

Family Fellowship 1 of 4

#0506

Study Given by W. D. Frazee

Revelation 3:20—this verse is the climax of the loving appeal of Jesus the True Witness to Laodiceans. We've all seen the picture I'm sure of Jesus standing at the door knocking. Why doesn't He come in?

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" Revelation 3:20.

Suppose we look out the window, and there we see Him at the door. What does He want? Well, He wants to come in. Why, what can He do for me? You know, to many people, religion, like everything else in life, centers in self. We're inclined to evaluate everything in nature, in human association in terms of what does this do for me, what does this mean to me. If we have plans that rain interferes with, we're sorry if it rains. If we have crops that need moisture, we're glad when it rains. My point is, we tend to think of things as they affect us personally. "Well," somebody says, "of course, why not?" Yes, very natural, very human.

So when Jesus comes knocking at the door, my natural response is, the question that comes to my mind is: what can He do for me? Well, He can do plenty for my friends. But that isn't the point I want to study with you tonight. The greatest thing in religion is not what God can do for me; it's what I can do for Him.

And I'm not talking about missionary work—that's good. I'm not talking about running errands for Him. He has a million, million angels to do that. He appreciates it, whether angels or men run His errands. I'm talking about something far more wonderful—it is this: The heart of Jesus longs for your fellowship. That's why He's knocking at the door. He is lonesome for you. He craves your company. He longs for a visit with you to live with you. There is a place in His heart that only you can fill. There is a longing in His soul that nobody but you can satisfy.

This is why He stands at the door and knocks. Longing that you shall open the door and invite Him in, that He may sup with you with Him. He will feed you. He will feed you with the living bread—Himself, for He says I am the living bread which came down from heaven. This, He offers to us. Take, eat, this is my body whosoever shall eat of this bread shall live forever

But ah friends, as surely as He is to feed you, you are to feed Him. Feed Him what? Love, fellowship, and understanding. Ah friends, there's a hunger deeper than any

physical craving. There is a longing more intense than any thirst for water. It is the longing of the soul for fellowship, and God longs for fellowship with you.

Someone says, "I'm afraid I don't understand that." God knew it would be hard for us to understand how the great King of the universe that rules over an infinite universe; how He could hunger for the love and fellowship of one little creature down here in this world. God knew that that would be a bit difficult for us to fully grasp, and so God arranged something. He made a plan to help us to understand this. And when I tell you about it, do not think that this is just some incidental lesson, that this is just some illustration. The great purpose of the establishment of the home, with the various relationships that it makes possible, the great purpose of it is that you and I may know how God feels toward us and how He wants us to feel toward Him—this is it.

In *Steps to Christ* page 10, you will find these vivid words:

"Through the things of nature, and the deepest and tenderest earthly ties that human hearts can know, He has sought to reveal Himself to us" *Steps to Christ*, page 10.

God has written the message of His love on the opening buds and the springing grass. In the glories of the heavens, His character is displayed. But there is something about the revelation of the love of God in the human relationships of life, which is unique. This is why the Devil hates it so. This is why he has bent his bow and taken the sharpest arrows from his quiver in his efforts to destroy the Christian home. The Christian home is designed by God to reveal the love of God to us as nothing else in this universe can. This is His purpose, so that we may know, I repeat, how God feels toward us, and He wants us to feel toward Him.

Now, let's take a few texts that will help us to appreciate this. You remember that when the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, as recorded in Luke 11, He said when ye pray, say what? "Our Father."

"Like as a father pities his children, so the LORD pities them that fear Him" Psalm 103:13.

Turn to Isaiah 66:13; I want you to see another beautiful text. Here God likens His love to that of whom? A mother:

"As one whom his mother comforts, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem" Isaiah 66:13.

As I read that text, my mind goes back to the time when I was a little fellow. I'd stub my toe; I'd gone barefoot in the summertime, and stub my toe, and knock the skin off, and there was the red blood flowing. You know what I did? I ran toward the house "Mama, Mama." What do you suppose she did? She found some salve and a rag. She put the salve on and wrapped up the toe, cuddled me and kissed me, and I felt better. My

point is friends, God is like that. Infinitely more tender than any mother's love could be, is the love of God.

Well, let's put these texts together. When ye pray say "Our Father": Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear him. As one whom his mother comforts, so will I comfort you.

Do you see in these texts that God is seeking to reveal to us through the love of our parents His love? Tell me, fathers and mothers, would it be a good thing if we would remember that? Our job, our assignment, our privilege, is to reveal the love of God to our children. That's our great mission. Oh, we're to provide them with food and clothing and shelter and all that. But friends, the great thing we're to provide them with is a revelation of the character of God. This is the first job, the all-inclusive job of every father and every mother—to be to that child what God is to us; to stand in the place of God in revealing this wonderful love.

