

Abba Father

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[0:00] Today we recognize fathers, and we're going to consider the fatherhood of God.

! God is our father. In Romans 8 verse 15 it says, For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

The Bible refers to our Lord as Abba, Father. God is Father, and we his sons and daughters by faith. As it says in 2 Corinthians 6 verse 18, it says, He will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

The fatherhood of God is under attack today. I was reading of late how there's some songs that in modern times are not so popular now.

Songs about the blood, the blood of Jesus. There's a sad reflection at times on some churches that the blood is being taken out of song books, as well as in some cases modern Bibles too.

[1:18] And I read lately this about the fatherhood of God. They're trying to take God the Father out of your Bible as well. And they're trying to take God the Father out of some song books.

Here's what I read recently. It says, In some denominations, feminism has made a serious assault on calling God our Father. Consider, for example, the doxology.

This was written in 1674. But here's the modern version of the doxology. You might recall these words. It says, Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Praise God, all creatures here below. Praise God above, ye heavenly host. Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost. It's a bit different from the old version.

Now they've taken Father out of it. They've taken Him out of it. The Father-Son metaphor is something that's right through the Word of God. God is our Father. Of course there are metaphors too, where God is alike to a hen, as a mother hen and so on.

[2:22] There are those analogies. There's lots of different analogies. But we mustn't take Father out of God. His Father, Son and Holy Ghost. The fatherhood of God.

It's being downplayed and denied. And yet it's a vital doctrine. It's a doctrine. It's a teaching of God's Word. We should not play around with such things. God is our Father.

As much as some Bibles, they take even that out of prayers. I don't have quotes about that exactly to tell you the detail of that.

But they actually take it away wherever they can. So this kind of gender-neutral world where everything's got to be persons and partners and everything, rather than men and women and husbands and wives.

And friends, the Fatherhood of God is under attack in this world in which we live. And I want to cover really three aspects tonight, three truths or doctrines. The Fatherhood of God, which we touched on.

[3:23] The sonship of believers. And the adoption into God's family. All three of these are linked together. So we've looked at the Fatherhood of God. God our Father.

It's fundamental. It's fundamental. God is Father. And secondly, consider the truth of sonship. That you're a son. A daughter of the living God.

The sonship that we enjoy as believers in Christ. What a privilege you have. What a privilege to be His sons. In John 1 verse 12 it says, But 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.

The power, the right, the privilege to become the sons of God. Even to them that believe on His name. Children of God. Children of God.

You're a child of God. You're a son of the living God. A daughter of the living God. If you trust Him. And children have various rights and privileges and responsibilities.

[4:31] We can cry out as His sons and daughters, we can cry out, Abba, Father, you can cry out to Him and He can hear your prayer.

He's a Father with an ear open. As our Father, He knows our needs. As we read in Matthew 6 verse 32, it says, In part, for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

And so He says, Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you. For your Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things, the everyday things of life.

He knows our needs. As our Father, He trains us, He chastens us. As we read in Proverbs 3 verse 11 to 12, my son, my son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of His correction.

For whom the Lord loveth, He correcteth, even as a father, the son in whom He delighted. Now, I don't know about you, but I used to get the odd smack when I was growing up.

[5:43] I didn't get too many because I was such a good boy. But there's times when my father had to give needful discipline and correction. And likewise with our God, the Father, sometimes God, the Father, must chasten us, puts us through testing times, through correcting times.

And yet, it's for our good, isn't it? It's for our training, it's for our discipline, it's for our chastening so that we can grow. He loves the ones that He chastens.

Don't shy away from it. Those times of trouble could be from His hand to help you trust Him more.

And as we read in Mark 14, we see that our Lord Jesus cried out, Abba, Father, in the garden, in the garden of Gethsemane.

And He said, Abba, Father, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee. Take away this cup from Me, nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.

Our Lord Jesus Himself had the discipline of praying and as our example, praying to Abba, Father, and yet submitting to His will that even what He prayed for, He was accepting.

