

Who is your Father?

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[0 : 00] So if you have a Bible there, it would be helpful for you to open up and follow what we're looking at. And I'm going to ask for help for us as we pray. Let's pray.

Lord, we are gathered here. We've come to seek you. We've come to hear from you. And we pray that as we draw near to you, you would indeed draw near to us.

Who are we to come near to the Almighty One and the Holy One? It's only by grace. And we pray that you would make good on your promises to bless and enrich and save your beloved people, even as we come this morning.

Have mercy on our weaknesses and let the glory belong to you. Amen. Amen. The question, who is your father?

There's a movie, which to me is a contemporary reference, but it's probably ancient history. While our hero, Luke Skywalker, dangles precariously from a beam in the space station, he hears the voice of the evil Darth Vader saying, Luke, I am your father, which is horrible news because he's this evil man.

[1 : 28] And Luke, I think I'm correct in saying, let's go, and falls, as it were, to his death, shouting, no, like that.

Because the idea of who his father was was just appalling to think that he was the son of this horrible, evil, malicious Darth Vader. In real life, of course, fathers are really important people. And biological fatherhood and biological fatherhood and family can be all sorts of things. It can be very complicated. It can be immensely important. It can be deeply affecting, either positively or negatively.

But the earthly fatherhood, of which we all have some reaction or experience, points us to the more fundamental and even more important matter of spiritual fatherhood.

The eternal father, the eternal father, the spiritual family that we belong to. Who is your spiritual father? Which is the spiritual family that you belong to?

[2 : 37] And God invented the idea of fatherhood. All fatherhood sort of comes from him. And the ideal father, then, some of us have been blessed with ideal fathers or good fathers, but not all of us.

But the ideal father is a source of stability, someone in whom you can instinctively trust, a source of protection, a source of guidance and advice, wisdom.

Somebody you know will love you, not for their own benefit, but selflessly, with a strong love, not a weak love. And a father is somebody who will make it his business to provide.

So there's an ideal father as a truly precious person. And indeed, if we've been blessed with such fathers on earth, we are blessed indeed.

And I guess in that sense, there's a call to us guys who are fathers to try and emulate that. So it reminds us of the importance of the calling of human fatherhood.

[3 : 44] But it also points us to the importance of being able to call God our heavenly father. And J.I. Packer's, J.I. Packer being a theologian, his view was that this was the greatest of all spiritual blessings.

Justification is great that our sins are forgiven. But greater still to be able to pray, as we prayed earlier, our father who is in heaven.

To say that God is our heavenly father. And so the text here asks us this question, which I'm asking to us as a group here.

So who is your father? Is God your heavenly father? And if it isn't, if you, he isn't, that doesn't make sense, does it?

The promise of the gospel that God can be your heavenly father.

[4 : 54] There is a way to be adopted into his family. There is a way to look up to the almighty and not to see the angry face of a holy and unyielding judge.

But to see the face of one who smiles on his children and wraps his arms around them and welcomes them home. A bit like the waiting father in the parable of the prodigal son.

Now let's just approach this a little bit because you might be thinking, well, this is a bit of a non-event. Because everybody's God's child, aren't they?

And there is, what I'm saying here is a weakly Christian idea. It's sort of Christian, but it is a weakened version of Christian called bomb fog.

So I'm sure you all know about bomb fog, don't you? This was, it's a little bit out of fashion now, but it was the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God.

[5 : 59] And it says, all human beings are brothers and God is the father of everybody. It's a sort of universalism. It says, you know, everybody's okay.

Nobody needs to repent. It's just all fine anyway. Brotherhood of man, fatherhood of God. To say we're all brothers in God's family. I mean, there is a sense in which God does say that all human beings were made by him.

And in a sense, loved by him. So there is a sense in which God is father to all. But that is not where, that is not to hit the nail on the head.

To say we're all in God's family doesn't hit the nail on the head. To say that we all automatically have God as our heavenly father is at best a weak statement of truth.

And at worst, a very misleading one. The Bible does say that by nature, human beings are not in God's family in any thoroughgoing, unreserved sense.

[7 : 05] But through Jesus Christ, we can become children of God. And this is how John begins his gospel with this, sort of setting out this theme in John 1, 11.

He says, he came to his own, but his own people did not receive him. So he wasn't received. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

And this comes in as amazing good news, an amazing blast from nowhere.

It is possible to become a member of God's family, not in the ordinary human way, but through Jesus Christ. And that sort of news bursts in as amazing good news.

