but we should listen to His directions.

2. 確定的關係 Established Relationship

There will be expected results when we pray to God. He provides for all that we need because of an established relationship with us. He treats us as children when we honor Him as our Heavenly Father. Jesus says in verses 9-11: 9 “Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? 11 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!” A stone can look like a loaf of bread, and a small snake is slender and has scales that resembles a fish. It is unthinkable for a father to give something useless and even harmful to his children. Sadly, there are some self-centered and irresponsible dads in the world. But in general, a father loves his kids and he will give them the best. But even when an earthly father can be ignorant and negligent, our Heavenly Father will not overlook our needs. He will bless us abundantly according to His will. Presenting prayer takes faith. We know that our Father who we cannot see is listening. Receiving God's response also needs faith. We trust that He knows our needs more than we do. Sometimes, we are upset when we do not get what we want. We hope to get some fancy pastry from a renowned bakery. But God may give us some simple bread from Aldi. We crave for some live fish in a tank. But God may have in mind some catfish nuggets. In your case, it may be a job, a car, a house or even your spouse that does not meet your expectation. What we truly need is a submissive heart, ready and willing to accept God's will. Besides our physical needs, God also have our spiritual need in mind. In a parallel passage in Luke 11:13, Jesus tell us the best gift our Heavenly Father prepares for us: “... how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” Receiving the Holy Spirit is another way to say that a person is saved. The moment we commit our lives to

Jesus, the Holy Spirit will come into our hearts. He will stay there forever. The presence of the Holy Spirit confirms our salvation. Among other works, the Holy Spirit helps us understand the Bible, He guides us in the truth and He convicts our hearts when we go astray. He also directs us in our prayer. For instance, He will nudge us when we pray for the wrong things or pray with a wrong motive. Therefore, prayer is not to demand things on our shopping list. Parents will be heart-broken if their kids come to them only when they lack something. My older son is in college. I know unlike girls, boys do not talk much. When my son contact me, usually it is because he wants me to pay certain fees or to buy something for him. But once in a while, he will ask me for inputs on certain decisions. For example, whether or not he should join an interest club or serve as a volunteer. I enjoy those communication. He reasons that I may have some useful advice because I have more life experience. He also understands that I have his best interests in mind. My son turns to me despite my limited wisdom and resources. How much more should we go to our mighty Heavenly Father? Prayer is an interaction between He and us. Prayer works not because our words have any magic power or we follow a certain formula. Prayer is effective because our Heavenly Father chooses to exercise His sovereignty and acts on our behalf. Prayer is not like crying out for help when you get into trouble while hiking. You hope that someone who hears you will come to your rescue. Of course God hears you when you pray. But He may not respond to you if you are not His child. However, there is one type of prayer from non-believers that God will definitely answer. It is the sinners' prayer. God loves to hear your confession and your willingness to accept His salvation grace. God is delighted for you to come back to His family and recognize Him as your Father.

3. 延伸的要求 Extended Request

Jesus tells us that there will be expected results when we pray to God. He graciously supplies our needs because of an established relationship. Because of that, Jesus gives us an extended request. We must treat others the same way God deals with us. Jesus says in verse 12: **“So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”** “The Law and the Prophets” are the two major sections of the Old Testament. Jesus means that treating others how you want to be treated is consistent with the Bible. On another occasion, Jesus told people that the Word of God can be boiled down to two commands: love God and love our neighbors as ourselves. The apostle John also reminds us that we cannot say we love the God we cannot see if we do not love fellow believers we can see. Jesus' request in this verse is generally called the “Golden Rule.” It is similar to a maxim by the ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius. He wrote: “Do not do to others what you do not want them to do to you.” For example, if you do not want people to lie to you, cheat you and steal from you, then you should not take advantage of them in those ways. Jesus went a step further. Not hurting others is not good enough. He also tells us to treat people well. When the gospel writer Luke records this teaching from Jesus, he puts the Golden Rule in the context of how we should interact with enemies. Jesus tells us to repay evil with good. God gives sunshine and rain to believers and non-believers alike. Therefore, we should show kindness to even our enemies. If that is the case, how much more should we show kindness to people who do not harm us? The Marriott Hotel used that idea in a series of TV commercials in 2017. One clip presents a true story. A lady called the front-desk because she had severe abdominal pain. The manager was about to go home. But she dropped her bag and went to check on the guest right away. Later she called an ambulance and sent the lady to a hospital. It turned out that her appendix had burst. Fortunately, a surgery was performed

