

## A FATHER AND A SON

Isaiah 9:6

My father was an excellent father to his six children. As I grew up, I took it for granted that my father would come home from work by 5:00 every day. I took for granted the joy and security of eating together as a family each night, with my father seated at the head of the table. I appreciated that my father attended every school band or orchestra concert I played in, and that he went out of his way to attend the baseball games and soccer games I was involved in during my high school years. And more than anything else, as a young teenager I enjoyed playing for three years on the baseball team which he coached.

My father had a stable job, and his children never lacked anything that we needed. Though we certainly weren't wealthy by the world's standards, my father never begrudged the money spent on music lessons, on necessary clothes, or on food to feed so many mouths.

He provided for my needs, and taught me to be responsible for myself at the same time. I remember that he paid exactly half for the first bicycle each of us owned. After that, we were on our own. He allowed us to use the family car when we got older, though it was our responsibility to pay for all the costs of our own insurance and gasoline. And when it came time for each of us to buy our first car, we were able to make that decision wisely.

Also, I knew from my earliest memories that my father would provide exactly 2/3 of my college expenses, expecting me to earn my way for the remaining 1/3. It was a wonderful lesson of becoming responsible but still being able to depend on my father, a lesson I learned well during that transition from childhood to adulthood.

I grew up knowing there would be food on the table, and knowing that whatever I really needed, my father would provide. I grew up in a stable and secure family, gaining my identity and self-confidence from the commitment to our family shared by my mother and father.

Then, during my third year of college, my father retired. Since I was the youngest, all his children were now grown, or very nearly grown, and he chose to be rather uninvolved in our lives. We all knew that his financial responsibilities to us would end with our college education. But the difficulty I had to go through in my early adulthood was the realization that somehow, in my father's mind, almost all his responsibilities as a father seemed to be over. In the 30 or so years of my adulthood before my father died, he visited me, as best as I can remember, twice. He always enjoyed our visits to his home, but when we became adults, something changed in his mind. It was like he was then free from his previous responsibilities as a father. Over the years, I learned to understand that and accept that, remembering how good a father he was to us as children. But it still hurt.

I say all of that to introduce this afternoon's subject: Jesus Christ is our everlasting father. His fatherly care for his children never ends. His fatherly care is permanent and eternal, lasting throughout this world and into the future of eternity.

Usually when we use the name father, we don't think about Jesus Christ. Rather, we think about God, God the father. But it is appropriate to think of Jesus Christ as a father also, for:

**I. JESUS HAS A FATHERLY CARE FOR HIS PEOPLE.**  
Isaiah 9:6 refers to Jesus Christ. He is our everlasting father.

And his fatherly care is very obvious. Perhaps the best description of his fatherly care is Jesus' own statement in

John 10:11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep...14 I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. 15 As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.

Jesus cares for his people as a shepherd cares for his sheep. Let me be a little more specific.

**A. He has compassion for the needs of his children.**

Ps. 103:13-14 "As a father pities his children, so the LORD pities those who fear him; for he knows our frame, he remembers that we are dust."

What does it mean to show pity? Well, that word cannot be understood in the sense that it is commonly used today, which is feeling sorry for someone, condescending sympathy. Pity, as we use the word today, is not a helpful thing. No one is really comforted by people feeling sorry for them, but they are comforted by people will to share in their struggles. In that sense, pity is impersonal, and a product of pride. Pity doesn't care about people as individuals, not so concerned about really helping someone else as it is making ourselves feel better.

Perhaps a better word to use here in the word compassion. Compassion is a response to seeing someone in great need. It is a compelling desire to help people in need. Tender love and real comfort.

Much so called charity today is nothing more than pity, feeling sorry for someone else and making ourselves feel better by offering some token help. But compassion is much deeper than

that. Compassion is the deep feeling of sharing in someone else's burdens and concerns, identifying with them and genuinely caring about them and desiring to help them in their needs.

And we do have plenty of needs. And Jesus Christ certainly had compassion upon people in need. The gospels tell us that so very clearly.

Matt. 9:36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Matt. 14:14 When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

Matt. 15:32 Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, or they may collapse on the way."

Matt. 20:34 Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him.

Mark 1:40-42 A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean." Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured.

