

OUR ABBA

Wednesday, February 11

Reading: Galatians 4:4-7

Galatians 4:6 *Because you are His sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father."*

While God as Father was not unknown in the Old Testament, it was not the intimate personal relationship we have today. It was expressed in terms of God as Father of the nation of Israel and not primarily a personal individual relationship.

“Yet You, LORD, are our Father. We are the clay, You are the potter; we are all the work of Your hand.” (Isaiah 64:8)

God was approached through the sacrifices in the Tabernacle/Temple. In fact, God as Father is only mentioned 14 times in the Old Testament and always in terms of the nation and not the individual.

When we turn to the New Testament, this suddenly changes. “Father” appears 17 times in the Sermon on the Mount alone. In the gospels, Jesus refers to “the Father” over 70 times.¹ “Father” becomes a dominant way to refer to God throughout the New Testament. So what changed? Paul tells us in Galatians chapter 4:4-7.

THE SON REDEEMED US (4:4-5): We were slaves to sin, our own sinful nature, and the world system. But Jesus died to free us from their power.

THE FATHER ADOPTED US (4:5): The only way to get into God’s family is be adopted. No one is born a child of God or can earn it through good deeds or personal merit.

¹ John 3:1 See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!

THE SPIRIT LIVES IN US (4:6-7): Because the Holy Spirit lives in our hearts, we have a personal relationship with God. We are connected! In the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew, we read the common Greek word for “father” (pater). Here in Galatians, Paul adds the Aramaic word for “father” (abba). This has a more familiar loving tone to it. Today, we might substitute the word ‘daddy.’ It reminds us of the intimate relationship we can have with God through the Spirit because of Christ’s redemption.

Romans 8:15 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. 17 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.

Do you take our relationship with God for granted? What are you thinking when you call God Father? When we pray “Our Father”, we should be thankful for all God has done for us. We should be humble that God has adopted us and made His children and heirs of His kingdom.

¹ David Jeremiah. Prayer the Great Adventure, p. 84.