

Reeks: Want 'n Kind is vir ons Gebore...

Titel: ... Everlasting Father

Prediker: Trevor Hudson

Datum: 11 Desember 2011

Good morning, friends, it's really good to be with you again a few weeks before Christmas. I'm not going to see you again, after this service, until Christmas, so I really want to wish you a very special time, and I hope that you'll be able to keep focus doing this time, especially upon Christ and all that Christ means to us.

It's been a great year to be with you. It's a privilege you give me of serving you on a Sunday with God's word, and I look forward to being able to do that again in the coming year. So it's really been great being with you. Thank you for all the interactions that we've had this year. I'll be thinking and praying especially for those of you for whom this is a very difficult time and pray that you'll have a very real sense of God's presence in your life, Emmanuel, at this time.

You've got a bulletin, and I invite you to take out the insert. I'm going to be giving you a number of scriptures today that are not on that bulletin, and I want to invite you, if you would like to, to make a note of these scriptures, because they are very, very important, particularly in terms of our theme. I want to read two scriptures. You have one in front of you, but you don't have this one, so you may want to make a note of Isaiah 9:6.

Isaiah is writing centuries before the coming of Christ, and you get in these words a sense of the Jewish hope in the Old Testament for the Messiah, and I want to read some wonderful words to you, Isaiah writing eight centuries before Jesus Christ: For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given, and the government, the kingdom, the kingdom of God, will be on His shoulders, and He will be called, and we've been looking at these titles over these past few weeks, and He will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father. That's our focus today: Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Now, alongside of that reading, you have this reading in front of you, from John 14, but I'm going to start reading it a little bit before the verse that you have in front of you, John 14, and I want to start with verse five, not verse eight: Thomas said to him, Lord, we don't know where You are going. How can we know the way? Verse six, this is a very important verse, it's a verse that raises a lot of controversy, but I want us to look at it today, verse six: Jesus answered, I am the way, I am the truth and I am the life. No one comes to the Father, no one comes to the Father except through me, and if you really knew Me, if you really... Jesus is saying if you really knew me you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know Him and you have seen Him, and then Phillip says, Lord, show us the Father. Show us the Father and that will be enough for us.

Jesus answered: Don't you know me, Phillip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, show us the Father? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in Me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in Me, who is doing His work. Believe Me when I say that I am in the Father and that the Father is in me, or at least believe on the evidence of what I do, on the miracles themselves.

I tell you the truth. Anyone who has faith in Me will do what I'm doing. He will do even greater things than these because I'm going to the Father and I will do whatever you ask in My name so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name and I will do it. Lots of important things in those words, and we thank God so much for these readings. We pray that God will help us this morning. I was... when they prayed for me before the service I said to those praying for me I need lots of prayer today. We thank God for these words.

Little Johnny, seven years of age, I'm sure he came to Mosaic, was drawing a... was on the lounge floor and he was doing something, he seemed to be drawing, and his father walked in and said to him, hey, Johnny, what are you doing. Johnny said, well, dad, I'm just... I'm just drawing, and dad said what are you drawing. And little Johnny said, no, I'm just drawing a picture of God. Dad said, but you can't draw a picture of God. No one, no one has ever seen what God is like. Little Johnny said, relax, dad. When I finish this picture everyone will know what God is like.





Can I start with an important question? Sometimes I engage your hearts. I want for a few moments to engage your mind. What is your picture of God? What is your picture of God? What is your understanding of God? And I want to say, friends, that that is a very, very important question for a whole lot of reasons. It's an important question because if we... if we have a fuzzy picture, if we have a fuzzy understanding of God, then we will have a very fuzzy relationship with God.

Talking to someone else the other day, and they were saying to me, Trevor... oh, he was talking about the Man upstairs, and that was his picture of God; the Man upstairs. Let me say, if that's your understanding of God, then your relationship with God is not going to be that strong, that intimate, that personal. Another person said to me, Trevor, for me God is the creative Principal of the universe.

Now, we could have a wonderful philosophical conversation about that, but let me tell you, it's very difficult to have a personal, intimate, real relationship with a creative principal. What's your picture of God? What's your understanding of what God is like? It's an important question, it really is. Some of us have a picture of God; have an understanding of God that makes it very hard for us to be intimate with God, to be close to God, to be vulnerable with God.

I go into a hospital and I sit down and the guy says to me these words: Trevor, I must have done something wrong for God to have given me this cancer. Do you see his picture of God? He's made some mistakes and God has given him cancer. If that's your picture of God you will never get close to God, but how often, when something goes wrong in our life, our default position is, God has done this. Why has God put me through this divorce? Why has God given me this illness? Why did God take my child? And our very picture of God makes an intimate relationship impossible.

But there's another reason why our picture of God is so important. We become, we become, you and I, become like the God we worship. Our picture of God, our understanding of God rubs off on us. Have you ever seen a person take their dog for a walk? Have you noticed sometimes that the owner begins to resemble their dog? Have you noticed that? I'm in trouble. We've got a mongrel Yorkie. I'm in trouble. But we become like the God we worship.

