

God the Father

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Date: 30 July 2017

[0 : 00] If you are a Christian, you have a Father beyond space and time. And some things about our Father, our Heavenly Father tonight.

! 1 John 3 verse 1, it says this, Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.

Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Behold, look at this, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed, what he has given, the love that he has given to us, that we should be called the sons of God.

Sons and daughters, children of God. We have a Father, capital F, Father, Heavenly Father, beyond space and time. So number 1, notice this.

He is a loving Father. He loves. Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us. What manner of love!

[1 : 07] What love this is! It's beyond human love. It's love, everlasting love. He loves us with a love beyond compare.

The love that the Father has given us, that kind of love. It's overwhelming. It's overwhelming. We can't really describe it, can we? To put it into words.

In whatever language, it's hard to describe his love. That tender love. That overwhelming love. That absolute, undeserved love.

That he would love me. That he would love us. While we were yet sinners, he loved us. While we were his enemies, he loved us. And made us his friends.

And more, his children. The grace of God is amazing. 1 John 3, verse 2. It goes on.

[2 : 01] The grace. His undeserved love. His kindness. Goes beyond. By adopting us. Adopting us.

In 1 John 3, verse 2. Beloved, now are we the sons of God. And it doth not yet appear what we shall be. But we know that.

When he shall appear, we shall be like him. For we shall see him as he is. When he shall appear, we shall be like him.

That's amazing, isn't it? I can't get my head around that. Can you hear that? You know, Brother Rukukuya is going to look like Jesus. He already does.

He already does. But he's going to look even more like him. Brother Mohan, you're going to look more like Jesus. Brother Dean. Sister Pat. You're going to look like Jesus.

[2 : 58] We're all going to look like Jesus. Because when he shall appear, we shall be like him. And we are the sons of God. Present tense. Now some people, they think, am I a Christian?

I hope so. I think so. This says, I know so. I know that I'm a Christian. Now are we the sons of God. We can say, I am a child of God. I am born again. I am his son. Sister, you can say, I am his daughter. Yes, I am.

Because God's love adopts us. He says, I want you in my family. And he makes it legal. He makes it happen. He brings us, it's a definite legal bond.

As when someone says, I want to adopt this child. I want this child to be my son. I want this child to be my daughter. The Bible says, we're adopted. We're made part of his family.

[4 : 00] You know, I love to say, I know I say it a bit sometimes, but we're highly honoured tonight because we have amongst us some members of the royal family.

You all are members of the royal family. If you know Jesus, if you are his king, if he is your king, you are members of the royal family. That's amazing, isn't it, to think of that.

That we are adopted, joined, and adoption speaks of a joining of a parent to a child. And if you are such that you adopt a child, it brings rights and responsibilities and privileges.

Now there was a small girl who gave her definition of the word adoption. She said this, it is when you love someone and you ask them to come and live with you.

You know, that's special, isn't it? I know it's a very special thing that just means something special. And this is so simple yet true, that God loves us and he wants us to come and live with him.

[5 : 06] He wants to adopt us as his sons and daughters. Are you one of his children? Would you come and live with him? That's what being born again means.

The new birth, born again. There was a man, Mr Adams, who loved to spend all the hours that he could working in his garden with his only son, Sammy.

Mr Adams had one son, Sammy. When World War II broke out, Mrs Adams suggested they take a refugee child into their home. A new arrival child into their home.

So it was someone from another country, another culture. And Mr Adams wasn't really in favour of the idea. He thought it was something a bit unusual at that time, especially, that it was something he wasn't sure about.

But he said, OK, to his wife, he said, OK, let's do that. He wanted to please his wife. And the child that they received came from an orphanage far, far away in Central Europe.

[6 : 10] And this child had the name Paul Piotrostansilus. I'll say that again. Piotrostansilus.

That was his name, Paul Piotrostansilus. And unfortunately, as Paul learnt the language of his new family in America, he also learnt to manipulate the truth. He started to get up to mischief, this little boy.

This new boy in the family, Paul, he got up to mischief. And he often would break Mr and Mrs Adams' hearts many times. And he did, however, develop a close friendship with the other little boy, with Sammy, with the other little boy, the little son of the Adams family.

And one day, Paul, against a specific warning of the mum and dad, Paul went swimming in a polluted stream. It was a dirty stream.

It wasn't safe to swim there, but he went and swam in this dirty water. And because of the possibility that it might be contagious, Paul was put in a separate room.

[7 : 15] And Sammy was told to stay away from him. Stay away from Paul. He might have caught some bug out of that dirty water. But they didn't stay apart because Sammy and Paul were good mates.

And they wanted to be together. And sure enough, Sammy caught the disease. And the fever ranged through him. And just four days later, Sammy died.

The boy of the family died. And a neighbour had expected that the Adams would have felt the need to send Paul away, send him back to the orphanage, send him back to where he came from, because of all the heartache that he had caused them.

But on returning from being away for a period, the neighbour was surprised to see the familiar sight of a man and a boy working together side by side in the garden.

Only this time, the boy was Paul, the adopted boy. And the neighbour said, You still have him then? Yes, Henry Adams replied, and he is doing much better now.

[8 : 20] All I can say to you, Paul, said the neighbour, is that you're a pretty lucky boy. And Henry interrupted. You don't need to bother to try to pronounce his name anymore. He is now Paul Adams.

We have adopted him. He is now the son we lost. He was brought into the family. He was counted as the son of the father.

And that's the kind of love that God gives to us, isn't it? That he could call us his sons. Behold what manner of love the father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.

This is the truth. That that kind of love is real. It's God's love. Love that adopts us, that makes us his children, that makes us citizens of heaven, that makes us part of God's family, the royal family, the royal family, much more important than any other human royal family.

As God's children, we enjoy the benefits that God the father grants to us. God's love for us, his concern for us, his care for us, his keeping, his love, his grace.

[9 : 32] In Proverbs 14, 26, it says, In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence, and his children shall have a place of refuge.

Proverbs 14, 26, His children shall have a place of refuge. We're under the father's care. We're in his keeping. So number one, he loves.

Behold what manner of love the father hath given to us. Secondly, he listens. God, our father, listens. God the father has ears to hear us.

Do we have ears to hear him? He listens for our call. In Romans 8, 14, 3, 16, we read about how we are to call on God our father.

Romans 8, 14, 3, 16, For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For you have not received the spirit of bondage, again to fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption.

[10:36] We're adopted, we made his children. The spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father, Abba, Father. The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.

Now, as a believer, the spirit of God bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.

We have that assurance. And we don't have to be on shaky ground thinking, Am I a Christian?

Am I not a Christian? Was I a Christian? And I've stopped being a Christian. And I've got to be a Christian again. No. His spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are, present tense, the children of God.

We're adopted. We're his. We're in his leading, in his domain, under his direction, in his care, in his keeping.

And the spirit of God, it says we cry. It comes out from within us. Abba, Father. It's got a very familiar tone to it, where it's such that a little child can cry.

[11:46] Daddy, Father. Father, Abba, Father. Will we cry out, Abba, Father? That he is such a father that we can have a total gladness to be with him.

As much as human fathers are very noble, oft times, he is much, much more than a human father. He is our heavenly father.

And God listens for you. Will you call out to him? In Psalm 40, verse 1, it says, I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me and heard my cry.

It's like, Psalm 40, verse 1, he inclined unto me. It's almost like, God's like this sometimes. waiting for our cry. He inclined unto me and heard my cry.

Do we cry to him? Do we cry, Abba, Father? Sometimes we say, Pastor, Pastor, when we should be saying, Abba, Father. Don't go, as much as pastors can be helpful, sometimes, they're human.

[12:57] And, we can go straight to God, can't we? It's not like in some places where they've got to go through a priest, they've got to have, you know, they go to some little cubicle and talk to a man through a curtain and tell this man all the bad things that they have done.

You don't have to do that. Go straight to the Heavenly Father, straight to God. We have one mediator between God and man, the man, Christ Jesus. Pray in Jesus' name to the Father.

He's inclining unto us to hear our cry. He's listening, He's listening for your cry. So call out to Him. It's the privilege of prayer, isn't it? What does our Lord say?

When you pray, say, Our Father. He is our Father. And He wants us to cry unto Him. Our Father.

Our Heavenly Father. And it's wonderful, it's our Father. It's a corporate thing, isn't it? We are, you're not just on your own, you've got brothers and sisters around you. Our Father.

[13:59] Our Father. As we pray, we've got that support of one another too. So firstly, He loves, behold what manner of love, the Father. Secondly, He listens, He wants us to cry, Abba, Father.

He listens. And thirdly, He leads. Our Father leads us, if we will but follow. God the Father will lead us. He still yet calls out those words that are often said here, come, follow me.

Come, follow me. He still calls that to us. As we go through life with its twists and turns, and sometimes unpleasant times, and difficult life, difficulties, and sad times, He is there.

If we will but listen, if we will but let Him lead. You know, it tells us in Psalm 23, that familiar one, but He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness, beside the still waters, even through the valley of the shadow of death, even through those darkest times.

Now, how dark can it be when you lose a loved one? It's shattering. It's, it's overwhelming sometimes to lose a loved one, to have that, that separation, that loss, that grief, that sorrow.

[15:32] He will take us through the valley of the shadow of death. And we need fear no evil. Why? He is with me. He is with me.

He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness. Will we follow His leading, is the question. The Father wants to lead us. But sadly, we don't always follow the Lord's leading, do we?

He wants to lead, but we sometimes reject His leading. We stop, we say, I'm going to go my way, instead of God's way. But He wants us to get back on track when we do that.

So 1 Peter 2, 21, we read of our Lord. 1 Peter 2, verse 21, For even here unto were you called, because, and the context here is talking about suffering, you're called to this, He says, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that you should follow His steps.

You know, where did His steps take Him? To the cross. His steps took Him to the beating. His steps took Him to the false trials, to the false accusations.

[16:47] His steps took Him to the garden of Gethsemane. His steps took Him to the bruising, to the flogging, to the scourging, to the whip, to the nails, to the cross, to the hill, to the thorns.

He leadeth me. Follow in His steps. You know, as a Christian, especially in some countries around our world today, if you become a Christian, you have a public baptism, and you confess Christ, you're signing your own death warrant.

It's the death penalty for you in some countries. And Jesus says, I've left you an example that you should follow in my steps. Now sometimes we've got, it's so easy in Australia, really, isn't it?

But brothers and sisters, and sometimes even in Australia, people think, oh, you know, younger people in school, or, you know, I was in a secular school and was an outright Christian, and you get picked on.

You get laughed at and scorned. And, you know, some people think it would be so easy to just be cowardly. It would be easy to wimp out.

[18:02] You know, when you face such things, when you're in a school situation, or you're amongst peers, and you say, no, I'm going to stand for Jesus Christ. And, you know, it would be easy because of the persecution, because of the difficulty, to not be strong.

But our Lord wants us to follow His steps. Follow His steps. Tread in His footsteps. Where He has walked, tread in His footsteps. Follow Him closely.

Follow His steps. Because we're called to this. Will we follow His leading? This is the question. You know, follow God's leading. Follow where God leads you.

Go where God leads you. Stay close to the Father. You know, you hear in some countries like where the snow, and you see the footsteps in the snow, where the Father has gone, and the little child walks along in the footsteps, in the footprints, in the snow.

It's that picture of where the Father has gone, we will follow. We will let Him lead. Let the Lord lead you.

[19:13] How can we picture the love of God? How can we picture God as our Father and the love of God? There's a woman who told her story as a young girl.

This woman, Mary, wrote this. She said this, I grew up knowing I was different and I hated it. I was born with a cleft palate.

And this is someone who's got, had to have a mouth operation where their mouth wasn't fully formed. And so, it leaves a scar.

She says, I was born with a cleft palate. And when I started school, my classmates made it clear to me how I looked to others. A little girl with a misshapen lip, a crooked nose, lopsided teeth, and garbled speech.

She was really self-conscious. She was really worried about how she looked. And her mates at school were questioning that. They said, what happened to your lip?

[20:20] And I'd tell them I'd fallen and cut it on a piece of glass. Somehow, it seemed more acceptable to have suffered an accident than to have been born different. And I was convinced that no one outside my family could love me.

There was, however, a teacher in the second grade, grade two, whom we all adored, Mrs. Leonard by name. And she was short, round, happy, a sparkling lady. And annually, we had a hearing test. And Mrs. Leonard gave the test to everyone in the class. And finally, it was my turn. And I knew from past years that we stood against the door and covered one ear. And the teacher sitting at her desk would whisper something.

And we would have to repeat it back. So the teacher would say, whisper some words. And the child would have to tell the teacher what she whispered. In her ear.

And it would be things like, the sky is blue. Or do you have new shoes? And I waited there for those words that God must have put into her mouth. Those seven words that changed my life.

[21:22] Mrs. Leonard said, in her whisper, I wish you were my little girl. That was the words that changed that girl's life. That someone would value her.

That someone would want her to be her little girl. I wish you were my little girl. And God says to every person, deformed by sin. Every person.

I wish you were my son. I wish you were my daughter. You know, we are deformed. We are born in sin. You know, it's one of the testimonies this morning at the baptism. That we were born in sin.

deformed by sin. Made ugly and vile. And something that would be hateful to a holy God. Yet he wants us to be his sons. To be his daughters. And the promise of scripture is this in John 1 verse 12. But as many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God. [22 : 30] Even to them that believe on his name. Which were born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man but of God.

As many as received him to them gave he the power to become the sons of God. Even to them that believe on his name.

He wants you for his son. He wants you for his daughter. you know God is not some cosmic dictator who says you know he forces people.

He says come. And we must respond. He says come. As many as received him. Will we receive him?

Do you know this wonderful father? Are you his child? There was a preacher who used to tell a story of a soldier who was mortally wounded. This soldier he was badly hurt in the battle.

[23 : 31] He was wounded. And a buddy Jim stayed by him through this long and lowly illness to the very end. And Charlie this soldier who was wounded whispered to his friend.

Jim I'm going to die. Jim I'm going to die. Knowing Jim had no family of his own Charlie added but I want you to go back to my mother and take my place there.

Take my place. But Charlie your mother doesn't know me. Jim told his dying comrade and she would not allow me to come into her home and live as a son.

Charlie said I will write a letter and you will take it to her. I will write a letter take it to her. And the letter told the words of her son's ill fortunes of his wounds and of his suffering and how Jim had stuck by him day and night through it all.

And the letter closed like this mother. Charlie wrote this mother received Jim for my sake. And Jim carefully tucked that letter away and put it in his waistcoat pocket and then at the close of the war he went to Charlie's hometown and sought out the mother's home.

[25 : 05] And he knocked on the door and he stood waiting. He was ravaged by the war. He was worn and torn and weary.

He'd just come from the battlefield to this door and he looked pretty sad. He looked pretty worn out. An unsightly character. He looked like someone that you probably just slammed the door on his face. and as the lady opened the door she looked upon him and she thought him to be just another beggar passing by.

But Jim handed her the letter through the open door through the half open door and she read it. She recognized her son's handwriting! And when she read the last line it said mother received Jim for my sake.

The expression on her face changed and tears of devotion, tears of emotion welled up and she threw the door wide open receiving Jim for Charlie's sake.

