

Why Jesus? – Because He is The Everlasting Father

12/16/18 – Pastor Randy

Isaiah 9:6-7 (ESV)

*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end,
on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.*

When Isaiah prophesied that coming Messiah would be born as a boy and would be called wonderful counselor, mighty God, everlasting father, and prince of peace, he was not communicating that these would be the child's proper names or even formal titles ascribed to the Messiah. These four titles are descriptive, functional titles. They reveal the character of the Messiah.

That is important lest anyone misconstrue the title of "everlasting father" as if it were communicating that God the Father and Jesus are the same person. Jesus is not God the Father but he is one with the Father, and as such he possesses the character of the Father. In John 1:17,18 we read,
*"For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only **God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.**"*

Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, came to earth to reveal the Father to us in a way that God's word and works had never fully been able to do. This same point is made in Hebrews 1:1-3:

"Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world... He is the radiance of the glory of God..."

I appreciate my father. He taught us with his words but more so by his example. He taught us to show up. He taught us not to keep up and not give up. He taught us to work and to be independent. He didn't overindulge us. I realize a couple of weeks ago I mentioned how selfish and superficial I was as a teenager. I attribute to my parents the fact that I at least knew that

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selfishness was wrong. My father loves to tell stories about his kids. In all honesty it is a little annoying when you are in your 50's and he still does it.

While I have been blessed with a good father, he has not been a perfect father. There is no perfect earthly father. For that very reason we shouldn't start with our own concept of what a father is, or should be, and then interpret God as father in light of that concept. Instead we should start with Who God has revealed Himself to be as our father and how he relates to us as father and then derive our concept of fatherhood in light of God's actions and attitudes towards us as His children.

Unhealthy fathers:

1. The abusive/oppressive father. The immature father who takes out his frustrations and anger on his kids. The "kick-the-cat" father. His personal mood dictates how he treats his children. It can also be due to the father placing unrealistic demands on his children and being intolerant of mistakes.
2. The absentee father. This father is sometimes physically absent but he may be physically present and still be relationally and emotionally distant. Of course, physical presence is the necessary precondition for relational and emotional closeness. The absentee father fails to build a relationship.
3. The overindulgent father. This type of father is more interested in keeping his children happy than he is in their being holy. He confuses providing for his children's needs with lavishly indulging their every desire. Some studies link parental overindulgence with the development of narcissistic character qualities in the child. Overindulging children creates a sense of entitlement which turns into a disability.
4. The exploitative father. He uses his children for self-serving ends. Many parents push their children to excel academically, artistically, and/or athletically. It is absolutely appropriate to challenge our children to work, putting to use the gifts God has given them for good. The question is one of motivation. I am referring to fathers who view their children as means to serve their self-interests rather than the child's best interests.

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What does the scripture reveal about the way God relates to us as our “Father” and how is this vividly pictured for us by Jesus?

1. God is a good, good Father because He is our provider.

He is provider in contrast to both the absentee father and the overindulgent father. All throughout scripture God has revealed himself as a father who provides for the needs of his children. In the OT God demonstrated his fatherly character as provider through His miraculous provision of food and water during their wilderness journey from Egypt to Canaan.

Jesus demonstrated this character trait throughout his life by his miracles of healing and deliverance as well as by miracles such as turning water into wine and feeding the multitudes. But when the people tried to manipulate Jesus he would have none of it. After Jesus fed the 5,000 he told them that they needed to believe in Him. Their response was, “What sign can you do to show us we should believe that you are the Messiah?” “Moses gave us mana in the wilderness.” It certainly sounds like they were making a deal with Jesus. “Hey, if you give us more free food we will definitely believe in you!!

Jesus called his followers to a life of sacrificial service. He did not preach a prosperity gospel that promised to enrich them. Bless them He did, indulge their selfish desires he did not. He is a father who meets our needs but will not satisfy our greed. He provides for need but confronts greed.

2. God is a good, good Father because He is our protector.

He protects us in contrast to the father that is either abusive or absent. David expressed God’s fatherly character when he wrote, “Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for you are with me.”

Jesus protected the woman caught in adultery from her accusers. Jesus came to give his life as a sacrifice in order to save us from the condemnation that we deserve. When Jesus walked the earth he delivered people, protecting them from evil, demonic forces that had afflicted and oppressed them. He demonstrated his fatherly character by confronting those who exploited the poor and the weak.

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3. God is a good, good father because He is committed to our growth and development in righteousness.

God doesn't treat us pawns to be exploited for self-serving ends. He didn't create us to fill some need he had for people to worship him. He created us to bless us with the gift of life. It was His good pleasure to give His love to us! When God created Adam and Eve He commissioned them to be fruitful and multiply; to live as stewards of His creation. God created us to be creative, to work and to be productive and to raise up other image bearers who grow in righteousness.

