Our Everlasting Father

Introduction:

This is the third week of Advent and we have been following the theme found in **Isaiah 9:6 –**

> **For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**

This passage is referring to the Child who would be born centuries later – Jesus Christ. We are told that his name, Jesus, will be the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father and the Prince of Peace. Today we will look at Christ as our Eternal Father. Think about this for a moment; Jesus is named as the Everlasting or Eternal Father. This is to some degree an oxymoron; Jesus Christ as the Everlasting Father seems to be a contradiction. The Trinity tells us that God is one and yet three distinct divine persons - the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; these three are distinct yet coexist in unity, and are co-equal and co-eternal. In one sense Jesus can't be the Father and the Spirit can't be the Son and the Father can't be the Spirit. And yet there are aspects of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit overlapping within themselves because they are One. Do you understand my thinking?

So how do we interpret this passage for us today?

- Isaiah is describing the names of the child to be born and a name in itself is descriptive. The names of the Messiah express certain characteristics of his life on earth. In the context of the Everlasting Father; he is everlasting or eternal

  Psalm 72:17 His name shall endure forever; His name shall continue as long as the sun. And *men* shall be blessed in Him; All nations shall call Him blessed.

  We are told in **1 John 1:1-4 and 14 – "In the beginning was the Word (Jesus), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." … "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."(NKJV)**

- Certain translations render "Everlasting Father" as the *Father of the future world* – (Pater futuri sæculi; Vulgate). This implies that in the coming age, when a Child is born, he will be the father of many. This makes more sense to me and I can understand Jesus as the Everlasting Father in this light. When I understand Christ's title in this sense I am much less uncomfortable to call Jesus my Eternal Father. Isa 9:6 teaches us that Jesus is eternal and fatherly; he was in the

eternal beginning and involved in the creation of all things and he was the Child-born-Messiah who became the father of many children.

- Lastly, Isaiah tells us Jesus will have the name father and the characteristics that go with that title. Jesus himself said, "if you have seen me you have seen the father" and even more bewildering to the Jews "I and the Father are one."

Everlasting Father:

So this morning we will look a little deeper at the name of Jesus as Everlasting Father and discover some of his characteristics. It has been my experience than whenever I speak on the issue of fathers, there are varied responses, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. Personally, I had a good relationship with my Dad. Could it have been better, for sure, but he did his best as a husband and father toward us as a family. For some of us our relationship with Dad was absent or distant or even hostile; when we think of Dad maybe we would rather forget... Some others were adopted and others still were abused.

Whatever our circumstance with our earthly Father, the picture of our Heavenly Father is much different. One of the best passages of Scripture describing fatherhood is found in **Luke 15:11-32** – I want to specifically look at the Father and his reckless son.

Here is the parable Jesus tells... The son asks for an early inheritance and goes off into a far country and squanders all his money. He runs out of money and then guess what happens; he runs out of friends and ends up in a pigpen, eating from the slop that is fed to the pigs. This is not a good place for a Jewish boy. At the lowest point of his life he starts thinking, "How many of my father's hired men have food to spare? And here I am, starving to death. I will set out and go back to my father."

Let's stop for a moment and think about this. Would your earthly father welcome you back after you asked him for your early inheritance? That is like asking for your dad to die so that you can selfishly receive from all his hard work. Why would this young man in the parable he be thinking this way? How could He think such thoughts? After being so selfish and wasteful why does he think about home? How could he come to that conclusion? Here is what I think.

- He knew the character of his father.
- He knew that his father was compassionate.
- He knew that the character of the father did not change.

Their relationship might never be the same but he knew that the father was full of forgiveness and mercy. To some degree, all he had left was to hope that his father would welcome him home. Why did he think this way; because he grew up in the house of his father?

So the story carries on… The prodigal says, "I will say to my father, 'I have sinned against heaven and against you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired men." He had lots of time to think about his speech and to rehearse it on the way home. Sometimes that is just like us. We have to get it all right and in order so that the Father will accept us. He had it down pat.

But before he could even get a word out his father had run to him, thrown his arms around him and kissed him.

Our Everlasting Father is compassionate:

Every so often we see or hear about a father and son being reunited, especially when one is sent off to war. The reunion is full of hugs and kisses and tears and sometimes full of surprise. I love watching those moments unfold as it touches a place deep in my heart. As I have thought about this passage and prayed for the Lord's wisdom and discernment, two characteristics of our Messiah – Everlasting Father – come to mind. My hope is that your heart will be touched deeply as you consider yourself being reunited with the Everlasting Father.

One of the biggest aspects of the Everlasting Father I see in **Luke 15** is this – the father was filed with compassion as his son returned home. This compassion as the Scripture states was overwhelming for the son and yet the son went ahead and gave his rehearsed speech. The beautiful part of this parable is that our Eternal Father always leaves the door open for us to come home again. No matter how far we distance ourselves from God, he is waiting to throw his arms around you.

Throughout the gospels we find that Jesus was full of compassion.

"But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with COMPASSION for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd." Matthew 9:36 (NKJV)

"Now a leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, "If You are willing, You can make me clean." Then Jesus, moved with COMPASSION, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed." Mark 1:40-41 (NKJV)

Compassion defined: sympathy for the suffering of others… This is how Jesus – our Everlasting Father – feels towards you and me. When Jesus sees us in our distress he has compassion on us. When He sees the mess we have made of our lives he is moved with compassion. When life has been hard and disaster after disaster has followed us around – our Everlasting Father, our Messiah Jesus Christ is moved with compassion. The compassion of Jesus moves him to guide and provide and rescue and restore our lives in him; just like we learned last week as we saw Jesus as our Mighty God.

