

# God is relational

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[0:00] Our Father, we're going to be quite a short series on the matter of relationships. As an eldership, we just felt it's necessary and appropriate that we should address this topic as it's so lively.

And I'm not just focusing on the issue of male-female relationships, but the whole spread of relationships is a cauldron.

Over the last 30 years, so many things have changed about the way people relate to one another, especially in the West. Family, friendship and work has huge and constant change taking place. All the old assumptions have been thrown out. There's basically a free-for-all, isn't there? There's no particular norms that govern anybody's behaviours.

One can't even say there's a particular section of society that behaves in a particular sort of way. We see relationship changes and accepting of new ideas and norms right across the spectrum of our society.

[1:11] And it does, at least, quite chaotic. It changes our vocabulary. We find it difficult to know how to relate to people sometimes.

What they want to be termed as. All this issue of gender fluidity, of course, is a sort of massive issue. And the church, bless her, is often sort of behind the curve on this.

And even more concerningly, the church has often got nothing much to say about this, apart from just going along with it and absorbing it and people actually reflecting in their own relationships something of what the world is saying and doing.

Interesting in that passage, John 17, the prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am not of the world, says Jesus.

And he calls his people to be not of the world. They live in the world, but they're not of the world. They really have something different to stay to say.

[2:23] So this affects all of us. It does affect all of us. And this series is really available to all. But rather than just diving in, which would be quite tempting to say, let's see what the Bible has to say about human families and relationships, and we will be doing that in a couple of weeks' time, because there are plenty of examples in the Bible of both good and bad relationships.

And the Bible does offer some very, very clear guidance. But it does sell on the back of a much bigger picture. In fact, I might call it a cosmos-wide picture.

And that's what we're going to look at this morning. In other words, what I'm saying is that if you find imperatives in the Bible which have to do with relationships, they are not plucked out of the air.

They're not arbitrary. They're not sort of societal-based. They're based on something much, much, much bigger and grander, which is truth concerning the God who has made this world, the sort of God that he is.

And that's what we're going to be thinking about this morning. What is this God like? What does this say to us about relationships? And the more you look into this, the more exciting it becomes, because you see that whatever the Christian church may have to say about male and female, and about lifelong relationships and so forth, is nothing to do with a sort of Western society or something that's gone into law and so forth, as if it was sort of parochial and particular to a particular age.

[4:09] It's massively bigger than that. It's based upon something which is true of the real God, the living God, and who he is. And he says, this is the way it is.

This is the person I am. Therefore, these things need to be the way they are. So, I hope in a way that in this series, we will become armed with tools so that we will not be on the back foot, as it were, when we get into discussions, or even when we're making our own decisions about issues of relationship.

That we will not be sort of stuck into a particular local text and say, well, that says there, but some people take one view and some people take another. The Bible has a complete richness and overview that enables us to take a very bold stance on all these matters.

So, that's what we're going to look at this morning. We're going to begin with the idea that the God who is is a God who has self-revealed himself. A God who self-reveals.

In other words, he's not someone that we can understand by our own intuition. To understand God, we are completely reliant on him self-revealing, telling us things about himself.

[5:43] He says, I'm not this sort of God. You might have thought this was the sort of God I am. I'm not that sort of God. I'm this sort of God. And the world has been made in the way that it has because I am that sort of God.

And this wonderful rescue plan that we celebrate every time we meet, this salvation, is because he is this sort of God. It's exactly the way it is rather than some other version.

This isn't dreamt up by us. It's a self-revelation from God. So, we need to use the Bible that God has given us and learn directly from God this morning. Now, if you were to step back from the Bible and look at the world religions, or indeed the kinds of thoughts that people have had about God, there are various categories, not exhaustive.

So, from the very dawn of time, there have been people who have believed in multiple gods, many gods, pantheism. I was hearing in our time with Melvin Bragg this week and it was about the Incas. And they were very hot on the idea that the mountains were almost like a mother god to them and needed to be placated. They made sacrifices.

[7:11] Territorial or issue-centered. Rocks, rivers, mountains, trees. Gods that usually and constantly needed to be made friendly by sacrifices.

So, you know, Mella was telling us about her feeling that God is angry. Many people feel, or used to feel, that God was angry. That the gods, God or gods, needed to be made happy.