successfully. The hotel manager stayed past midnight until the patient woke up and made sure that she was fine. We like to see heart-warming stories like this. It shows the beauty of humanity. But are we inspired to step out of our comfort zone and demonstrate love through actions? Sometimes, we make excuse that we are busy. Perhaps we assume that someone else will do it. But if everyone thinks the same way, then what needs to be done will not be done. I had an interesting observation a few weeks ago. I was chatting with someone in our gym. I saw a few kids' bikes on the floor right outside the coffee room. Those toys were blocking the way. I had a concern that someone would stumble on them. Then a few people walked by. They were aware of the obstacles because they leaped over those bikes. But none of them moved the clutter. Two girls passed by moments later. I asked them to bring the toys back to where they should be. They were glad to do the work. The world will surely be a better place if we take the initiative to care for others' needs. Very often, it can be simple things that a little kid can do. You may ask: what if I am friendly and helpful to people but they do not respond in the same way? Jesus never guarantees us that people will return good for good. He would never have gone to the cross if He waited until we made a confession! Jesus asks us to do our part, regardless of how others may react. We choose to show compassion and understanding, and to offer help. We seize opportunities to praise others and celebrate their success. There can be a few motivations for our actions. When money is the incentive, it is called a work. To do something reluctantly when being asked to can be an obligation or a punishment. But to do it joyfully because you have a simple heart to bless others is grace.

結論 CONCLUSION

Our close relationship with God will affect how we treat others. Prayer is not to get what we wish, but it is to know God's will. We can never bargain with God and persuade Him to agree with our terms. The longer we pray, the more we are willing to let go of our desire. Through this interaction, we get closer to the Heavenly Father. Someone described prayer like docking a ship to a pier. The crew from the boat throw a few ropes to the men on the shore. Then the engine on the ship will fire up and pull those cables. The pier will not be pulled out to the ocean-liner. Instead, the ship is drawn up to the pier. Likewise, our prayer will never drag God down to us. Rather, it brings us nearer to Him. Gradually, we realize that getting what we hope for becomes less important. We become submissive to the Father and pray like Jesus did: "Not my will; but Yours be done."

引言 INTRODUCTION

有其父，必有其子。在你的成長過程中，你會從父親身上學到一些東西。我的太太只見過我父親幾次，但她注意到我和他有些相似之處。她偶爾會說：「你和你的爸爸一樣，你常常把自己的感受藏在心裡。」還有一次我們吃飯時她指出：「你喜歡用手指敲桌子，就像你爸爸那樣。」無論是好習慣還是壞習慣，透過基因遺傳還是榜樣，我們都從父親繼承了一些東西。除了我們地上的父親之外，我們還有一位天上的父親。作為耶穌的跟隨者，我們是否具有神的某些特徵？你的想法和祂一樣嗎？你根據祂的價值觀做事嗎？你是否像神對待你一樣以愛、忍耐和恩慈對待別人？當我們在這個系列中討論天國生活時，我們學習如何在墮落的世界中活得像天上的公民。耶穌教導我們的不僅是值得考慮的道德原則。這些教訓是神兒女必須遵守的指示。父母希望孩子在家裡學習的教導能影響他們一生。同樣，神希望我們每天都實踐祂的真理。如果我們聽從神的話，我們就會蒙福。耶穌在今天的經文中談到了禱告。我們必須帶著討神喜悅的正確心態來禱告。祈求不是為了得到我們想要的東西，而是為了明白神的旨意。

