

## SUNDAY 6 SEPTEMBER 2021

### Father

Many of you celebrate Father's Day, like me, knowing that my father, sits like a child at the feet of my Heavenly Father and brings him honour and glory and praise. What comes to you when you hear the word "father"?

Daddy, dads, pops, or whatever form of address you use to speak to your father. When I hear the word father, I think of my father, good, honourable, loving husband. Hardworking, good husband to his wife, right up to the end. For others, the memory of your father may not be so positive, perhaps he abused you, or he just wasn't good to you or was just absent or you never knew him. No matter what you think of your father, good or bad, Jesus opens a window to our heavenly Father, which is just as amazing. So I pray that you, will listen with an open mind and learn who your actual, eternal Father is and how He feels about you.

I'm just saying again what I've said before, if Jesus was referring to God as Father, it was strange to the Jews. Like I said, God was far away, someone whose name you may not even call. It's blasphemy to describe God as your father. You dare not if you are a Muslim, to refer to Allah as father.

But Jesus, as throughout His ministry, introduces to the disciples, and us and the rest of the world, His Father. Now in John 17, Jesus' prayer just before He was crucified, He refers six times to God as Father, so let's sit as my father sits at God's feet in heaven today, learning more about our Father this morning at the feet of Jesus.

#### **John 17:1-2, 5, 10-11, 20-21 and 24-26**

*After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. 2 For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him.*

*5 And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. 11 I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one.*

*My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.*

24 "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. 25 "Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. 26 I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."

The image I had of God the Father was not at all the Father who Jesus came to represent to the world. To me, He was the angry old man up there watching me. I was afraid of Him because if I do something wrong, I'm going to be punished. And for many years if bad things happened to me, I believed it was the Father punishing me. Do you hear the word "the Father?" In my mind He was "the" Father, not my father. We don't refer to earthly father as "the father." We say, "my dad," or "dad said we should do this or that." So my relationship with Father was at a distance. I'd rather talk to "Jesus" than to Father.

So as I've said before, I've just tried to keep Him satisfied, almost as the other religions offer sacrifices, I've just tried to stay in His good books. I was afraid to pray, what will happen if I am using the wrong words. If there was heavy weather and lightning struck, I was afraid it was the end of the world and I wasn't sure if I would go to heaven. Until one day, when I discovered the image I created of the Father was not in line with the image the Bible portrays of Father. That day it changed, and He is no longer "the Father," but "my Father" or simply "Father," and even more intimately "Abba-Father," — "Daddy-God."

Jesus presents us to His Father, our Father, and I pray that you will celebrate Father's Day with me and love our heavenly Father anew, more than you can ever love your earthly father.

### **John 17:1-2**

*Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. 2 For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him.*

*And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.*

### **Father is Glorified**

I said a few weeks back that the word translated here as glorify means "**glorious greatness.**"

There is a very close intimate relationship between Father and Son. Jesus specifically asks that Father restore His (Jesus') glorious greatness. Why? So that He who is Jesus, can display Father's glorious greatness. Jesus wants to glorify God, so He prays for it.

True joy is not found in a life that revolves around you and your pleasures. True joy is found when you discover with Jesus that your Father is with you in heaven and here with you on earth and He possesses the quality of glorious greatness and glorious goodness. That's who He really is. A good Father, who loves the person He created in God's image, and wants to take care of.

Jesus teaches us to see more about Father and then give Him honor and praise and worship Him. See Father's hand in your life, yes in the great things, but also in the small things.

Jesus prays that His glorious greatness may be restored so that He can glorify God, but so we must do too.

### **John 17:10-11**

*All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them.*

We who believe in Jesus' salvation, we become His children, and because we became His children, we belong to Father.

### **You belong to God.**

Just think about that thought for a moment. It's awesome! I'm not worthless. No, the wonderful thing for me is that the moment you or I say to God, "*Father,*" it puts me and you in a different category than the rest of the world. The only, living, great, Creator God, is your Father.

And this is the relationship that Jesus displays of Father, and He wants us to have this close relationship. When God sent Jesus, He says, "*You're so important to me, I want to be your Father.*" Surely God could have made it different. He could have said that all who believe in Him and accepted Jesus as savior are now His slaves and are treated like slaves. But no, listen to what His Word says.

