

# Fatherhood

by T. Austin-Sparks

---

*The Lord Jesus came to manifest the Father and redeem a family, and we are redeemed as a family, not just individually.*

**Duration:** 54:48

**Scripture:** John 16:33, Acts 2:1-4, Romans 13:13-14

**Topics:** "Fatherhood"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the fatherly nature of God and how it is reflected in various aspects of His interactions with humanity. The speaker encourages the audience to explore the theme of father and son in the New Testament to gain a deeper understanding of God's character. The sermon also highlights the prophets' cry and anguish over the brokenness and disintegration of God's family, particularly the nation of Israel. The speaker concludes by urging the audience to seek a deeper understanding of God's fatherly love and to allow it to guide their relationships and actions.

---

## Transcript

Now dear friends, I want first of all, before coming to the message, to raise with you this question of the real fruitfulness of a time together like this. We want every one of these meetings to be a success. Sure you want the meetings to be a success, but what do we, each one, think of as a success to a meeting? What would you say would be the real success of our having come together this afternoon? Perhaps you haven't thought of it like that.

Well now, this is the time in which to adjust our minds to this matter and to ask ourselves individually, what am I expecting? What am I looking for? What am I wanting? Why have I come here? Don't you feel it is very necessary to focus down on questions like these and to really concentrate on some issue and to definitely say to ourselves now, such and such for me would make the meeting a success. That's only a manner of approaching things. You understand, you will understand what I mean when I say that the only real justification of us coming to any meeting at all of the Lord's people is that the Lord should speak to us as though we were the only person in the world.

That is that we should go away truly able to say the Lord has spoken to me and I think we could hope for nothing better, desire nothing greater and more than that. If that should be the case then it would be a success, wouldn't it? But when we have said that, we've got to get still closer to the matter. We must forget the meeting.

We must forget the other people who are here or who are not here. We must forget the place. We must forget the speaker.

We must try to get through the way in which he speaks and through the handling of the word of God on his part to get right through and all the time have our hearts and our minds poised in this way. Is the Lord saying anything to me? What is the Lord saying to me at this time? Is the Lord saying something to me? Or is he trying to say something to me? Now that is an absolute essential for the, I've used this word, the success of any meeting. The spiritual success that we everyone must seek to be alone with the Lord and all the time watching, listening intently for anything that the Lord may be seeking to say to us.

Will you try to make that adjustment and get that kind of attitude? And if so, if the Lord really has something to say, he'll find that a good opportunity for saying it. Now Brother Field spoke about a theme for the conference. I believe the Lord has given me something which may run through the meetings later after this afternoon.

I had thought that perhaps we would have made a start with it this afternoon, but on the way here and since being here I have had a very real sense that that is not so for the moment. There's something else to come before that, that the Lord would have me say. And not knowing anything about that of course, you will not, you will not be surprised at the Holy Spirit if you are pleasantly surprised to know that I'm turning you to John 17.

I think it would be good for us to read that prayer again carefully. There's only one thing in it that is in my heart to speak about, but we need the whole prayer in order to get to that one thing, so we will read. And you will notice that the first words of the chapter as arranged require the last words of the chapter before.

These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye may have peace. In the world ye have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. These things speak Jesus.

And lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said, Father, the hour is come. Glorify thy son, that the Son may glorify thee. Even as thou givest him authority over all flesh, that whatsoever thou hast given him, to them he should give eternal life.

And this is life eternal, that they should know thee, the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, Jesus Christ. I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou givest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory of which I had with thee before the world was.

I manifested thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world. Thine they were, and thou gavest them to me, and they have kept thy word. Now they know that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are from thee.

For the words which thou gavest me, I have given unto them, and they received them, and knew of a truth that I came forth from thee, and they believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them. I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me, for they are thine, and all things that are mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them.

And I am no more in the world, these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep them in thy name, which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are. While I was with them, I kept them in thy name, which thou hast given me, and I guarded them, and not one of them perished, but the

son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled.

But now I come to thee. These things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word, the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

I pray not that thou shouldest take them from the world, but thou shouldest keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth, thy word is truth.

As thou didst send me into the world, even so sent I them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word, that they may all be one, even as thou father art in me, and I in thee, but they also may be in us, that the world may believe that thou didst send me.

The glory which thou hast given me, I have given unto them, that they may be one, even as we are one, I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one, that the world may know that thou didst send me, and loveth them even as thou loveth me. Father, that which thou hast given me, I will that where I am, they also may be with us, that they may behold my glory, they also may be with me, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me, for thou lovest me before the foundation of the world. O righteous father, the world knew thee not, but I knew thee, and these knew that thou didst send me, and I made known unto them thy name, and will make it known, that the love wherewith thou lovest me, may be in them, and I in them.