Peter wrote, *"As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."*

Peter was making the point that God's children ought to reflect the character of their father: That means God's will for His children is that we live lives that reflect the righteous character and conduct of God.

Jesus' training of his disciples is a wonderful picture of a father's role of training his in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Jesus didn't feed his disciples greed and lust for power. He wasn't focused on pleasing them. He was more concerned with leading them to be holy than making them happy.

Because God as Father is committed to our growth and development he is not too timid to disciplines us in contrast to the overindulgent father and the absentee father. However, His discipline is always both firm and loving unlike abusive fathers. Chew on these words from Hebrews 12:7,8

As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as his own children. Who ever heard of a child who is never disciplined by its father? If God doesn't discipline you as he does all of his children, it means that you are illegitimate and are not really his children at all.

4. God is a good, good father because he delights in us!

Our father rejoices over us. He desires to be present with us.

He will take delight in you with gladness. With his love, he will calm all your fears. He will rejoice over you with joyful songs." Zephaniah 3:17

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A good father is one who doesn't just love his children by providing for them, protecting them, and training them to live right. His love for us is expressed by what he does for us and by how he feels towards us!!! He doesn't love you based on how well you perform. He is not a father who needs his children to be successful in order to make him look good. He is not insecure, needing us to validate him as a good father. He loves you because you are His.

Revelation 21:3 brings the whole story of the bible to a dramatic conclusion with these words:

"Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God."

The same God who repeatedly describes himself as the father of his people, here, in this one verse summarizes what He had been saying was his desire for His children (people) throughout the OT; a desire to be with them and to belong to them as they belong to Him. (See list at the end of the notes)

Jesus again demonstrated this in the way he related to those he came to save. In Mark 3:11 we read that Jesus called the disciples to himself ***"that they might be with Him"***! Jesus shows us the Father's heart by the way he gathered people to himself. Jesus wanted his people with him.

Isaiah did not just prophesy that this child to be born to us would be like a father to us. He said he would be everlasting or eternal father. That was both a hint at his identity as the co-eternal, co-sovereign God with God the Father and a statement of the never-ending nature of His relationship with us. He will be our father forever. He will be our father constantly and consistently.

"Everlasting" does not only communicate that he will be our father ***for*** all time; he will also be a father to us ***at*** all times. He is a faithful father.

Earlier I was expressed honor to my earthly father. My father is celebrating his 80th birthday tomorrow. He has recently passed the average life expectancy for males in the US. For my whole life my father has seemed indestructible. Only in the last couple of years has the question, "I wonder

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how many years my dad has left?” crossed my mind. For most of my life, I took his presence for granted. He had always been there and he would always be there. The blessing of having a dad who was “always there” has made it difficult to think of him not being here. But the reality is beginning to set in; my earthly father is not an everlasting father. My earthly father is not my everlasting father. But neither do I need him to be, because I have an everlasting Father, who has loved me and given himself for me.

Jesus is deserving of the title “everlasting father” in the sense that it is through faith in Him, that we have the right to become “children of God” (John 1:12). Adam could be described as the father of the human race, unfortunately the father of the fallen human race. Jesus came to become the father, or head, of a new redeemed human race. We were all born naturally of Adam, but through faith in Jesus you can be born again as a child of God. With God as your father you will enjoy the blessing of living under the provision, protection, discipline, training, of the one perfect and powerful Father. He is a Father who both acts in love towards you and feels love for you.

“I will **dwell** among the people of Israel and will be their God.” Exodus 29:45
“I will walk among you, and be your God, and you will be my people.” Lev. 26:12
“...for I the Lord **dwell** in the midst of the people of Israel.” Num. 35:34
And I will **dwell** among the children of Israel and will not forsake my people Israel.”
– 1 Kings 6:13
“...where I will **dwell** in the midst of the people of Israel forever.” Ezekiel 43:7
“...and I will **dwell** in their midst forever.” Ezekiel 43:9
“Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for behold, I come and I will **dwell** in your midst, declares the Lord.” Zechariah 2:10
“And I will **dwell** in your midst, and you shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you.” Zechariah 2:11

“...and I will **be their God**.” Gen. 17:8
“...whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might **be their God**” Lev. 26:45
“...and they shall **be my people** and I will **be their God**” Jer. 24:7
“And I will **be their God**, and they shall **be my people**.” Jer. 31:3

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"And they shall be my people, and I will be their God." Jer. 32:38

"And they shall be my people, and I will be their God." Ezekiel 11:20

"...but that they may be my people and I may be their God" Ezekiel 14:11

"...and they shall be my people, and I will be their God." Ezekiel 37:23

"And they shall be my people, and I will be their God." Zechariah 8:8

(See other numerous occurrences of the phrase, "I will be your God":

Ex. 6:7; Lev. 11:45; 22:33; 25:38; Num. 15:41; Deut. 29:13; Jeremiah 7:23; 11:4; 30:22; Ezekiel 36:28)