

Sermon followed by Service

June 16, 2024

Romans 8:14

We Have the Best Father!

“My dad is bigger than your dad ... my dad is smarter than your dad ... my dad is richer than your dad.” You’ve heard it. So who has the best father? Who wins the “best father” contest? We win! We have the best Father!

Why? We have God as our Father! How can that be? What makes us God’s children? Some people would say everybody is a child of God; but God doesn’t say that. Some would say that everyone who does good is a child of God; but God doesn’t say that. So whom does God say are his children? **“To all who receive Jesus, to those who believe in his name, he gives the right to become children of God - children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.”** Born of God, made alive with Jesus, believing in Jesus as your Savior, God calls you his children. That’s why we get to say: “I have the best Father.”

“I have the best father.” For some people, those are fighting words, words to start a fight. For us, “we have the best Father” are fighting words, words to get us through the fight. In our lesson Paul points us to our Father to make us strong for when evil attacks; and evil will attack. The forces of evil out there (the forces that put the thorns and the nails, the spit and the hurt on God’s Son Jesus) are working to put the hurt on you as

God's children. So many of you could talk about how it hurts when you ask family and friends to join you with Jesus, and they will not. Instead, you see the smirks, the looks; you hear the words; all aimed to hurt you, as if doing God's thing were somehow evil. We could share with each other how that hurt, or just the fear of that hurt, sometimes keeps us from living, doing, speaking up as a child of God. Yes, evil is waging its war against us, and it hurts. So Paul points us to the Father to make us strong for the fight.

As God's children that's not the only fight we face. Evil isn't just out there; evil wages war in here, too. You know that fight, that hurt; you learn it the hard way over and over again. On Father's Day, you want to do right by Dad, but you mess up. As a Father you get the special card, the special kiss, but then you blow it - someone tests your patience and you blow up on the people you love, or maybe just as bad, you "cave man" with your video games or screen instead of loving the people God gave you to love. You know the hurt - it doesn't matter whether you're father, mother, husband, wife, child, or feeling all alone - we want to love our family like our Father in heaven loves us, but our impatience, anger, selfishness fight against us and we blow it. Like Paul said: **"The good I want to do, I do not; the evil I don't want to do, I keep on doing. What a wretch, what a wreck, what a ruin am I."**

At those times, what kind of Father do you need? Or let me ask it a different way - what kind of father don't you need? As a child, when you mess up - whether you spill the milk or split your brother's head - when you mess up and you know you did wrong

and it hurts - what kind of father don't you need? You don't need a father yelling: "Why can't you get anything right?" You don't need a father threatening: "You better get it right or else." When the evil out there hurts your heart in here, what kind of father don't you need? You don't need a heartless father with no better answer than bossing: "Get tough and get over it." This world has its share of those fathers. We need better. What we need is a caring Father to make us strong; a loving Father to forgive us and make us right. And we have that kind of Father! **"For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.'"**

When the Holy Spirit made you alive as God's child he didn't point you to your Father and say: "You better get it right or else." Instead he pointed you to the God Most High, the God Most Holy and Powerful; and he put it into your heart that you get to call him: "Father." Not "Sir." But "Father." With our Father who art in heaven, you get to be like that hurting child who runs to dad: "Dad, I'm sorry. Dad, I hurt." You get to be that child who knows everything will be all right in dad's arms. That's the kind of Father you have.

Think of what that means. When the evil inside you gets the best of you - when you feel like a wretch with guilt - you have a Father you can go to and say: "Father, I'm sorry" and no matter what you have done your Father will hold you close and say to you: "My son, my daughter ... I love you no matter what you have done. No matter what you have done, Jesus died for your sin; he paid for your sin. With Jesus, it's gone, forgotten.

With Jesus, you're forgiven. You're right by me." That's the Father you have in heaven.

And when the evil out there tears you down ... when your world is falling apart, turning against you ... you have a Father you can cry to: "Father, where are you? Father, why? Father, how long?" And even if you hurt and cry and carry on way more than someone thinks you need to, your Father takes you in his arms and dries your tears: "You know who I am; no matter how bad things look, I'm still God. And - don't you forget it - you're my daughter, my son. I'll make things right for you." That's the Father you have for you in heaven.