And they were very demanding. Sometimes they demanded the highest sacrifice, which could be human sacrifice. And that still didn't satisfy them.

Insatiable. There's another category of gods, which I'll call the soap opera gods. Soap opera gods. So, you read about them in Greek and Roman history.

The gods who lived on Mount Olympus. The god who had sort of East Ender type lives with one another. And it's really strange in a way.

[8:19] You can see that these are just the inventions of people. Because they're just an extension of themselves. And these are fantastic and rather ridiculous beings who are completely flawed.

There's nothing holy or good or righteous about any of them. They just sort of cavort around the universe in their own little world. And everyone looks on and just goes, oh, it's amazing.

These sort of gods. And some of them sort of pass away and then another one gets invented.

Greeks and Romans, they're intelligent people. But they had this sort of idea of these soap opera gods who were the subjects of a strange mixture of worship and entertainment.

You can just see the perversity of people there. There are the monotheistic religions. These are the religions that say there is one god. There's not multiple gods.

There's one god. Judaism, Islam and Christianity would be major expressions and demonstrations of internal integrity of belief in one god.

[9:33] And then now we've come of age and we mass produce and self produce our own gods. Not just society, not just the emperor saying, you know, I'm a god and so forth, but every single one of us has manufactured our own gods.

every person for himself. Self-worship. This is the position of atheists, secularists and materialists. You all have your own goals. Whatever it is that you desire, you aspire to, your goal, that's your god.

It's sobering, isn't it? Think about it in that way. So, you know, some of you students you may be thinking that the most important thing in my life now is to get my masters and get a good qualification in my masters.

No, I'm not saying that's not right, but is that the most important thing in your life? If you have to say that's the most important thing in my life, I have to say to you that has become a god for you because you will sacrifice anything to make that happen.

[11:00] These gods look a lot like us. They like the things that we like and they hate the things that we hate. How convenient. They never challenge us. They never tell us off.

They don't trouble our conscience. they just fit in exactly what we want because they emerge from us rather than from outside us.

They are an extension of us. So here we are 2019. Are we better off than the Incas with their pantheistic gods?

Seems to me that we have increasingly degraded the person of gods or God to the point that they are no better than us frail human beings which is a logical extension of evolutionary theory that we are just animals and there is nothing more to be said about it.

God of the Bible is one and I've already said that Christianity is a monotheistic religion. Mono meaning one.

[12:20] Deuteronomy 6.4 says the Lord our God the Lord is one. And we hold to that.

God. But that is not all that can and should be said about self-revealing God of the Bible. The God who is actually God. Because the God of the Bible exists in three persons.

This God is one God that exists and has always existed as three distinct persons. I'm just going to read this part here because I want it to be not to get the words wrong in any fashion.

before time after time unchangeably unalterably this is the uniqueness of the God of the Bible. I know of nothing else in human history that demonstrates anything of this nature.

The God who is one but exists in three persons. This isn't therefore but this isn't therefore a matter for gloating or suggesting that in the league table of Bible religions on top.

[13:34] Not trying to score points this morning but just trying to get at truth. But the inevitable implication of what I've just said is that the God of the Bible is completely different to all the other gods already described.

There may be tiny echoes of truthful reality in some other religions some hangover from a perfectly formed world where there was a true knowledge of God but all this is so dim and completely swamped by missing truth that the other pictures are caricatures and perversely wrong pictures which do not help but hinder any true knowledge and worship of God.

last Sunday on one of our meal tables one of my work colleagues says why Christianity there are plenty of other religions I didn't give him this answer but that is that's not a bad starting point it's to say Christianity Christianity is distinct and different because the God who has been made known to us and has chosen to reveal himself to us and the God that we come to as Christians is this God who exists as one blood in three persons this was the conviction of the early church because they read their Bibles and they could not help but see that woven in a most delicate and convincing and emphatic manner was the three personhood of God they couldn't deny it and I would put the same challenge out to any one of us today if you're struggling with this particular doctrine and idea and you're saying prove it categorically to me demonstrate it to me categorically

I'd only encourage you to read the Bible to just read the Bible rather than try and take you to a particular text I could do that but it'll always be challengeable because you and I know that the elephant in the room is we can't square the circle on these points God is one and yet three and therefore your default would be this can't be right but God has so beautifully expressed himself in his own word that that's the safest place for us to go with humble hearts to receive from him and so it was that the early church and over some period of time came to that very solid conviction and they gathered together and established and expressed this truth in words and it's been given the name