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 預期的結果 Expected Results

耶穌以一個應許開始。當我們向神祈求時，我們就會得到預期的結果。我們稍後會看到，這個保證必須以神的條件為基礎。耶穌在第 7-8 節說：7「你們祈求，就給你們；尋找，就尋見；叩門，就給你們開門。8 因為凡祈求的，就得着；尋找的，就尋見；叩門的，就給他開門。」請問有誰是求什麼就有什麼的？如果沒有，耶穌給我們的應許是空洞的嗎？這是一個很好的例子，說明我們必須根據整本聖經的普遍教導來理解一段經文。我們不應該斷章取義。否則，錯誤的理解就會導致錯誤的應用。神給我們自由去祈求心中渴望的事情，但是祂只會供應祂認為我們需要的東西。我們可以參考約翰一書 5:14-15 的對照經文：14 我們若照祂的旨意求甚麼，祂就聽我們，這是我們向祂所存坦然無懼的心。15 既然知道祂聽我們一切所求的，就知道我們所求於祂的，無不得着。如果我們的禱告符合神的旨意，神就會聽我們。我們怎樣才能知道神的旨意呢？祂一切的旨意都記在聖經裡。例如，神希望每個人都能相信耶穌。因此，我為海外家人的得救禱告絕對是神的旨意。因此，我越多看聖經，就越知道如何禱告。我們可以從父母和孩子的關係來思考這個道理。當我的孩子還小的時候，他們和鄰居的小朋友在外面玩。有時他們會問我是否可以與朋友分享他們的零食。我一定會說可以的。慷慨和仁慈是美好的品格，雖然他們把

用我的錢買的東西分出去。同樣，如果祈求的結果能夠祝福別人並榮耀神，神就會樂意實現我們的願望。如果我們出於自私的目的祈求，祂就不會回應我們的禱告。雅各書 4:3 告訴我們：**你們求也得不到，是因為你們妄求，要浪費在你們的宴樂中。**神供應我們的需要，但祂不會滿足我們的慾望。例如，祂為什麼要給你一百萬美元，如果你只是想要獨自享樂？祂也不會賜給你一部新車，如果你的動機是向朋友炫耀。這指出了一個重要的屬靈原則。得到我們所想要的東西不應該是祈求的最終目的。我們需要進一步問如何使用神所賜的東西來榮耀祂。假設神送你的孩子去一所名校，而且有豐厚的獎學金。也許祂希望你的孩子與他們將會遇到的人分享福音。神也可能利用校園生活裝備你的孩子，使他們在將來的職業中服事神。神賜給你一份薪水不錯的工作，使你可以養家糊口。但你會利用你的事業向別人見證耶穌嗎？如果神醫治了你的重大疾病，你應該感謝祂。也許祂賜給你健康，是希望你在教會內外更多事奉祂。因此，禱告不是得到我們想要的東西的過程，而是明白神的旨意的途徑。許多人因為得不到他們所祈求的東西便放棄基督信仰。他們以為禱告就像自動販賣機一樣。他們投入一些錢，期望得到某些物品。如果機器故障，他們便會生氣。他們甚至會敲打或搖晃機器，直到他們得到想要的東西。禱告其實比較像是意見箱。我們真誠地表達自己的想法，希望有關官員考慮我們的意見。當然，不可能滿足所有人的要求。相比之下，神充滿智慧和能力。祂能夠照顧我們的需要以及千萬人的需要，並同時掌管世界上的所有事情。這就是為什麼祂是神而我們不是。祂邀請我們呈獻我們的要求。然後，我們憑信心接受結果，相信那是神認為對我們最好的安排。祂是我們的主人，我們是祂的僕人。祂聽我們的祈求，但我們必須聽從祂的指示。

