

Our Heavenly Father

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[0 : 00] I'm going to extend a very warm welcome to everybody this evening and we pray that we will all come under the blessing of God as we come around his word.

We pray that God's word will indeed be a source of encouragement and light to us and that his word will be the guide to our path. We pray that all of us will be blessed tonight.

We're going to begin just by reading from Psalm 103. I'm going to read from verse 8, verses 8 to 13. As far as east is distant from the west, so far hath he from us removed in his love all our iniquity. Such pity as a father hath unto his children dear. Like pity shows the Lord to such as worship him in fear. Let us now bow in prayer. Let us pray.

O Lord, as we come before you this morning, this evening, we pray that you will bless us. We give thanks for your word and that this word is so important to us.

[1 : 32] And we pray that as we meet in the quiet of our own homes and wherever we are situated, being able to watch together, that we will be conscious that you are with us, that we will be aware of your presence and aware of your power, and that you will speak to us.

We give thanks, O Lord, that you do in your word. We pray for the faith that will lay hold upon that truth. And we pray that that truth will go deep into our hearts, that it will change us and transform us, and that we will be blessed by it.

We give thanks, O Lord, that you are a gracious God and that you are ready to forgive. We give thanks, Lord, for the wonderful way that you work in our lives, how passionately and how intimately you work.

We give thanks, Lord, for your patience with us, because we are so slow to learn. And even what we do learn, we are liable at times just to deliberately forget or deliberately ignore.

And so we pray that you will forgive us our sin. We come before you as sinners. We confess our sin. And we give thanks, Lord, that you are faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

[2 : 49] Lord, there are times as we look at ourselves, we are conscious of how far short we are from what we ought to be. We give thanks, O Lord, that you have set standards for us.

And yet we complain so often about ourselves, and rightly so. And, Lord, we have to confess that we do not meet these standards and that we are so short of the glory of God, because that's what your word tells us.

All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. And so we pray that you will help us. Help us, Lord, to walk in a right way. Help us to follow you. Help us, Lord, to be sure of you, to be steadfast in the faith.

And we pray, then, that you will bless us, bless our homes, our families, and every single one whom we love. What a privilege it is to come and ask that the Lord will have mercy upon us and that you will bless us.

We give thanks, Lord, that you care for us far more than we realize. We give thanks for the extensive love that you have displayed by sending your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, into this world.

[4 : 00] And we pray that today will be a day of believing, that throughout the worships of this day, that encircle the globe. Because as the sun rises in one place and sets in another, we know that your people meet together and they gather together.

And even if it is by technology, that there is this collective worship of the Lord. And so we give thanks, Lord, that we are able to do this.

But we pray that it will be a day of great believing and that many, many souls will come to faith in Jesus Christ. Pray, Lord, for those who are going through difficult times and hard times and painful times.

Those whose worlds have been kind of turned upside down. Pray, Lord, where there is distress and anguish of heart. We pray where there has been loss and bereavement. We ask, Lord, for healing and for help.

Because death is never far away. And there are so many homes and families that have been affected by the cruel blow of death. Death is such a separator and divider.

[5 : 06] And our lives are never quite the same again than those that we love are taken from us. Lord, our God, we pray for those who are the victims of violence and injustice.

We pray, Lord, that you will help them. And there is so much brokenness within our land. There is so much that needs to be put right.

Lord, we realize that it is only you that can really put it right. Righteousness alone exalts a nation. Sin is a reproach to people. And, O Lord, our God, we pray that into so much of the chaos and carnage that sin has brought into people's lives and into communities and into our towns and our cities.

O Lord, may the healing from heaven come. Lord, that you will do us good. Help us in the face of the continued COVID virus. And we ask, Lord, that a vaccine will soon be found that will be effective.

And we pray as we will be approaching into the winter as well, that you will protect us from both flu and from the COVID. That you will watch over us and do us good.

[6 : 14] You have been gracious to us, O Lord. Continue to be so. Not according to our deserving, but according to your tender mercies. Grant wisdom to our leaders, to all who are in authority over us at every level.

Lord, grant them the wisdom that is from above. Lord, bless us, we pray, and cleanse us from our every sin. In Jesus' name we ask it. Amen.

Just a wee word to any of the young people that might be tuning in tonight. And we often talk about a role model. Now, a role model is somebody that, particularly when you're young, that you look up to.

Somebody that you really think a lot of. And you, in fact, might even try to model your life on, on who they are.

