

## 4 Jesus, Our Everlasting Father

*Series on Isaiah 9:6*

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**Bible Text:** Isaiah 9:6  
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We turn now to the reading of Isaiah 9:2-7 once again and I want to read three verses also from Isaiah 53. Isaiah 9:2-7.

2 The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. 3 Thou hast multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. 4 For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian. 5 For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire. 6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Then Isaiah 53:10-12.

10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him [that is, the Messiah, coming Messiah]; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. 11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. 12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

May God bless the reading of his sacred word.

Dear church family, Alexander the Great once had an old philosopher friend whom he met standing in a field intently looking at a large pile of bones. When he asked him what he was doing, the old man turned to Alexander and said, "I'm searching for the bones of your father, Philip, but I cannot seem to distinguish them from the bones of the slaves." The lesson, of course, is that death, death is the universal equalizer. From the greatest to the least, from the rich man to the poor man, from the most beautiful to the most plain, death is the universal equalizer.

Every one of us if the Lord tarries will face death. Death is no respecter of time or place. It strikes every minute of the day, every minute of the night. It claims its victims on land and on the sea, in the air, in the hospital bed, in the office, on the open road, on the sports field, even in the study. And every cutting edge of science is unable to deny it. Wonder drugs, intensive care, heroic measures, organ transplants, must all give way to the demands of death. Our last appointment in life is one that we have not made and yet we cannot avoid, but God knows the date, God knows the time, God knows the way. We can exercise regularly, we can eat nothing but health food, we can swallow vitamin pills, other food supplements daily, we can have regular medical check-ups, we can follow the best possible advice in micromanaging our lifestyle, yet the best we can do is maybe postpone a little while the inevitable. But the truth of the matter is, every 24 hours we live, we're 24 hours closer to our appointment on God's calendar book. So the only way to live and the only way to die is as we transition from 2020 to 2021, is to live in and out of and through and by and connected with Immanuel, God with us.

Spurgeon has this beautiful statement about this wonderful name and we've been looking at the names of Jesus in these weeks of Advent that are now past. He says, "It is hell's terror for Satan trembles at the sound of the name Immanuel. Let him come to you suddenly and do you but whisper that word, God with us, Immanuel, back Satan falls confounded, confused. God with us is the laborer's strength. How could he preach the gospel? How could he bend his knees in prayer? How could the missionary go out into foreign lands? The martyrs stand at the stake? The confessor own his master? How could men labor is that one word were taken away from them? Immanuel, God with us, is eternity's sonnet, heaven's hallelujah, the shout of the glorified, the song of the redeemed, the chorus of the angels, the everlasting oratorial of the great orchestra of the sky."

Immanuel, God with us. That's the answer for death. That's the answer for life. That's the answer for everything that has value in this life, and that's the answer we've been seeing in these weeks as we've walked our way through some glorious names in Isaiah 9:6. Surely, Immanuel also speaks into our lives that God is our everlasting Father and that's the name that we want to take up with you by God's grace this morning.

Isaiah 9:6 again, "unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and his name shall be called The everlasting Father." Well, this is quite a name. How do you understand this name? Jesus, the everlasting Father? I want to look at that with you this morning from the theme "Jesus, Our Everlasting Father." We'll look at him as the Father of eternity, as the everlasting Father, as the Father forever, and as the Father of the ages to come.

Now the question that immediately arises in our minds if we're at all theologically wired, is, "I thought the first person of the Trinity was the Father? How can Jesus be the everlasting Father? Is he somehow both the Son, second person of the Trinity, and the Father, the first person of the Trinity?" Well, of course, that would be heresy. That would be to deny the Trinity itself. That's not what this text is saying. In fact, Isaiah 9:6 is not talking about the relationship of the divine persons in the Trinity, it is simply underscoring this glorious truth that Jesus is the Father of eternity. It's saying in the same verse that he's both Son and Father, "unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." It highlights Jesus' equal status in the Godhead and his divine nature. It exclaims his eternal equality with God the Father and God the Spirit, his everlasting nature as Alpha and Omega. You see, Jesus is the only "physical God," if I can put that in quotation marks, that we will ever see. To see Jesus is to see the everlasting Father. "He who has seen me, Philip," John 14, "has seen the Father."