### **Romans 8:14-17a**

*Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." 16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. 17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

When Jesus prayed this prayer in John 17, He would have prayed it in His home language, which was Aramaic. And then every time He referred to His Father, He would have used the word "Abba." It's a very close, intimate form of who Father really is. It's "Daddy." People think it disrespectful to address Father as "Daddy," but it's actually the most respectful you can address God, definitely more respectful than just referring to Him as the old man above or just "the Father."

Paul wrote here in the letter to the Jews in Rome that if you have the Spirit of God, the Spirit you receive when you are born again, you are a child of God. You are not a slave of God, but you have free access to Father, and you can and should cry out to Him, "Abba" Daddy!

Paul repeats the concept when he wrote a letter to the Christians there in central Turkey, in Galatia.

### **Galatians 4:3-7**

*So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world. 4 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, 5 to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. 6 Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." 7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.*

I was caught up in a legalistic religion. For me, it was important as "believer" to do the things right, instead of doing the right things. But thank God for Jesus, that as Paul wrote here, a day came, which Jesus came to set me free from "religion" and came to introduce me to a "relationship" with His Father.

What is your relationship with Father? Far or near?

God is a completely different Father than you can ever dream or hope or think. He is our Father because He made us, but we are also double his, because He bought us. The moment we come to kneel before Father and we address Him as "Abba" or "Father" that moment we confess that we believe He made us, that as Father of Jesus in whom we believe, He has also become our Father, who allows us fully in His kingdom and who makes us heirs of His glorious greatness. If this happens, I have someone I can go to who:

- Loves me
- When I am sad
- when I get hurt,
- will comfort me,
- will heal My wounds,
- never makes a mistake,
- Is always in control.

What a wonderful privilege to have such a person as Father. And he's like any good Father, he's not just looking out for you, He wants to give you good things. Not always as you ask or want it, but as He sees fit.

### **Numbers 6:24-25**

*The LORD bless you and keep you; 25 the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; 26 the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.*

Jesus comes to teach that in His name, you can boldly speak to your Father and more He is speaking to us. He gives us His Word! His guidelines to help us develop our best potential. If we all live only as He wants, there will be no war, murder, rape, gossip, jealousy, bitterness, anger, etc. Just love, patience, peace, joy, goodness, kindness, humility, etc. That's why this blessing is really what Father wants to give you.

You can go to Father any time, in any way. It may be early in the morning, late in the afternoon, through the day, anytime you have the need to talk to Him. It can happen in any way, you can pray on your knees with your hands in front of your chest, you can lie on your face, stand on your feet, sit down, lie in bed, while walking, with Father it doesn't matter. And the miracle of our Father, he's never too busy to listen. Bottom line is what Jesus wants to teach us in this prayer in verse 10, we belong to Father, we are His, and therefore we are precious.

Now when Jesus speaks to Father in John 17:11, He introduces us to another facet of Father.

### **John 17:11**

*I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name — the name you gave me — so that they may be one as we are one.*

### **Holy Father**

What would it be like if God was "unholy"? In other words, just as the rest of the world's idols. What would it be like if you read in the Bible that God does unclean things and does not worry about them? No, if Jesus prays in His final moments before His death, He shows us His holy Father.

The word in the Hebrew for saint is *qadosh* and in Greek it is *hagios*. When people translate it with respect to God, it means:

*pertaining to being holy in the sense of superior moral qualities and possessing certain essentially divine qualities in contrast with what is human,*

Father can never be limited. He is so much more than you can ever imagine. Even bigger and better than what the Bible describes Him. He is exalted, He is sinless. When Jesus taught the disciples to pray, He taught them and us.

### **Mathew 6:9-10**

*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, 10 your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

"Your name, Father is Holy," when we bear the name of God, His honour is at stake, we who call Him Father should know that we must keep His Name high, through our actions, for He has, in spite of our sin, held our name high.

We are also holy to Him. Holy from God's perspective means that we are set apart by God for God, to worship and praise Him and to obey him. For we are His, we belong to Him.

