



RIVERS OF LIVING WATER

PETER BELLINGHAM

16 MARCH 2005

FATHER

Let's begin by mentioning the recent funeral of Pope John Paul II. It's interesting that millions of people traveled a long way to Italy to get closer to his funeral; and millions more, perhaps even billions, watched his funeral on television. Why? Well, many of those people are devout Catholics, so most likely that is why they went to so much trouble to go to the funeral of their beloved leader. But it seems there is an even more fundamental reason.

People want to have a Father, a Dad, a Daddy if you like. **God created us with a basic and most important need, the need to have a strong and loving Father in our lives.** For millions of people, John Paul represented a father like that. They believed that he met that need in their lives. But sadly, he was a human being. He died, just like all other human beings die. It was sad to see the multitudes crying over his death, because what they were really longing for was something much more than he could ever give them.

And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. (Matthew 23:9 KJV) In this verse, Jesus was obviously not talking about our earthly natural fathers, who we quite rightly call "father". In the context of the passage, He is speaking about spiritual leaders. **We should not call any spiritual leader, "father".** Why? Because as Jesus said, we only have one Father, and he is in heaven. That's why I mention that it was sad to see the multitudes weeping over the death of John Paul II, because the longing and deep need that they have is for something much more than he gave them. It is awfully sad that so many millions of people call their spiritual leaders "father", because this is precisely what our Lord Jesus told us not to do. But people do not recognize the true nature of the need which they have in their hearts and lives; nor do they know how to fulfill it. Hence they look in the wrong places.

You have a deep and strong need in your life. That need is the need for a father. **Every human being is designed to have a strong, caring, loving father in their life.** Maybe you have felt that need. Maybe you have ached over that need, because nobody has met it for you. Maybe you have cried over that unfulfilled need. Or maybe that need is so deeply locked away in the recesses of your heart, that you do not even know it is there. Life has taught you that your need for a strong, caring, loving father will never be fulfilled and so in order to escape the pain of this, you have buried that need and forgotten that it exists. But it does still exist, aching, throbbing deep within you. You need a father. And God wants you to know that your need for a strong, caring, loving father can be, and will be, fulfilled.

A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation. (Psalm 68:5 KJV)

You have a father. A father who loves you and is with you 24 hours of the day, 7 days a week. God lives in his "holy habitation". Where is that? Where is God's holy habitation? It is right there in your heart and soul. Your father God is with you, right with you, all the time. Much of the time you don't feel he is right there with you. But He is right there with you. He is in the holy habitation of your heart and He is your father.

So He is with you all the time, but what kind of father is He? He is a father who provides for you, who protects you, who rejoices over you, an awesome father, better than the best father you could ever imagine. While you might acknowledge with your mind that this is true, maybe deep down you don't really feel like you have this kind of father. Those feelings are going to change. You are going to discover your Father God. Prepare for a wonderful adventure that will change your life.

And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.

As Honduras prepares for Presidential elections later this year, it has been interesting listening to the politicians from the various parties as they have been speaking on the radio about what the country needs. Again and again I have heard them state that the family needs to be supported, that we need strong family units. They are right. However, this is ironic because in this society, many, many families have no loving father present. A family unit is only complete and can only be strong when a loving father is part of that unit. The good news is that in those families that have no loving father, God can be a father to the fatherless. In families where a father is present but he is less than perfect (which would include every earthly father!), God is the perfect father. And in the lives of those individuals who have neither family nor father, God is a father to the fatherless. Father is here.

A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation.

We have a deep need for father in our lives. God promises to meet that need because He is a father to the fatherless. You have a heavenly father, who is right here with you, all the time. You can know Him. **You can know what it is for that deep need to be wonderfully fulfilled, whatever circumstances you live in.**

What is our father like? Today we are going to look at just one verse of scripture that tells us a lot about who our heavenly father is in our lives. And then we are going to trust the Holy Spirit to make his fatherhood real in your everyday experience. Listen to what this verse says about your heavenly father. It says a whole lot.

The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing. (Zephaniah 3:17)

The Lord thy God in the midst of thee... He is right there in your heart. He is not distant and removed. He is right in the middle of your life. That means He is always with you and he knows you very, very, very well.

Is mighty... He is not weak. He is strong, mighty and powerful. He is your defender, your protector, the one who stands with you and fights for you.

He will save... He will save you. He has saved you from hell, and every day He will save you from the things that would be permanently harmful in your life. He guides you so that you can live according to his perfect plan for your life.

He will rejoice over thee with joy... He really, really enjoys you. He enjoys the fact that you are His child. He enjoys who you are; He enjoys the things you do. He rejoices *over* you, which means He is watching over you, enjoying you.

He will rest in his love... He is at peace and rest as he watches over you, because He loves you. He is not worried or concerned or fretting over your life, because he knows that He loves you and He has great confidence in the power of his love in your life. He gazes on you with a quiet and deep satisfaction, knowing that He is totally capable of bringing His good plans to pass in your life.

He will joy over thee with singing... He enjoys you so much that He actually sings over you. God your father is singing over you. He loves you so much.

Do you notice how this verse speaks solely of the things that our Father is to us. It says nothing about what we have to do for Him in order to make Him be all these wonderful things to us. Why? Because He is our Father. He carries the burden of our lives. **We don't have to do anything to make Him treat us in this wonderful way.** So we can simply open our hearts to accept and rest in the love of our father.

You have a heavenly father. Keep reading this verse during the week. Believe what it says about your heavenly father in your life. **Your dream about having a loving father in your life is one dream that has come true.** You will never have to attend His funeral. And day by day He is going to make his presence and fatherhood more and more real to you. Amen.

©Ministerio La Fuente 2005—All Rights Reserved.

www.ministeriolafuente.org