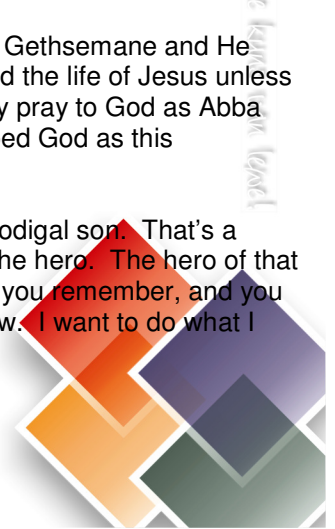
If your understanding of God is that God is violent and aggressive, I guarantee you, you'll become violent and aggressive. If our picture of God is sentimental and syrupy, I guarantee you; you'll become a sentimental and syrupy Christian. If your picture of God is that God likes certain people and doesn't like other people, I guarantee you; you will like certain people and not like other people. If you have a picture of God who doesn't care about right and wrong, I guarantee you, you won't care about right and wrong. Our picture of God rubs off on us. We become, we become like the God we worship.

Now, all I want to do this morning, and I really pray that I can be helpful, is I want to share with you a wonderful bit of good news, a wonderful bit of good news, and the good news is this: that Jesus Christ, now, Jesus is the centre of our faith, Jesus Christ reveals God to us as everlasting Father. Look again at those words from Isaiah. Just look at them again carefully. Now, Isaiah is writing centuries before the coming of Jesus Christ, and he says a Child is born, to us a Son is given. The government will be upon His shoulders and He will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, there is the phrase: Everlasting Father.

Now, Jesus Christ discloses, reveals, shows God to be Everlasting Father, and he does it again and again and again through the Gospels. Do you remember when Jesus prayed? Do you remember Jesus used a word that people had never, ever, ever used before in human history for God? It was an Aramaic word. It would seem that Jesus spoke Aramaic, and He used an intimate word, a tender word, a personal word, a wonderful word for God.

Do you remember what that word was? Do you remember what it was? When He was in Gethsemane and He spoke to God He called God Abba, Abba, Abba, Abba, Abba, and we will never understand the life of Jesus unless we realise that He lived His whole life out of an Abba experience of God, but He didn't only pray to God as Abba ever... as Father. Whenever... when Jesus told stories, we call them parables; He described God as this incredible, incredible Father, incredible Abba.

Do you remember that story in Luke 15? Do you remember? We call it the story of the prodigal son. That's a terrible mistake. We make the prodigal son the hero of that story. The prodigal son isn't the hero. The hero of that story is the father who runs down the road. That young boy was a... he was a bit dof. Do you remember, and you know the story, where he just makes... he just is so arrogant? Give me my inheritance now. I want to do what I



want with your... and he goes off and he breaks... he breaks the father's heart, do you remember that story, and he lands up in a pigpen.

We make such a big fuss over his conversion. Who wouldn't go home of you were in a pigpen? And he makes up a speech, do you remember, and then he starts going home and then Jesus says his father sees him in the distance. Love is never blind. Love is never blind, and the father runs down the road and holds his son and hugs his son and kisses his son. Jesus is saying this is what God is like, and the story is not over yet, and then the father has got three gifts.

He says here is a new robe for you. The guy is still smelling of pigs; he hasn't had a bath yet, but here is a robe. Put this robe on. It's a robe of acceptance. And then the father says I've got new shoes for you. This guy's Nikes had worn out, full of manure. You belong when you wore shoes in that day. It meant you weren't a servant. And then he says, here's a ring, and Jesus is saying this is what the father is like. This is the father's heart, running down the road as we come home.

But Jesus didn't only speak about God as Abba; Jesus shows us. Remember our reading. It will come up again. Phillip says to Jesus, Jesus, will you show us the Father, show... not... don't tell us about the Father. Show us the Father. That will be enough. Jesus said, don't you know me, Phillip, even after I've been with you? Anyone who has seen Me, who has seen Me, has seen the Father. How can you say show us the Father? Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I don't speak on my own authority. It is the Father living in me doing His work.

When you see Jesus touching a leper, that's what the Father is doing. When you see Jesus coming to a woman who's made a mistake and says to the woman, I do not condemn you, I don't condemn you, go now and do not sin again, that is... that is what the Father is like. When you see Jesus weeping, weeping, with Mary and Martha, when Lazarus has died, that is what the Father is like, grieving, weeping with us in our grief and pain.

When you see Jesus hanging on the cross, choking in His own blood, whispering forgiveness, that is the Father giving Himself to us, carrying our sin, making access available again. Jesus reveals the heart of God to us, the Abba heart of God, Everlasting Father, Everlasting Father. Can I ask you a question? Can I engage your heart now? Can I ask you a question? In your heart, not your head, do you know Everlasting Father? Is this how your heart experiences God, Abba? You know, so often there's a gap between our head and heart.

I don't know how many of you have been to London, but I'll never forget, when I used to get on the tubes you would have this recorded voice, do you remember, that has those three words, and they just repeat those three words again, and again and again. What are those three words? Mind the gap. And there's this big gap between head and heart, and with our head we say, I believe in God, the Father, but down here it's another story. It's another story.

