

Children of the Father [slide 1]

I. Introduction.

A. During the Christmas season, we do a lot of celebration.

1. Primarily, as Christians we celebrate the birth of Christ. The joy in his birth leads also to the joy of his sacrifice, death, and resurrection, wherein we receive eternal life. Lots of our Christmas pageants center around the circumstances of his birth in Bethlehem and the participants in that event. One of the participants is God the Father.

2. Christmas is a time to celebrate family relationships. Lots of people will travel to various locations to visit parents and children. It is a time to recall memories over the past year, or maybe over a number of years from similar celebrations. Some of these celebrations can be good or not so good, depending on the memories that are brought back to mind. Some of those memories are related to our dads or fathers.

a. How do you and I relate with our earthly father?

Though the scriptures refer mostly to sons, I mean sons and daughters.

(1). Did you have a good relationship with your father?

(2). Was your father involved in your life as you grew up?

(3). Can you look back at the wonderful memories of playing games with dad, or going to work with dad, or doing other activities with dad?

(4). Did dad see you off to bed at night, showing you how to pray for family and other issues in life?

(5). Did he take you out just to have a special time like buying your favorite ice-cream, fishing or horse-back riding or another favorite hobby?

(6). Did you rake the leaves with him, help him on a project, get advice on how to deal with the current crisis in your life?

(7). Was your father there to comfort you when you got hurt? Was he just the one to go to get a hug, or sit in his lap because you felt secure and protected?

(8). Did he want to hear about your successes and your defeats? Did he stand by you when others didn't?

(9). Did you hear him praising your accomplishments before others?

- b. Some of the fathers out there might be thinking, now how can I do all that? It really is hard to be a good father, not perfect, but one who really tries.
 - c. Some of us may have had fathers who were absent, whether they died or even separated by divorce.
 - d. Some never get to know their father because the father was there for conception, but not for birth.
 - e. Some fathers, though present are still absent because they are more focused on jobs, hobbies, or priorities other than the children.
 - f. Others have fathers that were abusive in some sort of way. The memories are mostly negative and are best kept hidden in some far attic of the mind. There is too much pain trying to reconcile those memories.
3. Celebrating Christmas does bring together the role of the Father. Jesus not only came to die on the cross for our sins, but he came to show us how to live life in relationship with the Father. Our relationship with our Heavenly Father can resolve what we have lacked from our earthly fathers.
4. To put things in some perspective, I also need to point out some of my own personal experience.
- a. Biological father only in my life for maybe the first three years. He was abusive - mom said he came in once, I was crying and he threw me across the room. I was born in Germany and coming back through New York, he wanted to leave me there because he thought I was mentally deficient. He later became part of the Pagan motorcycle "club". I was spared the difficulties in life that would bring. In High School, I read about him and his new family who were holed up in their house against the police. There are a number of half-brothers and sisters that I don't know very well. I met him and some of his children later at my grandmother's funeral and at a family reunion/picnic. He accepted Jesus and was part of a Mennonite Church before he died about 2 ½ years ago. I had an interest in knowing who he was, to know what part of my personality and weaknesses I inherited from him.
 - b. My Stepfather - he was one of sixteen kids, he lived in a foster home at one point in time. His was a rough and tumble family. Sometimes we would visit his family and they would be drinking, playing cards, swearing and yelling at each other. As a kid you just wanted to find a place away from the noise and keep occupied. My stepfather drank at times so sometimes

it was best to avoid him. (He did become a Christian when I was in High School.)

- c. When I married Linda, I became a stepfather to her three children. So I have had lots of opportunity to learn about being a father from some very different circumstances.

B. Primary Text - Romans 8:12-17.

Romans 8:12-17 Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation-- but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. ¹³ For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, ¹⁴ because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. {Or adoption} And by him we cry, "Abba, {Aramaic for Father} 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. [slide 3]

C. What we are going to cover.

- (1). The relationship between God the Father with his Son Jesus.
- (2). Other New Testament authors reference to God as Father.
- (3). How do we become children of the Father?
- (4). What are some of the impacts of our relationship as children of the Father to everyday life?

II. To learn about our relationship with God as Father, first we look at the relationship between God and his Son, Jesus.