So the question, who is your father? Where are you in this map of family connections? That really matters. And to have God as your heavenly father, and I'm sure there are many people here this morning who can genuinely pray our father.

[8 : 19] To be in that situation, let's not forget that is a wonderfully precious situation to be in, is it not? To say, God is my heavenly father. So, but to have the evil one as your father is unbelievably awful.

And if, I think, if one were to get a sense of how awful that is, one would be just gripped with how appalling that is.

To have the evil one as your father is an awful thing. And there was something there, I have no idea, because the click didn't work. Let's just come back to the chapter. It's in chapter 8.

And I'll just remind you that this is Jesus at the Feast of the Tabernacles. It's the meeting where there's tents and lights and water.

And lots of things are being discussed. And there is largely confusion and misunderstanding and division. And you get these two great claims of the water.

[9 : 25] If you're thirsty, come to me and drink. And I am the light of the world, says Jesus.

Whoever follows me will have the light of life. So you've got those two great claims in the midst of this confusion.

And I keep on trying to make sense of this. And I've only just noticed that there's something that changes from chapter 7 to chapter 8.

And this is this matter of father. The relation between the father and the son is something that goes all the way through John's gospel. And we'll pick up on some of the themes of that in a moment.

But you can see it's in chapter 8, verse 15, where he says, he talks of the father who sent me.

And I'm going to ask you a question. So chapter 7, how many references do you think it has to the father in chapter 7? And then I'm going to say chapter 8, how many references are there?

[10 : 32] It's a little bit of a silly thing, because you're not going to just sit there and count them all, are you? Well, you might do. Chapter 7? Think of a number.

Eight? There's actually no references to God the Father in chapter 7. And chapter 8? Think of a number. Eight? That's actually got 15.

And I counted all the references to where this theme props up for what it's worth. Chapter 14 has got 17 references. Chapter 5 has 13 references. So this chapter 8 has actually got a lot, relatively speaking, about fatherhood and the father.

And I'd like to try and lead us in thinking about this. I'm going to ask you to work on this. So, you know, you have to sort of concentrate a bit. But I was thinking, what's the way to get a handle on what is said here about fatherhood?

And this is what I came up with. I think it works reasonably well. And I'd like to think there's three sorts of things that are said about the father and the son. And the first is communication.

[11:44] Communication. So communication, what I'm thinking is things like this. That the father talks to the son and shows things to the son. That's a fatherly sort of thing to do, isn't it?

So if you've got a little baby, like there's a little baby at the back, you'll be saying to this little baby, mum, mum, mum, mum, mummy, mummy.

And the little child will be going. But as you talk to the child, bird, dog, dog, woof, woof.

And gradually the child from that communication picks up things. Fathers communicate with their children. Show them things. When they're a little bit older, you'll show them how to eat a boiled egg. Right. This is how you eat a boiled egg. Watch what daddy does. So you take a spoon and you hit it on the side. No, not like that. No, like that. Hit it on the side. And then you scoop the top off.

[12:45] And then you do that. And no. And then you put it in your mouth. Like that. So this is sort of communicating and showing. This is what fathers do, isn't it? Isn't it? Am I mad?

Probably. But yeah, okay. Well, let's not go there, shall we? And Jesus in this passage talks about fathers showing things to their offspring.

So in verse 38, he says, I speak of what I have seen with my father. And you do what you have heard from your father. So this is about communication.

And we'll, if you get the idea of that, we'll come to that in a moment. So we've got communication. And then we've got imitation. So this is another father-son thing. So I've said there that the sort of son imitates what the father does.

Acting like a father. So, for example, fathers, and mothers would do this as well, but fathers would do this. This is how you clean your teeth. You take toothpaste and you put it onto the toothbrush.

[13:50] No, not like that. It's far too much. You only need a little bit. Put it on like that. And then you go, this is what mummy and daddy do when they clean their teeth. And you can do that too.

That's right, isn't it? Please don't look too blank. I mean, it is. Or as a son grows up, he sees his dad cleaning the car.

I don't know. Do people clean cars these days? Imagine this one. Okay. So what we're doing is cleaning the car. And can I have a go? Yes, you can.

Okay. Here's a little bucket for you. Here's some fairy liquid in that. And then, no, you don't get it.

No, you've got it everywhere. Look, you just put it on the car like this, like that. Okay. So it's a sort of imitating.