2. 確定的關係 Established Relationship

當我們向神祈求時，就會有預期的結果。神供應我們所需的一切，是基於我們與祂確定的關係。當我們尊崇祂為天父時，祂就看我們為祂的孩子。耶穌在 9-11 節說：**9「你們中間誰有兒子求餅，反給他石頭呢？10 求魚，反給他蛇呢？11 你們雖然不好，尚且知道拿好東西給兒女，何況你們在天上的父，豈不更把好東西給求他的人嗎？」**石頭有時候看起來像一塊麵包，小蛇幼小又有鱗片，長得像魚。一個父親不可能把沒用甚至有害的東西給自己的孩子。可悲的是，世上的確有一些自我中心並且不負責任的父親。但一般來說，父親總是愛他的兒女，他會給他們最好的。但縱使地上的父親可能會無知和疏忽，我們的天父也不會忽略我們的需要。祂會按照祂的旨意厚厚地祝福我們。禱告需要信心。我們知道那位看不見的天父正在聆聽。接受神的回應時也需要信心。我們相信祂比我們更了解我們的需要。有時，當我們沒有得到渴望的東西時，我們便會感到失望。我們想要得到名店的精美糕點，但神給我們的可能是奧迪的麵包。我們渴望魚缸裡面的活魚，但神賜予的可能是一些鯰魚片。對你來說，可能是沒有達到你期望的工作、車子、房子甚至是你的配偶。我們真正需要的是一顆順服的心，準備好並願意接受神的旨意。除了我們身

體上的需要，神也照顧我們靈裡面的需要。在路加福音 11:13 的平行經文中，耶穌告訴我們天父為我們準備了最好的禮物：「...何況天父，豈不更將聖靈給求他的人嗎？」接受聖靈是表示一個人已經得救。當我們將生命交託給耶穌的那一刻，聖靈就會進入我們的心中。祂會永遠住在那裡。聖靈的同在證實了我們的救恩。聖靈幫助我們明白聖經，祂以真理引導我們，當我們偏行己路時，祂使我們的心知罪。另外，祂也引導我們的禱告。例如，當我們祈求的事情或心態不正確時，祂會提醒我們。因此，禱告並不是提出我們清單上的東西。如果孩子只有在缺什麼東西的時候才來找你，做父母的肯定會難過。我的大兒子正在上大學。我知道男孩與女孩不同，他們講話不多。當我兒子聯絡我時，通常是要我支付什麼費用或是要我買東西給他。但偶爾，他會在做決定前問我的意見。例如要不要參加某個興趣小組，或是去當義工。我喜歡和他交流。他認為我可能會有一些有用的建議，因為我有更多的生活經驗。他也知道我會為他的好處著想。雖然我的智慧和資源有限，我的兒子還是願意請教我。我們豈不是更應該去求問大能的天父嗎？禱告是祂與我們之間的互動。禱告之所以有效，並不是因為我們的言語有什麼魔力，或者我們依循某種公式。禱告有效，是因為我們的天父選擇運用祂的主權來幫助我們。禱告不像是當你爬山遇到麻煩時大聲呼叫。你希望有任何人能聽到你的聲音來拯救你。當然，當你禱告時，神會聽你的呼求。但如果你不是祂的孩子，祂不一定會回應你。然而，有一種來自非信徒的禱告，神一定會回應，就是罪人的禱告。神喜歡聽到人認罪並願意接受祂的救恩。神很高興你回到祂的家並承認祂是你的天父。