You think they're so great. And all young people, when growing up, have role models. Very often, the role model could be a footballer, or an athlete, or could be a pop star, or a film star, or some celebrity.

[7 : 26] But when you're young, very often, this person or these people are so important in your life. You might have posters on your wall about them in the bedroom.

You're looking at them. You look at everything you can find about them in magazines, and on the internet, and on telly. And these people are very important in your life.

And it's part of growing up. We have our role models. I heard of a minister in Wales. And he was saying that when he was a boy, he had his role model, his hero.

Didn't say who it was. Might have been a footballer. Or, more than likely, in Wales, might have been a rugby player. But this person was very much his hero.

As a boy, he said, my bedroom was plastered with photos of him. And I tried to look like him. I tried to walk like him. I tried to run like him.

[8 : 29] I tried to live as I thought he lived. This person was my role model. And as I said, years passed, there came a day when I actually met him.

And I was so excited. I just thought, this is wonderful. I met my hero. Then he goes on to say that over the course of the years, it so happened that he met this role model, this hero, more and more. And he actually got to know him quite well. And this is what he said, is that the more I got to know him, the smaller he became. When I was a boy, he was there.

He was this great person. And I just looked up to him. But the more I got to know him, the smaller he became. And in fact, I began to see things about him that I thought, that's actually not very nice. And that's often true that the more we get to know people, we begin to see the faults and the failings. But then he said, one day, I met Jesus.

[9 : 37] Or he said, maybe to put it right, Jesus met with me. And he became my role model. And you know, the wonderful thing he said was this, that the more I got to know Jesus, the greater he became.

The more I got to know Jesus, the more wonderful he was in my life. And it was so different to the hero I had growing up.

Because the more I got to know him, the smaller he got. And the more I could see the things that were wrong in his life. Whereas the more I got to know Jesus, the more beautiful, the more wonderful he became.

And you know, that is true for every single person. And I hope it will be true for you as well, that you would come to know Jesus. Now I know growing up you will have your role models.

And all boys and girls, that's part of growing up. But always remember that there is one role model above them all. And that is Jesus Christ.

[10:45] And you seek to have Jesus in your heart. If you have Jesus in your heart, that is the greatest role model that you will ever have in your life. And you will come to discover that Jesus is more wonderful and precious every single day.

Let's say the Lord's Prayer. Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be your name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever.

Amen. We're going to read God's Word now from 2 Corinthians. 2 Corinthians and in chapter 6. 2 Corinthians chapter 6.

Working together with him then we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For he says, Lara Loss.

[12:36] left. Through honour and dishonour, through slander and praise, we are treated as impostors and yet are true, as unknown and yet well known, as dying and behold we live, as punished and yet not killed, as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing everything. We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians.

Our heart is wide open. You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted in your own affections. In return, I speak as to children, widen your hearts also. Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers, for what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness, what accord has Christ with Belial, or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever, what agreement is the temple of God with idols, for we are the temple of the living God. As God said, I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore go out from their midst and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing, then I will welcome you.

And I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty. May God bless to us this reading of his own holy word.

Now, having read 2 Corinthians chapter 6, I want us to focus today on these, or tonight, these words in verse 18, I will be a father to you, you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty.

Paul loved the church in Corinth. Although the church in Corinth caused him lots of problems and heartaches, Paul was really, really frank with them. Some of his writings to the church in Corinth were very direct, very frank, but they were always written in love. And Paul had opened out his heart to them, because he really, really loved them. But that love was not given back to Paul in the same way, and it hurt Paul. You often find in Paul's writing to the church in Corinth that it really seems to be the way they reacted to him, and the way they spoke about him, it was like a knife in his heart. And if your heart is a heart that is full of love towards a person or towards people, and that love is not being reciprocated, and that you find that those who you love are not treating you in the way that you would want or hope. It's really painful.

[15:40] And that's how Paul was finding it. In fact, he was looking at it like that they had a divided heart. You see, he had taught them the beauty and the love of Christ and the freedom in Christ, but false teachers had come, and they had implanted their false truths, which had divided the Corinthians' hearts. And so they weren't totally committed in the way that they should be. They were divided.

They were living in a divided way. And Paul was looking at it almost like in a way that if a girl was engaged to be married, and yet somebody has come and has drawn her affections away.

And he's looking at himself like a father to them. And yet, that love that the father is pouring out upon his child is not being returned at all. And that's a kind of a heartbreak.

So Paul was trying to deal with the situation that had arisen in Corinth, because while they had accepted Jesus Christ, they had also accepted these false teachings. And they were trying to live in two worlds. They were trying to live as Christians. They were trying to live in the world.

