

The Apostles' Creed

The Father Almighty

January 22, 2023—Sermon Discussion Guide

The Father Almighty! The first face of God in whom we believe. The title "Father" was not used accidentally. That description, that attribute, that manifestation of God is used to tell us something—something important about the God we love and worship.

Some people find God described as a father to be very comforting. But for those from families where the father was a tyrant, a dictator, an abuser, or absent, accepting God as father-like can be problematic.

How does your experience of fathers impact your view of God as your father?



What Kind of Father is God?

Jesus gave us a parable to help us understand our relationship to God the Father.

Read Luke 15:11-32.

- List all the characteristics of the father in the story. Which characteristics are expected in earthly fathers, which are unusual in earthly fathers, and which are above and beyond for earthly fathers?
- What point is Jesus trying to make here about God the Father?
- The father gives the son his inheritance early. How have we received our inheritance from God early?
- How does the son get back in his father's good graces? How do we earn God's grace?
- How would you describe the love the father has for his son? How would you describe God's love to a doubter or non-believer?
- Look at this quote from J. I. Packer in his book, [Affirming the Apostles' Creed](#): "If God moves more slowly than we wish in clearing evil out of the world and introducing the new order,

that, we may be sure, is in order to widen his gracious purpose and include in it more victims of the world's evil than otherwise he could have done." What does this tell you about the kind of father God is?

Personal study: Investigate more about God the father using the following passages: Psalms 68:5-6, James 1:16-18, Luke 12:32, Luke 6:35-36, 2 Corinthians 6:16-18, 1 John 3:1.

Almighty

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word used for Almighty is *Shadday* (כַּל יִכּוֹל, *Shaddai, el Shaddai*). It is from the root word *shadad* meaning powerful, destroyer, oppressor. The Hebrews knew that God was powerful enough to oppress, overpower, and destroy as he chose. No one and no thing had more power than God. If you read the stories of the Old Testament, from Abraham to Jonah, from Moses to Joshua, from David to Daniel, from Judges to Kings, that power is tangible, visible, and obvious to those who witnessed it.

In the New Testament, the Greek word used for Almighty is *pantokrator* (παντοδύναμος, *pantodynamos*). It means omnipotent, absolutely and universally sovereign. Over and over in the New Testament we hear how God can accomplish anything, overcome anything, and reign supreme over everything. He is mighty enough to protect, to lead, and to save His people.

When J. I. Packer discusses God's Almighty nature, he points out that God uses everything in His creation to accomplish his purposes. Packer says, "...God's power to fulfill his purposes is not limited by anything he has made." The reason for this is that God can work his will through the function of the physical order of the universe and through the functioning of our psychological makeup." In other words, he can use the world he created to carry out his will by either using the natural world to make things happen or by using people to make things happen. He can use an earthquake, eruption, or tidal wave to destroy an evil city. He can use a disease or famine to destroy an evil empire. He can influence people to overthrow a corrupt government or bring help to people in need. He can use a hurricane to bring rain to a region suffering from drought. He can bring a child into the world to save it. God's power has no limits.

Read Exodus 14:15-31.

- How does this story exemplify the almighty nature of God?
- Since God is described as almighty, omnipotent, and all powerful, how does that affect your view of him as your father?
- Perhaps the idea of a powerful father is frightening to you? What is the difference between a powerful earthly father and a powerful heavenly father?
- Does the idea of a father that can fix everything comfort you or frighten you? How would you reassure a person who feels frightened by God's power? Are there other stories besides the Prodigal Son that could help you explain God's almighty nature?

Personal Study: See how the Almighty Father is presented by reading these verses. Genesis 17:1 and 35:11, Ruth 1:21, Job:11:7-9, Psalms 91:1-2, Ezekiel 10:5, Joel 1:15, 2 Corinthians 6:18.

My take away: Explain what having an Almighty God for your Father means to you. Lift up a prayer of praise and thanksgiving for his protection, provision, and his power.