

## Service Transcript

### Fathers' Day 2022

Welcome, notices, birthday box

Let us declare our faith in God the Creator:

***in God we live and move and have our being.***

The God who made the world is Lord of heaven and earth.

***He does not live in buildings we have made, nor does he need anything we can give, for he himself gives life and breath to all things.***

From one ancestor he made all the nations:

he set their times and places, so they would search and find him though he is not far from each of us.

***God has set a day to judge the world with justice.***

***He has appointed Jesus Christ to be the judge, and has proved this by raising him from the dead.***

This is our faith.

***In God we live and move and have our being. Amen.***

Copyright © 2005 Mark Earey

#### PRAYER

Father of all, we thank you for your loving kindness and care for us.

Thank you for giving us families, to mirror your love and to teach us to love others.

We thank you especially today for our fathers, for all that they do for us or all that they did for us.

We pray that you will bless and uphold all fathers here this morning, that they may be shining examples of fatherhood and reflect your love to their children.

We ask this in the name of your Son, our Brother, and our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

**2231 Bless the Lord O my soul**

**145 Great is the Lord**

Item "A chip off the old block"

**92 Father God I wonder**

#### What sort of Dad?

We all have different experiences of fathers and fatherhood. Some of us had great dads, some not so great. Unfortunately some have had awful dads or even absentees, and find it difficult to celebrate Fathers' Day because of it..

Here's a video by a guy called Michael Cooper, who had two of his children in late middle age and describes what that's like.

**Video** – Michael Cooper

Perhaps you can resonate with some of Michael Cooper's experience. He's having a lot of fun with his younger children. But it's not all plain sailing as a parent as any of us parents know. So what do we think makes a good dad.

Use flip chart  
- good dads

I'm guessing that we've all had the down side of dads too – and us dads know that we have made mistakes too. What's important to understand is that as parents, we are role models for our children. They get to be like us! That of course applies to mums too!

We looked earlier at how we can look like chips off the old block, but that applies to our behavioural traits too. Where do we get our values from in life? They can come in earlier life from our parents – and that includes our bad habits too! Think of your bad habits. Do your children do the same?

Some of our traits may be genetic, others are learned. When Rhiannon and I adopted, the desire of those who placed the with us hoped that we would give them values and opportunities they would not have received in their birth family. It's interesting to see how similar they are to us – and how different.

We all know that our children often take on different lifestyles and points of view because of influences from their peers, from school, from all the different voices they come into contact with in our information driven society. I have many of my dad's values – faith in Christ, the desire to be honest and act with integrity, an annoyance at those who cheat amongst others, but I also have views of my own which my parents never approved of.

Why am I saying all this? If you are a Christian when you were adopted into God's family, having trusted Jesus, it was Father God's desire and plan is that you become a chip off the old block in how you act, how we think and how you speak. And what's that? We'll get to it in a minute.

**Prayers** – as in weekly sheet

One of the most important things we need to learn about the fatherhood of God is that He's always there for His children, desiring the best for them and being a constant in their lives, so we can always trust Him, knowing that He won't let us down.

## **89 Faithful One, so unchanging**

### **Reading**

*Ephesians 1: 3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. 4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us.*

## Talk

### TITLE

Last week was Trinity Sunday and we affirmed that we worship one God, but that He is three Persons Father Son and Holy Spirit. We saw how each Person acted individually and in unity in our lives and in our world.

Today we are going to focus on just one of those Persons, and that is the Father and see how His fatherhood may be a role model for us fathers and how we respond to God the Father as His children and consequently to our own parents.

### WHAT SORT OF FATHER?

#### GOD IS CREATOR

So what sort of Father is God? Many would say that God is father of all living things, and therefore all human beings too because He has created them. It is the principle of universalism – that everyone is God's child because He creates them. There's songs about God being Father of all creation but that's not what the Bible teaches. Not everyone is a child of God. I'm pushed to find any definitive verse to suggest that. But I can find plenty that shows that God is willing to become and be a Father to all who would respond to Him by faith

#### GOD AS PATRIARCH

We come across God in the OT becoming a Father to the nation of Israel. BY His grace, God became a father to Israel and He describes them in this way

*You are the sons of the Lord your God ... For you are a people holy to the Lord your God, and the Lord has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth (Deut. 14:1–2).* We see God as a father showing mercy and compassion towards His people:

*As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him (Psalm 103:13).*

*Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he my darling child? For as often as I speak against him, I do remember him still. Therefore my heart yearns for him; I will surely have mercy on him, declares the Lord (Jer 31:20)*

God was their father, but the sense always was as a Patriarch that loves and forgives them as a nation rather than a closely personal God.

#### GOD AS DAD!

Here's Romans 8:15-16 *The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.'* 16 *The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.*

If you are a Christian this morning; then when you trusted Christ, God adopted you into His family – you are a child of God. That's a personal thing and no-other people than the followers of Jesus have ever been described in this way. And when we address Him we use the term Abba. It's the Aramaic word for Father – but it is an informal term of endearment. It means Dad. In present day Israel, the Hebrew used by small children for Daddy or Dad is Abba. We call God Dad. That's how we address Him and that is our relationship with Him – personal, intimate trusting, loving.

