

THE EVERLASTING FATHER

Text: Ephesians 2:11-18

Isaiah 9:6: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

After the fall of Adam, we have all been born into this world as aliens, as spoken of in our text. But I Peter 1:23 tells us: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." And now through Christ, we have a Heavenly Father!

When our Lord taught us to pray He instructed us to begin by acknowledging God as our Father:

Matthew 6:9: "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name."

Luke 11:2: "And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth."

In the New Testament, God is referred to as "The Father" 143 times. He is spoken of as "Our Father" 18 times.

1. CHRIST ABDICATED HIS SONSHIP TO GIVE US SONSHIP.

Over 700 years before Christ died, it was prophesied in Psalm 22:1, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? why art Thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?"

Matthew 27:46: "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

Mark 15:34: "And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

John 20:17: "Jesus saith unto her, Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God." Our Lord tells Mary that we in the Church have this extraordinary privilege of claiming God as our Father!

Romans 8:17: "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together."

2. ABBA CAPTURES INTIMACY WITH AUTHORITY.

Mark 14:36: "And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from Me: nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou wilt."

Romans 8:14, 15: “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. 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.”

Galatians 4:6: “And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”

Romans 8:12, 13, 15a: “Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live....But ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.”

In an essay in the *Journal of Theological Studies* by James Barr (vol. 39, 1988), he says, “It is fair to say that *abba* in Jesus’ time belonged to a familiar or colloquial register of language, as distinct from more formal and ceremonious language. . . . But in any case it was not a childish expression comparable with ‘Daddy’: it was a more solemn, responsible, adult address to a Father.”

Chad Harrington was in the Tel Aviv in Israel and he said, “Washing my hands in the restroom, I overheard an exchange between a Jewish father and his son. You should know that they both knew English *and Hebrew*. The father said to his son (in English), “When I ask you to do something, I want you to call me *Abba*.”

It is like adding a “sir” to your father.

Jesus addressed God by saying in Mark 14:36, “... Abba, Father...” He combined the Greek word *pater* with the Aramaic word *abba*. By joining the Greek and Aramaic words, Christ showed both intimacy and obedience.

Hebrews 5:7, 8: “Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared; Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered.”

So, without losing the intimacy of “Daddy” and without forgetting the solemnity of obedience, we may say “Dear Father.”

3. THE CONCEPT OF CHRIST’S FINISHED WORK GIVES US GOD AS OUR FOREVER FATHER.

Psalms 27:10: “When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up.”

Colossians 2:10: “And ye are complete in Him, which is the Head of all principality and power.”

John 19:30: “When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished: and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost.”

When we received Christ as personal Savior, we entered into the finished work of salvation. All that is required for our redemption has already been purchased by the shed blood of Christ.

Many years ago Dwight L. Moody was on a train, heading to his next opportunity of service for Christ. By this time in his life, he was widely known as a man who could fill most any auditorium in city-wide revivals. The engineer on the train was a member of a group who believed that one has to work his or her way into heaven. When the engineer heard that the famous evangelist was on the train, he asked if Moody would come to the engine area for a talk. Moody happily agreed. The engineer said, "Oh, Mr. Moody, won't you consider becoming part of our church. You could do so much good."

Moody replied, "That would not be possible, for you see, there are two letters separating what you and I believe. What you believe is spelled, 'D-O,' and if you do, do, do enough, you might do enough to get to Heaven. But what I believe is spelled 'D-O-N-E.' It's done; it was all done on Calvary when Christ died for our sins.

Romans 11:6: "And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."

A little girl once gave a testimony of her salvation experience. She said, "All I did was the letting and Jesus did the saving."

-Pastor Pope-