Now, everybody, you and I, we all live in the world. Cannot help that. That's where we are. And we engage, and we interact, and we go to our work, or we go to school, or we go, we do whatever we do in this world. But the Christian no longer lives for the world.

[17:15] You live for the Lord. You don't live for the world anymore. Because that's what you've been delivered from. We've been delivered from the world. You see, the world has completely different aims, and a different lifestyle, different philosophies, different hopes, different values.

The world's way is totally different to the way of the Christian. And that's unfortunately what was happening in Corinth, that they were not only living in the world, but they were living for the world. They had embraced the world. Now, of course, we live in this world, and there's so much of this world that is great in the work that we have, and our homes, and our families, and all the different things that make up life. But while we engage in that, we don't live for the world's aims, and the world's philosophies, and the world's standards.

They're different. Because once a person becomes a Christian, your thinking changes. You have new priorities. You look at life in a totally different way. And you're able to see things from a new perspective. You see it from God's perspective. And so there's new hopes, and there's new aspirations, and there's new aims, and there should be a new lifestyle. Now, of course, that doesn't mean that every single day that we live in the beautiful way that we should as Christians. Because we battle against sin. We battle against the world. We battle against Satan. We battle against all these things that are still within us. Not plain sailing.

But deep down within us, there are new desires and new longings. And so this is what was Paul's problem with the church in Corinth, is that they weren't living in the way that they should.

And it was very obvious that they had begun to, that they were embracing other ways. But for the Christian, there's a new king on the throne of the heart. And you see, God's grace influences, and God's grace draws us. And so there's a strong call, we have it here, to be separate.

[19:31] And right through the Bible, we find this, that God had his people, as I said, separate people. The moment you come to faith in Jesus Christ, a separation starts. You are, although maybe you don't realize it at that moment, you are separated from this world to God. It happens at that moment. We use the big word sanctification. And the sanctification can be used in two ways.

Sanctification is often the ongoing process of becoming more Christ-like within our life. But there is a once and for all sanctification in that we are set apart to God. The moment we come to faith in Jesus Christ, we're separated to him, we now belong to him. And so that is why there is this call to be separate. And there's a call to be holy. Be ye holy, says the Lord, for I am holy. And holiness really is the great mark. It is the great aim of the Christian. The world does not aim for holiness. You will never find a person out of Christ who will be saying, you know, the great desire of my life is to become holy, to become more like Jesus Christ. That you will never find that person. If you hear anybody say, you know what I want in life? I want to become more and more like Jesus. So only somebody who has come to faith that could be speaking like that. That is not the aim or the aspiration or the longing of the world at all. But this is our great aim or great desire. And we're commanded in scripture to be holy. Be ye holy, as it said, for I am holy. We're told without holiness, no one shall see the Lord. And of course, Satan will do all in his power to prevent you and me from becoming holier and holier people. Because the holier you are and the holier I am, the more we will resemble Jesus and the more effective our witness will be in this world. Like no doubt about it.

The more Christ-like a person is, their very life is our witness. It's our living witness. And that's why Satan so tries to take us off from the whole idea of holiness. And if he can't get us on that, then he will come in and say, you're a Christian. Your life's a mess. Look how unholy you are.

And then you end up agreeing with him because you look at your life and that's the way it seems to be. But you see, we've got to remember that God's grace doesn't, while God's grace does change us, it doesn't make us perfect overnight. In fact, we never become perfect in this world at all.

It was John Newton who put it beautifully. And so the well-known quote, I am not what I ought to be. I am not what I want to be. I am not what I hope to be in another world.

[22:50] But still, I am not what I once was. And by God's grace, I am what I am.

So that I am not what I once used to be. But by God's grace, I am what I am. So John Newton, he saw, and we can all echo that. I'm not what I want to be. I'm not what I had hoped to be.

I'm not what I believe I would be in another world. But the one thing I know is, I'm not what I used to be. And by God's grace, I am what I am. I am what I am by God's grace alone.

And so there's this call for separation. You go through the Bible, through the Old Testament, you'll find this call for separation was always there with the people of God.

And so Paul is asking, what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness and Christ with Belial? What portion does a believer share with the unbeliever?

[23 : 52] What agreement does the temple of God got with idols? And of course, today, we are the temple of the living God. And so we have to examine ourselves. Are there idols in our heart?