We live in a broken world where we can experience broken relationships. Our hearts can be broken and bruised; sometimes physically and sometimes emotionally. We live in a world where we can get hurt. That is why I am so glad that there is our Everlasting Father who will have compassion on me. I am glad Jesus is moved because of my suffering.

Our Everlasting Father is celebratory:

Another aspect of the Everlasting Father I see in **Luke 15** is this – the father was filed with celebration as his son returned home. The happiness and joy of the father was overwhelming for the son (and his elder brother). The wayward son was clothed with a robe of distinction, he received a ring of authority and sandals for his feet (servants went bare feet). You know, the beautiful part of this parable is that our Eternal Father always leaves the door open for us to come home again. No matter how far we distance ourselves from God, he is waiting to throw his arms around you.

Oftentimes when I am disobedient or distant from God I struggle with returning to my Father, just like the prodigal son. I have to clean myself up or rehearse my speech so that God will set fit to accept me back into fellowship. Can you relate to this?

Our Eternal Father – as seen in Jesus Christ – has quite the opposite response to sinners or saints returning home. In the case of **Luke 15**, he puts on a feast and celebrates his son who was as good as dead but is now alive. Now there is music and dancing in the house of the father.

Do we have a picture of our Everlasting Father celebrating our return to him or do we see him as hard and demanding?

In Conclusion:

Jesus is our Eternal Father. He is always there for you – He will not abandon you. His character is such that he is filled with compassion for us and the difficult circumstances that we find ourselves in. As well, when we return to him in humble repentance he wants to throw a party and celebrate. He is both compassionate and celebratory towards us his children.

The beauty of the third Sunday of Advent – Our Everlasting Father – is amazing. Jesus came to earth, the Incarnate Son of God, to seek and save sinners like us and to turn us into saints. His compassion identifies with our brokenness and he celebrates our lives as well enter into his party. We are to be clothed with his robe of righteousness and to display our ring of authority as his children and we are to wear the sandals provided for us so proving to be his sons and his daughters.

Application:

My Child,

You may not know me, but I know everything about you. I know when you sit down and when you rise up. I am familiar with all your ways. Psalm 139:1-3

Even the very hairs on your head are numbered. Matthew 10:29-31

For you were made in my image. Genesis 1:27

In me you live and move and have your being… For you are my offspring. Acts 17:28

I knew you even before you were conceived. Jeremiah 1:4-5

I chose you when I planned creation. Ephesians 1:11-12

You were not a mistake, for all your days are written in my book. Psalm 139:15-16

I determined the exact time of your birth and where you would live. Acts 17:26

You are fearfully and wonderfully made. Psalm 139:14

I knit you together in your mother's womb. Psalm 139:13

And brought you forth on the day you were born. Psalm 71:6

I have been misrepresented by those who don't know me. John 8:41-44

I am not distant and angry, but am the complete expression of love. 1 John 4:16

And it is my desire to lavish my love on you. 1 John 3:1

Simply because you are my child and I am your Father. 1 John 3:1

I offer you more than your earthly father ever could. Matthew 7:11

For I am the perfect father. Matthew 5:48

Every good gift that you receive comes from my hand. James 1:17

For I am your provider and I meet all your needs. Matthew 6:31-33

My plan for your future has always been filled with hope. Jeremiah 29:11

Because I love you with an everlasting love. Jeremiah 31:3

My thoughts toward you are countless as the sand on the seashore. Psalms 139:17-18

And I rejoice over you with singing. Zephaniah 3:17

I will never stop doing good to you. Jeremiah 32:40

For you are my treasured possession. Exodus 19:5

I desire to establish you with all my heart and all my soul. Jeremiah 32:41

And I want to show you great and marvelous things. Jeremiah 33:3

If you seek me with all your heart, you will find me. Deuteronomy 4:29

Delight in me and I will give you the desires of your heart. Psalm 37:4

For it is I who gave you those desires. Philippians 2:13

I am able to do more for you than you could possibly imagine. Ephesians 3:20

For I am your greatest encourager. 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

I am also the Father who comforts you in all your troubles. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

When you are brokenhearted, I am close to you. Psalm 34:18

As a shepherd carries a lamb, I have carried you close to my heart. Isaiah 40:11

One day I will wipe away every tear from your eyes. Revelation 21:3-4

And I'll take away all the pain you have suffered on this earth. Revelation 21:3-4

I am your Father, and I love you even as I love my son, Jesus. John 17:23

For in Jesus, my love for you is revealed. John 17:26

He is the exact representation of my being. Hebrews 1:3

He came to demonstrate that I am for you, not against you. Romans 8:31

And to tell you that I am not counting your sins. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19

Jesus died so that you and I could be reconciled. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19

His death was the ultimate expression of my love for you. 1 John 4:10

I gave up everything I loved that I might gain your love. Romans 8:31-32

If you receive the gift of my son Jesus, you receive me. 1 John 2:23

And nothing will ever separate you from my love again. Romans 8:38-39

Come home and I'll throw the biggest party heaven has ever seen. Luke 15:7

I have always been Father, and will always be Father. Ephesians 3:14-15

My question is… Will you be my child? John 1:12-13

I am waiting for you. Luke 15:11-32

Love, Your Dad
Almighty God

* Words paraphrased from the Holy Bible ©1999-2008 FathersLoveLetter.com