

[00:00:00] *hope: Welcome to the Hope Church Glasgow Sunday podcast. We pray you encounter God's love afresh today. Find out more about us@hopechurchglasgow.org or find us on Facebook and Instagram. Now, please enjoy this week's podcast.

[00:00:18] Ian: First off, I've got a question for you.

It's kind of a bit more of a bit of a maths problem, really. But. But you're okay, you don't need to have gone to Strathclyde University to answer this question.

No, it's relatively simple mathematics. And we'll get started shortly, shall we?

So the question is this recently, maybe it was about a couple of months ago.

When I say recently, it was Father's Day.

And what I want you to do is do a little bit of maths. Now, it's not relatively complicated, it's a bit of simple addition.

I'm going to hold up to you a number of cards that I received on the Sunday of Father's Day and I want you to tell me how many daughters I have and are the proud possessors of. So don't shout out, but here you go, here's the clue. Here you go. There you go.

Two cards. If you can't see them very well. Has this come up? There you go. Is there a funny dad joke on this card? I'm afraid not. Okay.

It kind of sums up.

It sums up my humor, I'm afraid, and it sums up theirs. And there's the usual things of self promotion by one of my daughters. I rate myself five star for this card choice.

It just called out to me with so much love. Thank you for your time, your interest, your, your prayers and all the other investments that you still keep making.

So, okay, so that's the first bit of the mathematical problems. Now we move on to something a bit more complicated. So you've done a bit of addition there. Now you've got to do addition and subtraction at the same time. So this is very complicated.

So I'm going to show you a picture now. There's two slightly older people in this picture.

This is our entire family.

And I want you to work out, like I said before, how many daughters do I have?

So how many daughters do I have?

Work it out. As I say, there's two people who are slightly older on that picture.

But if you've done the addition, you will have worked out that there is a disparity.

There is a disparity that happens pretty much every year on Father's Day and on birthday, because it just happens and it's never the same one. It kind of rotates around that somebody takes on the role and the responsibility of getting their card three or four days late.

So my question to you then is, what do I do as a father? How do I respond to this person who has failed to deliver on the glorious day of Father's Day? So I have here kind of my three little, three responses that I kind of thought it was a good idea at the time, but we'll see how it goes.

So we have one response over here. It's sort of, thanks for the card, but you blew it again this year. You could have made a bit of an effort to get it here on time, don't you think? I mean, it's just one day of the year and all you've got to do is get it in the post box. So, you know, do you want me to send you a first class stamp or something?

Now, I suspect that wouldn't work overly well.

It's. And I suspect even you would say that is not overly fatherly in a response to one of my three daughters that are there.

Okay, there might be a second response. And it's this sort of.

Here we go, second one. So.

Hi there.

Thanks for the card.

Yeah, no, it was, it was good. Yeah, Sorry it didn't get here on time, but hey, I know you.

Oh, dear, it's a bit of a shame. But hey, never mind, it's not a problem. And hey, maybe next year you'll get it right. Hey, yeah, okay. But thanks again. Thanks again. I'm gonna put the phone down.

And then there's the third response that's over here, which is, hey, thanks so much. I was absolutely thrilled to get that card. It was fantastic. I just appreciate what you put into it. The effort, the thoughtfulness, the kindness, the words. I'm just thrilled to be your dad.

What did you say? Did it arrive on time? Oh, don't worry about that. That wasn't important.

I was just delighted to receive it.

And I'm just going to put something in your account this week because I love you so much. I'm thrilled to be your dad. It's such a blessing.

I'm blessed and I hope you're blessed as well.

So there's three different kinds of responses that we might have as a father to a daughter, but I'm sure you can work out there's a good response over here and there's a bad response over there.

But what about the one in the middle?

What about the one in the middle? What fundamentally was not quite Right, about that.

That's a question.

Anybody got an answer?

It was a guilt trip. That's right.

It was a. Yes, but it was a qualified thanks.

It was actually a bit really of a focus on their limitations that made them feel guilt and shame.

And we live in a world where that so often is the reality of what we experience and of what we see and of what we know.

But you see, God isn't like that, is He? We know that he's full of love. To us, God is love.

So he has to be over here. He can't not be anywhere else. He has to sit on this seat.

Because it's not that he does love, it's because that he is love and he's always love. And he can't function in any other way towards us.

I think I say this every time when I come up here, actually.

Let me read you something here. Just a lovely quote.

I love this book called. It's a Dreadful Color. It's a dreadful cover, and it's an awful title, but it's a brilliant book.

He says the Christian life is a lifelong shedding of tepid thoughts on the goodness of God.

This is the problem in this middle bit. It's tepid thoughts on the goodness of God. I'll tell you what, I'll read you a bit more. A bit of an indulgence. Whet your appetite.

Put it on your Christmas list, perhaps. As believers today, we know God loves us. Yeah, okay. We really believe that. But if we were to more closely examine how we actually relate to the Father moment by moment, which reveals our real theology, whatever we might say it is on paper, many of us tend to believe it is a love that's infected with disappointment.