Are there idols that are separating us from God? So we have to really examine ourselves in these things. Now there's a lot we could say here, but after the call to go out and to be separate and touch no unclean thing, the Lord gives them the most wonderful promise.

He says that he will welcome you. I will be a father to you. You shall be my sons and daughters.

You will be sons and daughters to me. Now you see, the moment that we are born again, as I said, a separation happens.

When we are made new. You see, by nature, we're children of wrath, even as others. We're under the sentence of death.

We are following the course of this world. We are influenced by the power of the air, by Satan.

We're influenced by all these things. But when we become a Christian, something changes.

[25 : 02] And remember, at the end of the day, that there are only two kingdoms in this world. Only two families. There are only two roads. A broad road and a narrow road. There are only two destinies, heaven and hell.

There's no middle ground. It's either Christ or a part of Christ. That's why it's so important that we find faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, the moment that we're born again, two amazing things happen, which affects our status before God.

We are just, well, we call it justified, and we are adopted. These two things happen instantly. It's not a process.

We are, in God's sight, we are pronounced just. By accepting the work of Jesus Christ, by accepting Jesus Christ by faith, the moment that we come into a union with Jesus Christ, God says, in my sight, regarding a legal standing before me, you are just.

And along with that, he says, I am adopting you into my family. That's not a process that goes on. It's something that happens instantly.

[26 : 17] You are straight away. It's a spiritual act that takes place. And God says, you are now part of my family. Isn't that an amazing thing? We're brought into the family of God.

Now, as to why God should adopt us, it's beyond our understanding. And, in fact, we can go no further than to say it is for his own good pleasure and for his own glory.

Because we've got to remember there are three persons in the Godhead, and they were complete and are complete and always will be complete in themselves. And enjoy the most perfect harmony throughout eternity.

But for his own good pleasure, he has done what he has done. And he has created this world, and he has filled it with people, and he has adopted into his family a number that no one can number.

And to God be all the glory for that. And how amazing that whole thing is. And so the Lord says, I will be a father to you. Now, what does that mean for us?

[27 : 27] That he will be a father to us? Well, it means various things. First of all, we're given a new name. You see, once we're into a family, we now have a new name.

God's name is put upon us. We belong to him. And we're happy to be known in this world as belonging to God. The believer was first called the Christian in Antioch.

And to this day, those who follow the Lord are termed Christians. The Bible gives differing definitions. We can be a follower. We can be believers.

We can be Christians. But we are happy to be identified as those who belong to God. In this world, we say, God is my God.

And so that is who we belong to. His name is a new name that we have. But we also have what we term the spirit of adoption. What does that mean?

[28 : 25] Well, very simply it means this. That God's spirit ministers with our spirit, assuring us that we belong to him.

Now, that's a wonderful thing. No longer are we sort of floundering about and saying, Oh, you know, I don't know if it's God for me or if it's God against me. As the old fellow said, it's better theft than theft.

We know it. It's not something that you can convey to somebody else. It is something that is deep within your heart. You know. Because God's spirit is assuring you that you belong to God and that you are at one with him.

No longer you have to run away. Remember in the past how many of us run away from God, try to hide from God. Sometimes you'd waken in the night and you'd be so, you'd just feel awful because you knew that you were separate from God and that God's wrath was on you.

I remember many a time wakening and thinking, You know, if I die, I'm lost. It was an awful thing because I knew I was not right with God. But you know, the wonderful thing is now, even although your life might be in turmoil, underneath there is a settled peace there that we belong.

[29 : 43] That's what God's spirit, that's the spirit of adoption that works within our own heart. You see, heaven's door is always open. We don't have to question in the workout and say, Can I go to the Lord?

Can I go and ask him? No. The door is open. The hand is outstretched. I'm your father, he is saying. I'm your heavenly father. Come to me any time, with anything at all.

And his love to you is unchanging. In fact, we know the word Abba. Abba, Father. And the very word in itself shows the unchanging nature of God.

Because you can say, Abba, forwards, backwards, and it's the same. Abba, good Abba, backwards, say it backwards. It's the same backwards and forwards. And that's how God's love is.

Backwards, for it doesn't matter. It's never changing. It's always the same for you. And he will be a father who will work everything for our good. Now, like Jacob, sometimes we say, All these things are against me.

[30 : 49] Have you ever said that in this life? I'm sure you have. Where life is really on top of you and things have got you down. And you're saying, you know, everything's against me. And at these particular times, you can't remember the good and the blessings and the good things that have been.

Everything's on top of you. But you know, the wonderful thing is that they're actually not. You know, this is a strange thing. This is the mystery.