And children love to imitate. And this is what fathers do, isn't it? They show an example and the children imitate it. And in verse 39, Jesus gives this idea of imitation.

[14:53] They say, Abraham is our father. And Jesus said to them, if you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works that Abraham did. If you're really his son, you would be imitating your father.

So there's the idea of imitation. And then thirdly, there's the idea of motivation. So what drives the father? What the father is keen on or desires, things the father goes for, the son will also go for.

So do you support a football team? Kind of. Which team is it? Brighton. Do you support a football team? You support Brighton as well?

Well, there's a thing, you see. So the idea that what dad gets interested in, the son also gets interested in. So when dad is watching and Brighton go score and dad goes, yeah, then son watching next door will probably go, yeah, as well.

Well, because they are motivated by the same things that the father does. So dad likes chocolate, probably son will like chocolate as well, maybe, maybe not.

[16:06] I mean, there is a, depending on your culture, there's a thing that when a son is old enough, the father will buy him beer because the father likes beer and the son will obviously, in this

example, like beer as well.

It is sort of the things that people like, the things that people are motivated to, that will be shared from father to son. And that's in this chapter too.

There is, in verse, I put in verse 40, you seek to kill me. There are quite a few motivation things going on in this chapter, things that people seek and want and desire and what the father desires, the son also desires because of that interaction between the father and the son.

We have it in verse 44. Therefore, you are of your father, the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. So he's picking up on that idea that the devil has desires and his children have the same desires, same motivation.

Okay, so communication. We're going to use the idea of communication. We're going to use the idea of imitation. We're going to use the idea of motivation between father and son.

[17 : 28] And we'll look at how those things apply to Jesus and his father. And then we'll look at how this applies to the Jewish people that Jesus is talking to.

Let's assume that they're the Jewish leaders and their father. And along the way, hopefully, we'll see how this affects us. So let's look first at Jesus and his father.

And I'll put these two together, communication and imitation. Let's look at some texts which talk about the way Jesus and his father relate to one another. So I'm going to go out of the passage specified into John 5, verse 19, which says this.

Truly, truly, I say to you, the son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the father doing.

For whatever the father does, that the son does likewise. For the father loves the son and shows him all that he himself is doing.

[18 : 37] It's a rather beautiful description of the way the father and the son operate. The son doesn't do things by himself, but he receives communication from the father.

And then he imitates or expresses exactly what the father has shown him. And it's put in very simple language. But it's a very profound insight into the life of Jesus, isn't it?

The son does nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees his father doing. So in some sense, Jesus sees the father acting, reacting, guiding.

And Jesus receives this communication. And Jesus expresses this into his actions and reactions and whatever else I said.

Whatever the son does, sorry, whatever the father does, the son does likewise. So there's a sort of completeness that everything that the father does, the son emulates and imitates.

[19 : 43] And there's nothing that Jesus does that isn't an expression of the father. It's rather wonderful, isn't it? No wonder that Jesus later on can say, if you've seen me, you've seen the father.

Because everything I do is an exact transcription of the father in his will, in his ways, in his actions, in his character.

I just express that perfectly. Communication and imitation. Communication. Coming into John chapter 7, verse 16.

This is the whole matter of teaching. Jesus said, My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me. In other words, I'm getting teaching. The father is, as it were, teaching me. And I receive that communication and pass it on into the world.

[20 : 46] That covers the things that Jesus says. His words are not just from him. They are communicated from the father and sort of imitated into the world.

Chapter 8, 28. Chapter 8, 28. When you have lifted up the son of man, then you will know that I am he, and I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the father taught me.

So, same thought, isn't it? That I speak, but what I speak is exactly from the father. Communication and imitation.

Communication. Chapter 8, 38. I speak what I have seen with my father. That idea is deeply in there, isn't it?

Of the son operating on this principle of communication, the father imitating it into the world. And I think we just stop and worship, really. We stop and say, isn't this an amazing insight into the Trinitarian being of Jesus.

[21 : 59] Beautiful and glorious communication by which the almighty father communicates to the son what he is doing. And Jesus does and teaches and speaks exactly the will of the father.

This is the glory of our great savior. Communication and imitation. Let's look at the matter of motivation. So, there's motivation going on here.

There's purpose. It isn't just sort of fact. There's intention. So, if we pick up on verse 42. Jesus said, if God were your father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here.

I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. So, just pick that thought that there is a motivation here of the father. He sends his son.

I remember when I was little being sent by my father to pick up the newspapers from the corner shop. Sent with a purpose.

