

“Questions Jesus Asked: “Which of You?”

Luke 11:5-13 (NIV)

June 19, 2016---Father’s Day

Rev. Dave Baldrige

Palm Harbor United Methodist Church, Palm Harbor, Florida

A week ago today at this time I did not know of the full extent of the massacre in Orlando. How could a good, good father allow this?

The Chris Tomlin song that the choir sang said this: “You are perfect in all of your ways, You are perfect in all of your ways to us.”

Our good, good Father is perfect in all of His ways....but our ways....well we have so far to go.

What are His ways...let’s go back to the song and Tomlin’s words: “Oh, it’s love so undeniable, I can hardly speak. Peace so unexplainable. I can hardly think.”

Do we have that Father’s love that is so undeniable? Do we have that peace that is unexplainable?

And then Tomlin says this: “As you call me deeper still into love, love, love.”

We just got back from Annual Conference. Our Bishop and Cabinet had a statement and response to the violent crime of hate that took place last Sunday.

We were asked to consider approving and accepting the statement. I wholeheartedly did as did the Florida Annual Conference. In part the statement said this: “We call upon all United Methodists to claim our witness as Wesleyan Christians to stand against such hateful violence. Toward that end we affirm these words found in the Preamble to our Social Principles.

Grateful for God’s forgiving love, in which we live and by which we are judged, and affirming our belief in the inestimable worth of each individual, we renew our commitment to become faithful witnesses to the Gospel, not alone to the ends of the earth, but also to the depth of our common life and work. (Book of Discipline, p.104)

It is our hope that our response to this act of violence and evil will be lived out in our common life and work in our churches and in the larger community in ways that reflect the reconciling love of Christ. We unequivocally stand against words and deed, and our complicit silence, that do harm to anyone, anywhere, and particularly to those in the LGBTQ community.

We pledge ourselves to the demonstration of love to all of God’s children, and invite all clergy and laity in the Florida Conference into that same pledge.”

Oh....good, good father...you call me deeper still into love, love, love. You’re a Good, Good Father. It’s who you are, it’s who you are, it’s who you are. And I’m loved by you. It’s who I am, it’s who I am, it’s who I am.

On Thursday evening at Annual Conference in Orlando we had a Prayer Vigil. Sarah and I were there. Cathy and her husband Bill were there along with a couple of hundred or so people. The names of those killed were read. Prayers were offered. And I wept.

Oh, good good father....how, why, how long? Searching for answers. And so we have this last of the sermon series on Questions Jesus Asked: "Which of you?"

"Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion." A loving Father would not do that.

I have been called a lot of things in my life....don't go there...but probably one of the greatest is Dad or Daddy. Well, no---hold it...when I hear my 2 year old granddaughter say Pops well it does something to this grandpas heart. Dad, daddy, father, Pops are endearing words...words of love. I try to love my children unconditionally. And I DO love my grandchildren unconditionally! 4th grandchild on the way in December!!!! Oh, how much more does our Heavenly Father love us?

In VERSES 9-10 it says, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."

The verb tense of the words ask, seek, and knock in the original Greek in which they were written are Present Imperatives. I wish someone would ask me, "What does that mean?" xxxx Glad you asked...it means a continuous kind of action. "Action in progress." "State of persistence." Keep asking, keep seeking, keep knocking.

Are we truly, consistently and persistently asking, seeking, and knocking. Oh to ask, seek and find the answers.

Fathers...which of you when your child keeps asking, and seeking....sometimes cave in...and say okay. And I must admit that as much as I love my 2 sons...there is a special relationship with my daughter. She knew that and used it to her advantage. She would do the pout lip thingy...and well....I would say yes.

Now of course there would be limits...because I think that most of us learned that there are things that are asked for that are not in our best interest. Likewise our Good Heavenly Father at times tells us no.

In our scripture it says Which of You Fathers if you son asks for a fish will him a snake instead? Now that seems ludicrous. Of course a good father wouldn't do that. Which of you fathers if your child asks for an egg will give him a scorpion. Let's see an egg or a poisonous scorpion? Duh---an egg of course.

Did you notice **Verse 13: If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?**

An earthly father gives good gifts...but the Heavenly Father gives the greatest gift....the gift of the Holy Spirit.

And the fruit of His Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23) How we doing on those???

Do we have His love?
Do we share His joy?
Do we embrace His patience?
Do we embody His kindness?
Do we offer goodness?
Do we maintain our faithfulness?
Do we seek gentleness?
Do we live out our self-control?

Oh Father give us your gift of the Holy Spirit to live in this world that seems so fallen,

Do not just listen, but hear, really hear the Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace;
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is error, the truth;
Where there is doubt, the faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
And where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,
Grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled, as to console;
To be understood, as to understand;
To be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

A great hymn written in the early 1900's is the hymn "In My Father's World." The last verse says this: "This is my Father's world. O let me ne'er forget that though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the ruler yet." Did you hear me? God is the ruler yet!!!!

Sometimes it is as if we just want to say, “Come Lord Jesus come!” The Commencement speaker at Asbury University this year when Andy walked the graduation line was Rev. Samuel Rodriguez. He said this: “When we are saying, “Come Lord Jesus come, and waiting for Jesus to come down---the church must stand up.”

Be the light. Be the love.

Romans 8:15-16 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁵ The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship.^[a] And by him we cry, “Abba,^[b] Father.” ¹⁶ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.

Abba, Father. Abba is a term of endearment. Papa, Daddy. Papa-God is you will. We cry out in our world today saying, “Abba, Father.”

Oh children of God you are not Fatherless, but you are Fatherfull. You have been adopted!!

You are His really daughter.

You are His really son.

As in the video, (Fatherless to Faithful) Levi and Lia said, “Maybe you can’t even imagine being loved by a good father...Got some really great news. There’s a heavenly father and He’s a really really good daddy. When you choose Him, God adopts you into His family. He’s your “really” dad.

The love of a good father is something to treasure forever.
God is a good good Father.