For those who have rejected the Lord Jesus Christ and turned their back upon him, and yet their life has been full of many good things, these good things at the end of the day will prove to be a curse.

Rather than being a blessing for them eternally, these things will testify against them. But for the Christian, even the bad things that have happened in this life, God has said that he's actually, through these things, working it all for our good, for our spiritual good, and for a return on good.

So that our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works in us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. So all the things are working ultimately for our good.

[32 : 04] Yes, the things have broke you, and hurt you, and pained you. If you love the Lord Jesus Christ, you know, in glory you will discover.

You say, Lord, I can't get over the way you actually worked good out of this. And as a father, he loves to have fellowship with us.

Now, any parent loves the company of their children. If you're children away from your home, you love when they come. You love when they come in.

There's always a delight, a skip in the heart, when your family comes in. And that's the heartache when parents lose children. The emptiness of this day. Because we love our children.

And it doesn't matter how old they get. They're still our children. And so we love to have their company. And so it is with the Lord. He loves our company.

[32 : 58] He wants us to be with Him. He wants us to be living, conscious of His presence. He wants us to be listening to His Word. He wants us to be talking to Him all the time. So you make sure that you're living in this particular way.

He also loves to pity us. That's what we read the first psalm. Such pity as a father hath unto his children dear. Like pity shows the Lord to such as worship him in fear.

When you're down, when you feel at the end of yourself and that nobody understands and nobody cares and nobody listens, the Lord is listening to you. He pities you. He cares.

But as a father, He also disciplines. You know, there's times that the rod has to come out and we have to be checked and brought back into line. The Lord, when He does discipline us, He always does it in love.

Because He wants the best for us. And He'll say, if I leave you, it's not for your good. I'm not showing kindness to you by just allowing you to go your own way.

[34 : 04] I need you to come back in line. Sometimes when we won't listen to Him or His Word, He has to bring out the rod. As a father, He protects us. That's another of the wonderful things that He does.

He's watching over us all the time. Remember when Satan was trying to destroy Job? And he complained before God and he says, no wonder Job fears you.

Because he built a hedge around him and all that he has. And it's only when God allowed Satan permission to get a job, to get through that hedge, that Satan was able to do anything to Job and to all that Job had.

And you ask the Lord, Lord, put a hedge around me. Put a hedge around me and my family and those whom I love. You know, today we talk about things that are unfenced. But in God's sight, His people are unfenced.

But not only does He protect us, He provides for us. He provides for us every day. He promises to supply all our needs according to His riches and glory.

[35 : 10] But He has also, He's providing a future for us. He has prepared for us a most glorious inheritance. And the wonderful thing as a father is that here is a son who is our saviour and our mediator.

And He wants us to reign and to share with His son. So that we become heirs and joint heirs with Christ in the kingdom.

What a glory that awaits us. This is a provision that God has made for us. If you today are without the Lord Jesus Christ, you're missing out by style.

You are in an empty world that promises much. But whatever it gives, it takes back. What the Lord gives you is forever. Please ask the Lord to be your portion.

To become your heavenly father. So that you will come to embrace Jesus Christ. And you will discover all these blessings that we've talked about here. So that they will be yours for time and for eternity.

[36 : 19] Lord of God, we give thanks for being able to reflect for a little on your word. And we ask, Lord, that you watch over us the remainder of this night. And give us rest and sleep.

Take away your sin in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to conclude singing from Psalm number 16 and sing Psalms. Psalm number 16 and sing Psalms. We're going to sing from verse 8 to the end. Before me constantly I set the Lord alone. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be overthrown. Therefore my heart is glad. My tongue with joy will sing.

My body too will rest secure in hope and wavering. To the last verse you have made known to me the path of life divine. Bliss shall I know at your right hand.

Joy from your face will shine. Before me constantly I set the Lord alone.

[37 : 24] Because he is at my right hand, I'll not be overthrown.

My heart is glad. Therefore my heart is glad.

My tongue with joy will sing. My body too will rest secure in hope and wavering.

For you will not allow my soul in death.

To see the tombs decay. Nor will you leave your holy one. Nor will you leave your holy one.

[38 : 38] To see the tombs decay. You have made known to me the path of life divine.

Blessed shall I know at your right hand. Joy from your face will shine.

Amen. Now may the grace, mercy and peace of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit rest and abide upon each one of you now and forevermore. Amen. Thank you.

Jocelyn Mes And Jeannis. And c'est to His Son. Wo you take your