

APOSTLE'S CREED... "God, Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth."
Matthew 7.9-11

Do you know what God looks like?

The class assignment was to draw a picture of something you liked.

The teacher went around, observed the children, and commented on what they were drawing.

She got to one little girl and asked what she was drawing.

The little girl said she was drawing a picture of God.

The teacher said, "but no one knows what God looks like."

Without missing a beat the little girl says, "They will when I get done."

Today we're going to draw some pictures of God with words.

They might not exactly tell us what God looks like on the outside

but when we're done they will tell us what God looks like on the inside.

They'll tell us something of the nature and character of God, not all but some.

The words are part of the Apostle's Creed;

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth.

I hope we hear in those two titles, Father Almighty

that God wants to take care of us

and that God can take care of us.

Matthew 7.11 might say it best, " **If you then who are evil,**

know how to give good gifts to your children,

how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him."

God wants to give us good things and God can give us good things.

We affirm that every time we say the apostle's creed

that God is both personal and powerful, tender and tough

FATHER implies the "want to."

ALMIGHTY implies the "can do"

Last week in the Upper Room there was a devotional

written by a young man who as a boy knew he was loved.

Here are some of his words, "In junior high basketball

I always searched the crowd for my Dad.

He always came to the games even though I rarely got to play.

Afterwards he would wait to talk to me before I got on the bus.

His words have stayed with me all these years,

'I will always be proud of you son whether you are the star or whether you sit on the bench.

I love you son. See you at home."

I think we all long to hear those words, long to be loved like that.

And we have a God that does love us like that.

Actually the word for Father means “daddy.”

Jesus called his Father, “daddy.”

Do you feel comfortable calling God, “daddy.”

Most of us would probably say no.

One reason might be that it seems a bit disrespectful or a bit “cheesy.”

Another is that it may be too intimate

and we’re often uncomfortable or embarrassed in intimate relationships.

We may feel unworthy or to connect God with father for some is painful.

They have been abandoned or abused by their earthly fathers.

So the image of a safe presence, caring presence obviously

isn’t associated with the term Father.

But that can be overcome.

First, God is the perfect Father that models for us the perfect Father.

Second when we do some word study we find that the title God in the Bible

says more about relationship rather than gender.

We read in Genesis 1.26-27 that God said,

“Let us make man in our image, in our likeness...”

So God created man in his own image,

in the image of God he created him,

male and female he created them.”

God is not limited to just being “male.”

We read throughout the Bible metaphors and images

that describe God as having both male or female characteristics.

One metaphor of God in scripture is that of mothering.

Isaiah 49.15 and Isaiah 66.13 speak of a mother’s care and comfort.

It’s surprising that in the Old Testament we find God referred to as Father only fifteen times.

And we know in Jewish life and worship today, God is not spoken of as “Father.”

Isaiah tried, Isaiah 63.16 and 64.8, **“For Thou art our Father...and Thou O Lord art our Father...”**

It didn’t stick.

God tried, Jeremiah 3.19,

“You shall call Me, My Father, and not turn away from following Me.”

It didn’t stick. They didn’t call God Father and they did turn away.

But in the New Testament it is far different,

it is part of the permanent revelation of the character of God.

God as “Father” is referred to 170 times and mostly from the lips of Jesus.

When Jesus was twelve, after a trip to Jerusalem Mary and Joseph headed home without him. When they discovered his absence they went back and found him in the temple teaching. When confronted, his defense, **“Why were you searching for me? He asked. Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?”**

When the disciples asked Jesus how they should pray, his response, Matthew 6.9; **“Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name...”**

That is how he prayed when he prayed for himself on the Mount of Olives, Luke 22.42, **“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; Yet not my will but yours be done.”**

And on the cross, Luke 23.46, **“Jesus cried out in a loud voice, Father (daddy) into your hands I commit my spirit.”**

When Jesus prayed for the disciples, all believers, that means even you and I , he addresses God as Father; at the Last Supper, John 17.24, **“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am...”**

And on the cross, Luke 23.32, **“Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.”**

In the early church’s liturgy God was referred to as the **FATHER** of our Lord Jesus Christ.