Trinity it's not a Bible word but it is a word that expresses God who is one yet exists in three persons and we would do well to respect the wisdom of the fathers and how they came to that solid conclusion because it was worked out painfully so over many decades to come to that solid place

and why does this matter because as a Christian church we would say you cannot be a Christian if you do not have belief in the one God who exists in three persons and that is why when we baptise people as an introduction to the Christian life we baptise them in the name of the God who is one and three we proclaim it every time a new believer comes into the family of God it is completely foundational we can't understand this you say

[18:07] I just can't get my head around this I see it but I can't understand it I've experienced this and many of us could say we could have experienced it but I can't explain it and you may be troubled by the thought that something so fundamental to a Christian belief has mystery and the breakdown of human reasoning at its heart isn't that interesting that something which is so fundamental to Christian belief should actually have mystery at its heart but God as it were puts us into that place and says do you know what the first thing I'm going to ask of you is a humble heart and just for you to be saying I don't understand this I just have to accept what you say and that tells us something about the nature of faith and trust where I need to believe God's word rather than my own human understanding if you're sitting thinking

I do understand this and I'm confident in saying that you don't because this is beyond human reasoning you may be thinking well actually there is one God but there are different bits to him three personalities within this one God and each personality is just a part of the whole of God well that's not what the Bible says and it's heresy so if you think that come and have a word with me afterwards because that's a very unbiblical view which is the reason why all illustrations fall down somewhere so the illustrations are often made of one source and then three manifestations of that source or you may be thinking that one God acts in different times with different aspects of his character so the stern part is one character the loving part another and the life changing part another just as we say he's a Jekyll and

Hyde character sometimes he acts in one way sometimes in another that sounds very much like one God with different ways of behaving but that's definitely not the full God of the Bible it's heresy so to drill down into that thought it's a very very unhelpful idea to think of of God as one part of God as being the I'm the justice piece and another part of God being the one who bargains creates mercy and kindness that's very dysfunctional and it's got nothing to do with the God of the Bible so people who separate the Old and the New Testaments in that way and say well the God of the Old Testament was that sort of a God but there's another sort of God who manifested in the New that is so unhelpful don't think in that way because it's not true you have to read the Bible rather than come to a lazy conclusion like that

I'm simply saying that the God of the Bible is so much bigger and more mysterious than anything you and I could begin to get our heads around hallelujah people have rightly said if I could understand this God what sort of a God would he really be would I really respect such a God if you could interpret all that he does is that the sort of God you want well it's certainly not the God who is there's a God there's a God who is is a God who is knowable but he's also unknowable I want to go further and go into this territory here but now we need to go further and speak of the one God who exists of three persons and just consider that God has always been will always be that way that's an amazing thought isn't it here we're all getting older wrinkly we live we die everything changes this God has never changed from eternity to eternity with a blip which we call time in between what an extraordinary idea what a mind blowing concept fundamental is that the God who is one and not a number of separate parts has always existed in such a way that the three persons are in an utterly close and unbreakable connection and relationship with one another they do not relate to silent uncommunicating statues words are spoken desire expressed plans made and executed in utter and perfect harmony

God is one but he is not lonely this is why God is relational God is fundamentally relational it's not just something that's got tacked on as a result of creation not something he just sort of I'll add that to my CV I will become relational he is fundamentally relational because the God who is one and has existed from all eternity with no beginning has always been in relationship he is relational in himself if there were nothing or no one else to relate to we can say that the God of the Bible is intrinsically relational this is not true of the God of the Quran but this so wonderful is not saying enough it's hinting but it's not saying enough we need to understand

[24:20] God willing more clearly about the relationship of the three persons of God who is Trinity and for this we are utterly dependent on God in his self-revelation in the Bible what we're going into is territory that cannot possibly be understood by some cleverness of men some philosophy there are aspects of the character of the God that may be learnt though poorly from other sources so we like to quote Psalm 19 the heavens declare the glory of God so it is right and good that we come back tonight and hopefully it's nice clear sky and the moon's up there we look up and the stars are shining and we say there's a God who made that and that's exactly that's exactly the right thing the heavens declare the glory of God so if they declare the glory of God even with our fragile minds it's the right conclusion that we come to say there is a

God who made this but we can't go any further with that understanding you go out tomorrow night and the night after and the night after and you won't move an inch forward apart from saying how great is this God that he makes all this but you won't understand more about God until you take your Bible and open it because the heavens do not tell us anything about the three persons of God the personhood of God the Bible says that the three persons of God the Father and God the Son and God the Spirit and it is these three who are in intimate and unchangeable communion fellowship and relationship with one another these are not just ornery titles the sort of thing that you might bestow upon people or a simple way of distinguishing one from another but they're the finest description that God can give us as to the essence of the three persons do you want to know who I am says God I am Father I am Son I am Spirit this is the best and richest description of God and this is so important because to miss this or misunderstand this is to miss out on the most fundamental truth of God indeed to blur or ignore this in favour of other God descriptions even descriptions given in the Bible such as God Almighty God our provider God our fortress and rock which are beautifully true and intensely helpful is to miss out on the main revelation that God would have all mankind to know and understand all mankind to know and understand because this is not just a truth which is available to people who are Christians to use an analogy to look at the moon rather than the sun would be to look at other descriptions of God which though true would be missing the main thing so the father relates to the son as a father the most conceivably wonderful father that could ever be as a father relates to the son the most precious brave loyal and obedient son you could ever conceive we're meant to think those thoughts we're meant to realise that God is like that that the father relates to the son in that way we've all had imperfect family relationships but we can extrapolate and we can sense what the most precious and wonderful father would be like and what the most obedient and loyal son would be like their mutual love respect and enjoyment of one another is enabled and overflows by the living power of the spirit the spirit of unimaginable power and indescribable gentleness so it was is now will be forever and ever this is how it was before creation because the bible says there was a time before creation did you notice there were two verses in john 17 that said talked about the love that the father had for the son before the world was made there was a time before creation i have to say not time but rather in eternity when god needs nothing he needs nothing because he's fully satisfied in himself as father son and spirit and this is when god in his wisdom laid plans for all that was to unfold in time and history and beyond when the father spoke to the son within the richness of the spirit and all was decided and it was very good and it's precious to think about that conversation we can't go any further than that the bible doesn't give us any detail of how this process happened but it did happen so that creation was never a sort of a work in progress make up the plan as you go along but there was always an absolute detailed blueprint for everything that touched on the world that god made these are such important verses they tell us so much you can take hold of the clues out of them then god said in genesis 1 26 27 let us make man in our image in our likeness and let them rule and that extraordinary thing why was god going to rule well the clue is relation it's relational so god created man in his own image in the image of god he created him male and female he created them the image of god is found in male and female it's a revolutionary idea god mandated that male and female should rule in the world that he was giving to them for them to be stewards and overseers so they name the creatures one by one these creatures who are not made in the image of god therefore they don't have the same relationship to

him as the male and female that he made and he's saying to adam and eve you name them you name them you give them the names and we'll have a talk about it in the cool of the evening as god comes and walks with them why did you give that creature why did you do that it's beautifully relational isn't it and then a day of tragedy an awful darkness when adam and eve exercise the rights and privileges of god likeness and choice to abuse god's kindness and instead of following the pattern of the son who loves the father chose to love themselves instead and that's a fundamental diagnosis of the fullness of people that we love ourselves rather than god disaster relational meltdown separation awful consequences which relational meltdown always causes so many ripples and manifestations down through generations and it all starts with adam and eve loving themselves rather than god and the whole human race is affected seemingly unbridgeable breach and seemingly forever non-relational consequences but it did not take god father son and spirit by surprise not in the smallest item nor did they need to change any of the past eternities plan not in one tiny part of it jesus is recorded in the book of hebrews as saying here i come i'm willing to do your will oh my god he said those words in eternity past before creation he was willing to become the sin bearer he was willing to be the perfect man the second adam he was willing for all that he'd made the choice already he wasn't taken by surprise on the day that adam and eve fell away from god it's just part of the unfolding plan god already had an audacious relational rescue and restoration plan in place to deal with this very worst of eventualities a massive plan to deal with a massive relational disaster the father had already determined that his son should be the means of achieving such rescue by becoming a man himself conceived by the spirit and doing all that adam and eve and all that come from them had not done and by their now sinful nature could never do and pay the full price and penalty for the breach in that relationship because broken relationships always come with a terrible price to pay don't they it's inescapable it's one of the great sadnesses for me pastorally I feel about relationships because you know that when people make bad choices there are always consequences and they cannot be escaped you cannot be put under the carpet you cannot be brushed away you're probably going to have to live the whole of your life with a bad relational choice even though you may receive the full forgiveness and covering from God there will be consequences broken relationships always come with a terrible price to pay and that was unavoidable absolutely unavoidable there was going to be a price to be paid and who was going to pay the price it couldn't be the people who'd done it they didn't have the capacity they didn't have the righteousness to be acceptable to God there was only one

[36:35] God's own son second Adam God is relational in salvation oh we love this verse and it's so relational for God so loved the world that he gave his one only son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life as the father has loved me so have I loved you says Jesus my prayer is not for them alone I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message 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 if we are encouraged to see creation through the prism of relational God the idea of God being relational in salvation completely overwhelms and dwarfs that it's the most massive expression of God's relationship and desire for relationship with mankind

God's salvation makes no sense without a relational God this is how God presented himself on the day when the angels announced good news to the shepherds when Jesus changed water into wine when he was baptized and the Holy Spirit came upon him like a dove and the father's voice was heard this is my son whom I love I'm well pleased with him and on the Mount of Transfiguration and Gethsemane and Calvary and Resurrection relational mourning it was always the father and the son and the spirit acting in perfect harmony together to achieve this salvation nothing out of kilter nothing out of order the father requests the son obeys the spirit enables to be a Christian is to accept that plan

God's plan to embrace God's the father's love gift of his son in the resurrection life giving power of the spirit and be brought into harmony with this God part of his now extended family because the God who is one but three now has a growing family of sons and daughters fellow brothers with Jesus Christ sons of a heavenly father brothers together heirs with the son held and sustained protected and provided for by the power of the spirit this is relational this is relational and there's

more oh not there yet there's a wedding there's a wedding where's that come from the Christian is not only brought into the circle of

God's family love and accorded the full rights of an adopted child but alongside Jesus the author and finisher of the faith there's a stunning change of imagery we could be adopted children and at the same time be the bride of Christ married to him I stand here and I think how amazing that is that truth because in two weeks time we'll look at marriage but look the big picture is Jesus being married to his people if you get that right you're not going to go far wrong in your understanding of marriage yeah if you get that right you won't go far wrong because that's the real picture that's the reality that's the perfect and we are just imagining that on earth in our relationships what a privilege called to become the bride of

Christ Jesus won us for himself as a husband might win a bride Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy to present her to himself as a radiant church without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish but holy and blameless and he's going to do that it's going to be the perfect marriage the marriage made in heaven glorious it's his work to be a Christian is to be a willing participant in the work of Jesus making us his perfect bride this starts now but there is so much to be done to make us ready for a day when Jesus returns to earth and takes us to be his bride forever and ever this is wonderfully relational there are so many evidences of God's relational love the immense love which caused the father to not spare his own son but suffer the anguish of a father's separation from the eternally expressed fellowship

[42:13] I talked about the blip of time when there was a blip at Calvary where there was a felt separation a felt separation of the father and the son what an awesome thing isn't that awesome from all eternity they'd had that intensity of close relationship my God my God why have you forsaken me why have you forsaken me the words come easily from us we know them so well what intensity what intensity Jesus expresses there my God my God why have you forsaken me that was part of the plan but to you cannot deny you can't detract from the fact that that plan was extremely painful it was not easy to execute and he does this for us son's love as he thought of me on

Calvary's cross the death he experienced for me the pains he took to draw me to himself disappointments he's endured in my very weak and stumbling journey through life this is all deeply relational isn't it Christian these are the living signs of the family love which is now yours and yours forever there is no lessening of the love of the father son and spirit to you and never will be you need to hold that you need to get that because we all know what it is to have experiences in life which seem like a straw that breaks the camel's back and we think how can I go on how could God love me after this how could it be possible because everybody else would just discard me but you have to understand that the eternal

God is unchangeable and when the father says I love you he means I love you and I will love you and I will love you and I will love you and I will keep you and there is nothing I say it carefully nothing that we can do that will actually degrade the love of God to an 80% level as it were or put us on probation doesn't work like that does it it shouldn't work like that in our own families it certainly doesn't work in the family of God that way God has invited you into a holy and intimate place and this is what Jesus prayed for on the night before he died what we heard about my prayer is that those who believe in me through their message 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 the world may believe that you sent me