[26 : 19] And for us, the Father throws wide open the door. The Father throws wide open the door for us, for Jesus sake, for Jesus sake.

The Father opens the door for us because the Lord Jesus died in our place for our sin. And we can have access, an open door, we can have a wide open door into the family of God, access into the family of God.

You know, it speaks that word access, you know, that receiving, that welcome, it talks about how we've got access.

You know, many times we see this truth of how it says that we may boldly come before the throne of grace. Wow.

that we can come boldly, not just come kind of quietly sneaking in, boldly, we're children of God, boldly before our King, our Master, our Father.

[27 : 33] We can run into His presence, run to Him. What a blessing that is, access into the family of God.

God, it says in Matthew 10, 29, of the value that we have, the value. You know, I like to think, as the Bible compares, what shall a man gain?

If he gained the whole world and lose his own soul, that, if you put it in a balance, that the world doesn't outweigh the value of one soul.

All the value of the world, all the riches of planet Earth cannot compare with the value of one soul, one human soul. Matthew 10, 29, it says, are not two sparrows sold for a farthing, two birds for a

little coin, and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your father.

Not one little bird dies without your father, but the very hairs of your head, he's got a few less to count, but the very hairs of your head are numbered.

[28 : 48] He knows how many hairs you've got left, brother. He knows how many hairs I've got left. He knows the number. He knows that. He knows that detail about us such that he counts the number of hairs on our head.

That's how much God cares for you, that he would care for you to such a detail, to such an important measure. And so it goes on, fear ye not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.

We are of more value than many sparrows. So in other words, God values you. He wants you to be part of his family. And Christianity is a relationship with God, a relationship with God.

Are you related? And we can come from many countries and cultures and still be brothers in Christ. Can't we? Amen? Brothers, brothers, sisters, brothers in Christ, family, closer than our own kin, than our own folk, our own kinfolk, as it were, closer than our own blood.

Family is our spiritual family. It's very special. And we have a relationship. Do you have a relationship with your father, the father God? And if you belong to him, there will be a family likeness.

[30 : 11] A family likeness. I like to think that each day I look in the mirror, I might look a bit more like Jesus. But there's that sense of his likeness.

That one day, Brother Dean, it says, when you shall see him, you will be like him. You will be like him. Isn't that glorious? To know that, I guess it's almost like the final stage, as it were, the final phase, as it were, of salvation is glorification.

It's that sense that we'll have a whole new body. Who's looking forward to that? A whole new body will be totally renewed. As we're raised up from the dead, or as we're taken up to meet him in the air, that we will be like him.

He'll give us a body fashioned after his own likeness. And for the meantime, we still have a family likeness. Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.

Therefore, the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Don't expect any great patting on the back from the world. The world knoweth us not.

[31 : 29] The world thinks we're crackpots. The world thinks Christians are fruit loops. The world thinks Christians are wackos. And they're fair game for every media attack that they can launch against anyone who calls himself a Christian.

The world hates us because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we, now, you can confess, I am a son of God.

Now are we the sons of God. Now some people have this strange idea that they can't say I'm a Christian. They've got the idea that it's only when I die that I'll know whether I'm saved or not. You can know today I'm saved. You can know today I've been born again. Now are we the sons of God. And it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know, know, we know, we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

So for the meantime, consider the truth of the fatherhood of God. God our father. He loves us. The Bible says, while we were yet sinners, he loves us.

[32 : 47] He loves us. Undeserving of his love, yet he loves us. He listens for our prayer. He wants to hear your cry.

He wants you to call on his name. The Bible says, whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

How complicated do we have to make it? It says call. Call. Make that call. Make that call. Call on his name and you shall be saved.

It's his promise. Sometimes we make it too complicated. It's not. It's not complicated at all. It's very simple. Because our father loves us and he listens for our cry.

He wants us to cry out to him. He wants us to call on his name. And friends, not only so, but he leads. If we will follow. And he will lead you.