He loves us, but it's a flustered love.

We see him looking down on us with paternal affection but slightly raised eyebrows.

God hasn't got slightly raised eyebrows over you this morning.

He goes on, how are they still falling short so much after all I've done for them is what we picture him wondering.

And as a result of it, the shoulders of our soul remain drooped in the presence of God once again. It's the result of projecting our own capacities to love onto God.

We do not know his truest heart.

I love that line. It's the result of projecting our own capacities to love onto God.

And that's what we do. We've got to meet with God and we've got to encounter that love.

That is what he dearly wants for us.

What's the book?

The book is called As I say it's a dreadful title. Gentle and the Heart of Christ for sinners and sufferers. I mean, it's appalling.

Dane Orthland, but it's a great one. Buy it for yourself. It's good.

I'd lend you mine if I hadn't got so many underlinings on it.

You could borrow it.

Okay, so let's move on.

What are we about today?

We're in Psalm 103. I'm sure you'll have guessed that by that. And we're in verse five.

We're talking about the God who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagles. Praise God.

And I just feel like we just always need to be reminded of his goodness. And this is kind of what I was trying to bring out there earlier on, because he wants to satisfy our desires.

But it's goodness that we have to experience, not just read about. We have to experience and to know in the reality of our lives.

And then we have something that touches us and that satisfies us.

And I think one of the scriptures that impacted me most when I was a lot younger than I am now is the scripture in Mark 7. So where he says, which of you, if your son asks for bread, you'll give him a stone?

Or if he asks for a fish, we'll give him a snake.

If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him?

God is a good God, and he gives good gifts. And he gives gifts, like it says there, to feed us.

They are nutrition to our soul.

They are the feeding of our hearts. Now, if you go to Luke 11, you get the same picture of which of your own astral fish will give him. And he says, give him a snake. And he says, and if he asks for an egg, would you give him a scorpion? Which clearly wouldn't. If then you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much will your Father in heaven.

And it says, give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.

So God's in the business now of not only giving good gifts, but he's in the business of giving Himself, the Holy Spirit, the Father, the Son, the whole package given to you and I.

That's the God who gives to us. That's the God who wants to satisfy us.

And, you know, fathers want to make their children secure.

They want them to be safe.

He doesn't want you to sit on this middle chair here, which is where we're insecure, we're anxious, we're distressed, we're a victim of our circumstances.

We're those who don't experience the renewing strength we find ourselves in weakness.

That's not what he wants for us. He wants to be over here where we receive the goodness of God, the love of God, when we receive God himself.

Now, just to give us context to that, I want to mention the verses before, which is why I put the whole thing up here.

He says, praise the Lord, my soul, all my inmost being, praise his holy name. There is, if you like, a bit of a precondition to living in this place. And that we do make our attention and our whole being is focused on him and that that is important to us.

And as a result of that, our satisfaction will come from Him.

We're not a part of this world that says our satisfaction comes from having a bigger house, a bigger car, a bigger holiday, a bigger wherever it is.

It's what people have on their bucket list, isn't it? You know, bucket lists are not wrong.

I'm not saying that, but I learned a really interesting thing last week when somebody told me there's a thing now called an unbucket list.

Because bucket lists get people trapped into something of I've got to achieve, I've got to perform, I've got to make this to happen.

And even the world has learned that the bucket list in and of itself can become a pressure and a problem. I looked it up on the Internet and this is what it said. Unlike a traditional bucket list, which is a collection of goals or experience you hope to achieve in the future. And an unbucket list is about reconnecting with people and appreciating them. Hey, the world's starting to get something right.

It encourages reaching out to friends, former colleagues, acquaintances, to acknowledge shared moments, express gratitude, remained engaged with life in a reflective, well, in a human centered way. It says, but it's good.

Even the world is starting to realize that relationship is what it's about.

Life is about relationship rather than it is about stuff and things and bigger things and glossier things, because all that happens with that. There is the dopamine hit of when the thing happens, and then quickly there is the dissatisfaction and there's another thing to be achieved and to be accomplished on that list. And it becomes one of the things that ultimately is really unhelpful us.

But let me just put it to you that we can over here, when we talk about who satisfies your desires with good things so that youth is renewed like the eagle is all right. He's not just talking about worship.

Worship's important and we've all got a high value for that. But it's also in life, he wants us to value the right things.

Anna and I have just been away for like five days looking after grandchildren and to some extent looking after two of the two parents and taxiing and doing lots of cooking and going to Ikea, buying wretched furniture that needs assembling. I mean, all sorts of things that one does to make for a wonderful week.

