

Pentecost — Who's the Daddy?

Romans 8:14-17

For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

I am a dad. I am not an ideal dad. I am not always 'there' for my kids. I get tired, distracted, stressed, grumpy, overcome with worry on occasions. When I get tired the quality of attention that I give drops massively.

On the other hand... I love my boys. I love reading stories with them, playing hide and seek, or giving them piggy back rides. I love teaching board games to them too, and the swelling noise around the table as they get into the game. I like sitting and drawing with them — dinosaurs, animals, time-machines, spaceships.

In Mark 14, in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus addressed his Father as *Abba*. It's Aramaic, and understood to be a familiar, intimate version of Father — *Av*. He is calling God 'Daddy'.

In Romans 8:15 Paul says that by having the spirit of God we have a special relationship with God. We get to call God 'Daddy' too. He repeats exactly this point in Galatians 4. He assumes that both Roman and Galatian Christians know Jesus addressed the creator as 'Daddy'.

In *all the good ways that this implies*, God wants our relationship with him to be that of Father (or parent) and child. This includes accepting and receiving God's unconditional love. That we are fearless: neither fearing God, nor anything else, because God's love drives out our fear. Joyful, because wholesome relationships are joyful. Intimate and honest. And probably including laughter, too!

The relationship includes learning wise living from our 'Daddy Father', being held to account by our 'Daddy Father', and knowing that our 'Daddy Father' wants the very best for us and of us, he wants us to be our best, just the way that I want my boys to make the most of themselves and am proud of their achievements.

Most of all, that we talk to our 'Daddy Father' regularly.

Sometimes parent and child relationships are less than ideal — and we can carry those experiences of human fathers into our expectations of God if we are not careful.

But the overwhelming message of the whole New Testament is that of God wanting us to know him, intimately — God wants to restore that loving 'parent and child' relationship with each of us, and by extension to see ourselves as brothers and sisters with each other.

Don't settle for less!

All blessings,

Tim.

See you on the Green 12.30 Sunday for our Jubilee Prayer & Praise