### **John 17:20-21**

*“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.*

It's Jesus' special prayer for you and me because He says I pray for those who will come to faith. We, who believe! And what is He praying for? That we may be in God, that the world may believe. Father wants us to show the world what He planted in His. His image, so that the world can believe. It's as if Father wants us to become so full of Him that by our actions, we "show off," His goodness and love then they will believe.

### **John 17:24-26**

*“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. 25 “Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. 26 I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”*

### **Righteous Father**

Another question. What would it be like if Father were unjust? He favours certain people. Sometimes people say that God is unjust. *“Why do I have it so bad and with other people it's just going well?”* When Jesus comes to introduce us to God, He presents Himself to us as a righteous Father.

Even if the world does bad thing to us, Father is faithful and trustworthy. If you think God is treating you unfairly, the fault is God's, the problem lies with you! The Bible is proof that God is just and trustworthy.

So how would a relationship with Father looks like? Let's learn from Jesus' prayer again.

### **Our Relationship with Father**

- **Have Father's Interests at Heart**

### **John 17:4**

*I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.*

For Jesus, it was about promoting His Father's cause, even though it meant people mistreated Him. This meant that his own blood family had cast him out. For Jesus, however, it was far more important to please His Father than to please people. I've said a lot of times, if we say we are children of God, and God is our Father, then we are part of God's Family business. And the purpose of His business is to convince people of God's love for the world and for them.

- **One with Father and Jesus**

### **John 17:21**

*that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.*

Amazing thought then Father allows us to be in Him. Sometimes people say "*they feel out.*" Then they mean that other people push them out, but not Father. Jesus prays that we who believe will be able to say we are "in." We are part of God's family. We allow God to change our thoughts so that we think as He thinks. Why? Again, so that the world may believe.

The world is tired of "fake" Christians. I had a conversation this week with someone who said he wasn't "religious" but believes there's something bigger. He says he cannot believe in the God of the Bible because God is cruel and fierce. Our job is to show Father's love. You have to show that you belong to Him and want to live in union with Him.

### **Obedience**

### **John 17:18-19**

*As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. 19 For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.*

Jesus is an obedient witness. He came to do what His Father asked Him to do. He was sent into the world to bring the good news that Father had come to restore the relationship between people and Him and that He was coming to take back the power Satan had gained through sin. One of Jesus' other tasks was to equip people to take on the task,

You and I are just as part of this family business. You work in a place, stay in a place, shop in a place, be ready to showcase your Father's glorious greatness. Obey His Word and His commands.

- **Know God**

**John 17:25**

*Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me.*

The reason Jesus could speak so comfortably and yet intimately with His Father was because He knew God. The Greek word used here means intimacy, Jesus not only knew about Father, He knew intimately, so intimately that He knew what Father's will was for Him. I say this so many times, don't just know about God and talk about what you've heard from others. Make an effort to get to know your Father intimately.

- **Love God**

**John 17:26**

*I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.*

Jesus is not afraid to display His love and God's love or to talk about it. The relationship between Father and Jesus was that of a loving relationship. Although He knew Him, it wasn't on a friendship basis, but it was a loving relationship. That's why Jesus teaches us to love Father with heart and soul and mind, that's the most important of all, because He first loved us. Loved us to death!

There's one last thought I read between the lines.

**Jesus wanted to go to His Father**

**John 17:11a**

*I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you.*

Jesus knows that with His Father it is so much better, so He want to go back, back to His Father, where it is best. That's where many of our daddys are today, along with Jesus with our Father, in His glorious greatness. This should be our greatest desire. God has made us for Himself and we can never be fully satisfied until one day we can enjoy Him completely, in full intimate fellowship and love for Him.

It will really take an eternity to truly know God completely because He is infinite — there is no end to the knowledge of God. We should not think of eternal life simply as an endless existence. Everyone will live forever, but the question is where?

If you have never surrendered your life, then you are already missing out on the wonderful peace of getting to know and love God as Father, but you also miss out on your eternal existence with God. An existence without God is horrible and hopeless.

May God bless you on this Father's Day knowing that we have a loving Father who wants only the best for us, one who is good and loving. And Jesus wants to teach us even more about our wonderful Father through the Word. You never have to feel fatherless because you have a Father in heaven.