Now I want you just to pass your eye over that prayer, verse one, he said father, verse five, O father, verse 11, I come to thee, holy father, keep them. 21, as thou father art in me, and I in thee. 22, 24, father, that which thou hast given me.

25, O righteous father, back to verse six, I manifested thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me. Verse 26, I made known unto them thy name, I manifested thy name, I made known unto them thy name. And quite evidently from this chapter, and from a great mass of this whole gospel, the name which he manifested and made known, was the name father.

It may not impress us as it would have done those of his own time, for with the Lord Jesus, there came in a revelation of God which was nothing less than revolutionary, revolutionary. You go back to the old testament and you look at the manifestation of God in the names and titles which are given to him. They are many, they are wonderful, they are very great, very glorious, but usually very remote.

They put God in a place of holy and awful isolation. There he is, the one who is unapproachable in himself, and whose presence always created fear, something like terror, that if there was anything approximating to the coming near of God, even in those strange forms of manifestation called the theophanies, when in the first place those visited thought it was a man, and then afterwards said the Lord. Even there, those people cried out in fear, in terror, and the Lord had said even to a Moses, a Moses, such an honored, choice, faithful, devoted servant, no man shall see thy face and live, and live.

When there wrestled with Jacob a man, and subsequently that man departed, Jacob cried, woe is me, I have seen the Lord face to face, and my life is spared. To him it was a wonderful thing, because he had not met the unveiled deity. The veiled God had come in man form, but even so Jacob recognized it was the Lord, and the wonderful thing was that his life remained whole in him.

That was the Old Testament conception of God. When the Lord Jesus came into this world, he brought an altogether revolutionary revelation of God. When the one word on his lips, more than any other word was, Father, my Father, the Father, our Father, Father.

This part of John's Gospel, which those who have organized it, have marked off as 17th chapter, is as you will see the culmination, the summation of all that has gone before, the life of the Lord Jesus. The manifestation of the Son of God, with all his walks and his words. Here the end has come.

Notice how it goes on immediately, when he had said this, they went over the brook, where there was a garden. The final scenes of his earthly life were enacted. The cross, this is the gathering up of everything.

It is Jesus gathering it all up. He is gathering up the very purpose for which he came into this world. He is gathering up the meaning of all his teaching and all his works.

He is gathering up all the meaning of his having been here in this world. And he is putting it into one word, one marvelous word or name, Father. He is saying about his life, his work, his walk, he is everything up to this last hour.

What I came for, I have done. I came to manifest thy name, to manifest thy name. Note the way in which he puts it.

I did not come to tell them that God is a Father. That may be. You may look at it like that.

To give them a doctrine, a truth, a teaching about the fatherhood of God, as a theme, as a subject. He did not say that. He said, I manifest it.

I manifest it. If you like, for our purpose, you could use the word, I demonstrate it. I demonstrate it.

All the difference, you know, even between a lecturer and a demonstrator. Between a preacher and a demonstrator. To manifest is something very practical.

It is more than words, more than teaching. It is showing in a living way the thing that you are desiring to have grasped and understood. And so this matter of the Father God, the Father God, was manifested in a person.

The person himself was a manifestation. When you look at him, when you listen to him, when you watch him doing what he is doing, everywhere there is one deduction that you can draw. I should draw, I must draw.

That is what God is like. That is just what God is like. Whether it be with the little children and his hands of blessing upon them, drawing them to himself.

Or take any of the many things that he did, in healings, in comfortings, in restorings, and any of the wonderful things that he said in parable, what is called a prodigal son, or a lost sheep, or whatever it may be. What is the conclusion? That is a pretty story, that is very interesting, that conveys some wonderful truth and teaching. Oh no, what he meant was, that is what God is like.

And it is all an expression of God as Father. He himself is the manifestation of the Father. Now open that out and go right back to the beginning of history as the Bible gives it to us.

And this conception, this conception is inherent in the very beginning. What was the conception with which the Bible opened? When God had completed his creative activities, and got his man, and got the man's wife, that was the end, the crown. What was it all unto? A family, a family.

The family conception was right there in the very beginning. And in God's mind it was to be a family of his own children. Might have been the children, men and women, but with God it was a family for himself.

He wanted a family of children after his own image and likeness, like himself, like himself. His heart was set upon this. It is there, right at the beginning.

Be fruitful and multiply. And behind it is God. And it is God in the spirit and intent of fatherhood to have a family.

There it is. You can think more about it. Do you notice that in the second phase of the Bible, what we call the patriarchs, it's the family which is the dominant characteristic feature of the patriarchs.

It's a Bible word, patriarch, as you know. But do you know what it means? Patriarch? The head of a family, that's all. The head of a family.

Perhaps you haven't thought of that when you've thought of Noah and Moses and Abraham and all these people, called them by this high sounding name, the patriarchs. No, just the heads of families, that's all. That's all it means.

