

Everlasting Father

Isaiah 9.6

Intro – Various rulers, kings, and presidents throughout history have had different sorts of relationships with their children.

- I've been re-reading William Manchester's biography of Winston Churchill. His father was a very powerful man in British politics himself and apart from some foolish mistakes and a debilitating illness probably would have become prime minister himself. But he basically ignored his two sons.
- In recent years, we've seen the Clintons, the Bushes, and the Obamas have a "hands off the kids" policy of protectiveness for their children.
- Centuries back, some parental relationships among rulers were more complex. Herod the Great of Bible times had 4 of his own sons murdered because he was paranoid that one of them would steal his throne.
- Other rulers have used their power to enrich their children.
- Perhaps one of the most endearing images of "access" to power is the photo of little –John F. Kennedy Jr. peeking out from within the presidential desk in the oval office. One of the White House staffers at the time, Preston Bruce, tells how John Jr. would hide under there, and that sometimes when the president needed to get down to business Bruce would have the job of dragging him out of there. Talk about access to power!
- But, if you really want to talk about power, talk about access, talk about privilege, what if the ruler of the universe was your dad? That is essentially what the Bible calls Jesus!
- Our text for this morning is **Isaiah 9.6-7** and we are going to focus on this specific title given for the coming Messiah: EVERLASTING FATHER.

Isaiah 9:6-7

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.
⁷Of 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.

Transition – This morning as we consider this title for Jesus, EVERLASTING FATHER, we are going to begin with 3 basic truths:

- Jesus is eternal &
- Jesus is infinite
- And we are NOT!

And then we are going to focus on 2 questions:

- How is Jesus our “Father”?
- How does Jesus’ “fatherly eternity” affect our everyday, time bound lives?

1. Jesus is eternal!

- a. The Hebrew word for “everlasting” basically means eternal, or more literally: time beyond our comprehension.
- b. All of these titles for the coming Messiah given by Isaiah: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace have to do with the coming reign of the Messiah, His rule over the people of God and ultimately the world.
 - i. That is very clear in the context:
 - **verse 6** – “the government shall be upon His shoulders”
 - **verse 7** – “the increase of His government...” “on the throne of David...”
 - These are all kingly titles that describe the glorious character of the ultimate Ruler!
 - As WONDERFUL COUNSELOR Jesus reigns with wisdom.
 - As MIGHTY GOD Jesus reigns with almighty power.
 - As EVERLASTING FATHER Jesus reigns as a dynasty of One that will last forever and ever.
 - As PRINCE OF PEACE Jesus reigns with peace and grace not just with power.
- c. And this term “everlasting” provide the security that there will never be one to replace Jesus on the throne of the universe! He cannot be overthrown! Israelites reading Isaiah would have longed for a stable monarchy. They would have tired of the continual transitions of power. Isaiah 1.1 mentions just in the years of his ministry there were 4 different kings. But Jesus offers a reign that never ends.
- d. From the Jewish perspective this would have been a forward looking title for their coming Messiah. Once He came and established His kingdom, it would never end. But from a Christian, New Testament perspective, we are obligated to consider the eternity of Jesus in the sense that He both has always existed and will always exist. So to begin to get our minds around this, let’s take a look at **John 8.58**. The opponents of Jesus are questioning Him and comparing Him to Abraham, the “father” of the Jews. And then we have Jesus’ reply...

John 8:58 - Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am."

- e. After this, the Jews picked up stones to throw at Jesus and kill Him. They understood that Jesus is claiming to be pre-existent to Abraham.
- f. But not only that by using the words “I am” Jesus is referencing the divine name for God, “I AM”. He is claiming eternity and divinity! Jesus is claiming to have no beginning or end, He is just “I AM”.
- g. **Illustration** – Of course, it is impossible for us to get our minds around the idea of eternity. But here is an illustration that Charles Spurgeon used:
Just imagine for a moment a little child at the knee of an elderly grandparent and interested in all their stories. “Tell me about the ‘olden days’ Grandpa!” “Tell me about when you were a little girl, Grandma!” If the little one is 4 years old, an 80 year old would have lived 20

times longer than that little one.

But at the same time, think about that grandparent sitting under an old oak tree. Think about how many storms have passed over that tree, how many generations have come and gone since that oak tree was an acorn. An oak tree that is really old may live to be 4 or 5 times older than an 80 year old.

And then think about the soil that the oak tree is growing in. How many centuries of leaves rotting and worms eating.

And then think about the bedrock underneath the soil. Consider all the stories that those rocks could tell all the way back to when "God created the heavens and the earth".

Old is relative isn't it? Just the other day, we were talking about someone who had sent a Christmas card, and someone said, "Man, they were old when we were kids!" And of course they weren't really that old. But if you think about a 4 year old and an 80 year old, then the 80 year is old. But not compared to a tree or a rock! And compared to God, compared to Jesus the most ancient bedrock is practically embryonic! Jesus is eternal!

Transition – And then by using this title for deity, "I Am", Jesus is also claiming other attributes of God for Himself. One that is related to eternity is this...

