

Everlasting Father

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Date: 14 December 2025

Preacher: Rev Gordon Kennedy

[0 : 00] Have you ever bought something that was described as everlasting?

! In a Willy Wonka and the chocolate factory there was the everlasting gobstopper! Which seemed to mean that as soon as you sucked it away to nothing it re-grew or something like that. There's a makeup product, and I know because I'm worth it, that promises everlastingly youthful skin but you can see it doesn't work. Remember they tried to sell us everlasting light bulbs? You bought a light bulb since then? Yep. Everlasting has become a word which is used inappropriately to describe products that are anything but everlasting.

We've just about emptied the word of all meaning. I reckon just about the only everlasting thing that we've ever bought was a dancing Santa.

No matter how many times you deliberately leave the batteries in the back or drop it or accidentally hit it with a hammer, each year it comes out the box and our young children start pushing the rachid button and there it goes.

Everlasting is a word that should be precious to us. The name of the promised child is everlasting father.

[2 : 02] Father. In a similar way to the word everlasting, the word father has become a difficult word for many people.

Not all human fathers have proved good and trustworthy or caring and compassionate. Sadly, we know this to be true.

But let's thank our God today that we are not invited in the name of this promised child to begin with our human ideas about everlasting or to begin with our human ideas about father and somehow work up the way eventually to get to God.

It's the other way round. Isaiah invites us to begin with our good and generous and gracious God. To know him as everlasting and to know the word in relation to him. To know our God as father.

[3 : 11] And to know that word in relation to him. We are to respond to the everlasting father.

In and through Jesus, our everlasting savior. The idea in Isaiah 9 is of everlasting.

And it's exactly what it says on the 10. Perpetuity. Unending. The idea of father includes being the source.

The beginning. The protector and the guide. The one who has an intimate relationship with his children. It doesn't matter.

How many brothers and sisters we have. How many aunts or uncles or cousins we have. We only get to have one father. The day will come when dad isn't there anymore.

[4 : 15] No matter how hard our human fathers try. They just can't be everlasting. I wonder if you've noticed.

I'm sure you have. Some days it's hard to be a grown up. It's tiring. Being a parent.

Or a guardian. Or a guide. The one to whom people always come and expect you to know what the answer is. It's tiring.

Some days. I think we would like to be children again. We would like to depend upon someone else. We would like to have someone tell us what to do.

When we're perplexed. And don't know the way forward. That's a father. A parent. Some days when we're weary of being the grown up.

[5 : 20] We long for a parent. Isaiah first spoke the name of this promised child to the city Jerusalem.

At a time when that city was surrounded by armies. Could have been any time in the last three and a half thousand years. There was warfare on every side.

No sign of end to the fighting. The economy was in poor shape. Public health was under pressure. Food security was nil.

And the water was scarce. Every headline we read in our papers today could have been written about 8th century Judea. And it turns out.

Isaiah spoke the name of this child to people just like us. To a city just like our city. To people who are frightened about the future.

[6 : 22] Worried about today. And weary with having to know all the answers. And be the grown up. To people like that.

God's promise is of an everlasting father. One who will protect you. One who will guide you in the good way.

One who will love you and care for you. One who is the source of every blessing and good. That will come into your life. Will anyone really tell me this isn't exactly what we want for Christmas?

The promise of the everlasting father is realized for us in Jesus the everlasting son.

I don't think it is so much that Jesus becomes the everlasting father. It is that in Jesus. Through Jesus.

[7 : 24] By Jesus. We. Use all. And me. We together become. The everlasting children.

Of the everlasting father. John knew all about this. See what kind of love the father has given to us. That we should be called the children of God.

And so we are. The father loves you. He longs to call you his child. What makes God skip with joy. Is you being at home with him. How then are we born again. To become children of this father. John tells us the answer.

In the opening page of his gospel. To all who received him. To all who believed in his name. He gave the right to become children of God.

