

No Longer Slaves: Sons & Daughters of the King
The Knowledge of God as Loving Father
Week 1

I. Introduction

A. "Adoption"

- B. We should esteem our adoption by the Father as greater than being "the child or heir of any earthly Prince [since] the son of the greatest potentate may be the child of wrath: but the child of God by grace, has Christ Jesus to be his eldest *brother*, with whom he is *fellow heir* in heaven; he has the holy Ghost also for his *comforter* and the kingdom of heaven for his everlasting *inheritance*." (*Works of Perkins*, 3:138; modernized by teacher)
- C. "See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and 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." 1 John 3:1-2

II. Father

A. "Father"

1. Where do our thoughts of this word come from?
2. How has the culture shaped these thoughts? Our own experience?
3. Do you think your earthly father plays large when considering notions of God?

B. He does...but it doesn't have to end there.

C. The effect of the Father

D. Knowledge of a loving heavenly Father opened up through Adoption.

E. "Father" is a relational word.

III. Father in the Old Testament

A. "Father" in OT?

1. Of the more than 200 times God is identified as the Father in the Bible, only 18 occur in the Old Testament.
2. Just enough to get the unique idea and prepare

B. In Prayer

- A. Initial reluctance
- B. 5 times in prayer, though two the voice of the Lord (Psalm 89:26; Jer. 3:4) and a 3rd depicts the names we will use when we see the Messiah (Isaiah 9:6).
- C. Late in Isaiah (63:16; 64:8)
- D. Direct naming only in extreme need

C. In Reference to Himself

1. 7 times, with 4 involving specifically the Lord's anointed: either Solomon (1 Chr. 17:13, 22:10, 28:6) or the mysterious double reference to David and the coming Messiah / King (Ps. 2:7).
2. A 5th occurs in God's exchange with Job and involves his relationship to creation (Job 38:28).
3. 2 where God names himself in relation to His people, both in Jeremiah (3:19; 31:9)

D. In Context of Redemption, Tenderness, Intimacy

1. 1 is in regard to the Exodus (Deut. 1:31; 32:6)
2. Tenderness and compassion, particularly to vulnerable women, the diminished, and the hurting (Psalm 68:5; 103:13)
3. The Father disciplines because he loves (Proverbs 3:11-12).
4. The interrelatedness of the community formed by the same Father (Malachi 2:10)

IV. Father in the New Testament

- A. Without incarnation → longings and hints

B. Hebrews 1:1-3

C. Not merely a helpful metaphor - *His Name*

D. Gospels: 145 direct references from Jesus

E. Every book except 3 John

F. *Matthew 11:27*

G. *John 14:15-21*

H. *John 20:17*

I. *The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9; Luke 11:2)*

V. Why WE can call God Father - The Father & Adoption

A. *Ephesians 1*

1. "Belonging"

2. Ephesians 1:2-6

a. Election (v.4) - provoked by God's love alone

b. Predestined (v. 4-5) - in love; deep affection for marked out sons

c. Always predestine for something → A relationship with the Father through adoption.

d. A divine gift from a loving Father which is his delight and according to his incontrovertible will.

e. Will go on to discuss what it means to be "family" - this *grounds*.

B. Galatians 4

1. Letter opens with “our Father” (1:1, 3, 4)
2. Father & Adoption
3. Illustration (vv. 1-2) & Application (vv. 3-7) → “Father” connects (vv. 2, 6)
4. Jews were under “guardians and managers”; Gentiles were enslaved to “elementary principles”.
5. **Radical turning point in relation to God the Father in vv. 4-5.**
6. → the Son
7. God the Father is the primary actor in the drama of salvation.
8. The Spirit communicates our status.
9. Redeemed from slavery for sonship in the Father’s family.
10. We are not *naturally* members of God’s family.
11. The Spirit leads us to address our Father in intimacy and love.
12. More on the Spirit and “abba” (and Romans 8:15-16) next week.

VI. Conclusion

- A. “Therefore, it is more pious and more accurate to signify God from the Son and call Him Father, than to name Him from His works only and call him Unoriginate.” Athanasius
- B. He is eternally the Father. He was not always Creator.
- C. God has made clear to us how we can know him: God the Father came to us through God the Son by God the Spirit’s power.
- D. Whether places of heartache or bliss, a greater reality exists than our earthly families: our heavenly or **spiritual family**. This is more real; this is eternal.

E. The significance of prayer.