So everlasting Father does connect God the Son with God the Father. There's no separation between the two, no disconnecting, no untethering of Jesus from the Father. But this text is a challenge. Exactly how do we interpret it? I want to use just a little illustration this morning as a kind of paradigm to help you understand, also the struggles of a pastor when you approach a text like this. A few weeks ago, my wife and I just walked out of the building on this side and someone wanted to get back in the building but the door was locked and I had a key, but I didn't know if the key worked on that door. I knew it worked on the back door, so my wife was finagling around, she couldn't get it. I said, "Well, let me try." I tried it several different ways, just I couldn't get it, and then all of a sudden the door opened. It worked. You had to get it just right.

These words, the everlasting Father, we need to get them right so we don't fall into heresy on the one side, but we also need to get them right so we can drink of the amazing comfort on the last Sabbath of this year of what these words mean about who Jesus is for us. And so just like that key, you turn it one way, you turn it another until it works, we want to look at these four points this morning and we want to turn the key of God's word and unlock one aspect, another aspect, yet another, and yet another on this wonderful phrase "the everlasting Father." So first of all, this phrase has been translated in the four ways that are my points to you this morning in different translations. They've been translated "Father of eternity, everlasting Father," that's the King James translation, "Father forever, Father of the ages to come," and all four of those translations are accurate, are doable, are true to the original. So let's take this key now and let's unlock them one by one.

The first, then, is "unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: his name shall be called Father of eternity." Let's look at it that way, the child who's going to be born, this son who will be given, obviously referring to Jesus as we've seen, is not the product of eternity nor is he a child of eternity but he is the Father of eternity. That's the point. Now evolutionists would say, "Well, if you give enough time, millions, billions of years, anything can happen." That's the objection they always raise, right? "Given a long period of time, anything could happen. Jesus was an unusual human being," they say, "an

unusual man, but given enough time, you see, someone like him, he himself can develop and come on the scene, the human scene and be who he is." There's only one Jesus. They might even agree to that but he's not God. You see, but the Bible tells us that this holy being, the Lord Jesus Christ, who was born to the virgin Mary is a child, no, of eternity. No, he's the Father of eternity. He's not a product of eternity.

His name is everlasting Father. He's the only person who's ever lived before he was born. He has no beginning. His goings forth were from of old, says the prophet Micah, from eternity. His conception was not his inception. He's from eternity past. He always was. He always is. He shall always be. He never was not. Praise God, he always lives. He always lives from eternity past to eternity future. He never would have been called the everlasting Father if he is not eternal as the Father, and so though born of the virgin Mary he could say of himself, "Before Abraham was, I am." And John could say of him, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God."

So he's the Father of eternity, not a child of time. Nevertheless, something very amazing happened in Bethlehem 2,000+ years ago, the Father of eternity became a child of time and space. The Lord of history became the one who appeared in history. Can you imagine what that must have been like for Jesus? For the Father of eternity to step into time and space? For the eternal Son of God to become a creature bound to time and space? Maybe you've never thought about that but let me say it this way: how would you like to become a little earthworm? A little earthworm. Imagine spending, boys and girls, the whole of your life in just a little little patch of earth, only experiencing vibrations, not having a brain. You can't imagine even what a brain would be like, it's unthinkable to you. Well, in Bethlehem the unthinkable happened, the Father of eternity became a child of time. "Great, great," says the Apostle Paul, "is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh." He who is truly eternal God, one in essence with the Father and the Spirit, very God of very God, light of light, took upon himself our human nature from the virgin Mary, miraculously conceived by the overshadowing power of the Holy Spirit, and she gave birth to Jesus in a cattle stable, laying him in swaddling clothes, laying him in a manger even as he remained unchanged and undiminished in his deity.

We're so used to hearing about Christmas and the miracle of the Incarnation seldom penetrates us the way it should, but this is the miracle, the mystery, the wonder of all ages, the Prince of Glory laid as a babe in the manger, the infinite becoming bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, the Creator brought forth out of the creature, he who made the world and is above the world has come into the world. The immortal Son clothed with divine glory at the right hand of the Father chose the rags of mortality so that a way could go open to rend the elect from the claws of Satan. He whose dwelling was in the heaven of heavens was led down into the hellishness of this earth. The invisible God made himself visible. The eternal, a child of time.