[33 : 46] Via the still waters. He will lead you. If it be through the valley of the shadow of death. He will lead you if you will follow his footsteps. Look for his footprints.

Look for his footsteps and walk in them. In other words, be like Christ. Be Christ to your world. And consider that relationship.

You are of more value than many sparrows. The value that you have. Sometimes it's very sad when one who professes to be a Christian almost devalues themselves.

They almost think, oh, what am I? They kind of beat up themselves and they have got maybe an overness of humility where it's I'm a nothing.

I'm just hopeless. I can't do anything for God. I'm a nobody. I can identify with all of that. But we don't walk around with our face glum and kicking the can along the road and think, oh, I'm a nothing.

[35 : 06] You are a son of God. You are a child of God. Lift up your heads and be such that you are of more value than many sparrows.

And let's not discount ourselves. He shed his blood for you. He died on the cross for you. He wants you to walk in his steps, to walk strong, walk tall, walk whole heartedly after God and stand up and be counted.

We can be encouraged tonight. As a Christian, we shall be like him. The world needs the message from your lips. Be bold, be strong, be courageous and stand for Christ and don't be afraid of what the world says because the world knoweth us not because it knew him not.

But now are we the sons of God. And it doth not yet appear what we shall be but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is.

For the meantime, desire to please God. Desire to please God. Desire to be like him. And not because some preacher puts you on some guilt trip or makes you think I've got to do this and I've got to do that and you know I'm not a very good Christian because I'm not doing this or I'm not doing that.

[36 : 34] Just walk in his steps. It's simple. Don't beat yourself up. Just walk in his steps. Every day with Jesus is sweeter than the day before. So when you get out of bed in the morning, look for his steps.

Let him lead you. Don't worry about what the world is saying. Don't worry about all the people that hate the name of Jesus. We've got people that hate us.

You know the Bible talks about hated without a cause. That happens to people today. It happens to Julie and me. There's people that hate us. There's no sense to it.

There's no reason to it. And we're attacked. And we've seen people all around of recent stories, of recent happenings, where Christians are just, the devil's got his target sights.

He's just looking, who can I pick off next? Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! That's the devil, isn't it? He wants to shoot you. He wants to hurt you.

[37 : 40] And friends, you've got God, his faith, your faith, as a shield. You know?

That's what we need to do, don't we? He is our refuge and strength. And you are a child of God. God, let's walk like it, let's live like it.

And if you're yet to be saved, make it now. I'm wanting to call on his name, I'm going to call on his name right now. Let's pray.

Lord, we thank you that at the cross you took our sin, our penalty, our punishment, you paid the death penalty for our sin.

And Lord, all we have to do is call on your name. And thank you, Lord, for dying on the cross for my sin, for being my saviour.

[38 : 36] Lord, and for the joy that we have, that we can call our heavenly father, God, our father, our father which art in heaven.

Thank you, Lord, that we can call you that. You are in heaven and you are in our heart. Lord, we thank you that we can know that joy, we can know that value.

Lord, let us speak against the enemy when he would try to say that we do not have value because we have great value, such value that your precious blood was shed for our saving, that your precious holy blood was shed for us.

such great value. Thank you for our brothers and sisters here tonight from many countries and cultures that you have saved us out of every nation and made us your own children and made us brothers and sisters together as your family.

Help us, Lord, to know your love, to behold what manner of love that you have given to us, that we should be called the sons of God. help us to listen and not to stop praying, but to call on you and

not wait till it's church time, but to call on you all the time.

[40 : 05] And Lord, let us follow your leading, that we will lead, we will follow where you lead. We'll follow the leading of the word of God, the leading of your Holy Spirit.

May we be sensitive and walk in your steps. And help us, Lord, when we know the world will hate us and we know that life is hard, we get hurt, but it doesn't stop us because your word tells us one day we will be like you.

And for the meantime, Lord, help us to become more and more like you, that we'll carry our cross and walk in your steps.

In Jesus' name, Amen.