[23 : 08] And Jesus has been sent. And let's think for a moment about that sending. We get the same thing in John's gospel, chapter 3, verse 17. God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

And let's ponder for a moment that sending then. There is a motivation from the father expressed by the son. The father sends.

The son has been sent. And his heart is on the purpose of the father, which is to save. I think that's a wonderful thing, isn't it?

God could have just left our world in its darkness and in its lostness and its hostility and enmity and separatedness just to, you know, to flounder.

But God didn't do that. He sent his son to save. And obviously my words are inadequate to that. But what a thought that is.

[24 : 13] That the father has this motivation. I am sending my son into that dark, contrary, rebellious, hostile world to save people.

To bless them. To pick them from their lostness and make them glorious. I think, you know, it's a reason for being amazingly thankful, isn't it?

How helpless and hopeless we sinners had been if he never had loved us till cleansed from our sin. But he came down to our world at the father's will to save people like us.

I mean, let's be grateful for that. And let's just pick up this motivation theme again. There's another motivation thing that's going on. In verse 50, it says that the father's motivation is to seek the son's glory.

So I realize I've stepped out of my paragraph here. Chapter 8, verse 50. I do not seek my own glory. There is one who seeks it and he is the judge.

[25 : 22] There's quite a bit of seeking going on in John's gospel. Actually, in this chapter. You might look back at it and find it this afternoon if you want to. But seeking is a motivation thing, isn't it?

Sort of looking for something. Wanting something. Pressing forward to something. And Jesus is saying, well, I have motivation, but it's not for my own glory. But the father has motivation for my glory.

The father is motivated to seek the glory of Jesus. It is my father who glorifies me, he says in verse 54.

And in that great high priestly prayer, Jesus converses with his father. And he says, glorify your son that your son may glorify you.

Father, the hour has come. Glorify your son that the son may glorify you. There's a motivation there to so work the purposes of salvation.

[26 : 17] That Jesus Christ is seen to be glorious and amazing and fantastic and brilliant.

And the father says, I want people, I want that, I want it to be, that's how you are seen to be. Because my son is glorious. And the work that he's done is glorious.

And the things he's achieved are glorious. And I want him to be seen that. And I want everybody to, as it were, applaud him. I want everybody to say, he is great.

The father seeks the glory of Jesus. That's the father's heartfelt desire. And if you are a parent, depending on how old your children are, you will be so pleased when they say their first word. Or you will be so pleased to go to sports day and see them come in number five in the egg and spoon race. Well done! You know, you will be applauding your child.

[27 : 25] If you ever get a child who goes to university or goes to school on prize day, you will be clapping there. My child has done so well. Well done! Or graduation day.

I was really mean. I didn't let my mum and dad come to graduation day. It was mean of me. I regret that. Because they would have loved to go there, I think, and see my 15 seconds of fame.

And because it is in the parental heart, and we're talking about fathers here, to want to see their children acclaimed. And to take pride in them.

And here's the father who takes pride, as it were, in the achievements of Jesus. And I'm just going to say, would you agree with that? Do you think Jesus is great?

Has it sort of dawned on you? Would you be one of the people applauding Jesus and saying, He deserves that high place. He's won that. I'm totally behind him.

[28 : 29] What he's done for me. What he's done in and of himself. Where he's got to. He totally deserves that. You know, are we saying amen to that? Sort of. Yes, I think amen to that.

So, we're just looking at the father-son relationship, as it is, sort of trying to scratch the surface of this, as it regards Jesus and his father.

And that runs through this chapter and through the gospel. Let's look now at the Jews that he's debating with and their father.

So, the thing we have to notice first is that they are not believing in Jesus. They are contesting everything he says. They are denying that he is the Christ.

They are refusing to accept that. And their claim is that Abraham is our father. So, they say in verse 39, Abraham is our father.

[29 : 29] Let's just read the text just to refresh our minds of it. So, this is chapter 8, verse 39.

They answered him, Abraham is our father. Jesus said to them, If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did. But now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God.

This is not what Abraham did. You were doing the works your father did. And they said to him, We are not born of sexual immorality. We have one father, even God.

And Jesus said to them, If God were your father, you would love me. For I came from God, and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. Why do you still not understand what I say?

It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. You are of your father the devil. Your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him.

[30 : 33] When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. Because I tell you the truth, you do not believe me. Which one of you convinces me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me?

Whoever is from God, hears the words of God. The reason you do not hear them, is because you are not of God. So let's just think about these Jews, and their paternity, their father.

