

Have you ever wondered what God is like?

One day a little girl asked her father, "Daddy, what is God like? The question sounded innocent enough - until the father actually tried to answer the question in a language that a five-year-old could understand. Finally he gave the answer for which fathers are famous: "Go ask your mother."

The little girl went to her mother with the question, "Momma, what is God like?" The mother struggled to answer the question before she realized that she couldn't answer her daughter either. So she finally said, "Honey, why don't you ask your Church School teacher?"

The little girl went to her church school teacher with the same question, "What is God like?"

The teacher thought for a moment then said simply, "Why don't you ask your mom or dad?" The little girl looked at the teacher and said in an exasperated way, "I have! And if I had lived with God as long as you all have, I would think I could tell a little girl what God is like."

What is God like? Unfortunately, it is not always easy to tell others what God is like. Sometimes it is easier to show them.

In our scripture for today, the author of Ephesians is talking to us as followers of Jesus Christ, and he is encouraging us to live our lives in such a way, that we show the world what God is like. But that can be a challenge for us.

It is a challenge, because we live in a world that gives us a whole different set of values. We live in a world that tells us life is really about us. We can and should get what we want. We are told that we should put ourselves first. We are told that we should stand

on our own two feet and pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps, as if we don't ever need anyone else.

The problem with this kind of thinking is that when something tough or tragic happens in our life that is when we realize how much we need others.

We are in the midst of a sermon series called *Walking in Hope: Finding a New Way*. This sermon series is meant to help us to rebuild hope in our lives, when tough things happen to us. Two weeks ago, we talked about how when difficult times come, that is when it is important for us to take stock of where we are and where we have been. Then to make new commitments to God and to a life of faith that can help us. Today, we are going to talk about the value of being a part of being connected to others.

In our scripture, the author of Ephesians challenges us to be quick to walk in the way God calls us to. We are to stay committed to living a life of faith. He even offers that we be quick to pour ourselves out for one another in acts of love, and to be quick to mend fences when things don't go well.

The author of Ephesians understands that life is not about us getting our way (which the world teaches). He understands that life is about living for God. Are you willing to live for God?

When you have been hurt, when you have been wronged, how do you respond?

Most of us were taught when we were growing up that when someone did something to hurt us, to be quick to respond and hurt them back. But as someone once said, "The problem with paying back evil for evil, or an eye for an eye, is that if you're not careful we will all be walking around blind." To live with the mentality of getting

even ends up hurting ourselves and the people we care the most about.

The author of Ephesians wants us to live by a different standard. He wants us to live with the standard of living for God, of letting love, honesty and care for another to be at the center of who we are. He is challenging us to live so that living for God and for God's kingdom is at the core of our life.

When you have been hurt or frustrated by another, how can your response bring honor and glory to God? Life is not about us getting our way; it is about living for God.

The second thing that this scripture teaches us is that we have each been gifted and equipped for life, so that we can help each other connect with God and grow and mature in faith. We get to be here, for each other. We get to use our different talents, abilities and passions to help each other through this challenge called life. Are you willing to help others connect with God and grow in faith?

One winter day, a little boy in Alabama was standing on a grate next to a bakery to try to keep his shoeless feet warm. A woman passing by was moved by this cold-looking figure. It was one of those days with a sharp, cold, bone-chilling wind.

"Where are your shoes, young man?" she asked. He reluctantly admitted he didn't have any. She invited him into a nearby store where she bought him a new pair of shoes and a warm jacket.

When they came back out into the street, the little boy was so excited that he immediately started to run off to show his family his gifts. Suddenly he stopped, turned around and ran back to the woman. He thanked her, his face one big smile.

He stood there for a few seconds looking carefully at her face and then said, "Can I ask you a question? Are you God's wife?"

She responded saying, "Oh, no. I'm not God's wife. I am just one of God's children."

The little boy was so excited. "I knew it. I knew it! I just knew you were related to God!"

What about you? Are you related to God? Does your life show by how we live to help others connect with God and grow in faith?

Life is tough. There is a world around us that is wondering what is God like? What does God look like? The author of Ephesians reminds us to live for God and to help others connect with God and grow in faith. May we learn to give and receive the necessary support we need to stay faithful.

Amen