[8 : 30] Those who were born. Not of blood. Nor of the will of the flesh. Nor of the will of any human. But born of God. But born of God.

We are transformed. We are born all over again. Into the children of the everlasting father. Through Jesus the son.

Jesus has not been born in Bethlehem. So that we can post Christmas cards to one another. So that we can sing cheery Christmas songs.

So that we can buy presents that people don't want. Jesus is born in Bethlehem for you and me. So that we might receive him.

You know how the wise men. Recognised the star. And journeyed across the desert to receive him. And welcome him.

[9 : 29] And kneel down and worship him. That's how we receive him. Jesus has been born in Bethlehem. So that we might believe in his name.

The name Jesus. Jesus. Because he will save his people from their sins. We trust in the name of Jesus.

There is no one else can save us from our sins. No one else bears this name. Which can take away. The power and the penalty of our sins from us.

Jesus is the only one. Who can make us right with God. We are born again as the children of God. When we trust in Jesus alone. We are not made into the children of our everlasting father. By our human birth.

[10 : 29] By our human choice. But by the gracious work of God in Jesus. The father who is the source of our new life. Has fixed his love upon us all.

He has chosen you. He has chosen you. He has chosen all of us. And in the sacrifice of Jesus. He makes us his own.

He brings us through a new birth. And we are now the children of God. We are God's children now. What we will be has not yet appeared.

But we know that when he appears. We shall be like him. Because we shall see him as he is. Now means now. Not tomorrow. Not sometime after you die.

Now means now. By faith in Jesus. The everlasting son. You are now become the children of the father. You and me.

[11 : 31] We are all welcomed by God into his family. We have all been gathered by God around his family table. He makes us at home with him.

And of course John is right. We do not yet appear as the transformed people of God. We are not yet what we shall be.

But thank God we are now no longer what once we were. We have all been strangers to God. But now we are his children in Jesus. Brought home to the father.

We are growing. Just in the same way as children do. We are growing day by day. More and more into the likeness of Jesus.

Our elder brother. More and more into the family likeness. Of the everlasting father. One day. One glorious day.

[12:29] Jesus will come again. And we will see him not in a poor lowly stable. But appearing in all the glory of God. Reigning at the right hand of the father.

And when we see him. We will be like him. As he is the son of the father. So we are now. So we are becoming. So we will be.

The children of the father. And everyone who thus hopes in him. Purifies himself as he is pure.

I hope you don't despise hope. It is power for life. Through hope in Jesus. We are made right with God.

We are renewed and redeemed. By our father. As his own children. This hope sustains us. And empowers us. To live today. As the children.

[13:24] Of the everlasting father. The name of promise. Is everlasting father. Father. Only an everlasting father.

Can make us everlasting children. The good news. Is not good news. Just for one day. Or one year. Or even the span. Of one human life. The good news. Is everlasting good news. Our hope. That we are being made. Into the children of God.

Is that we are being made. Into the everlasting children. Of the everlasting father. Mary's child.

Is light. In our darkness. In the darkness. Of being lost from God. Jesus shines. As the way home.

To the father. Mary's child.

[14:17] Is a word of truth. In a world. Of falsehood. Our father is good. Our father loves us. Our father is powerful enough.

To turn creation upside down. That we can come home to him. Mary's child is hope. For you. For me.

For all the world. Hope that Mary's child is Jesus. The king of kings. And lord of lords. The powerful one. Who reigns over all creation.

He is the only one. Who can catch us up. And bring us home. To our father. This is why we sing in praise.

Of our father. This is why we sing. In joy. At the son. We the everlasting children. Of the everlasting father. Get to celebrate.

[15:11] And sing. The love and peace. Of our holy God. Who alone. Is our father. Come today. Come now. Come to the everlasting father.

Let's pray together. We are humbled before you. God our father. We depend upon you. The source of all light.

And good. Shine upon us. Pour your blessing upon us. Bring us to Jesus. That he might carry us. Home to you. We ask it. In his name. Amen.