So they claim Abraham is their father. They're saying, because we are Jewish, we are genetically descended from Abraham, so Abraham is our father, and that's the truth of it.

And Jesus is saying, well, actually, it doesn't work like that. Genetically, yeah, you may be, on your birth certificate, you may be very well biologically descended from Abraham, but in the real spiritual sense, that does not make Abraham your father.

Jesus says, no, you are not Abraham's children. Because if you were Abraham's children, you'd be doing the imitation thing. You'd be imitating what your father did.

[31 : 43] And Abraham, well, what sort of things did he do? He was a man of faith. He stepped out in faith. He trusted God. You guys don't do that, says Jesus. He was justified by faith.

He stood on the promises of God. But you guys are not doing that, are you? The Jews were standing on the law. They were saying how well they'd achieved, and that made them acceptable.

And Abraham never did that. And Jesus says, you are not imitating your father. No, you are not imitating your father. Or at least, you are not imitating Abraham as your father.

You are actually imitating a different father. You do what you have heard from your father. That's in verse 38. And what you're doing is trying to kill me.

And let's pick up there on motivation. You seek to kill me. So there is a motivation from your father to hate me and kill me, and you are expressing that hatred and murder yourselves.

[32 : 49] You seek to kill me. I wish I knew what that said. It's gone off the bottom, hasn't it? So it has terrible implications about who their father is. They deny that Jesus is the Christ.

They are planning to kill Jesus. They claim that Abraham is their father, and then they say, actually, God is our father. Where do they say that?

They say that in verse 41. We have one father, even God. So do you get the thing that they're saying? They're saying genetically, Abraham is our father, and therefore spiritually, God is our

father.

We're part of the family of God. And Jesus says, how wrong you are. That is not the family you belong to. You just look at the communication you receive, the imitation you live.

Look at the motivation that motivates you. God isn't your father. And the awful truth that, well, let's come to it. They say, look, don't you dare insult us.

[33 : 58] We are pure, born Jews. We are not born of sexual immorality, says verse 41. We have one father who is God, they say.

Jesus says, actually, you are not. You can tell from your motivation, you do your father's desires. Your father, you want to murder.

Your father was a murderer. And your father is the devil. Verse 44. You are of your father, the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires.

He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. It's an appalling thing to say, isn't it? The truth about the family you belong to is that you are the child of Satan.

It's an appalling thing. It's a sort of horror movie stuff, isn't it? What's the truth about these people? They belong to the family of Satan.

[35 : 01] And Jesus picks out these two things, doesn't he? Of lying and murder.

You want to kill me? That's the murder. You deny that I'm the Christ? That's the lie. And he picks on those two things. You are of your father, the devil.

That's worse than Luke Skywalker, isn't it? Luke Skywalker was appalled that Darth Vader was his father. No! But to these people, Jesus says, Satan is your father.

It's an appalling thing. Absolutely appalling. There's no doubt this is what Jesus says.

But I suppose the question is, did he just mean then? Is this sort of a very precisely targeted statement for those, I don't know how many, let's suppose there were 50 of them talking to Jesus.

[36 : 06] Is it just them? Or does it, is it a wider application? Is this sort of a bit, I suppose you might say, this is a rather primitive thing for Jesus to say, or misguided, or even anti-Semitic?

Now let me just be quite clear with you. Whatever Jesus says, if he said it, that's good enough for me. But people will find fault with what Jesus says, so would they be right to do that?

Let's just tease it out one bit at a time. This idea of being a liar, lying like their father. That's why I would like you to turn to 1 John, chapter 2, please.

And so fascinating that in his letter, John picks up this same theme of lying, and he says in 1 John 2, verse 22, who is the liar, but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ.

This is the Antichrist. He says, this is the lie to say that Jesus is not the Christ and not the Savior, not God come down to earth from heaven.

[37 : 28] If you're telling that lie, you got it from your father, who is Satan. And the shocking thing is that that lie fills our culture, doesn't it?

That lie fills our culture. In our Shaftesbury Road WhatsApp group, I'm going to yet again suggest that we sing Christmas carols, see whether there's any response.

But the standard response will be, we're not religious. We don't want to celebrate the coming of Jesus. We don't mind Christmas stars.

We don't mind Santa. We don't mind reindeer. But we draw the line at anything that suggests we agree that Jesus is the Christ. That's where our culture's at, certainly Brighton culture.

