

THE GOOD GIFTS GOD GIVES US...

Statement...by now, that crowd gathered for Jesus' Sermon on the Mount were sitting on the edge of our seats. What would he say next? Will he drop any more bombs? Will he call someone out? Shockingly, we get it a note on lighter side, a brief reprieve from his harsh rhetoric

ASK, IT SHALL BE GIVEN YOU; SEEK, YOU SHALL FIND; KNOCK, THE DOOR WILL BE OPENED; WHO AMONG YOU, IF YOUR CHILD ASKS FOR BREAD, WILL GIVE HIM A STONE? IF THE CHILD ASKS FOR A FISH, WILL GIVE A SNAKE? IF YOU WHO ARE EVIL KNOW HOW TO GIVE GIFTS TO YOUR KIDS, HOW MUCH MORE WILL YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN GIVE GOOD THINGS TO THOSE WHO ASK

Was Jesus lightening up or reminding us of something crucial about God that we tend to forget? Jesus comes BEARING GIFTS. His words sound TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE, as if God is writing us a BLANK CHECK, a DOTING PARENT who doles out goodies to his children. It seems to encourage the wrong attitude about prayer: all we have to do is to PUSH GOD'S BUTTONS, say the right words, and we will get what we want.

Our View of God... Some Christians act as if Jesus came to make us miserable. Give God an inch, and he will take a mile. God is a KILLJOY who loads us down with GUILT, who makes us feel bad if we do what we like to do. Jesus can TALK TOUGH; he makes demands; and he expects us to stand out from crowd. But he didn't come to make us miserable but to make our lives MEMORABLE. Recall the quote I gave you:

What you think about God is the most important thing about you.

Your view of God shapes your destiny, how you view life, where you place your priorities and how you view yourself/others.

Jesus reminds those who have developed a distorted image of God...

If you who evil know how to give GOOD GIFTS to your kids, how much more will God give GOOD THINGS to those who ask of him.

THE ULTIMATE GIFT GIVER...it isn't a SECRET FORMULA giving us BETTER RESULTS to prayer. He is describing God's nature: God wants to know/be known by us. God is approachable. Jesus compares God to a GIFT GIVER: a God who loves us enough to send us HIS VERY BEST; who subjected his Son to the whims of life on earth; who endured watching him be rejected and die on a Cross. The GOOD THINGS HE GIVES aren't SPIRITUAL FRINGE BENEFITS doled out to the DESERVING, but BLESSINGS given to the undeserving. Dr. Shelton named a new definition of love, forgiveness, acceptance, and the companionship of Holy Spirit. What gifts would you be on your list?