But you come away. You come away tired, but you come away and you say to each other in the car, that is satisfying because we've done it because we feel God wants us to, and we want to, and it's serving others and it satisfies the soul, it satisfies our hearts. And I mean, I just want to say that it satisfies our desires with good things. And I mean, I just. I mean, I like a holiday like anybody else, but I love coming back here, you know, And I sometimes think, why. I think this building is a little bit tatty. It's not. I mean, but no, it's because the family's here, isn't it? It's the family of the church. I want to be with the people that I'm joined to, that I'm called to be with, that I've got a destiny with that. You know, you might be on hosting this week and. Or making the coffee and bless you for that. And these wonderful people that serve us, and we were, want to serve in it as well. And there's something that satisfies your desires as you know, him, in those things where we're serving, we're satisfied in Him. We're contented in Him. We find peace in our hearts in Him. We're at rest in Him. I love that quote of John Piper's. God is most glorified in us, we when we are most satisfied in Him.

Hear that again. God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him. Now, that might be worship, but it's a life thing as well, isn't it? It's what our focus is.

It's what we're about.

Now, just in case you're in any doubt, it was about stuff.

I'll just put this up in. Because we can actually be those who are satisfied when we've got stuff and when we can be satisfied when we've not got stuff.

According to Paul, in that Philippians 4. He says, I've learned to be content whatever the circumstances.

I know what it is to be in need and know what it is to have plenty.

I've learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

I mean, that's beautiful, isn't it?

I mean, I'm not sure, you know, many of us, well, I'll speak for myself, is going hungry. I'm satisfied in him. Whoa, that's a bit of a challenge. But you know, Paul says we can do it. We can get through all things through him who strengthens us.

And he does say here also. I'll just highlight again that to get to verse five, you've also got to read verse two. You've got to. I know we've mentioned it before, but forget not all his benefits. And I think it's interesting the Bible says forget not because it obviously saying is the natural thing is that we forget.

I just wonder why God made us like that, to be honest. I mean, it really was not helpful in my view.

I mean, even this morning, even this morning, this is empty, by the way. Don't anybody put it in the box.

Even this morning, my wife pointed out to me, ian, there has been a Sanax, whatever it is, shower gel or other brands are available in our shower for two weeks, sat like this, that your economy drive, of all things, you know, the ketchup things that sits like this. And she pointed out to me, you have left it there for two things, two weeks. So I duly got a whole shower out of the remnants of the bottom of my Sanex bottle. And you know, it's not a problem to be reminded because we all forget. We all forget stuff. And I feel like I am a model in this respect of forgetting things.

But hey, ho, we can get there.

But we need each other.

We need the Word to help us not forget. We need to worship to help us not forget. We need fellowship with the people around us to help us not forget. We need friendship around us to help us not forget. We need the church around us to help us not forget.

There's no such thing as a healthy, lonesome Christian, you know, going out there, doing it on your own. The Bible never wrote it like that. It never meant to be like that. It's just that for some wacky reason in the Western world we managed to sort of think it might even be possible.

So we forget those things. And he says, I think the other thing we tend to forget very quickly is that we're in a spiritual battle. Even this morning, you didn't come here and think, oh, spiritual battle, right? Oh, no, no, no. Because you don't see it, you can't touch it, you can't feel it necessarily. And you know, just as the devil, the first thing he says to Eve in the garden of incense, you know, did God really say, you must not eat from the tree of life? That he always wants to come along and put questions in that questions God's identity, questions that God's a good God over here. He challenges that and questions it. And then he challenges not only the fatherhood of God, but he challenges your sonship. He questions it and gets you to think, you know, you're a nobody, that you don't matter, that he doesn't care. But the reality is it's something very, very different to that. The goodness of God is there for us.

And then lastly, as we come to the end of this, he says he satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagles. And it's a picture, isn't it, of God giving us strength.

Strength for life, strength for today, strength for the challenges, the challenge of bringing up children, the challenge of going to work each every day, whatever it looks like for you.

There's lots of scriptures we could use in parallel to that. That God wants to impart strength to us as we are most satisfied in him.

Isaiah 40 says, those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles, they will run and they will not grow weary.

You know, God wants us to be strengthened.

Now obviously you can read all the negatives to this.

If we don't find our focus on him, we don't find our satisfaction.

Then we find ourselves in weakness. And this is where we are if we're landing on this middle chair.

That we've got this ambiguity about God's goodness. But the reality is we live in the blessing and the favor of a good God, a really good God who loves us, who wants to satisfy us in all of life's ups and downs and provide for us and for us to be strengthened each and every day in that Praise God. Mark, can you just come up with your guitar?

That would be so good.

I'd love that.

You just start playing a minute.

I just feel like God wants to say to us, you know, we put it as two chairs. The chair over here that's got this kind of bit of a man or a world centered view of God versus a God view of God.

And we kind of think of them as two different things, and they are, but it's almost like they exist on a continuum. This chair of God's goodness goes on, you know, halfway to Edinburgh, if you like.

It's a very big chair and it goes a long way.

And God wants us, wherever we are, to know more of his goodness. It's not either or necessarily. It's not just, hey, I want you to get completely off this chair, onto this one. But he does. He wants. Even this morning, if you're facing anxiety, weakness, you feel your strength is gone, you feel that God is far away. He wants to come and minister life to you.

He wants you to know this wonderful truth, that he wants to satisfy your desires in Him.

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