To him you can pray: "Father." You can pray: "Father, thy will be done" without fearing his will. You can pray: "Father, forgive us our trespasses." You can pray: "Father, deliver us from evil." You can pray: "Father," knowing your Father who art in heaven will work his will for you - he will forgive; he will deliver you.

Sounds good, doesn't it? But our lesson doesn't stop there. Why not? Because praying "Abba, Father" doesn't stop all the evil; and our Father's smile doesn't stop all the hurt. You know that, don't you? But your Father who art in heaven has something more for you. Paul says: "**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.**" Think about it - as the children of God, you are heirs of God! With Jesus you get to share in the glory of God. With Jesus you get to share in the home, the heaven of

God. Imagine a life safe and secure from evil; no evil inside or out. Imagine a life free from sickness and hurt. Imagine a life where everything you think is right, everything you do works right, every word out of your mouth sounds right - that's the life your Father has for you! And your Father doesn't just say: "I love you; I want the best for you." Your Father is the God who can make what he wants for you to be true for you!

So let the world argue about who's the biggest, best, richest, smartest. We have the best - our Father who art in heaven! Amen.

June 15 & 16, 2024

THE SERVICE

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... we take a break from our walk with “Daniel in the Lion’s World” to soak in the promise of being a child of our Father who art in heaven.

OPENING HYMN (SUNDAY)

“Dearest Jesus, We are Here”

Hymn 648 vs. 1-4

Dearest Jesus, we are here, gladly your command obeying;
with this child we now draw near in response to your own saying
that to you it shall be given as a child and heir of heaven.

Lord, your Word is clear and plain, and we would obey it duly:
“He who is not born again, heart and life renewing truly,
born of water and the Spirit, can my kingdom not inherit.”

Therefore we have come to you, in our arms this infant bearing.
Shine your heav’nly light anew — let this child, your mercy sharing,
in your arms be shielded ever, yours on earth and yours forever.

Gracious Head, your member own; Shepherd, take your lamb and feed it;
Prince of Peace, make here your throne; Way of Life, to heaven lead it.
Precious Vine, let nothing sever from your side this branch forever.

HOLY BAPTISM (SUNDAY)

CW p. 151

**+ Theodore August Gough +
Son of Lee & Kristen Gough**

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

CONFESSION

Our Savior Jesus Christ commanded Baptism when he said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

All of us are born into this world with a deep need for Baptism. From our parents we inherit a sinful nature; we are without true fear of God and true faith in God and are condemned to eternal death. But while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. He took away our sin by giving his life on the cross. In Baptism, he clothes us with the robe of his righteousness and gives us a new life. We recall what Baptism means for our daily lives:

Baptism means that the sinful nature in us

**should be drowned by daily sorrow and repentance,
and that all its evil deeds and desires be put to death.**

It also means that a new person should daily arise

to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

As baptized children of God, we confess our sins:

Holy God, gracious Father,

I am sinful by nature

and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words, and actions.

I have not loved you with my whole heart;

I have not loved others as I should.

I deserve your punishment both now and forever.

But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins

with his innocent suffering and death.

Trusting in him, I pray: God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Silence for meditation and reflection

God saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit and united us to the death and resurrection of Jesus. Every day God forgives your sins, removes your guilt, and strengthens you to defeat Satan's power. His promise is for you and your children, and he will never forsake you. Your sins are forgiven. You are clothed with Christ. You are at peace with God now and forever.

Amen.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

The Gospel according to St. Mark:

People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.

Theodore August Gough, I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Receive the sign of the cross on the head and heart T to mark you as one redeemed by Christ the crucified.

The almighty God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has given you the new birth of water and the Spirit and has forgiven all your sins. May he strengthen you with his grace all the days of your life. Peace be with you.

Let us pray.

We give thanks, most merciful Father, that you have received *Theodore* as your own *child* and made *him* a member of Christ's body, the church.

