

Joke: A German Shepherd, Doberman and a cat die and go to heaven. God greets the three and asks each what they believe in. First God asks the German Shepherd who replies, "I believe in discipline and loyalty to my master." God says, "This is good, you can sit here at my right hand."

Next, God asks the Doberman what he believes in. The Doberman replies, "I believe in love and protecting my master." God says, "Wonderful, you can sit here at my left."

Finally, God asks the cat what he believes in and the cat replies, "I believe you are in my seat."

We started this series God is a couple weeks ago. In week one we looked at God is merciful. Last week we talked about God is trustworthy. Today we're going look at an attributes of God that quite frankly it's one of the most widely believed, and yet at the same time the most often doubted about who God is.

What I want to share today is that God is loving.

And more specifically that He's a loving Father. And those two words loving Father, for some, create some challenges inside of you, because the truth is we all have dads and some of you have or had a good dad, others of you might of, and others still may have had an absent dad.

And as a pastor, one of the things that I see when talking with people, trying to work through some of the struggles and challenges they are dealing with often are due to an unhealthy connection to their earthly father.

Depending on who gave the statistics there are about 1 in 4 that's about 18.3 million children who live without a father in their home.

So here's what I want you to realize that whether you had a good dad or not so good dad, our earthly relationships can impact the way we see our heavenly Father.

1 John 3:1 (NIV): 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.

I love that. . . See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!

And if you have committed your life to Jesus, confessed Him as your Lord and Savior, believe in your heart that He died and rose again, learning to walk as He has instructed, then that is you. . . a child of God.

I'm not saying you never struggle, that you never mess up, what I am saying is that when you do you are quick to repent and allow the spirit to lead you in righteousness.

If that is you turn to the person next to you and tell them I am a child of God.

Turn to the other person and tell them like you believe it say. . . I am a child of God.

Here's the thing. This verse in 1 John is so interesting to me because it does create some issues and the reason is because there's two different types of people that read this verse and respond to it in two very different ways.

You've got the shouters and the doubters.

You got the shouters, these are the people that are like, "Yeah, I am a child of God, God loves me."

And then you got the doubters that are like, "You tell me that God is a loving Father, but how could He love someone like me?"

And if we're honest, there are times that even the shouters have become doubters.

Even those of us who have an incredible amount of faith, there are moments where we stop and doubt, can God really love me? Does God really love me? Others I understand but me?

And as we talk about this loving Father today, perhaps you had a great dad, perhaps you had an absent dad, perhaps you had no dad at all, or someone who was bad. Maybe you had a great dad who showed up at every game, took you fishing, taught you great things about life, but maybe just thinking about your dad brings up some pain and some hurt.

In my life my dad happened to be both. When I was growing up there was a dad who drank, not always around yet still often made time for me. Then as I older he found a relationship with Jesus, turned his life around, stopped drinking. Made time for not just me, but also my family.

And regardless of how you grew up, we need to realize that our experience with our earthly fathers and our earthly relationships can quite often shape the view of our heavenly Father.

So today I want to talk to anyone who has ever questioned God's love. If you've ever wondered or doubted if God loved you. If

you've desperately searched for approval, affirmation or acceptance, or perhaps you just need to know someone actually loves you. This message is for you.

Today I want to talk about God is love more specifically when you feel like God can't love you.

And hear this church there's somebody here or watching online or will hear this message next week, next month or next year that needs to hear this because there is somebody that had something said to you, that declared something over you.

Maybe someone said you were worthless. A teacher told you that you will never accomplish anything. I had that. Somebody declared some negative labels over your life.

And today, God wants me to remind you that He's called you, He's equipped you, His Spirit lives inside of you, He loves you. And maybe that's all you needed to hear today.

But that's not all of my message. That's just a little good news before we get started.

Luke 8 let me read a few verses to lay our foundation today. I want you to see a few things from this section of Scripture Luke 8 starting with verse 40 says this. . .

Luke 8:40–46 (NIV): Now when Jesus returned, a crowd welcomed him, for they were all expecting him. 41 Then a man named Jairus, a synagogue leader, came and fell at Jesus' feet, pleading with him to come to his house 42 because his only daughter, a girl of about twelve, was dying. As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him. 43 And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years, but no one could heal her. 44 She came up behind him and touched the

edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped.
45 “Who touched me?” Jesus asked. When they all denied it, Peter said, “Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you.” 46 But Jesus said, “Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me.”

I can imagine the crowd once they found out who it was that touched Jesus gasped, an unclean woman should have never got that close to anyone. She had to have touched so many to get to Jesus and by the ceremonial law at the time would have made everyone she touched unclean as well.

Let's continue. . .

Luke 8:47–48 (NIV): Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet. In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed. 48 Then he said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace.”