When you know God and Abba in your heart everything changes, everything. When you know God as Abba in your heart you know that this is the Father's world and I am always safe, even in a world of hijacking, crime, violence. I am safe because nothing can ever separate me from God, my Abba, in Jesus Christ, not even death. Do we know that? Do I know that safety in my heart?

When I know God as Abba in my heart, then I know I'm not an orphan in this universe. I'm a beloved child of Abba, and all my broken sense of worth and value and rejection begins to be healed because I know deep down I'm Abba's child. When I experience Abba in my heart I know that I belong to a family. I'm not alone. I belong to Abba's family now. When I experience God as Abba in my heart I know there is a reason to my existence. I'm not a mistake. Whatever the circumstances of my birth, I'm not a mistake. I'm here for a reason, a purpose. I have a calling, a vocation, from Abba. Do you know Abba in your heart, not in your head, in your heart, your heart, Everlasting Father, in your heart?

And some of you are saying, Trevor, I don't, I don't, and I long for what you're talking about. I long for it. How does one enter into this experience? Well, I've got no step one, step two, step three, but I've got three Bible verses, and I'm going to give you three Bible verses to guide you. Make a note of these verses, write them down, meditate on them, pray on them, until they become real in your life, three critical verses.

Here's the first one, John 14:6. Jesus says these words: I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. Now, look carefully at that verse. Notice what it is not saying. Jesus is not saying no one comes to God except through me. Jesus is not saying that. My Jewish friends have got a relationship with



God. Would you agree? Moses had a relationship with God. He didn't know Jesus Christ. Abraham had a relationship with God. He didn't know Jesus Christ. My brother in law, who is a Jew, knows God. He doesn't know Jesus Christ. No one comes to the Father; no one experiences God as Abba, as Abba, except through Jesus Christ.

I'm not saying today, please don't misunderstand me, I'm not saying today that all religions are the same. All religions are not the same. They're not the same. Whatever our secular culture says, they are not the same. It's disrespectful to say of someone that our religions are the same. They're not the same. There's a big difference between Buddha and Jesus, massive. Just study the two and you'll see the difference. What Jesus offers is a distinctive experience of intimacy with God as Abba, and it changes everything. That's why I follow Christ. He offers access into intimacy and depth we find nowhere else.

Here's another version, Galatians 4:6: because you are His sons and daughters God sent the Spirit of His Son, where, into our... where? Not into our heads, into our hearts, and what happens? And the Spirit cries out, Abba, Father, that when I open my heart, my life, to the Spirit of Jesus Christ the Spirit of Jesus Christ enters my life and it joins with my spirit, and there is an inner knowing, an inner assurance that it given to me, that God is Abba. That's why I say to my people every day, open your life up to the Spirit of God. Every day, open your life up to the Holy Spirit, every day. Let the spirit of God come and join with your human spirit and bring to you a new assurance of God as Abba.

Got that verse? Here is the last one. Here is the last one. Jesus replied, now, anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. Now, watch what happens, watch what happens. My Father will love them and we, that's Jesus and the Father, will come to them and make our home with them. What is Jesus saying? As I take His teaching seriously, seriously, as I take His words seriously, His teachings about race, his teachings about money, about possessions, about sexuality, His words about violence and non-violence, His words about transparency and deceit and lies and truth, when I take Jesus' words seriously and I begin to build them into my life, the Father and Jesus come to live in me, and I know Abba. I know Abba.

It's half past nine. You want to go home. Everlasting Father, Everlasting Father. I want to invite you into an experience of God today as Abba, your Abba, your Abba. I've given you three verses. Let Jesus lead you into Abba's heart. Don't go any other way. Jesus will take you into that heart. He's that way, the truth, the life. He leads us into that experience that he had with Abba, and then I invite, each day, I invite the spirit of God.

We all need to be Pentecostals. Every day I invite the Spirit of God into my life, my heart, my mind, my body, so that the Spirit can join with my spirit and I can cry out, Abba, even in the darkest, darkest moments of my life. And then I give my life to obedience, to following Jesus, to taking His teaching seriously, and as I follow Him, Abba and Jesus come to live in me, in me, and I get to know Abba. Amen, amen.

Has this been helpful? I hope so. Can I pray for you? We talk, God, here about deep things, deep things, and today we want to open our life to Your words and we want to take them seriously. Lord, Jesus Christ, lead us into Abba's heart like You lived in Abba's heart. May your Spirit come today. May Your Spirit come into our tired, broken, weary, hurting, painful, grieving lives. May Your Spirit come, oh Christ, and may your Spirit join with our spirit and give to us an assurance that you are Abba.

Empower us, Lord, to be faithful to your teachings. Empower us, and as we engage your teachings, engulf us in Your presence. This is our prayer, and we offer it to You with all the longing and all the yearning of our hearts this morning, and we say together, as God's people, amen, amen.

Friends, may the joy, may the joy of the risen Christ be with each one of you, amen. Have a great day, friends, take care.

die leuens van hoord