Calling God Dad is uniquely Christian – even some Christians are almost fearful to be that informal, that trite, that familiar to address God that way. Yet God tells us that we should be Dad to Him.

So the first thing we take from today is that we should learn to speak with God as we do our own parent – God doesn't need formal speeches, special prayers, special titles: just for us to treat Him as Dad and pour out our hearts to Him, and receive from Him.

#### A FATHER WHO LOVES

After my sermon last week on the Trinity, I was reminded that God is love. You can't love unless you have someone to love. If God is one, how can He love. We have a God who is Trinity. Some church art PIC 1 shows God as an old bloke with a junior Son as a young man with a cross and the Spirit who is a dove. That isn't how the Bible portrays the Godhead – the Persons of the Trinity are co-equal in glory, power and majesty. PIC 2 In eastern Orthodox Churches the Trinity is pictured as three figures, each looking the same and communing together around a table. God is love and this is expressed by the relationships of the three Persons of the Godhead.

God loves us. Just as love binds and draws together the Godhead, we are drawn to God by the bond of love with the Godhead. We are invited around a table with the Father, Son and Spirit. That's why we have Communion – we are invited around a table with other members of God's family – we are children of God. We are SPECIAL TO FATHER GOD + LOVE)

The bond between a parent and a child is a special one – or should be. What is your relationship like fathers? What about you children? Pray that God the Father, Dad, will nurture in us all a deep loving relationship with one another in our families, because God calls us to be a chip off the old block. He loves, we should too.

In what other ways should we be a chip off their heavenly Father. Potentially lots of things, but let me give you just the few we have in Ephesians 1

- **He loves us** – we just had that
- **He blesses us** - *(He) has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.* The Father seeks to bless us by giving everything He is able to spiritually bless us with. He chose to do that for us. At the heart of true fatherhood is the desire for our children to have the very best we are able to do for them. There are two caveats. God gives us every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. He doesn't give us everything we want, but everything that is important for our eternal future. Being a good parent is about giving our children what they need not necessarily what they want. We all know that, but we all know how difficult it is to say no. The second caveat is that the children will accept what is being offered. There is nothing more painful than watching our children ignoring our advice, sometimes our pleadings and doing their own thing – particularly something we know will bring them harm. That is God's experience of parent hood too as he watches his adopted children dishonouring Him. If you don't like your children turning their back on your love, help and advice, then don't do it to God either!
- **He makes sacrifices for us** - *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us.* How far are you prepared to go for your children? God's love is a self-sacrificing love. To redeem us it cost God the Son to suffer on the cross to redeem us.
- **He is forgiving** – and all that was done because God is a forgiving God. Right at the heart of family life is the need to be forgiving parents and forgiving children. It is for those who

are most mature to make the first move with forgiveness and that is usually the parent. God the Father made the move by sending the Son to open that way of forgiveness.

- **He is faithful** – finally when we become children of God, he adopts us into his family. Most of us had no choice as to what family we are in. I'm a Reid and I can't get away from my heritage – I wouldn't want to. The difference with God's family is that we choose to be part of it – and God is faithful as a parent to us and sticks with us however useless as family members we may or may not be. That's God's example of parenthood: to be faithful to his children. If we try to apply that one in our parenthood, that can be a hard one can't it? Let's pray that we shall be always be there for our children.

This fathers' day, let's take inspiration from our Heavenly Father by reminding ourselves that at the centre of parent hood is love – agape – self-sacrificing love. A love that seeks the best for our children whatever age they are, that makes sacrifices for their benefit and a willingness to not just forgive, but to be the drivers of forgiveness, whatever the cost.

Perhaps this morning you've realised that you've never come into the blessings and benefits of knowing God as Father. He so wants to forgive you and bring you into His family. That's why Jesus died for you. Today, he wants you to invite him into your life, that you may know what it really means to call God Father, to follow Jesus and know the presence of His Spirit in your life? He so wants to bless you, but it is your decision as to accepting God's gift of blessing, of eternal life and being part of His family. Will to trust and follow today?

### **147 Great is Thy faithfulness**

#### **Benediction**

*Loving God,  
as a father feeds, nurtures and sustains his children,  
so you feed us with the rich food of your heavenly banquet.  
Help us who have tasted your goodness  
to grow in grace within the household of faith:  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.*

## FOR REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

1. How much like your parents are you? How did they inspire you? What bad traits did you pick up from them? How much have you diverged from their behaviour and attitudes and why? How has your experience of their parenthood shaped your own actions and attitude as a parent?
2. "God is our Father." Is that a confession only Christians can make? What implications does God being our Father for our being "a chip off the old block."
3. Read Ephesians 1:1-14. What do we learn about the way in which God the father has shaped our lives as His people? How do you think that may shape the kind of parents we should be to our children?