So let's break this down. You've got this earthly father whose daughter is dying, and he does what any good dad would do. He does everything in his power that he can do to get her healed, to make her well?

I can imagine he talked with the family doctor and everything he could think of and nothing was working and then he remembers of the stories of Jesus, maybe witnessed the miracles that were performed first hand. So he decides I need to go find Jesus.

But here's the thing he was a religious leader in the synagogue. And what we know about these religious leaders back in the day is that most of them didn't really like Jesus.

And yet this dad was willing to risk his reputation, possibly even his job because of his daughter. And so, he goes after Jesus, and Jesus, what does he do? He agrees to go with him. He says, "Let's go, I'll walk with you. I'll go with you to your house."

No excuses of why he couldn't go, just with compassion and love says let's go see your daughter.

So, Jesus goes with him but then on the journey out of the blue Jesus stops.

I can imagine Jairus thinking what are you doing Jesus we don't have time to stop. I told you my daughter is dying she doesn't have much time and you agreed to come and heal her and yet now here we are with this distraction.

Jairus must have been a little disappointed, at the very least frustrated. Why are you stopping?

I don't think it is out of the question that someone could even make the conclusion that in that moment, his perception of Jesus, his view of who Jesus was had changed. I thought we cared but you let this distraction get to you.

And truth is church that same feeling can happen in our life's as well.

And church we need to know that Jesus is always on time it just might not be our time.

Lazarus who Jesus who Scripture tells us Jesus loved. Heard he was sick as well, and that story even gets better because the Scripture tells us after Jesus received the news he waited two more days to start walking to his house.

Maybe your dad called you something that caused some hurt. Or maybe it was an absent father who worked all the time and didn't have time for you. Maybe you never got to know your father or perhaps it was a coach or a teacher or a friend and they said something to you and hurt you.

And it caused a wound inside of you and you became disappointed or disillusioned with that person. I had some teachers that told me I can make it in live, but truth is I also had others that didn't think I would.

And here's the thing often times your earthly relationships impact the way we view our heavenly Father.

And I want to give you three lies that we believe about God. Misconceptions that some have about God.

The first one is this. The lie is that God is judgmental.

We believe that He judges us by our mistakes.

But the truth is God is compassionate.

Psalm 103:13 (NIV): As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him;

That's the first lie. The second lie is this. . .that God is angry.

He's just waiting for me to mess up. He's just waiting for me to fail and then He's going to lose his temper and strike me down.

And church that's a lie.

The truth of the matter is that God is patient. Exodus 34 verse 6 tells us. . .

Exodus 34:6 (NIV): And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness,

That's the truth. The third lie some believe is that God is not loving toward me.

We believe there's no way God can love someone like me. I've messed up too much. I've committed too many sins. I keep doing the same thing over and over. How could God love someone like me?

But that's a lie. The truth of the matter is that God is full of love. As a matter of fact He is love, it's not what He does it's who He is.

Romans 5:8 (NIV): But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

God is loving, He's a loving Father. And my hope for you today is that you would see and know God as the loving Father that He is.

So let's go back to our story.

Let's look at the two daughters. First you've got the 12 year old daughter who is sick. She's dying. She's got no control over the situation. She can't get up, she can't go to Jesus, but she has a dad who could and maybe she told dad to go Him, I don't know, but we do know he went. Then you've got a woman who's been suffering for 12 years.

For 12 years, the woman is hemorrhaging, she's spent all her money to find a cure, and no cure. Because of her disease, she was considered ceremonially unclean, what that meant was that she could not touch anyone or anything without making them unclean as well.

So think about this, 12 years, 12 years of going without human touch. 12 years, without a hug, and not just that but 12 years of being completely abandoned, and cast aside from society.

She could not touch anyone, or anything. Anything she sat on would become unclean, 12 years. And she's got no one to go on her behalf. So she, in spite of what others might say, in spite of the looks she might receive, goes to Jesus.

Both need healing. One to stop the hemorrhaging, the other so she could live.

And here's the thing, we all have wounds that require healing.

And listen there are some scars that are only healed as we experience the love of the Father.

But how do we experience the love of the Father?

Let me share three things that He does so that we can experience His love. Beyond the cross which was enough the first thing is that He walks with us. Jesus walked with Jairus, heading to his house to see his daughter.

And church whatever your situation is, whether you're on the mountain top, or whether you're in the valley, He walks with you.

Jesus said to Jairus I'll go to your daughter, he told Zacchaeus come down I'm going to your house. And in Deuteronomy we read. . .

Deuteronomy 31:8 (NIV): The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged."

He will what? Never leave you nor forsake you.

And when Jesus walks with you, that changes everything. You and I were never meant to do live alone. To do live alone. And if you feel alone, feel as though no one cares you need to understand Jesus is walking with you through every trial, every struggle, every hard time, every problem, every valley as well as on the mountain tops.

And if your single don't settle for just someone who tolerates you because your tired of being alone. We let Jesus walk with you until the right person comes alone. For you guys God has a Ruth, and you ladies he has your Boaz.

Show Boaz slide

Don't settle for Ishmael when you were promised Isaac.

He walks with us, but then He also stops for us.

Jesus stopped for the woman with the issue of blood.

He stopped for the woman, He stopped for blind Bartimaeus, and he will stop for you.

If you feel like you're unlovable, He stops for you. If you don't feel worthy, He stops for you. If you feel like you failed beyond forgiveness, He stops for you. If you feel unseen, you feel unknown, you feel overlooked, you feel like nobody listens to you. He stops for you.

If you will push through the crowds of people when they say be quit like Bartimaeus, or unclean like the woman, if you will just reach out to Jesus, He'll stop for you. He'll stop whatever He's doing to walk with you.

And hear this church, He's stopping for you. He's stopping for you right here right now no matter what you're going through, no matter what you're facing, no matter how hard life has been.

He walks with us. He stops for us.

Lastly, He talks to us. I love this in scripture, hundreds of times, it's referenced in the Bible that God speaks to man.

In our story, He talks to the woman. And I want you to see this progression that happens, this is so good.

She goes from being ceremonially unclean, and an outcast in the community. But then she reaches out to Jesus and is healed in an instant. Then Jesus looks at her and says, I can't believe you did that you unclean woman, you outcast, you filthy chick you made everyone unclean including me. How selfish can you be. No, he doesn't do that what does He do, He calls her daughter.

This is the only place in scripture where Jesus calls someone, 'daughter'. She goes from being an outcast a face that should have never even been in the crowd in the first place to being a daughter of the living God.

You see, the lavish love of your Father he labels you, not with some of the negative labels you have had spoken over your life, but He labels you as His child.

And what you need to understand. Is that there are those of you that you've had someone place a label on your life. And that label has isn't who you are, it has been left a pain, a scar upon your life.

But when you receive the love of the Father, His lavish love over you, it takes those labels away and He marks you as His child.

You are a child of God. He calls you son. He calls you daughter. His lavish love does that to us. It labels you, it marks you as His child. He walks with us. He stops for us and He talks to us.

But pastor, what about Jairus' daughter who was dying? I'm glad you asked. . .

Because many times we think that when Jesus is working on someone else's issues, He's forgets about ours. But I promise you, His love is way bigger than that.

So what happens with this 12 year old daughter who's dying? Some men came and told the dad, "Hey, it's too late. She died, Stop bothering Jesus, it's too late." And I can almost sense the disappointment in this father's heart.

But hear this church, when it feels like all hope is gone, when it seems like the end has arrived. When it seems like there's no way out. That's when Jesus steps in and He says, "No, I've got the last say."

And so what does He do? He continues His walk with Jairus, He gets to the house, stops there and talks to the little girl, grabs her hand. And Luke 8:54 says this. . .

Luke 8:54 (NIV): But he took her by the hand and said, "My child, get up!"

Listen church, your situation may appear dead. It may appear hopeless. But God is about to step in.

Maybe it's a relationship that you've been fighting through. Maybe it's an addiction that you've been battling with. Maybe it's in your finances. It could be a dream you have had that you thought would never come to pass. I want to prophecy to you today, God is about to resurrect some things you thought had died.

You may feel like Jesus has stopped working on your situation and focused on someone else. But let me just tell you, His love is big enough. He has not stopped working on you. He hasn't quit, He's not done.

In the song Way Maker we sing. . .

Even when I don't feel it, You're working
You never stop, You never stop working
You never stop, You never stop working

His love is big enough. His love was big enough for the woman. His love was big enough for the little girl. And His love is big enough for you.

Once again. . .

1 John 3:1 (NIV): 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.

Romans 8:38–39 (NLT): And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. 39 No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to

separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And if you're here today and you recognize that there's been times in your life where you've doubted the love of your Father. Let me assure you your not alone in that. And church I need you to understand that there is nothing we can do to make Him love us less.

Hear this when we don't live like He has called us to, or when we do things that break His heart, and we do. It does that because He made us for more than that, and that is not who you are, you are a new creation. But there is nothing we can do to make Him love us less, and there is no way to earn more of His love.

Simple put, God is love.

He loves us just as we are, but loves us to much to keep us just the way we are.

He loved you so much that He sent His son Jesus for you, who died on a cross, rose again after three days so that you and I could have new life, abundant life, have forgiveness of our sins and experience His love in a real and deep way.

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!