

## Interactive lesson



*picture from MMMS collection,  
credit Tiffany Miner*

Happy Father's Day! What does it mean, to be a father?

As a father, what do you have to do for your children?

Is everyone good at that?

Did you, as a child, always understand why your father did what he did?

How about now that you are an adult, do you understand?

I think there are some things we will never understand about why some people do what they do, because we do not walk in their shoes. But in general, we can get a glimpse of why from our own related experiences.

Now consider "Our Father who art in heaven": Do we understand why God does what God does?

OK, back to earth. What did you learn or copy most from your father?

What are you most proud about teaching or sharing with your children?

What do we learn or copy most from God?

What do you think God is most pleased about teaching

or sharing with us?

What would you do for your children?

Is there anything you would not do for them? Why?

Do you think there is anything God would not do for us as God's children? Why?

What did and does God do for us?

How should we respond to God?

Let us pray:

For all that God has done for us and continues to do for us, we give thanks.

For all of our fathers, we give thanks: the constant, stabilizing ones; the chaotic ones; and even the absent ones, for we would not be here without them.

<The following lines of prayer are adapted from the UM Book of Worship p.441, as taken from Book of Blessings, U.S.A., 20<sup>th</sup> Cent., Alt.>

- For our fathers, who have given us life and love, may we show them reverence and love.
- For fathers who have lost a child through death, may their faith give them hope, and their family and friends support and console them.
- For men, though without children of their own, who like fathers have nurtured and care for us.
- For fathers, who have been unable to be a source of strength, who have not responded to their children and have not sustained their families.

- God our Father, in your wisdom and love you made all things. Bless these men, that they may be strengthened as Christian fathers. Let the example of their faith and love shine forth.
- Help us, their sons and daughters, to honor them always with a spirit of profound respect.  
Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

### Gospel lesson

After last week [when Jesus ate with sinners, healed the bleeding woman and raised a girl from the dead], He healed blind men and cast out demons, but the Pharisees refused to proclaim Him as being from God.



picture from

<https://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/lumo-jesus-disciples/>

**Matthew 9:35-10:8**

**NRSV**

<sup>35</sup> Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness.

<sup>36</sup> When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

<sup>37</sup> Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is

plentiful, but the laborers are few;

<sup>38</sup> therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

<sup>10:1</sup> Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness.

<sup>2</sup> These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John;

<sup>3</sup> Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus;

<sup>4</sup> Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.

<sup>5</sup> These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans,

<sup>6</sup> but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

<sup>7</sup> As you go, proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.'

<sup>8</sup> Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment.

*The word of God for the people of God*

<Hymn "We ALL Are One in Mission"

TFWS #2243>

## Message: Is Anything Too Wonderful?



picture from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/the-path-of-the-disciple-the-weight-of-the-call/third-sunday-after-pentecost-year-a-lectionary-planning-notes/third-sunday-after-pentecost-year-a-graphics-2>

Please pray with me?

Our Father who art in heaven,  
as we take time now to further consider today's  
scriptures, please

- speak Your words through my mouth,
- open our ears to hear Your message, and
- abide in our hearts,

That we may learn what You teach us and trust in Your  
blessings for the love You call us to live. Amen.

As disciples considering the "Weight of the Call,"  
this week we ask, "Is Anything Too Wonderful?"

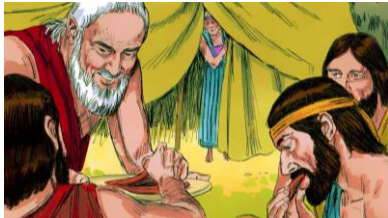
"What incredible, almost impossible-to-believe  
event has happened in your community? What  
stretched your understanding of God at work in the  
world? What blew your mind with wonder and joy?

Grab hold of that today and celebrate the goodness  
of God at work in your midst."

I have no doubt that God answers prayers for this  
community. From things like the rain holding off for

events like the Fishing and Heritage Day, to families reconnecting after long separations, to the healing of bodies and souls, I see God at work among you, through you, and because of you.

I sometimes wonder what tragedies we narrowly avoid because of our prayers to God for help with our lives. I also wonder what more we could have if we dared to trust God and work towards hope.



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/abraham-strangers/>

Abraham trusted God and offered strangers gracious rest during their travels. According to the customs of his day, strangers were to be offered hospitality. But Abraham not only allowed them a safe place to rest and refresh themselves, he respected them as people to be honored even though he did not know them: He ran to serve them, had water brought for them, prepared a small feast for them, and stood by attentively while they ate.

When is the last time you treated a stranger like a beloved family member coming for a visit? Nowadays we tend to view strangers distrustfully and expect cash in return for what we provide, unless the person is destitute – and then our prize is feeling superior.

Society today is pretty jaded, like Sarah who laughed at the idea she could have a child. Things just did not work that way. How could such a barren one bring forth life, let alone an heir for old Abraham?

Yet, “Is anything too wonderful for the Lord?” With God, all things are possible. Not only did Sarah bear a son, he became the father of a great people with proud descendants to this day.



*picture from MMMS collection*

We live in a small community. We may laugh at the idea that anything really big in the world’s eyes can come from here. Yet, “Is anything too wonderful for the Lord?” With God, all things are possible. With God’s blessing, we can build strong Christian community that cherishes and nurtures people from all walks of life, spreading the Word of God further and more effectively than we ever imagined.

It all starts with us staying faithful to God. The psalmist stayed faithful because he had made vows to be paid in the presence of the people. Paul tells the Romans that “God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us” – and so we respond in faith, knowing that we can hope in God and not be disappointed by God’s love working in and through us as the Holy Spirit.

Jesus came and helped the hopeless, and then sent His disciples to do likewise: first, proclaiming the kingdom of heaven, and then sharing the blessings of faith freely with the people. Those who received the Good News received miracles of grace!

Notice that the apostles were first sent out within their own extended families, the house of Israel. After the resurrection, rejected by the Jewish leadership, they took to the countryside and proclaimed the resurrection to all people.



*picture from  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Karl\\_Aspelin-Luther\\_uppbr%C3%A4nner\\_den\\_p%C3%A5fliga\\_bullan.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Karl_Aspelin-Luther_uppbr%C3%A4nner_den_p%C3%A5fliga_bullan.jpg);  
painting by Karl Aspelin "Luther burns the Papal bull in the square of Wittenberg year 1520"*

Historically, Martin Luther first tried to proclaim the Good News of justification of faith to the lost sheep of the Roman Catholic church; when he was turned away from there, he proceeded to proclaim it to all who would listen, triggering the Reformation.

When John Wesley tried to get the Anglican church to send bishops to the new world after the American Revolution and the church said no, he ordained a superintendent to lead proclamation of the Word in the new country, and the Methodist church in America was born.



These were all people who stayed faithful to God's Word even in the face of opposition. They taught the truth and let the Holy Spirit work through them – and God made their work fruitful. We are called to do similarly,



picture from

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putting aside our [scoffing like old Sarah that we are past being of use], and live in faith to **be** the blessings God promised to the world.

**Be wonderful for the Lord! Amen.**

**! Amen.**