

Ps. 103:13-14 (LD 46) “Father Knows Best”

For the Children: A little child tends to trust his father and look up to him. As the child grows older, he begins to see that his father is not perfect, does not always keep his promises, is not always there to help when needed, is not always able to help. Some children become disrespectful of their fathers because of this. In contrast, our Father in heaven is always able to help us and always willing to do what is good for us – though He will not always give us everything we ask for. When we pray to Him, we must always be respectful and trusting. Otherwise, we might find He is offended by our prayers. **Questions:** How does it help us to pray to know that God is all-powerful and all-knowing? How does it help us to know that He created us? How does it help us to know that He is our compassionate Father?

Introduction:

First Point: The God Who Is in Heaven

- 1) The Name of God: The main thought in our text is that “Yahweh has compassion.” The name “Yahweh” reminds us that He is not a creature, with earthly majesty and glory. He is infinite in all His attributes, infinitely far above us. See vs. 11-12. “Yahweh” means He is eternal, unchanging, and not dependent on His creation. So we are not praying to a God who can be manipulated, nor a God who might be unable to answer. He knows and can supply anything we might need
- 2) He Is Our Creator: God made us from dust, when He created the world in 6 days. Therefore, “He Himself knows our frame.” The word, “frame” implies the shaping of material by the “Potter” – as in Gen. 2:7. Therefore He knows our constitution, limitations, weaknesses, fears, ignorance, immaturity, temptations and sins. He knows we are under a curse because of sin, so we return to dust. He knows what we need, what harms and what is good. See Mt. 7:7-11. The Lord not only “knows” all this, He “remembers” – “He is *mindful* that we are dust.” He does not forget these truths about us for one second
- 3) Great Expectations: These truths about God lead us to “expect everything for body and soul from His almighty power” (Q/A 121) – everything we need, not everything we might want. This gives us great confidence when we ask according to His Word/will. It also gives great comfort when we face the change and decay of this world – to know that the Lord understands our problems and “makes allowances.” Not that He lowers His standards, but He sends His Son to meet those standards, knowing we cannot; and in Him gives us all other help we need to live as His people

Second Point: The God Who Is Our Father

- 1) Christ Closes the Distance: A God so infinitely far above us could seem remote to us. Given His holiness and our sin, He *would be* remote – were it not for our adoption as His children through Christ. Christ has made it possible for us to call the God Who is in heaven, our Father. Christ is our “Immanuel” – “God with us.” It is because of this that we can expect a sympathetic hearing and a favourable response when we pray. It is because of Christ that we know God is not only *able*, but also *willing* to help us
- 2) A Father with Compassion: Earthly fathers (and mothers) see the helplessness of their young children, and naturally want to help them. “Compassion” is the pity felt by a superior for a helpless inferior, because of some bond between them. But the bond between us and our compassionate God is one of grace and unconditional election. See Ex. 33:19. Compassion is a major part of God’s Self-revelation to His covenant-people (Ex. 34:6). Its result is forgiveness of sins versus judgement; and a favourable hearing of, and answer to, our prayers. This also explains why we can have such confidence in prayer: because we come before a compassionate Father
- 3) For Those Who Fear: While “Abba,” “Daddy,” is a NT term we can use for God, it does not mean over-familiarity or disrespect. On the contrary, we must approach God in prayer with “childlike awe and trust,” in the fear of the Lord. In other words, there must be reverence and love, unquestioning trust and childlike dependency upon Him i.e., faith. Otherwise our prayers would be offensive to Him, as irreverent and untrusting

Conclusion: