

Thursday 7th May 2020

Good morning!

Two ways to pray for ourselves today:

1) Need some encouragement today about who you are, and how loved you are by God? You may know the 'Father's Love Letter' - a compilation of Bible verses that speak of the Father's deep love for you. Take your time reading it:

"You may not know me, but I know everything about you. (Psalm 139:1) I know when you sit down and when you rise up. (Psalm 139:2) I am familiar with all your ways. (Psalm 139:3) Even the very hairs on your head are numbered. (Matthew 10:29-31) For you were made in my image. (Genesis 1:27) In me you live and move and have your being. (Acts 17:28) For you are my offspring. (Acts 17:28) I knew you even before you were conceived. (Jeremiah 1:4-5) I chose you when I planned creation. (Ephesians 1:11-12) You were not a mistake, for all your days are written in my book. (Psalm 139:15-16) I determined the exact time of your birth and where you would live. (Acts 17:26) You are fearfully and wonderfully made. (Psalm 139:14) I knit you together in your mother's womb. (Psalm 139:13) And brought you forth on the day you were born. (Psalm 71:6) I have been misrepresented by those who don't know me. (John 8:41-44) I am not distant and angry, but am the complete expression of love. (1 John 4:16) And it is my desire to lavish my love on you. (1 John 3:1) Simply because you are my child and I am your Father. (1 John 3:1)

I offer you more than your earthly father ever could. (Matthew 7:11) For I am the perfect father. (Matthew 5:48) Every good gift that you receive comes from my hand. (James 1:17) For I am your provider and I meet all your needs. (Matthew 6:31-33) My plan for your future has always been filled with hope. (Jeremiah 29:11) Because I love you with an everlasting love. (Jeremiah 31:3) My thoughts toward you are countless as the sand on the seashore. (Psalm 139:17-18) And I rejoice over you with singing. (Zephaniah 3:17) I will never stop doing good to you. (Jeremiah 32:40) For you are my treasured possession. (Exodus 19:5) I desire to establish you with all my heart and all my soul. (Jeremiah 32:41) And I want to show you great and marvellous things. (Jeremiah 33:3) If you seek me with all your heart, you will find me. (Deuteronomy 4:29) Delight in me and I will give you the desires of your heart. (Psalm 37:4) For it is I who gave you those desires. (Philippians 2:13) I am able to do more for you than you could possibly imagine. (Ephesians 3:20) For I am your greatest encourager. (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17) I am also the Father who comforts you in all your troubles. (2 Corinthians 1:3-4) When you are brokenhearted, I am close to you. (Psalm 34:18) As a shepherd carries a lamb, I have carried you close to my heart. (Isaiah 40:11) One day I will wipe away every tear from your eyes. (Revelation 21:3-4) And I'll take away all the pain you have suffered on this earth. (Revelation 21:3-4) I am your Father, and I love you even as I love my son, Jesus. (John 17:23) For in Jesus, my love for you is revealed. (John 17:26)

He is the exact representation of my being. (Hebrews 1:3) He came to demonstrate that I am for you, not against you. (Romans 8:31) And to tell you that I am not counting your sins. (2 Corinthians 5:18-19) Jesus died so that you and I could be reconciled. (2 Corinthians 5:18-19) His death was the ultimate expression of my love for you. (1 John 4:10) I gave up everything I loved that I might gain your love. (Romans 8:31-32) If you receive the gift of my son Jesus, you receive me. (1 John 2:23) And nothing will ever separate you from my love again. (Romans 8:38-39) Come home and I'll throw the biggest party heaven has ever seen. (Luke 15:7) I have always been Father, and will always be Father. (Ephesians 3:14-15) My question is... Will you be my child? (John 1:12-13)

May the Lord give us grace to believe this more fully and live out of it more faithfully.

2) Need some encouragement today to live more courageously for Jesus, to pursue his Kingdom wholeheartedly, and not settle for less than the faith adventures he calls us into? Need an injection of holy discomfort?!

Here is a famous prayer, said to be written by Sir Francis Drake in 1577:

*"Disturb us, Lord, when
We are too well pleased with ourselves,
When our dreams have come true
Because we have dreamed too little,
When we arrived safely
Because we sailed too close to the shore.*

*Disturb us, Lord, when
With the abundance of things we possess
We have lost our thirst
For the waters of life;
Having fallen in love with life,
We have ceased to dream of eternity
And in our efforts to build a new earth,
We have allowed our vision
Of the new Heaven to dim.*

*Disturb us, Lord, to dare more boldly,
To venture on wider seas
Where storms will show your mastery;
Where losing sight of land,
We shall find the stars.
We ask You to push back
The horizons of our hopes;
And to push into the future
In strength, courage, hope, and love."*

AMEN