But now, and don't miss this next point, friends, this is only half of it. The relationship that God has established between parents and children is not simply that the child may see in the love of father and mother the love of God, and thus get acquainted with God, and know what God is like—oh, no. There is another side to it—it is this: that you and I, as fathers and mothers, in loving the children that God has given us may learn to understand how God feels toward us.

Go to Genesis 5, you'll get a glimpse of what I'm talking about. You come to a man name what? Enoch.

"And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah:
And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three
hundred years..." Genesis 5:21–22.

Finally, you remember, God took him to Heaven with him, he was translated. In commenting on this, the Lord's messenger tells us that Enoch had known God before Methuselah was ever born. But as the little toddler began to follow him around, and those little fingers began to cling to the father's hand, little Methuselah not only—don't miss this—got a revelation of the love of God through Enoch the father, but Enoch learned to know how God felt toward him as he had never known before.

It brings me back to what I started with this evening; we tend, I repeat, to evaluate things as to how they affect us. And to a child, the relationship between parent and child is for whose sake? The child's sake. Father and mother, who are they? Why they're the ones that take care of me. They're the ones that feed me, and so on. But I want to tell you something, friends, most people don't know until they grow up, and they have not grown up until they *do* know this, that there is something that the child does for the parents that is just as meaningful as what the parent does for the child. If children could even begin to understand this, they'd never run away from home. And they'd never do what is even worse; insult or slight their parent in the home.

Dear boys and girls, you need father and mother, but they need you. Oh, I don't mean to wash the dishes; somebody could be hired to wash the dishes if you weren't there. I mean that father and mother need your love. "Ah," but somebody says, "but I'm the one who needs love. I wish they'd love me more." Maybe you don't know how much they *do* love you. But no matter how much you need their love, remember, they need yours.

Do you know what a good father and a good mother look forward to as the little ones grow up? They look forward to the time when the children will be old enough to enter into mature fellowship with them. I must hasten to tell you that very few people ever achieve that. The Devil is busy putting asunder what God has joined together. Have you heard about the generation gap? You know who invented that idea? The Devil. I'll tell you more about it tomorrow. But just now friends, I want to emphasize this, that parents need children, they need the love of their children. Not merely when they're 6 or 12, but when they're 18 and 30 and 40 or 50. They need the love and understand of those who God has given them just as much as the children need them.

In all this, God is speaking to us this wonderful lesson. Jesus at the door is saying, I need you. I need your fellowship as much as any child needs the fellowship of his parents, and as much as any parent needs the fellowship of his children. This is the number one lesson in the whole thing. Through the things of nature, and the deepest and tenderest earthly ties that human hearts can know, He has sought to reveal Himself to us. That's the inspired statement I gave you from *Steps to Christ* page 10.

Let's go a little further. Look at Ephesians 5. Here's the relationship between the husband and wife. The husband and wife are the same individuals as the father and the mother, aren't they? Yes. But this relationship between husband and wife is quite a different relationship from the relationship between parents and children. What's this relationship for? It is to reveal the love of God to us. It's to help the husband and wife to learn and understand how God feels toward them.

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it... For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church" Ephesians 5:25, 31–32.

You see, the Scripture here takes the union of husband and wife and uses it to reveal, to illustrate, to symbolize, to express the union of Christ and His church.

Now, let's be very practical about this. You husbands, do you know what our job is? It's to be to our wives what Jesus is to the church—that's it. No more and no less, this is our job. It is to reveal to that one we promised before God and angels to love and honor and cherish as long as we both shall live to reveal the love of Christ. You see, God intends that the wife married to a good husband, a Christian husband, a loving husband

shall get a revelation of how God feels toward her. A wife that is fully conscious of the love of her husband can say to God, Oh, do you love me as much as my husband loves me? Oh, Jesus says, I love you even more than that. It must be wonderful.

But again, as with parents and children, that's only half of it. Do you know what the husband is to learn? As the husband's heart goes out in love in cherishing his wife, he learns by that experience how God feels not only toward her but toward him. This is what the marriage relationship is for. Through the deepest and tenderest earthly ties that human hearts can know, He has sought to reveal Himself to us.

We're told that the Gospel is a wonderful simplifier of life's problems. If we will take these simple yet tremendous principles that we're studying tonight and simply apply them day by day to the experiences of life, we can have some wonderful bits of Heaven here on earth.

"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the church." And remember, all of this is to help the husband and wife to get a picture, not only of how much God loves you, but how much He longs for your love. Not only of what God means to you, but what you mean to Him.

What kind of a home would we have if one partner in the marriage relation did all the loving and all the needing? There's mutual love and need. The husband needs the wife. The wife needs the husband.

You know, I find that my dear wife even enjoys the fact that there are some things that I can't do that she can do for me. That's right, she just enjoys it. She likes to be needed. Bless her heart, she gets plenty of enjoyment because she's sure needed. She's needed very much. But remember, and don't miss it, it all this, God is saying to her, and to me, I need you, I want you, I love you, I need you. Oh friends, isn't God wonderful, not only to need us but to let us know in many ways that He does?