God is our Father in two important ways.
One-the Father of all mankind through creation
and two-our Father as Christians through redemption.

Isaiah 43.1 doesn’t use the title Father but implies both; **“He who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Fear not for I have called you by name and you are mine.”**

Romans 8.16 says it even better, **“...but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, Abba, Father. And the Spirit testifies that we are God’s children.”**

Psalm 13.6 gives us a wonderful picture of trust; **“I’ve thrown myself headlong into your arms.”**

The story in Luke 15 of the Prodigal Son reminds us of the safety and security of God’s presence. Remember the son basically wished his father dead, took his inheritance, and squandered it on wine, woman, and song.

When the money disappears, so do his friends, and so does whatever dignity he has left because he ends up slopping pigs who have more to eat than he does. But that was good, because the Spirit of God enters, and the kid comes to his senses.

It gets even better.
The father is still waiting, longing and looking for his son to return.
And when the son does return, the father sees him, and runs to him.
In running the father sweats and shows the soul of his feet

which was unheard of, unheard of for a man of such prestige.

But it gets even better.

The dad hugs the kid, this son who hasn't had a bath for a day or two.

This son who is covered with mud, pig slop, and pig stuff

and who smells like...you can imagine.

That is a touching picture of God the Father Almighty's love.

I don't know if it can get any better.

Do you believe God loves you that way.

Remember Father, is the want to.

Almighty is the can do.

A teacher asked her Sunday School Class, "Is there anything God cannot do?"

How would you answer that?

A little boy in her class said, "Yes, He can't please everyone."

That's good isn't it? That seems to be true doesn't it?

Another thing that God cannot do is, not be God.

In our creed we state we believe in both, the purity and power of God's love.

We believe that God is both personal and powerful.

Ok, personal we get, powerful we get

But if God wants what is best for us and has the power to give us that,

Then why doesn't he? Why is there so much evil in our world?

So much tragedy? So much heartache?

That is because God gives us choices. We call it free will.

And God gives us the resources, what we need to make the right choices.

The Bible tells us that God's can to, is God's able to;

2 Corinthians 9.8, "**And God is able to make all grace abound to you,**

So that in all things at all times having all that you need,

your will abound in every good work."

You'll be ready to anything and everything.

Ephesians 3.20, "**Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us..."**

God can do far more than we ever imagine or guess or request in our wildest dreams.

Jude 1.24, "**To him who is able to keep you from falling..."**

Acts 20.32, "**No I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can(is able) build you up and give you an inheritance..."**

The Bible in Romans 13.1-2 reminds us that God is able to change the course of history for all rulers, governments, and Christian leaders derive their authority from God.

God is able to make older barren women and young virgins have babies because
“all things are possible with God.”

And because God is able we can always hope.

Isaiah 40.27-31, **“Do you not know? Have you not heard?
 The Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth.
 He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.**

**He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.
 Even youths grow tired and weary and young men stumble and fall;
 But those who put their hope in the Lord will renew their strength.**

**They will soar on wings like eagles;
 They will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”**

Did you catch the line about creator of the ends of the earth?
 The Scriptures ask, Psalm 121,.2, **“Where can we get help?
 Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made the heavens and the earth.”**

The heavens and the earth, they tell us, they shout to us, God is able.
 God is even able to make something out of nothing.

You’ve heard this before, Genesis 1.1-3
**“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
 Now the earth was formless and empty,
 Darkness was over the surface of the deep,
 And the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.
 And God said “...**

You know God moved in and created order, beauty, and life.
 And God CAN DO that in a person’s life.
 God is not only able to make something out of nothing, but make something out of a mess.

Dave knew he messed up his life.
 In Psalm 51 he cries asking God for a new, clean, and pure heart.

Paul agrees, in II Corinthians 5.17 tells us God is able to change a heart and change a life;
“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”

Do you believe that? Do you believe that God wants to
 and God can make something out of the messes in your life?

If so, stand with me and let’s say, **“We believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.”**

Then let’s sing what we believe, **“How Great Thou Art.”**