

- If we needed to get someone attention in a busy crowd, we might yell, move to an elevated location, raise our arm to signal them, or run towards them.
 - But how does God the Father get our attention in this crowded and loud world?
 - He invites us repeatedly.
 - And when we don't listen, he tells a shocking parable like today's gospel: "*The king was enraged and sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city.*"
 - Now that God has our attention, why are we deaf to his invitations?
 - St. Ignatius of Loyola said we miss God's invitations because we are "mind-blind."
 - Think of a toddler; they often throw temper tantrums and are stubborn because they only know what they know and see what they see.
 - It is impossible for their young minds to understand correction or the perspective of an adult.
 - A young child is mind-blind and so are we in prayer.
 - This is why people ignore and even reject the invitation that the king sends out in the gospel.
 - They don't understand the king's perspective nor the gravity of what they are missing.
 - In our mind-blindness, we think that God simply knows what we know and sees what we see.
 - Without seeking God's perspective we find prayer unfulfilling and misuse the name 'God' to mean a projection of what we think and feel.
 - We spend far too much time mulling over our thoughts and limited experiences, and not God's.
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- To snap out of this, we must realize that we have been conditioned by modern thinking in four ways.
 - **First, we tend to picture ourselves as individuals.**
 - Our ancestors looked to other people, to tradition, and to authorities for knowledge.
 - But philosophers such as Rene Descartes turned us inward stating, "*I think, therefore I am.*"
 - This led to the individual being the center of knowledge and truth by taking into consideration only personal experience and emotions.
 - Instead of valuing where we came from, we are more concerned with who we can become because it is all about 'me.'
 - Consider this: does the ear discover its purpose apart from external sounds, or the eye apart from external light?
 - Why would our soul discover its purpose staring inward only?
 - **Second, we are conditioned to doubt everything.**
 - Our skepticism of how God communicates is like spiritual Alzheimer's.
 - We cannot proceed forward in the spiritual life because we are unsure of where we have come from and being called to.
 - We regain this by studying salvation history in the Scriptures and recalling how God has invited us in the past.

- **Third, God has been engineered out of life.**
- As an engineer, I have a deep love for science, but science is only concerned with what can be observed or measured.
- How do we measure God?
- Science is meant to help us understand and appreciate God's marvelous creation and participate in it better.
- **Lastly, we have a difficulty picturing God as a father intimately involved in His creation.**
- We ask, "*Why do I need to tell God that, He already knows everything? If God is unchanging, all-knowing, all-powerful, how can God share his thoughts, feelings, and desires in prayer? Why bother to communicate with God at all?*"
- St. Ignatius's antidote is to begin prayer considering: how is God looking at us right now and then make a response.
- We do not begin prayer as independent individuals; we begin with God looking at us.
- Remember, God thirsts for us before we thirst for Him.

- Every relationship begins with trust.
- If God is looking at us, God is in relationship with us.
- As we try to understand this relationship, our thoughts either focus on God or on ourselves.
- With these two perspectives we can consider what it feels like to be looked at.
- We can also consider the God who is looking, and what God is like or what God desires?
- Isn't this the genius behind Eucharistic adoration?
- God looks at us and we look at Him.
- And we ponder what God sees within us, that perhaps we do not see.
- This encounter is what we call prayer.
- Prayer is not a blind monologue with a distant being.
- St. Theresa of Avila said we do not pray to a distant God.
- We pray as if He is present like a person who can act, feel, and communicate with us.
- Only an encounter with a living God can surprise and challenge us.
- To stop missing God's invitations we must realize that God can be encountered and known, but we cannot know how God is looking at us without looking at God in prayer.
- The spiritual writer, Matthew Kelly said, "*Prayer is like a great love. When you start dating the silence can be awkward, but as you grow to know each other you can sit in silence for hours and just being with each other is a great comfort.*"