I hope you understand, then, that quote I often say to you from Samuel Rutherford when he said, "My salvation is my Lord's second greatest miracle, the first being his Incarnation." I hope it makes sense to you, but I hope it goes further than that because,

you see, the fact that Jesus was willing to crawl on the ground as a worm and no man, to agonize for you, to die for you, dear believer, that fact ought to encourage you to come to him at all times, to trust him with your entire soul, with all your cares, to rest in him in your every need. And if you're unsaved, that fact ought to allure you to him. Does it do that? That he, the Father of eternity is willing to become a child of time, does it draw you to Jesus?

But if we struggle with that key a bit more, you see, we'll understand that there's another nuance to this phrase, "the everlasting Father," and that's this, that it speaks to us about the dimensions of life. He's not only the Father of eternity but, secondly, he's the everlasting Father. Now in the past weeks we've looked at the name Wonderful and we've said it takes care of the dullness of life. We've looked at the name Counselor which takes care of the decisions of life. We've looked at the name mighty God which takes care of the demands of life. But now we look at everlasting Father which takes care of the dimensions of life in this world.

Someone wrote these words, "I feel in this life as if I'm packed in a coffin." This life is very narrow. This life is very limited. Thomas Edison, the inventor of the electric lightbulb, said near the end of his life, "I feel like a small boy playing along a beach, picking up and examining a pebble here, another there, while the whole limitless expanse of the coastline and the ocean stretches out before me." Cecil Rhodes, the architect of British Colonialism in South Africa, said on his deathbed, "I've left so much undone." Undone. Isn't that the way you often feel? That's the way I feel a lot. Often in the middle of the night, I get up and I scratch out another, a book that needs to be written. I've got a list of things I want to do and I know if I live to be as old as Methuselah, which won't happen, I still won't get everything done. So much left undone. Our lives are so cramped and so often we feel, don't we, "I've done so little today. I've done so little this week. I've done so little in 2020." Where has the last year gone? Where has the decade gone? Where has our Sabbaths gone? And we're prone to say life is too circumscribed. We instinctively feel that there must be more to life than we know of it. We feel cramped in this world, and one reason why is because God has put eternity into our hearts. Instinctively we know that this life is not all there is and the Bible, of course, confirms it.

So in this life, we feel, may I say it this way, we feel like an animal in the zoo. You know, they're in cages. It's fascinating, of course, to see the animals there but as we look at the various animals, we also realize, don't we, boys and girls, that they really don't belong in the zoo. We don't come across lions in our normal daily experience and it's fascinating to see them in the zoo, but a lion doesn't belong in a zoo, does he? A lion wants to roam. He wants space. We can see sometimes great eagles behind the wire mesh in a zoo and that poor eagle is flying around in that little compound, but you know, if you let him go, he can fly up into the sky so high you can't see him. You know, you know, I know these animals aren't meant to be in captivity.

So in the human heart deep down, God has placed eternity. Eternity. That's how God has made us. There's a yearning. There's a yearning inside of us to be united to the living God. There's an emptiness without him. We want eternity to break into time. We want a

relationship with God that will expand us and that will be everlasting and that will be unlimited by space and be infinite in communion and fellowship and glory and beauty, and that will give us meaning and purpose and joy and fulfillment in life, and the amazing thing is it's happened. It happened at Bethlehem by Jesus confining himself in his human nature and paying for our sin, and obeying the law for us. He's opened the door for us for an infinite, eternal relationship with him, and in him, you see, we see the everlasting Father. In everything about him as you read the gospels, eternity is stamped upon him in every way.

I've been thinking about that actually. My wife and I right now are just halfway through the book of Luke in our daily readings together, and reading story after story after story about Jesus and how he thinks so counterculturally and thinks so much from the eternal perspective and his Father's eternal will, you see, he's the everlasting Father. He's so much above and beyond us and yet he stamps eternity on all that he does, and that resonates deep down with us when we feel like our lives are so short, so constricted, so narrow, so limited.

You see, if you're born again, you think exactly the opposite of the world. The world thinks, "If I give myself to Jesus and surrender my all to him, I will live a constricted life." That's nonsense. It's when you're in Christ that your life expands, that you're no longer just this 5 or 6 foot person in a small confined space and time, but when you're in Christ, you belong to the God of the universe. You belong to Jesus, the everlasting Father. Your comfort, your only comfort in life and death is that you don't belong to yourself but you belong to him, to him who is eternal.