I wonder what that means how is it that the world will know that Jesus has been sent by God and he's not just a prophet good man miracle worker how will the world know that Jesus says in his prayer which is surely being answered he says it's something to do with the fact that when they see that you father in me and I'm in you and that we are in him the world will be convicted there's something about our relationship with God which will be a very convicting truth to the world a very convicting evidence something about the reality of it everybody understands relationships look I'm going way beyond the issues of philosophy and bits and pieces of truth and so forth I'm talking about this relationship with God sometimes

I wonder whether the best thing for people to become Christians would be to be present in a prayer meeting when we're just addressing God as our father they're saying this is amazing how can these people do that how can they talk in that way they're not putting on an act they're not putting on a

performance it's a reality may they fall down on their faces and acknowledge that God is amongst you God is relational himself relational to the men and women he has created relational to those he has rescued by the life death and resurrection of his son Jesus and this is how God wants you to know him above everything else because there is no higher richer expression of the true nature of God than what he has given us if there were a better expression of it he would have given it to us because he's loving are you in a relationship with

[48:10] God father son and spirit I'll use that deliberately father son and spirit do you have that relationship with God that embraces those three persons not just in some paper contract not just in some formal agreement where little is said or expressed many of us live at a distance from God's family life we know the theory we're glad of the truth we're clear about the message but we live at a distance from Calvary and our view of God and the everyday life defaults to matters of keeping out of trouble doing our best because for us God is a ruler and has his laws God is a ruler and he does have his laws but if that's the texture of your relationship with God if it is a matter of rule keeping and you're more like a slave than a child and

God has not called you to be a slave he's called you to be a child and to belong to him and I think this is a very challenging point and I pause at this point in my preparation I pause at this point in this message because we can all be a bit like the elder brother in the prodigal son parable can't we we just sort of count the number of pigs out there you know you didn't do this for me didn't do that for me it's all a sort of monetary equation it's something so much less than it should have been how much that elder brother missed out on when the younger brother came back which he could have enjoyed couldn't he yeah the feast the enjoyment the pleasure the wonder of it but has the emotion drained out of your experience as a Christian so you come along and you do the things that Christians do and you and I can't detect so much in other people well we can to some degree but we can't always but perhaps perhaps you don't think of

God as father son and spirit perhaps you just think of him as God yet he's saying I want you to know me in that way and when we know him in that way that changes everything we may have badly lost something like the Ephesian church had in the book of!

Revelation where Jesus the risen Lord Jesus said they lost their first love we need to get back get a better sight of Calvary fill ourselves with the I need to pinch myself thought that the God we belong to and the God who has bought us relates to us as not as slaves but as children so we cry Abba father that's a natural heart cry of the Christian not something weird separate it's the intimate instinctive heart cry of a child of God when we are captivated enjoying the relational life with God who is father son and spirit all that the Bible has to say about relationships with one another supremely the lifelong relationship between a man and a woman makes absolute sense that are attractive rather than restricting dour joyless and arbitrary and that's why we're going to deal with that two weeks time and not today because we need to be convinced of this great reality first of all if you're not a

Christian today I've got no other God to present before you apart from the one that I've tried to do so very inadequately no other God I don't need to because I'm so proud of him I'm glad in him rejoicing in him that I know that he's exactly the God you need to come to as the hymn says come to the father through Jesus the son this is exactly what you need this is exactly what you were designed for this is your truest and best calling for this life and the next and this is invitation and I give you these words in the Bible if you're thirsty come all you who are thirsty come to the waters you have no money come buy and eat Isaiah 55 verse 1 if you're burdened and heavy laden this is the

[53:15] God who says come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest if you feel you're walking in a fog or darkness I am the light of the world whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life you think you think you're love and you need direction Jesus says I'm the good shepherd the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep and this is God the father son and spirit offering himself to you today offering himself to all of us today so whatever state our relationship with him may be from zero to some other figure

he's offering himself to us today and he's saying come to me I'm exactly the same God that you may have departed from me we've never got near to but I'm as much a father to that person as to you and to that person that person identical identical his love is the same

God invites you into his family so I say on behalf of the living God come come come into the family of God Amen