2. Jesus is infinite & unlimited!

- a. Not only is Jesus unlimited in time, He is unlimited in power, knowledge, and wisdom.
- b. Just think about it, for a being to exist eternally, forever and ever requires that that being be infinitely powerful to sustain themselves.
- c. You know how the American experiment is based upon the idea of a limited government. We don't want the government to be in every corner of our lives.
- d. But with Jesus that is different. When He reigns on the earth, there will be no limit to His rule.
- e. And when He reigns in a heart, there should be not limit to His rule.
- f. **Transition** – There are some great benefits to serving an eternal, infinite, unlimited sovereign! We will get to those in a moment, but first as we consider that Jesus is eternal and that He is infinite and unlimited we also need to remember that...

3. WE ARE NOT!

- a. It is self evident that we are not eternal and we are not infinite. Jesus is independent of us. He does not need us. But we are utterly dependent. We depend on Him for everything.
- b. We are not just limited in time, we are limited in power, influence, knowledge, skills, EVERYTHING! But just as an example, listen to this quote on our limitation in time from A.W. Tozer:
"The days of the years of our lives are short! Life is a short and fevered rehearsal for a concert we cannot stay to give. Just when we appear to have gained some proficiency, we are forced to lay our instruments down." (Knowledge of the Holy, pg. 52)
- c. **Application** - As we consider the eternity of Jesus Christ, we cannot avoid the fact that we are not immortal. And perhaps one of the most important things that I can say as your pastor is to simply, but bluntly say that your days are numbered! No matter how young we are, there is a limit to our lives.
Which means that we need to be prepared to meet the Lord. We are accountable to our Maker and we have failed the test! We have loved ourselves instead of God; we have lived

in selfishness, anger, and rebellion against Him. We probably have a hard time taking our sinfulness seriously enough. But when the end of our days comes, we will understand the gravity of our sins as we stand before the Judge.

And Jesus Christ has made a way for us to be pardoned of sin. Jesus paid the severe cost of the cross so that our sins could be forgiven. The only way to be prepared for eternity is by faith. When we believe that Christ died for us, and receive Him into our lives, then we also receive forgiveness of sin AND eternity in fellowship with God!

- d. **Transition** – So as we see Jesus as the “Everlasting Father”, we need to submit to His unlimited rule in every corner of our lives, and we must prepare ourselves for eternity by faith in Him! But then we might ask...

4. How is Jesus our “Father”?

- a. First of all, we need to recognize that for us to call Jesus “Father” feels a bit strange because since the coming of Jesus and the revelation of the Trinity in the New Testament, we know Jesus as the Son of God. When we refer to the Trinity as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, it feels awkward to think of the Son, as Father. But it would not have felt that way to those Israelites who first read this title of the Messiah.
- b. Again, they would have been thinking in the context of monarchy. The kings of Israel and other great men were sometimes referred as “father”. We have something similar to this in our vernacular when we speak of the “founding fathers” of our nation.
- c. So to say that the Messiah would be the “Everlasting Father” is to say that He will eternally reign with gracious paternal benevolence.
- d. Calling Jesus “Everlasting Father” also reminds us that we are dependent on Him like a little child. When we receive spiritual nourishment, it is from His hand. If we are blessed with provision, it is given by Jesus, our Father. And we are born into the family by His work on the cross and His Word awakening our hearts.
- e. **Transition** – So now we need to conclude with...

5. How does Jesus’ “fatherly eternity” affect our everyday, time bound lives?

- a. When John Newton, the author of Amazing Grace, preached on this passage, he pointed out that to be related to the one who is eternal and infinite and is the rightful Sovereign of all that exists is a powerful thing!
- b. Think about the SECURITY that this brings! Right now, the world is on pins and needles as power transitions in North Korea. Transitions from one dynasty to another in the ancient world were unsettling and often bloody. But Jesus will reign over His kingdom forever and ever!!! That is real security! You and I are in His hands! We are servants of His kingdom, there is no need for anxiety or fear!
- c. Also, think of the RIGHTS to come with being a child, an heir. We talked at the beginning of this message about how little JFK Jr. had access to his father’s office and desk, more or less as a playground. Think about the privilege of being one of the little ones of the King!
 - i. We have the access of prayer.
 - ii. We have the protection of His angel warriors.
 - iii. We have the authority of His message.
- d. And then, all that Jesus is for us, He is ETERNALLY. If He died for us on the cross, then if we have received Him, we cannot lose His favor; we cannot escape from His grace! Listen to...

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 - ¹⁶Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, ¹⁷comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.

- e. God provides this eternal comfort to our souls because of Jesus Christ!
- f. And then one other thing that comes with having a father is work! You hang around our house long enough and you're going to get put to work. And we are responsible to carry out Jesus' work in the world. But now listen to this...

Matthew 28:18-20 - ¹⁸And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

- g. We have the authority of Jesus behind us to do His work "unto the end of the age". The batteries are never going to run out on this power source!

Conclusion – So, this title of Jesus "Eternal Father" calls us to...

- Acknowledge the glory of His eternity and...
- yield to His loving, fatherly leadership in our lives.

It compels us to...

- Find our security in Jesus and His eternal reign.
- It calls us to yield ever portion of our hearts affections to Him and every facet of our daily lives to His authority.

As Everlasting Father, Jesus provides access to the heart of the King of the universe, and we should lay claim to that access by prayer.

As Everlasting Father, Jesus provides everlasting comfort. He is the only one who can lift our time bound eyes to the horizons of eternity and show us hope in His presence.

And as Everlasting Father, Jesus stands behind the work of the church with authority and power and presence until the end of the age! We can count on His grace and power because it is enough and because He is the Everlasting Father!