A. Have you ever seen how proud a father-to-be is of knowing that he is going to have a child? Who does he tell? God tells the prophets.

- 1. **Isaiah 7:14** Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. [slide 5]
- 2. **Micah 5:2** But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times. [slide 5]
- 3. We see that the Old Testament points to Christ.

B. We see the Father announcing the birth of his son in human form in Luke 2 to the shepherds, giving glory to the Son. In response a heavenly host praise God saying "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.

1. Jesus is revealed to Simeon and Anna the prophetess in Jerusalem when Jesus was dedicated in the temple.
 2. Why do you think God is telling people about his son?
- C. Later in Luke 2, We see more glimpses of the relationship when Jesus was twelve and in Jerusalem, his parents were returning home to Nazareth, but Jesus was left behind. His response to them in **Luke 2:49** was - **why were you searching for me? Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?** At the end of the chapter it says that Jesus grew in favor with God and men.
- D. Earlier I had asked if your Father was excited to tell other people about you? Do you remember some of the times where God audibly praised his Son?
1. **Matthew 3:17** And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love, with him I am well pleased." **[slide 7]**
 2. Peter attests to that same voice of God in **II Peter 1:17 -18** **For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."** ¹⁸ **We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain. [slide 7]**
 3. Can you see the Father looking at Jesus with full love and delight saying "this is my Son whom I love. I am pleased with him." Do we think God would ever say this type of thing to us?
- E. We see the relationship not only from what is audible from God, but from what Jesus said and did.
1. Sermon on the Mount.
 - a. Matthew 5, 6, and 7 are a group of three chapters of Jesus' teaching (in red ink)? Sermon on the Mount!
 - b. **Matthew 5:14-16** **You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. [slide 9]** How does Jesus demonstrate this relationship with the Father? People see Jesus' miracles and praise God.
 - c. **Matthew 6:6** **But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. [slide 11]** How does Jesus demonstrate this in his relationship with the Father? Jesus goes off to pray in the mountains.

- d. **Matthew 7:9-11** Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹ If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! **[slide 11]** We never hear of Jesus asking for something and getting surprised by his Father's response.
 - e. Multiple times in the three chapters we can read about how to walk with the Father. One would think that maybe Jesus had an insight to this from walking with the Father on this earth for the previous 30 years, not even looking at his relationship with the Father prior to coming to the earth.
 - f. Result of this relationship is seen at the end of chapter 7, verse 29 - **he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.** Jesus taught out of relationship with the Father.
2. Jesus did things from the relationship with the Father, he spoke what the Father spoke and did what the Father did.
- a. **John 8:28** So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am the one I claim to be and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me." **[slide 13]** So this could apply to the parables and teachings that Jesus did.
 - b. **John 5:19** I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. ²⁰ For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does... **[slide 13]** This would apply to all of the miracles that Jesus did.
3. Everything that Jesus spoke and did was to bring glory to the Father.
- a. **John 12:28-30** Father, glorify your name! Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." ²⁹ The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him. ³⁰ Jesus said, "This voice was for your benefit, not mine." **[slide 15]**
 - b. **John 17:4-5** I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. ⁵ And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. **[slide 17]**

- c. **John 8:29** The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him. [slide 17] We see why the Father says audibly: with him I am well pleased. We also see that the Father does not abandon his child. Is our experience with the Father one of feeling left alone or of one feeling that he is always with us?
- 4. Did everyone in Jesus' time like the idea that Jesus revealed himself to be the Son of God?
 - a. **John 5:17-18** Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working." ¹⁸ For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God. [slide 19]
- 5. But Jesus, being the Son of God, died on the cross and gave sonship to us. We see this in the resurrection **John 20:17** ... I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.

- III. Authors of New Testament Reference God as Father. Jesus revealed the relationship; does anyone else understand this in the New Testament?
 - A. Jude - **Jude 1:1** Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James, To those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ: [slide 21]
 - B. James - the brother of Jesus, just referred to by Jude - **James 1:27** Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. [slide 21]
 - 1. What is the similarity about widows and orphans? It involves the lack of a father.
 - C. John, the brother of the apostle James who was beheaded by Herod. **John 3:1** How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God. [slide 23]
 - D. Who is willing to think that Paul refers to God as the Father?
 - 1. **Galatians 1:1-5** Paul, an apostle-- sent not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead-- ² and all the brothers with me, To the churches in Galatia: ³ Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴ who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, ⁵ to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. [slide 25]
 - 2. Could go through a number of the letters to give more scriptures, but for the sake of time, yes, Paul definitely

understands that God is his Father.