From eternity past, he was there. He entered into covenant with his Father to save sinners just like you. Romans 5:12-21 says that Adam is our temporal father representing us in the covenant of works but, dear believer, Christ is your eternal Father representing you in the covenant of grace.

And isn't all of Jesus' words stamped with eternity? Even ordinary unconverted people could feel it. They said, "No man's ever spoken like this man. He doesn't speak like the scribes and Pharisees." He's the best preacher that ever lived. When he speaks, time stands still. Luke says the people hung upon, literally in the Greek, the people hung upon him hearing. You couldn't help but listen to Jesus. He spoke from the perspective of eternity.

Then his deeds. His deeds have the quality of eternity about them too, don't they? His values aren't the values of this world. This world has no time for the outcasts of society, for publicans and sinners, but Jesus had time for them. He sees them as sheep that are lost and in need of shepherding.

When Jesus looks at Herod's temple, is he impressed? Well, it was an impressive structure but that doesn't impress Jesus. He says, "One stone won't stand upon another." You see, he knew he was building an eternal home, a building much bigger and a better

temple, an everlasting temple for him to dwell in, the hearts of sinners, for his was a spiritual, eternal kingdom.

Everything about Jesus has this eternal stamp upon it. He looks at a lily and the sparrow that falls to the ground and he thinks about his eternal Father in heaven. Everything he touches, everything he talks about, everything brings a new dimension to life so that you truly find life, eternal life in Jesus when you find him. This is life eternal, to know God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent.

And so just the opposite of what the world thinks, you see. Unless you actually come into contact with this person, actually come into union with Jesus by faith and repentance, unless you're bought by God's grace to meet the Lord Jesus Christ, to come to know him, you have never truly lived. Jesus said, "I live. I have come that you might have life." Have you ever seen that? Has he ever spoken to you, as it were, "I don't know what you call life but it's not life when you're not in me. Here in your earthly existence due to your fallen paradise, due to your daily sin, you are trapped in time and space like a lion in his cage, you're trapped like a person in his coffin, but I have come to release you. I have come to give you life eternal. I am everlasting Father."

Oh, my friend, if you don't know Jesus, I don't say it to put you down, I say it to lift you up, I say it because I love your soul, you have not begun to live, you're just doing time here on earth, you're just killing time but Jesus says, "I have come that you might have life and that you might have it more abundantly." Don't you want that? Isn't there an emptiness inside of you that craves to have life more abundantly? And you see, that's exactly what happens when the Holy Spirit begins to work in us, when the everlasting Father Jesus begins to stamp eternity upon our consciences more tangibly, when eternity becomes real in the depths of our being, then we begin to see that we're sinners and that we're traveling to eternity and we have one never-dying soul created for eternity, and we hear those words so differently now, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

Jonathan Edwards was 13 years old and he wrote a bunch of resolutions in a diary and one of them was this, "O God, stamp eternity upon my eyes." But when the Lord begins to save you, it just won't be on your eyes, it'll be in your conscience, it'll be on your hands, on your feet. It'll be your whole being, your soul, your mind, your eyes, your feet, your desires, your will, your affections, your emotions. Oh, you say, "Lord, help me to live wholly and solely for thee. Help me to hate sin and to love Jesus and to live for eternity." This is the everlasting Father. He will teach you these things so that you see not just the things you see, and you see an unconverted person, you see a never-dying soul, you see it from an eternal perspective, you don't just live for the things of time and sense.

But then we turn that key again and it opens to a third meaning, a third translation, a Father of perpetuity, or you might say, a Father forever. A Father forever, "unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: his name shall be called a Father forever." Now when you read it this way, you see, then the emphasis falls not so much upon the fact of his eternal existence but on the thought of his being everlastingly fatherly to us and that's

a lovely thought, isn't it? That's a lovely thought. It's a mysterious thought too. "Unto us a child is born," God says and you picture Mary burdened with blessing bringing forth her baby. And then he says, "unto us a son is given," and you see God the Father holding out in his arms his only begotten, dearly beloved Son. Then you see Isaiah 700 years before it happened saying he's the Son of God and he's Mary's son both, "unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and his name shall be called Father forever."

Well, how is he Father forever to us? How is he fatherly to us? Well, he gives us life. He gives us life. He begets us by his Spirit. That's a whole other sermon actually. But in terms of his relationship to us, you see, he's a begetting fatherly Savior who has eternal life in himself, and he gives it to us through faith and repentance and by his Spirit. That's why he speaks so fatherly to his disciples. "Little children," isn't that fatherly, "I will be with you a little while longer," he says. "You'll seek me but as I said to the Jews, where I am going you cannot come." Isn't that fatherly?

