

What does it mean to have a relationship with God?

Introduction:

DISCUSSION

If a non-Christian friend asked you "What do you mean when you say you have a relationship with God? That sounds really odd!", what would you say?

1) Why is it important?

- **It's what we were made for**

'...the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground the Lord God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil...'

'The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."'

Genesis 2:8-9, 15-17

But this relationship is broken:

'...the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.'

Genesis 3:23-24

- **It's what we were saved for**

'...I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away."'

Revelation 21:2-4

'This is eternal life, that they know you the only true God.'

John 17:3

2) What kind of relationship with God do we have?

- **Our Lord**

Exodus 3:14, 34:6, Psalm 48:1, 93:1, 99:1, 135:5 etc... pretty much every page!

- **Our Father**

John 16:23-27, 20:17; Gal 4:4-6; Rom 8:14-17; Matt 6:31-33; Heb 12:7-10 etc.

'To all who received [Jesus], who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.'

John 1:12

- **Our Bridegroom**

Rev 19:6-9, 21:2-4; Is 54:5, 61:10; John 3:28-29 etc.

'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.'

Ephesians 5:31-32

'...as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.'

Isaiah 62:5

3) What does it involve?

- a. **Growing to know Him better**

'Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth and teach me.'

Psalm 25:4-5a

b. Delight & love

'O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you.'

Psalm 63:1-3

'Love the Lord, all you His saints!'

Psalm 31:23

'I love the Lord, because he has heard my voice and my pleas for mercy.'

Psalm 116:1

c. Trust & dependence

'Our soul waits for the Lord; he is our help and our shield. For our heart is glad in him, because we trust in his holy name.'

Psalm 33:20-21

'Hear my prayer, O Lord; let my cry come to you!'

Psalm 102:1

d. Fear & obedience

'Oh, fear the Lord, you his saints, for those who fear him have no lack!'

Psalm 34:9

'Give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart.'

Psalm 119:33

e. Service & worship

'May all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him!'

Psalm 72:11

'Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!'

Psalm 100:2

f. Relating corporately

'I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.'

Psalm 22:22

'I will thank you in the great congregation; in the mighty throng I will praise you.'

Psalm 35:18

g. Honesty

'I say to God, my rock: "Why have you forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?"'

Psalm 42:9

And yet...:

'Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.'

Psalm 42:11

h. ...And loads more!

4) How does God strengthen us in our walk with Him?

- **Prayer**
- **Sacraments**
- **The Church**
- **The Word**

'Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son... He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature...'

Hebrews 1:1-3

DISCUSSION

- *How will this shape your priorities for the year ahead in St Andrews?*
- *What have you found helpful to do practically to live out and grow in your relationship with God?*