[7:06] It wasn't always the Father's will to give what we would seek, but yet His heart was to submit to the will of His Father. Abba, Father, it's a wonderful thing, a wonderful relationship.

It speaks of intimacy, it speaks of relationship. My Father, Abba, Father, it's got a very down-to-earth ring to it.

Some have thought that it might mean like Daddy or Papa. There's different views about such things, but nevertheless it's certainly a very close and intimate term.

And that's the kind of relationship that your Father, your Heavenly Father wants for you to have with Him. That intimacy, that closeness, how do you regard Him?

How do you regard Him? I know some of you put Him on your T-shirts, you love Him so much, and that's a wonderful thing, that you want to tell others about your Saviour, your Lord, about His love for them.

[8:10] Do you regard your Heavenly Father as you ought to? There's a story told of when Queen Victoria was reigning in England, and she occasionally would go down to the common folk and mix around with some of her humble subjects and go and visit them.

And she entered one day into the humble home of a widow who was a Christian woman, and she wanted to enjoy some Christian fellowship with her, because Queen Victoria had some godly thoughts and godly desires.

And later on this poor woman was asked by her neighbours about her situation, and they said to her, they were kind of mocking her and scorning her, and they said, Granny, who's the most honoured guest?

you've ever entertained in your home. They expected her to say it was Jesus. For despite their constant ridicule of her Christian faith, they recognised her deep spirituality.

But to their surprise she answered, the most honoured guest I've had in my home is Her Majesty the Queen. They said to her, did you say the Queen?

[9:27] Ha! you're caught out this time. How about this Jesus you talk about? You're always talking about him. Isn't he your most honoured

guest? Her answer was definite and scriptural.

No, indeed. He was not a guest. He lives here. He lives here. Jesus lives in her house. How about you?

Does the Father, the Heavenly Father, live in your house? Is he just a guest that comes and goes or you might go and visit him when you do something religious?

That your kind of faith is kind of a passing interest, a casual thing? That Jesus, that your Father, your Heavenly Father is just some temporary guest who's on the scene now and again?

Someone you have a passing interest in? When you get that kind of religious feeling every so often? He's meant to be one who takes up permanent residence, permanent residence in our hearts, our Heavenly Father.

[10:30] That's the kind of relationship that He wants with us, our Father, a deep and abiding relationship. So we see the fatherhood of God, we see the sonship of believers and thirdly we see our adoption into God's family, our adoption into God's family.

It's a special thing to be adopted. To be adopted. I could relate to that as in effect a stepfather. That my first child, Julie, had a child before I met her and I adopted that child as my daughter, in effect.

As my daughter. In effect I was adopting her. It was a package deal, I didn't just get Julie. I got a lovely daughter as well. And I thank God for the two of them.

As I courted her I got to know my daughter as well. My adopted daughter. And adoption is something beautiful, it's something precious, isn't it?

[11:40] That someone that is not a physically child can be adopted, can be embraced and made our own. And at adoption, a child is placed into a family.

They attain sonship. They are granted the status of son, of daughter. They have a change of family, a change of name, a change of home, a change of responsibilities.

Adopted, that's what you are, as God's child. You're adopted, you're made his. Taken from the father, the devil, and taken and made a son, a daughter of the living God.

What a privilege that is. And you're placed into this new family, God's family, on a permanent basis. It's a permanent relationship.

Galatians 4, verse 6, it says, And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his son into your hearts, crying, Abba, father.

[12:50] Abba is a family term. It's an Aramaic word meaning my father, it's that special closeness, that close term of father, of dad, of that closeness with God.

It speaks of that familiarity with God, that closeness with him. That familiarity, yet not a flippancy, not a flippancy. It's a closer personal relationship, and yet it is a wonderful high regard, it's a high respect.

As we read in Isaiah 64, verse 8, where we read of this relationship, it says, But now, O Lord, thou art our father, we are the claim, and thou art potter, and we are the work of thy hand.

That's the kind of relationship. He is like a potter with the claim. He is the one who shapes us, and fashions us, and leads us, and moulds us, and guides us.