Sometimes as a father when your children are very young, you've got to protect them from things that wouldn't be in their best interest to see or to experience or to know, and it's as if you say to them, "Little children, this isn't right for you yet. Maybe some day you can experience this." That's the kind of relationship Jesus has with his people. He gives them life and he gives them life to the degree that they can handle it. He said to his disciples, "Some things you can't handle now. Some things I'll tell you later." He's a father, you see. It's as if he says, "I'm going and you can't follow me now. I'm going to a place that you have not begun to dream of. I'm going to the cross to take the place of sinners, to take your place, to experience the anger of a holy God for your sins. I'm going to that terrible place where God in his mercy seems not to be found, and you can't follow me there. You couldn't survive it. You couldn't cope with it, little children. You cannot come. It's not your way but my way, little children, for you."

And you see, that's what takes us to Isaiah 53, those amazing words in verses 10 and 11. You see, it's not the Father dying on the cross here. The Father didn't die on that cross. Sometimes you hear people say foolish things like that, "Thank you, Father." I've heard a man say that in a prayer meeting. I'm so glad it wasn't our church. Saying, "Thank you, Father, for dying on the cross." The Father didn't die on the cross. The Son died on the cross. The Son died on the cross. Verses 10 and 11 speaks about the Lord bruising his Son, putting him to grief. And then we read this, "he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities."

I don't know if you've ever really meditated on these verses but they are profound, and let me just try to illustrate them for you, maybe we'll put the key into this verse as well. Say it's 4 o'clock in the morning. I'm talking now to you men who are fathers and your wife has just gone into labor, and maybe 12 hours later she eventually gives birth. It's been a long night. It's been a painful birth but she finally holds that little baby in her arms and by the side of the bed, you are that happy blessed father. You're beaming. You're saying, "That's my son. That's my daughter."



You see, that's really the picture Isaiah is using here. In a sense, Jesus is both fatherly and motherly to his church at the same time. In fact, Isaiah interestingly compares Jesus' love to his people twice in the book of Isaiah to a mother. Isaiah 49, "A mother may forget her sucking child, yet will not I forget thee." Isaiah 66, I believe, verse 13, he says, "As a mother comforteth you, so will I comfort you." You see, as a mother goes through this travail, this labor, and you pray, don't you, for her as a father, as a husband, "Help her through the hours of travail," and she goes through it and then birth happens and the baby is not stillborn but the baby lives, you're overwhelmed with joy. You see, Jesus compares himself to that. He says, "I shall see of the travail of my soul." It's a word used for a pregnant woman giving birth. And Jesus has no stillborn children. He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied. The sufferings of his soul upon the cross will give birth to the church, the militant church here, the triumphant church hereafter, the everlasting church because he's the everlasting Father.

Our fatherhood comes to an end and we die, but Jesus' fatherhood last forever. He's the everlasting Father and like a blessed and joyful father standing by, he looks at his church and he says, "This is my offspring. These are my sons. These are my daughters. I am their Father as their life-giver. I have earned the right to save them and I have saved them. I've brought them to faith. I'm the author and finisher of their faith." And one day he'll say with you too, dear believer, in that crowd, "Here am I, Father, and all those whom thou hast given me from eternity past. I have lost none." What a Father he is. He's Father forever and in that fatherhood, he not only brings us to life but he forgives us of our sins. "As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." He washes their sins away from the east to the west and the north to the south, and he throws them behind his Father's back into the sea of eternal forgetfulness.

And then he's fatherly also with regard to their sanctification. How fatherly he is toward us in purging us, in pruning us, in maturing us, one affliction after another. John Bunyan said, "When one trial doth me leave, another trial doth me seize." And from trial to trial, he trains us as a prophet teaching us, as a priest by his intercessory prayers, and by blessing us he keeps us in the palm of his hand, and especially as a fatherly king, he rules us, he delivers us, he preserves us. How wise he is in his rule, his governing. He's a wise ruler, gentle, patient, honest, just, persuasive, precious, loving, gracious. He knows how to correct us without destroying us. He's so fatherly. He's so fatherly in delivering us from Satan and sin and world and false doctrine and from ourselves.