That's a lie, isn't it? And people who tell that lie show which family they belong to. Shockingly. You think, well, they're nice people.

[38 : 29] They are nice people. They're educated people. They are educated people. But rock bottom, spiritually, they don't belong to God. They need the gospel because they're lost.

And they belong to the family of the evil one. I mean, it's awful, but inescapably true. I mean, what about us sitting here? Do you believe Jesus is the Christ?

Do you see him as he's portrayed, the Son of God, the Savior, the Christ? Do you say yes to him? Or are you hanging on to a lie?

I mean, let's... The Christians were saying yes. We're not hanging on to a lie. And let's think of this of murder. That's there in John's gospel.

Let's pick it up in his letter. 1 John chapter 3, verses 11 to 15. And I was really surprised how strongly he picks this up in the letter.

[39 : 32] This is the message we have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. So it's particularly addressed to professing Christians. We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother.

And what... And he says, this related to the fact that his deeds were evil. We shouldn't be surprised that the world hates us, but we know that we have passed out of death to life because we love the brothers.

Whoever does not love abides in death. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer. And we know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. Very stark piece of logic, isn't it?

We love the brothers, because if we don't, we're murderers. That's what he says, isn't it? That's the logic of it. Very, very stark. Whoever does not love abides in death.

Whoever hates his brother is a murderer. And you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. Let me just say a little bit about this word hate. In the Bible, hate doesn't always have a strong emotional component.

[40 : 39] In the Bible, the word hate could more or less be translated reject. It doesn't have to be an angry thing, but it has to be... It's a rejection thing. So let's just read that again.

Whoever rejects his brother is a murderer. And you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. That's a strong statement. It's addressed to Christian people, professing Christian people. How are you with the brethren, with the brothers, with the community of Jesus Christ? Do you love the community? Do you love the brothers?

Or do you, in some sense, reject? And it is a rather telling and penetrating question, isn't it? Do you love the Christian brothers and sisters?

Hate, if you just take it to reject. Or let's sort of take it another... Just not be bothered with. Not that bothered about my Christian brothers and sisters.

[41 : 45] And that gets a bit nearer than Mark, doesn't it? Am I that bothered about my brothers and sisters? Am I that bothered to pray for them on some sort of regular, meaningful basis?

Am I that bothered to keep up with how they are? Does it matter to me? Do I rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep? You know, people get into the habit of living the Christian life more or less on their own little silo.

And I think they come under this challenging question. Surely, do you love the brothers? Because you ought to.

That's a pretty essential hallmark of actually having eternal life and being in that family rather than the other one. So I just pause on that question.

Put it this way. If being a Christian was a crime, on the basis of how much you love the brothers, would there be enough evidence to convict you? Do you see what I mean?

[42 : 56] Any sign that you love the brothers? Because it's a really serious question and an important one. So, we've looked at this morning in the following ways.

We've looked at the way father-son relationships are here in chapter 8. We've looked at how this seems to imply communication and imitation and motivation.

And then we pick this out as regards Jesus who receives communication from his father and perfectly imitates the father. The father shows him all he does and Jesus speaks and acts exactly as the father.

And when it comes to motivation, the father sent his son to save and Jesus comes to save. and the father is motivated to glorify his son and we say amen to that because Jesus deserves to be glorified.

We then looked at how this affects the Jewish opponents of Jesus in terms of communication and imitation and motivation and we see that they lied denying he is the Christ as their father as a liar.

[44 : 16] They rejected him as murderers as their father as a murderer. And the family they belong to is a family which denies Jesus is the Christ and rejects him.

And that family is a very big family and sadly so many people today belong to it. They too are children of the devil. That's a sad and sobering deduction from what Jesus says here.

But let's not forget the way the gospel bursts into that and says it doesn't have to stay that way. It doesn't have to stay that way. The good news is that Jesus came to bring people from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of his dear son.

Jesus came to transfer people from the slavery and lostness of God. And he paid the price for that adoption process when he died on the cross and shed his blood so that sinners like us could call

God our heavenly father which is tremendous isn't it?

So just to bring it to a conclusion poor old Luke Skywalker I am your father Luke! No!

[45 : 43] But we too would be lost in a horrible dark kingdom unless one is born of the water and the spirit we cannot enter the kingdom of God and yet to all who received him who believed in his name he gave the right to become children of God children who are born not of blood not of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man but of God and we say amen to that do we not?

Amen. Let's sing together we're going to sing this one yet not I but through Christ in me.