He is that one due that absolute and uttermost respect. Malachi 1, verse 6, it says, A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master.

[14:04] If I then be a father, where is mine honour? And if I be a master, where is my fear? Saith the Lord of hosts. As a son, honours his father.

Now we know, in today's day and age, there's some fathers that don't call for, they wouldn't call for a lot of respect by the way they act and conduct themselves at times.

And yet, there is still that deference, there is still that due regard for a father. Even if your father is a hopeless alcoholic drug dealer, you know, whatever the case, whatever his situation in life, there is still that regard for the younger to the elder, for the son to the father.

And yet, of our heavenly father, he is a perfect father. He is the perfect father. There is no one who could be more perfect than this father, our heavenly father.

And yet, we're living in a world today where our culture has degenerated to such a level that we see fathers are not given the respect that they once had. Our heavenly father commands our honour,

our respect.

[15:20] And that should be the relationship we have. Thank God that we are adopted into that family, the family of God. And it's a great thing too that not only is it an individual thing, the sons and father, but we've got brothers and sisters too.

They're thrown in as well. We get to meet some great people. You know, they're not good people because there's none good, but there's some great people.

Amen? They're on the way. God is making them more good. God is making them more like himself. And thank God, you can put up with me just as much as I can put up with you as brothers and sisters.

God's making us more like him. We're becoming more and more like him day by day. Brothers and sisters, a family relationship. And I read this quote about an adopting family.

An adopting family, this is what an adopting family says, you did not start out as a member of my family, but I have chosen to take you in and make you my child.

[16:20] You get all the privileges and benefits that come with being my child. You get me to love you, protect you, teach you, provide for you and take care of you.

You get my name. And when it's all said and done, you'll receive an inheritance. Think of that. Think of that. Brother, sister, tonight.

You get all of that. The privileges of being his son, of his love, his protection, his teaching, his care, his name, and an inheritance just ahead.

Adoption. It can be expensive. It was costly for our Lord, wasn't it? Think of what it cost him, his precious blood on the cross. Our adoption is an internal relationship.

We've got access to the Father. We've got access. We've been accepted in the Beloved. And we can know the Father's heart. The Father's heart, sometimes a broken heart, but a glad heart too, a rejoicing heart.

[17:27] As we heard this morning of the prodigal son, of the Father's rejoicing at the homecoming of his son. And we can enjoy the smile of our Father, the loving Father.

God, our Father. He's our protector. He's our provider, our nourisher. And in him we can know a childlike trust. Adoption. It means that we have a legal standing, a legal status in God's family. A new family relationship. The old one is gone. We've found a wonderful new family to belong to. Brothers and sisters and our Heavenly Father caring for us, watching over us with all the privileges and benefits that brings.

And we that were once, as it says of us in Ephesians 2, 3, once were the children of wrath by nature. He's changed our very nature. He's changed us, our very core nature, and made us his own.

He's bestowed upon us his saving grace and made us the children of God. Here's another quote. The adopted child lost all rights and privileges in his old family and gained all the rights of a legitimate son in his new family.

[18:42] He got a new father. He became heir to his new father's estate. He became co-heir with the other sons. In the eyes of the law, the old life was completely wiped out.

All debts were completely cancelled. He was absolutely the son of his new father. And he was carried out in the presence of seven witnesses. It was something that had standing, that had credibility, that stood for sure.

And that's the kind of adoption you have into God's family. You're his. You're his. From time and eternity. You're his. God's child. God's child.

Shouldn't that make him want to rejoice? Shouldn't that make him want to get glad and praise him? To be his. What a privilege. Friends, how?

How can we become his child? You might be hearing all this and think, I don't think I'm even in that family yet. I don't think I know him yet. As father, how can you become his child?

[19:50] How can you become a son, a daughter of God? It's the Holy Spirit who makes you one. We read, as we see here in Romans 8, it's the spirit of adoption, the work of the spirit.

It must be of God that he places you into the family by his spirit. Romans 8, 14, it says, 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, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.