Now, we pray, grant to *him* and to all your church on earth that, being dead to sin, we may live to righteousness and, being buried with Christ into his death, we may also share in his resurrection, so that, with all your saints, we may inherit eternal life; through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

HYMN (SUNDAY)

“See This Wonder in the Making”

Hymn 646

See this wonder in the making: God himself this child is taking
as a lamb safe in his keeping, his to be, awake or sleeping.

Miracle each time it happens as the door of heaven opens
and the Father beams, “Belovèd, heir of gifts a king would covet!”

Far more tender than a mother, far more caring than a father,
God, into your arms we place *him/her/them*,
with your love and peace embrace *him/her/them*.

Here we bring a child of nature; home we take a newborn creature,
now God’s precious son or daughter, born again by Word and water.

HYMN (SATURDAY)

“God’s Own Child, I Gladly Say It”

Hymn 679

God’s own child, I gladly say it: I am baptized into Christ!
He, because I could not pay it, gave my full redemption price.
Do I need earth’s treasures many? I have one worth more than any
that brought me salvation free, lasting to eternity!

Sin, disturb my soul no longer: I am baptized into Christ!
I have comfort even stronger: Jesus’ cleansing sacrifice.
Should a guilty conscience seize me since my baptism did release me
in a dear forgiving flood, sprinkling me with Jesus’ blood?

Satan, hear this proclamation: I am baptized into Christ!
Drop your ugly accusation, I am not so soon enticed.
Now that to the font I've traveled, all your might has come unraveled,
and, against your tyranny, God, my Lord, unites with me!

Death, you cannot end my gladness: I am baptized into Christ!
When I die, I leave all sadness to inherit paradise!
Though I lie in dust and ashes faith's assurance brightly flashes:
Baptism has the strength divine to make life immortal mine.

There is nothing worth comparing to this lifelong comfort sure!
Open-eyed my grave is staring: even there I'll sleep secure.
Though my flesh awaits its raising, still my soul continues praising:
I am baptized into Christ; I'm a child of paradise!

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, your mercies are new every morning;
and though we deserve only punishment, you receive us as your children
and provide for all our needs of body and soul. Grant that we may heartily
acknowledge your merciful goodness, give thanks for all your benefits, and
serve you in willing obedience; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and
forever. **Amen.**

FIRST READING

Titus 3:4–7

But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us,
not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.

He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,
whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so
that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the
hope of eternal life.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND READING*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.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION*1 John 3:1*

Alleluia. See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Alleluia.

GOSPEL*Luke 15:11–32*

Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them.

“Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

“When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’ So he got up and went to his father.

“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

“The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

“But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.

“Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. ‘Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’

“The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’

“ ‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ ”

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise be to you, O Christ!**

HYMN OF THE DAY

“Baptized into Your Name Most Holy”

Hymn 680

Baptized into your name most holy, O Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
I claim a place, though weak and lowly,
among your saints, your chosen host.
Buried with Christ and dead to sin, your Spirit now shall live within.

My loving Father, there you took me to be henceforth your child and heir.
My faithful Savior, there you let me the fruit of all your sorrows share.
O Holy Spirit, comfort me when threat'ning clouds around I see.

My faithful God, you fail me never; your promise surely will endure.
O cast me not away forever if words and deeds become impure.
Have mercy when I come defiled; forgive, lift up, restore your child.

All that I am and love most dearly— receive it all, O Lord, from me.
Let me confess my faith sincerely; help me your faithful child to be!
Let nothing that I am or own serve any will but yours alone.

SERMON

Romans 8: 14-17

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We

believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

OFFERING

If you prefer to give online, the code at the right will take you to our Online Giving page. We invite our online givers to join in our offering with an "I Give Online" card in the pew racks.



PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Heavenly Father, bless all earthly fathers as they seek to fulfill the calling you have entrusted to them. Give them loving hearts and sound judgment to exercise godly family leadership. Help them to bring up their children in the training and instruction of the Lord. In loving Christian fathers, may children see reflections of you, the Father whose love for us is perfect and complete; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

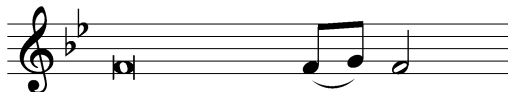
LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

THE SACRAMENT

(Guests, please see our communion practice on page 2.)