Then there are other relationships, friends that love makes possible. Take the love between brothers and sisters, other relatives and friends. Wherever human love is operating, that is true, this is the lesson. God is seeking to teach us how much He means to us and how much we mean to Him. Start looking at your human relationships this way. Then you'll get the true meaning out of them—this is what they're for. This is what they were designed to reveal.

Turn over now to 1 John 4. I want to show you something wonderful:

"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loves is born of God, and knows God. He that loves not knows not God; for God is love" 1 John 4:7–8.

Do you see in these sweet and simple statements this fact: That it is only as we know Him that we can reveal His love to others? I've given you a high and holy standard,

as parents, as children, as husbands, as wives, as brothers and sisters, friends—a high and holy standard. You are to be to the ones you love what God has been and is to you. But it is only as you know *Him* that you can rightly reveal *Him* to others. This is life—To know Him. So if you want to love others, you must know Him. The way to know Him is to get acquainted with Him. This takes time, and He gave us time so that we could.

Too bad when we use it in so many other ways and miss this. Isn't it a tragedy, I mean a tragedy, that there are millions of people who are far better acquainted with the TV celebrities than they are with Jesus Christ. Isn't that a pity? Do you want love in your hearts and your home? Do you want to know the joy of association with friends and dear ones? The answer is to know God. Only as we know Him, can we reveal His love to others. And I repeat, the way to know Him is to visit with Him.

This is why He's knocking at the door. He'd like to come in for a visit. Of course, we might need to turn off the TV so we could hear Him. We might need to touch that dial that takes care of the radio so we could have a visit with Him. I wonder if it would be worth it, friends, what do you think?

Remember, He longs for your fellowship. You need Him. He will supply that which no human communication can. But you will supply what no other human being can give Him—the love of your heart. He needs you in a special way.

Only as we know Him, can we reveal His love to others. But there's something more. Only as we reveal His love to others can we fully know Him. We must know Him to reveal this love. We must reveal this love in order to know Him. It is not merely love that we look at and admire. It is not merely love that we receive that teaches love. Love in its fullness can be known only by those who become channels of that love, only by those who give that love—not just receive it. For it is written, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

My dear friends, I tell you something, I want to be very practical. You know we're dealing with a great enemy, and he's here tonight, just like he's always around. And you know, he's saying to somebody, Oh, I wish I had someone to love me, or I wish I had someone to love. If you ask the dear Savior, He probably will help you to understand that you already have someone to love—maybe you missed it. There is many a teenager that is reaching out to love some other teenager that has never learned the lesson of loving their parents, loving their brothers and sisters. Think it over, my friends; the place to start loving is where God put you. The place to start revealing His love is in the place of His providence.

"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loves is born of God, and knows God. He that loves not knows not God; for God is love" 1 John 4:7–8.

So I give you these sweet, simple facts. The first is: God wants your fellowship. He hungers for your love. There is a place in His heart that only you can fill. Second:

Human relationships are His gifts to help us understand this. Third: Only as we know Him, can we reveal His love in these relationships. And Fourth: Only as we reveal this love to those that God has arranged that we shall love, only as we do this can we know Him in fullness.

Let me say this, and don't miss this point; there are no two patterns of life alike. The particular experience that God has planned for you is not like somebody else. So don't look around and think, oh if I just had what this one had, or that one had. If I just had the parents that somebody else had. If I had the wife somebody else had, or the husband that somebody else had. If I had a brother like my friend has, or a sister like another friend has, oh then I think I could enter into what Brother Frazee is talking about.

My dear friend, God chose you before the foundation of the world, and whether you know it or not, He planned your life with exquisite care. If you'll take that by faith now and make the best of it, it won't be long before Jesus will sit down with you beside the River of Life, and open up the books, and you will be so abundantly satisfied with the way He planned your life and led in your experience, that you will clap your hands in joy, and throw your arms around Him in a long embrace of appreciation.

May we kneel together in prayer? Heavenly Father, we thank thee with all our hearts tonight. Not only for what Thou doest mean to us, but oh, we thank Thee a glimpse tonight in this wonderful truth, that we mean so much to Thee.

And we thank Thee for all the precious experiences Thou hast made available to us—these human relationships that help us to know, what Thou doest mean to us, and what we mean to Thee.

We're sorry that we've made such a mess of things at times. We're sorry that in our homes and in other relations, we've been selfish when we might have been loving; that we've been mean when we might have been tender; that we've been careless and uncaring when we might have been concerned.

But oh, we thank Thee that the blessed Jesus came down to this world and lived with us and died for us so that our sins might be canceled, and our hearts might be changed, and that we might become like the One we admire.

So tonight, forgive us where we failed, and let the precious life of Jesus completely cover us and change us, Lord. We thank Thee, in the wonderful name of our Elder Brother—Jesus, amen.

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