3. 延伸的要求 Extended Request

耶穌告訴我們，當我們向神祈求時，就會得到預期的結果。天父樂意滿足我們的需要，是由於祂和我們確定的關係。因此，耶穌向我們提出了一個延伸的要求。我們必須像神對待我們一樣對待別人。耶穌在第 12 節說：「所以，無論何事，你們願意人怎樣待你們，你們也要怎樣待人，因為這就是律法和先知的道理。」「律法和先知」是舊約的兩個主要部分。耶穌的意思是，你希望人怎樣對待你，你就怎樣對待別人，這種心態是符合聖經的。有一次耶穌告訴人們，神的話可以歸納為兩個命令：愛神和愛人如己。使徒約翰也提醒我們，如果我們不愛看得見的信徒，我們就不能說我們愛看不見的神。耶穌在這節經文中的要求通常被稱為「黃金定律」。它類似於孔子說的一句格言：「己所不欲，勿施於人。」例如，如果你不希望人們對你說謊、欺騙你、偷你的東西，那麼你就不應該以那些方式虧待他們。但是耶穌更進一步。不傷害別人還不夠，祂告訴我們要善待他人。當福音書的作者路加記載耶穌的這一段教導時，他把黃金定律放在我們應該如何看待敵人的段落裡。耶穌告訴我們要以善報惡。神賜給信徒和非信徒同樣的陽光和雨水。因此，我們也應該善待敵人。如果我們真是這樣看待敵人，我們豈不是更應該對其他人友善嗎？2017 年，萬豪酒店在一系列電視廣告中借用了這個理念。其中一個片段講述了一個真實的故事。一位女士因為肚子痛打電話給前台。經理本來正準備回家。但她扔下皮

包，立即去看看客人的狀況。隨後，她叫了救護車，將那位女士送到醫院。原來她的闌尾已經破裂了。還好手術很成功。那位酒店的經理一直等到半夜，直到病人醒來並確保她沒事才回家。我們喜歡看到這樣溫暖人心的故事。它展示了人性的美善。但我們是否會被激勵，透過行動向別人表達愛心呢？有時候，我們會找藉口說自己很忙，或是以為其他人會去幫忙。但如果每個人都是這樣想，那麼需要做的事情就會沒有人去做。幾週前我有一個有趣的觀察。我在體育館和某人聊天。我看到咖啡間外面的地上有幾輛兒童自行車。那些玩具擋住了路。我擔心有人會被絆倒。稍後，有幾個人走過來。他們看到障礙物，但是他們跨過那些自行車，卻沒有把那些雜物搬開。過了一會兒，兩個小女孩經過。我請她們把玩具放回原處，她們很樂意幫忙。如果我們主動關心別人的需要，世界一定會變得更美好。很多時候，可能只是一些連小孩子都能做到的簡單事情。你也許會問：如果我對別人友善且樂於助人，但他們卻沒有以同樣的方式回應怎麼辦？耶穌從來沒有向我們保證人們會以同樣的態度回報。如果祂要等到我們願意認罪，祂可能永遠都不會上十字架！耶穌要求我們盡自己的本份，無論別人如何回應。我們選擇表現出憐憫和同情心，並提供幫助。我們把握機會讚賞別人並慶祝他們的成就。我們做一件事可能是出於不同的推動力。如果金錢是唯一的原因，那是稱為工作。如果我們是勉為其難地去做，那可能是一份責任或一種懲罰。但如果你是本著一顆單純的心去祝福別人，那就是恩典的施予。

結論 CONCLUSION

我們與神親近的關係會影響我們與別人相處的態度。祈求不是為了得到我們想要的東西，而是為了明白神的旨意。我們永遠無法跟神討價還價並說服祂接受我們的要求。我們越多禱告，我們就越願意放棄自己的心意。透過這種互動，我們與天父更加接近。有人形容禱告就像一艘船要靠近碼頭。船上的人員向岸上的人丟幾根繩子。然後船上的引擎發動，把繩子拉緊。碼頭不會被拖到船那邊。相反，船會被拉近碼頭。同樣，我們的禱告永遠不會把神拉到我們身邊。反之，禱告使我們更接近神。漸漸地，我們明白得到我們所希望得到的東西變得不那麼重要了。我們變得更願意順服天父，就像耶穌那樣禱告：「不要照我的意思，只要照祢的意思。」