Jesus' motivation for ministry was compassion for people in need! Also,

**B. He has sympathy for the weaknesses of his children.**

A good father not only has compassion, but sympathy. An understanding of someone else's weaknesses. Nothing worse for

many children than a father who expects them to be perfect, who doesn't allow them to make mistakes and doesn't allow them to be children.

Sometimes we view Jesus Christ that way. But he does have sympathy. He does know our weaknesses, because he, too was tempted, really tempted. Sometimes I think we don't really believe that. Jesus Christ had to do battle with sin, he had to resist very real temptation.

Hebr. 2:10 "For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. 11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren."

Hebr. 2:14 "Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 16 For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. 17 Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted."

Hebr. 4:15 "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin."

Don't ever think that Jesus does not understand your temptation. Don't ever think that he can't sympathize with your

weakness. Don't ever think that you can't admit to Jesus that you are tempted to sin. He, too, was tempted.

Heb. 4:16 "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." "Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

Illus: Jesus has a fatherly care for his people. Let me say, before we move on, that many people have endured fathers who didn't show much compassion or sympathy. That makes it very hard to see God in such a light, because most people tend to view God with the same personality as their own earthly father, good or bad. Normal reaction. I don't want to ignore that. But I want to help you deal with it. If the example of your father is a bad one, then I encourage you to dwell upon how the Bible defines a father, emphasizing how a father ought to act toward his children. Jesus Christ is our everlasting father, filled with great compassion and great sympathy.

Obvious application: Go to him with your needs. Depend upon him. Trust in him, for he is the mighty God, as we studied last week. Say to yourself, "He is my father, my everlasting father."

And obey him. That was Israel's problem in the OT.

Deut. 32:5-6 "They have acted corruptly toward him; to their shame they are no longer his children, but a warped and crooked generation. Is this the way you repay the LORD, O foolish and unwise people? Is he not your Father, your Creator, who made you and formed you?"

Let me now talk about the word "everlasting." Simple truth,

## **II. JESUS' FATHERLY CARE FOR HIS PEOPLE WILL NEVER END.**

He is the "everlasting" father. His fatherly care never ends because he lives forever, and he lives with those who trust in him.

Hebr. 7:25 "Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them."

The Bible gives us reasons why his fatherly care be everlasting. First, he will never change. Specifically,

### **A. His character will never change.**

Illus: That what is so difficult in dealing with my own father. His relationship to his children did change. Those who knew him later in life had a hard time believing how good a father he was when his children were young. And he was. Those who knew him then could hardly believe how separated he became from the lives of his adult children. His relationship with us has certainly changed.

But Jesus Christ never changes. He is the everlasting father. Now, and forever, he cares for the needs of his people.

Hebr. 13:8 "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."

Hebr. 1:12 "You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end."

In that verse, Jesus is compared to the angels, who are creatures, finite and ever-changing. But his years remain the same, he never changes. Quoting,

Ps. 102:26 "They will perish, but you remain; they will all

wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded. But you remain the same, and your years will never end."

Why is that so important? Because we need that security. We need that continuity. We need something that won't change. Something that we can depend on. Something, someone who is faithful. We all need that stability. The Bible says that we, as human beings, are grass. Not a very flattering comparison. Our lives are described in,

Isa. 40:7-8 "The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the LORD blows on them. Surely the people are grass. The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever."

Ps. 103:15-16 "As for man, his days are like grass, he flourishes like a flower of the field; the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more."

Contrast: Ps. 103:17 "But from everlasting to everlasting the LORD's love is with those who fear him."

We are not indestructible. We are not invincible. We are not the masters of our own destiny. We cannot stop the changes that occur in our lives. You cannot stop yourself from getting older. There is no eternal youth, and no fountain of youth to restore that which was lost. And the changes in our character and personality are just as inevitable.

But we have an everlasting father who never changes, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever. His character never changes. And,

## **B. His kingdom will never end.**

Is.9:7

He is not talking about an earthly millennium, he is talking about eternity. Jesus will sit on the throne of David, which is the throne of God, forever. Jesus will rule as king forever.

Ps. 89:35-37 "Once for all, I have sworn by my holiness-- and I will not lie to David--that his line will continue forever and his throne endure before me like the sun; it will be established forever like the moon, the faithful witness in the sky."