And if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. Friends, you're a son and you're an heir of God.

How? It's an act of God's Holy Spirit. It must be the spirit adopted into God's family. To know his privileges, his supply, his comfort.

[21:03] The God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble. The comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

There's a comfort from being his. There's a new nature as we've changed from glory to glory to glory, changed, conformed into the likeness of the Lord Jesus as we read in 2 Corinthians 3, verse 18.

God's plan is that we should all be like him. And when we see him, we shall be like him. So that's 1 John 3. The Holy Spirit of God is conforming us, changing us, shaping us, making us more like him. In 1 John 3 it says, 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, 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.

[22:23] And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.

We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him. There's a time when every one of you is going to look, is going to be like him.

I've said this before, even Don's going to look like Jesus. That's going to be a miracle, isn't it? Even Don's going to look like Jesus when he comes. He's going to be like him.

Are you looking forward to that, brother? Yeah. I'm a bit more like Jesus then. No, friends, we're going to be like him.

Amen? We're going to be like him. It's going to be a good day, isn't it? It's going to be a glorious day. It's going to be glory. And in the meantime, we're still on the way. We're still on the journey. And every man that hath this hope in him purifies himself, even as he is pure.

[23:32] So you want to, by God's help and strength, seek to be more like him. Ask him to help you be more like him. By his spirit, he will make you more like him.

It's like someone put it to, here's a little quote from someone. It's as if God says, I know you have no righteousness of your own.

Here, have mine. That's what God says, isn't it? Really, he does. I know you have no righteousness of your own. Here, have mine. That's what God says to us.

All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. All even the best things we've ever done are really just rubbish. But he says, I give you my righteousness, my robes of righteousness.

Friends, to close, think of it. Are you a child of God? I pray that you are. I trust that you will become such as God's spirit prompts you, draws you, provokes you, jabs you, stirs you, unsettles you, discomforts you, such that one day you will bow the knee and say, Lord, have all of me.

[24:51] I've had enough of my own way. Take all of me. It says, but as he which I've called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation, because it is written, be ye holy, for I am holy.

And the context there is, as obedient children, as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance, but as he which I've called you is holy, so be ye holy.

We've got that privilege to be his and to be making, be being made more like him. So friends, still to come, there's a glorious future inheritance.

Whatever your state, whatever your worldly, situation, if you're a child of God, there's a wonderful future inheritance awaiting.

And meantime, make the most of each time, each day, as you make the most of the life that he's given to you. Ask him to help you.

[25:56] Seek to walk in his spirit, to know the joy, the privilege of being his. Friends, it says, Galatians 3.26, Paul addressed the Galatian Christians in Galatians 3.26, for ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

It's by faith. Again, a plea. A plea about faith, about your standing with God.

Is he your father? You know, some people think, oh, we're all God's children. Everybody's God's children. It's not true. We're born into this world, in effect, as children of the other one.

And friends, it's only by his grace that you can be converted and trust him. It's by faith. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

It's entered into this relationship. It's entered into by faith. It's as you call on him, as you trust him.

Friends, I urge you, don't miss that. Will you trust him now?

[27:03] Then you can know that amazing reality of the fatherhood of God, of the sonship of believers, and of the adoption into God's family.

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

Let us pray. Dear Lord, we praise you that we can cry. We can cry from the depths of our being. We can cry, Abba, Father.

Just as you, Lord Jesus, cried it out in the garden of Gethsemane, as the weight of our sin was bearing down upon you, as the dread reality of the cross faced you, Abba, Father.

And you went all the way to the cross for us, Lord Jesus. We thank you that we can cry out, Abba, Father. Thank you, Father, for sending the Lord Jesus to be that one, to take our pain and sin, to pay for it in full.

[28:17] And Lord, that we can become children of God by faith in Christ today. We thank you for that wonderful privilege, that wonderful adoption, that new family of God that we can be a part of, as brothers and sisters, as your sons and daughters.

We thank you for that in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.