You know, one of our forefathers said, "Jesus is so fatherly to me that when I'm tempted to sin, he removes the sin from me, and when the temptation is present, he removes the desire from me. He's protecting me like a father." In fact, he meets all your needs as a prophet, as a priest, as a king. Dear child of God, to save you not only but to keep you saved, to sanctify you. He's a Father forever. He's not going to let you go. He's going to keep you forever. No man can pluck you out of his hands.

But then there's one more turn of the key. One more, he's the Father of the ages to come. That's how you could translate this. John Calvin translates it this way actually. "Unto us a

child is born, unto us a son is given: and his name shall be called Father of the ages to come." Christmas is no utopian fairy story. If you're a believer, a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, it is going to be a utopian story ending for you. You will live happily ever after because he's the everlasting Father. That life which began once upon a time is going to end for all those who had their faith only in Christ, in everlasting happiness because his fatherhood never ends.

He's the Father of the ages to come and that fits in with verse 7, "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever." What a beautiful thing that is. If you're a father here on earth, you know what it was like when you had your first child. You couldn't quite put your feet in those shoes. It took a while to really believe you're a father and to really begin to exercise it and have some experience in being a father, and then you had more children, then maybe you had grandchildren and as you get older, the more and more fatherly you feel, don't you, because you get more experience. And now I feel fatherly to our theological students, I feel fatherly to you in a way I didn't when I was here 34 years ago, although some of you are much older than me. I said to one of our elderly friends recently, I said, "Well, I'm a senior now too." Well, that elderly lady said to me, "You're just a young kid yet." You see, because she's much older.

So there's all these degrees of fatherhood as you move through life but most fathers I think would feel like me, the older you get, the more fatherly you feel because dimensions of fatherhood just keep coming to you as you get older and the numbers increase, which is wonderful, and yet you realize you're insufficient for it and you've got so much more to learn about it, also from the fatherliness of Jesus. But you see, Jesus is perfect Father and all this fatherhood we experience in this life will all come to an end but his fatherhood never comes to an end. He's a Father for the ages to come, forever and ever. This is the Father you need. This Father who is connected to the first person of the Trinity irrevocably and exercises his fatherhood in relationship to that Father so that you receive really as a believer the fatherliness of the first person of the Trinity, the fatherliness of the second person of the Trinity, and as the Son sends the Spirit to indwell you and to sanctify you and to seal you and to comfort you and to sanctify you, the Spirit is fatherly to you as well. You really have a Triune fatherliness kind of God working in you the wonderful work of salvation, but it's possible, it's all possible through this father of the ages to come who's everlasting Father because of what he merited. He merited the right to be your Father.

So Jesus will never die again. He will never become childless in the age to come. He will never lose one of his own. There will be no empty chairs in heaven. He'll never un-father himself from you. Your union to him will never be annulled, dear believer, and you will never be able to un-child yourself from him. He's irrevocably your everlasting Father. Today, tomorrow, forever, he's always the same. You may always go to your fatherly Christ. He hears you 24/7, 365. He will always love you. He will always have compassion upon you as we just sung together. He will never reject you for he is your everlasting Father.

No father like him. The Jews were proud to say, "We have Abraham as our father," but Abraham had his shortcomings. Some people believe the church is their father but the church has its shortcomings. Other people have been disillusioned by their own earthly father but this everlasting Father, he will never disappoint you. You will spend eternity glorifying him. And what will that be like? Well, when Jesus comes and time is no more, it will be overwhelming to be in his fatherly presence. It will be a mixture of awe and joy and overpowering sweetness and amazing love. One forefather put it this way, "He is coming, he is coming. The Father, the everlasting Father is coming into his house." And then he pictured in his own mind what it would be like to enter in and said, "Each breath I drew let me into the new awe, the new joy, the overpowering sweetness. I was pierced through and through with the arrows of it. I was being unmade. I was no one. The earth, the stars, the sun, all that was or will be existing is all for his sake and he's coming. I cast down my eyes and then I looked, he is coming, the one who came to Bethlehem's manger is coming again."