(Gluten-free wafers are available; ask Pastor.)



The Lord be with you.



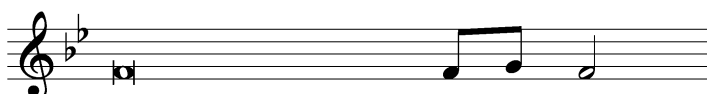
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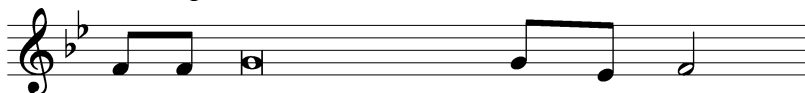
Lift up your hearts.



We lift them up to the Lord.



Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.



It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who promised that wherever two or three come together in his name, there he is with them to shepherd his flock until he comes again in glory. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (SUNG)

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power, God of might. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest!

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my T body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **Amen.**

JESUS, LAMB OF GOD (SUNG)

Jesus, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Jesus, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Jesus, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us your peace.

DISTRIBUTION HYMN

"Lord Jesus Christ, You Have Prepared"

Hymn 667

Lord Jesus Christ, you have prepared this feast for our salvation;
it is your body and your blood, and at your invitation
as weary souls, with sin oppressed, we come to you for needed rest,
for comfort, and for pardon.

Although you did to heav'n ascend, where angel hosts are dwelling,
and in your presence they behold your glory, all excelling,
and though your people shall not see your glory and your majesty
till dawns the judgment morning,

Yet, Savior, you are not confined to any habitation,
but you are present ev'rywhere and with your congregation.
Firm as a rock this truth shall stand, unmoved by any daring hand
or subtle craft and cunning.

We eat this bread and drink this cup, your precious Word believing
that your true body and your blood our lips are here receiving.
This Word remains forever true, and there is naught you cannot do,
for you, Lord, are almighty.

Though reason cannot understand, yet faith this truth embraces:
your body, Lord, is even now at once in many places.
I leave to you how this can be; your Word alone suffices me;
I trust its truth unfailing.

Lord, I believe what you have said; help me when doubts assail me.
Remember that I am but dust, and let my faith not fail me.
Your supper in this vale of tears refreshes me and stills my fears
and is my priceless treasure.

Grant that we worthily receive your supper, Lord, our Savior,
and, truly grieving for our sins, may prove by our behavior
that we are thankful for your grace and day by day may run our race,
in holiness increasing.

For your consoling supper, Lord, be praised through out all ages!
Preserve it, for in ev'ry place the world against it rages.
Grant that this sacrament may be a blessed comfort unto me
when living and when dying.

CLOSING PRAYER

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his mercy endures forever.

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

We give you thanks, O Lord, for the foretaste of the heavenly banquet you
have given us in this Sacrament. Through this gift you have fed our faith,
nourished our hope, and strengthened our love.

By your Spirit, help us to live as your holy people until that day when you
will receive us as your guests at the wedding supper of the Lamb, who
lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace. **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN

“Go, My Children, with My Blessing”

Hymn 930

Go, my children, with my blessing, never alone.

Waking, sleeping, I am with you; you are my own.

In my love’s baptismal river I have made you mine forever.

Go, my children, with my blessing, you are my own.

Go, my children, sins forgiven, at peace and pure.

Here you learned how much I love you, what I can cure.

Here you heard my dear Son’s story; here you touched him, saw his glory.

Go, my children, sins forgiven, at peace and pure.

Go, my children, fed and nourished, closer to me;
grow in love and love by serving, joyful and free.

Here my Spirit’s power filled you; here his tender comfort stilled you.

Go, my children, fed and nourished, joyful and free.

I the Lord will bless and keep you and give you peace;

I the Lord will smile upon you and give you peace;

I the Lord will be your Father, Savior, Comforter, and Brother.

Go, my children; I will keep you and give you peace.

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