That is the message of Christmas. That was the message which the angel announced to Mary. He didn't just tell Mary she was going to have a little baby. Much, much more. The angel didn't tell Mary about "the Christ-child". He told her about the Christ-King.

Luke 1:31-33 "You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

And so we sing so often, "Joy to the world! The Lord is come; let earth receive her king." And, "Hark! the herald angels sing. Glory to the newborn king...Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ the everlasting Lord!"

It is a shame that most of our Christmas celebrations focus on things that change, things that pass away. Most of our celebrations focus on gifts and buying presents. Our celebrations focus on trees that are brought into our houses, trees which pass away and are thrown out on the curb the day after Christmas. Our celebrations focus on meals, cookies, parties, and decorations.

All of those things are meaningless, and even worthless, unless they point us to the one who never changes, the king whose kingdom will never end, the everlasting father. So Christmas ought not to be merely the celebration of the Christ child. It is not the celebration of "the little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay." The incarnation of Jesus ought to be invoke a celebration of our everlasting father. The message of Christmas is that Jesus' fatherly care for his people will never end.

And because of that,

## **III. JESUS' FATHERLY CARE SECURES OUR ETERNAL SALVATION.**

Our salvation is the result of Jesus' fatherly care, and that salvation is secure, it is permanent. It is everlasting.

Isa. 45:17 "But Israel will be saved by the LORD with an everlasting salvation; you will never be put to shame or disgraced, to ages everlasting."

That is the real message of the gospel, the message of an everlasting father who secures for us our eternal salvation. How do we know that our salvation is secure? Because we have an everlasting father. And,

### **A. Our everlasting father will never disown his children.**

That is the security of having an everlasting father.

Rom. 8:15-17 "For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs --heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory."

Gal. 4:6-7 "Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir."

Through Christ, we can address God as our father. We can call him by that personal name of trust and dependence, abba. We need not fear his rejection, for he has made us heirs, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ of all the glories of eternal life.

Our eternal security comes from knowing Jesus Christ, and knowing that he is our everlasting father, and that, therefore, he will never disown us. The assurance of our salvation comes from the understanding that God is our father and we are his children, along with the confidence that our everlasting father will never disown his children.

Yet not everyone can have that security. Not everyone can call to Jesus Christ as their everlasting father. Who can? Who can cry out to God as their father? Who, as children of God, can be assured that their everlasting father will never disown them?

Answer given in John 1:12 "Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God."

1John 5:11-12 "And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life."

Who can know that their everlasting father will never disown them? Those who have Jesus Christ, those who have received Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

Unfortunately, that does not include everyone. Jesus himself spoke very harshly to a group of unbelieving Jews in John 8.

John 8:19 Then they asked him, "Where is your father?" "You do not know me or my Father," Jesus replied. "If you knew me, you would know my Father also."

His debate with those Jews continued.

John 8:39-41 "Abraham is our father," they answered. "If you were Abraham's children," said Jesus, "then you would do the things Abraham did. As it is, you are determined to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things. You are doing the things your own father does." "We are not illegitimate children," they protested. "The only Father we have is God himself."

John 8:42-47 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me. Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God."

To the contrary, however,

**B. Our everlasting father will give his children everlasting life.**

Emphasize the word "everlasting."

Salvation is not a social redemption, it doesn't mean that God will enable you to escape poverty, or that he will cure the ills of society or bring world peace through the efforts of the nations of this world. I'm not interested in a social gospel, or an economic salvation. Salvation does not mean world peace or an end to war, or even that the struggles of your own life will be resolved. The peace on earth which comes through Jesus Christ is peace with God, peace that will last for eternity, peace that results in everlasting life.

Paul understood the meaning of everlasting life so very well. Phil. 3:20-21 "Our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body."

That's everlasting life. That is the message of Christmas. That's the message we take into the new year that is about to begin. The message is this:

1Cor. 15:51 "Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." 55 "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" 56 The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

In all of this, my goal has been to tell you about my father. Not

my imperfect earthly father, whom I loved very much. But my heavenly father, whom I love much more. My everlasting father.

Isa. 9:6 "For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

So let me urge you this afternoon to focus your heart not upon a little baby boy in a manger, but upon the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. Our everlasting father. It is he who receives our worship.