And oh, then to worship him forever as my God and my Father and through him, the Triune God, fatherly in every one of their persons. Oh, to hear the sound of the trump full of glory, coming. He's coming. That's what the manger says. It's what the end of the year says. We hear his footsteps and when we cross the threshold into glory, it will be an eternal education in the fatherliness of our precious Lord and Savior. He will be fatherly to me forever and forever. But in that fatherliness in heaven, I will need no correction because I will be as holy as he is holy. He will have purified me. I will be sin free in Immanuel's land. That fatherliness will be eternally perfect and full of love and I will be able to respond to it with the fullness of my soul and my mind and my will and my affections forever. There will be no shortcoming of response in me.

He's the fatherly Lord of the world to come, from everlasting to everlasting. He is God and he is Father, and the more that we know of that fatherliness, the more we grow in that fatherliness in all eternity, expanding, our cups will always be full but our capacity will be always being augmented, and the more we grow, the more we'll be grateful forever and ever and ever, growing in the apprehension of the fatherliness of the Lord Jesus Christ. And the day is close. The future ages are upon us, as it were. Every time Christmas comes around, what do we say to each other? We say, "Wow, Christmas is upon us again? It's so quick." The Bible tells us the end of the ages is upon us. The Bible says we are nearer now to being with Christ in glory than when we first believed. Time is rolling on to timelessness. The everlasting Father, the Father of eternity, this Father forever, the Father of the future of the ages to come, the Lord Jesus Christ, he is coming. He's coming and he will be your Father forever and ever and ever.

The child that was born, the son that was given, my everlasting Father for a rebel, for a sinner like me? Yes. Yes, out of pure grace. And he can be your Father too. Oh, don't settle. As precious as your dad is, don't settle only for an earthly father. Come, come to this heavenly perfect Father. He's available. He invites you. Are you ready for him? If you were to die today, would you go to your everlasting Father? How are you going to enter

eternity? Are you going to enter like an orphan in a storm or are you going to enter everlastingly fathered by the Lord Jesus Christ? It's one or the other.

Satan, you see, the father of lies, has been very busy at work trying to overturn the biblical concepts of creation at the beginning of the world and the return of Christ at the end of the ages. Satan knows that if he can make creation look ridiculous in the eyes of men and the return of Christ look ridiculous in the eyes of men, he can keep from you the joy of the fatherliness of Jesus. He can create in you and the people of this world what is more and more common, the idea that this whole universe is just some kind of free-floating blob with no meaning at all. No beginning. No ending. And to have meaning, you need to look for the meaning within itself which is the essence of what philosophers call existentialism which is the prevailing philosophy of today. There's no authority. There's no set rule. There's no authoritative Scripture. Satan is clever. He wants to take all meaning out of this life but the Bible tells us this life has meaning, this life has purpose. The Bible says we have to look outside of this world to the one who made it, to the everlasting Father, to Jesus Christ, the only Savior and Lord, and he gives us meaning and purpose and joy and fulfillment to this brief life, and even more for the eternity to come.

So go to the Son of God, son of man, who was given for sinners like you, and entrust yourself now to him. Repent with all your sins before him. Believe in him alone. Rest your soul, encamp your soul at Calvary and find in his blood the ground for him to be your everlasting Father who will never fail you. And praise him for your eternal security in this everlasting Father, and say to him, "I thank thee so much, everlasting Father, for all thy fatherliness to me, merited by thee for me, embraced by faith, given by the Spirit so that I may say my comfort, my only comfort in life and death is that I no longer belong to myself but to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ whose name is everlasting Father." Amen.

*Great God of heaven, we thank thee so much for this glorious name, every acutely aware, Lord, that we've only scratched the surface of it. But oh, hasten the day where this mortality shall put on immortality and this corruption incorruption, that we shall ever be with the Lord, the everlasting Father. O let thy people be jealous of that day. May the worst day of our lives in the world's eyes, our death day, be the best day of our lives to transition into that perfect land of Beulah where our souls will be in thy presence worshipping thee, and one day our bodies as well, and growing, growing, growing in the preciousness and the awareness of the preciousness of thy everlasting fatherliness.*

*Lord Jesus, we thank thee so much for all that thou hast done for us to make this name not only possible but real in our lives, and we pray, persuade the unsaved in our midst not to live their lives like they're trapped in a zoo or in a coffin, confined, restricted, but help them by faith to turn the key in the door and to experience by Spirit-worked faith that wonderful wonderful joy that the door opens into the eternal fatherliness of our Lord and Savior. What a feast. What a glory and what a glory to come. O Father of the future ages, we thank thee for who thou art in Jesus' name. Amen.*