- IV. How do we become the children of the Father? Through faith in Christ!
- A. Through faith in Christ.
1. **Gal. 3:26** You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus... [slide 27]
 2. **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 ... [slide 27]
 3. **Matt. 11:27** No one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. [slide 27]
- B. What happens? Our primary text - **Romans 8:12-17** Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation-- but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. ¹³ For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, ¹⁴ because those who are led by the Spirit of God are **sons of God**. ¹⁵ For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of **sonship**. {Or **adoption**} 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. [slide 29]
1. We received a Spirit of sonship/adoption, the Holy Spirit.
 2. We are led by the Spirit of God.
 3. The Spirit testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.
 4. We cry Abba, Father.
 5. If we are children, we are heirs of God, co-heirs of Christ.
 6. How does this translate practically?
- V. What is the Impact of our Relationship to God as Children of the Father?
- A. Go back to the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5 thru 7.
- Matthew 6:25-26** Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? [slide 31]
1. The Father provides our basic needs, what we need to eat, what we need to wear. Is there something that is a need in you that your Father does not care about?
 2. We seek God not from a demand, but from the relationship that he does take care of his children.

3. This should cause us to seek him. Do you ever not ask God for things because you think that he does not care?
 4. Example, I go to my place of seeking God and talk to him about it.
 5. Then I also ask him about other people's needs - Father you see Ronnie and Renee, what do they need from you right now. Please meet their needs.
 6. In other parts of Matthew 6, it says that when I do these things in secret, our Father will reward us.
- B. **Matthew 5:43-45** "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. **[slide 33]**
1. It should affect how we deal with situations where people treat us the wrong way, including our brothers and sisters in Christ.
 2. Coming to my place of prayer - God, you give me the chance to see so and so, and I'm going to give her a piece of my mind. I don't know who she thinks she is. She's not getting one over me; I have my rights. I will not be a doormat. No what happens is God deals with our attitude and shows how much he has forgiven us, so we need to forgive others.
- C. **Hebrews 12:5-11** And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, ⁶ because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son." ⁷ Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? ⁸ If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. ⁹ Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! ¹⁰ Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. ¹¹ No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. **[slide 35-36]**
1. Discipline in a general sense means following a set of rules or orders. If I am trying to compete as an athlete, I might watch what I eat and have a specific training schedule to build strength and endurance.

2. If I am disciplining a child, I am trying to cause that child to follow a set of rules or values. The discipline is done for multiple reasons, including to protect the child from harm and to teach self-control.
3. Sin in our lives fights against discipline and self-control. Being sons and daughters of God means that God, our Father, is going to be dealing with sin in our lives.
4. This is one of the areas I missed as a child. I did not learn much discipline. We can also be disciplined in some areas but not in others.
5. Discipline means learning to say no to my cravings, learning to wait for things instead of being impulsive in my wants.
6. Discipline means not always getting what everyone else has.
7. God is not abusive in his discipline towards us. I have never had my heavenly Father yell at me. This needs to reflect back on us as fathers also.

VI. Conclusion/Application.

- A. Do you know the Father? If you do not know the Son, you cannot know the Father? Do you not know the Father because of a bad relationship with your earthly father?
- B. If you already know Christ, how is your relationship with the Father? Does it reflect a negative impact from your earthly father? Do you need your Heavenly Father to touch some area and bring healing? Do you trust him to provide? Do you trust his discipline? Do you know how much he loves you?
- C. Do you know the Heavenly Father and are growing in relationship with him? Your purpose is to bring him glory as he shows himself through you. Ex. Philip said to Jesus - show us the Father. Jesus said, if you've seen me, you've seen the Father. We are not God like Jesus was, but he has given us his Spirit to reflect who the Father is and to do what the Father is doing.

VII. The Lord's Prayer.

VIII. Benediction.

Jude 1b-2 To those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ: ² Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance. Go in the mercy, peace, and love of the Father throughout this week, Amen.