But you see right through that long and very rich phase of the development of history in the Bible, there lies there deeply embedded this idea of the family. And in the patriarchal families was not only the father who was the head of the household, the eldest son. The eldest son was the priest of the family.

In union with the father, it was fathers and sons which was the divine idea. Father and son. If you like to make it singular, you can, because you are looking right ahead to John 17, father and son, lying there right at the heart of the patriarchal family.

And when you still move further in the Bible history, come to what we call that section of the Old Testament which has to do with the kings, the monarchy. Have you been impressed with this? But when that phase reaches its highest point, its peak, in David and Solomon, the very conception and idea of monarchy, of government, of dominion, of reign, of kingdom, lies with father and son. Father and son.

David and Solomon. That was the peak of the monarchy. And if you look both into the Old Testament account and into the New Testament references to it, you will find that those words spoken by the Lord to David about his son Solomon, he shall be to me a son, and I will be to him a father.

Those words are taken up in the book of the Acts and applied to the Lord Jesus. So that God was looking through David and through Solomon, not just at them, but through them, to his own eternal thought of the family. And here it's the family reigning, governing, fatherhood and sonship in ultimate and supreme dominion.

A lot of the New Testament there is in that, isn't there? You come to the next and final section of the Old Testament, the prophets. And what is this cry of the prophets? For in this section, it's a cry, it's a sob, it's a groan, it's an anguish, it's a tragedy. For the Lord God, that is the spirit of the prophets.

They are burdened, and you know that word is used about their message, the burden of the word of the Lord. The burden of the word of the Lord. There are men with a burden, men with a cry, men with a heartache, men who are expressing a tragedy.

Listen again to Isaiah 53. What's it all about? God has lost his family. The family has been broken up and broken down.

The family of Israel is scattered and disintegrated. It's away from God and away from God's house. God is deprived of that thing for which he first of all created, and then inculcated into the whole of his dealings with men, his lust, his family.

God is there and the prophets seem to be in a state of disappointment, in a state of sorrow. Listen to Hosea for instance. There's a cry of deep anguish in that prophet's heart, and it all focuses upon this family conception.

Well that is enough. It's covered a lot of history hasn't it? There's a lot more in it than that. You could say that that could carry us on for a week only.

But that's enough to show what was in God's heart. But that's enough to show what was in God's heart. What his heart has been set upon.

What he had hidden in a way as his thought in history, in his dealings with men, in his constitution of things, a hidden desire and purpose of the heart of God. Son of God come, the Son. Now I'm not going to tell you at this point and do all the work for you.

You do a little work on this and you will be greatly helped as well as greatly impressed. Just go through your New Testament and tabulate the number of times Father and Son occur. Father and Son.

That is as to God and the Lord Jesus. And when you've done that, go the third step and tabulate the number of times that the Lord's people are referred to as his children, his sons, or as in a family relationship to himself, begotten of God, born of God, and so on. It's full isn't it? It's rich.

We've only to mention it or a great deal just to come back to us and break upon us. There it is. Now we said the Son of God.

Came from the Father. He said I came from the Father. And why? To take up all that history.

To take up all that history from creation. Through the patriarch, through the monarchy, through the prophets. Gathering to himself the realization of this thing for his Father.

To satisfy his Father. Now dear friends, if you want to know what the Lord Jesus meant and what it means where we are concerned, when he said I came, I am come to do thy will. Thy will.

Thy will. Thy will. That great will of God to be spelt with a capital W. What was it? This that we're talking about.

The will of God is the family of God, in which he is truly Father God. His Son is truly the Son, the eldest Son, the firstborn among many brethren. That's the will of God.

You want, you pray to know the will of God? You ask to know what the Lord's will is? Well of course you may apply that to all sorts of things, but you must remember that the will of God is very comprehensive and specific. And the will of God is just this that we are talking about. He came for this.

He came not only to speak of the Father, but to manifest the Father. So that he could say, he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father. There's no further need for you to say, show us the Father.

No further need for anybody to say, show us the Father. He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father. I manifested thy name.

I have given them thy name. And as we have seen in this chapter alone, six times, Father, O righteous Father, O Father, the Lord Jesus has come expressly to give in his own person the revelation of God as Father. He has come to redeem unto God his family.

It's wonderful words in the early part of the letter to the Hebrews. He's not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I and the children whom God hath given me were for holy brethren, partners in a heavenly calling. That is the fruit of his redeeming activity.

Dear friends, it's a good thing to be redeemed. It's a good thing to have what redemption means in the sense of sins forgiven, deliverance from bondage, security unto eternal life, all those blessings. But do we sufficiently recognize this, that it is a family that he has come to redeem, and that we are redeemed as a family, maybe redeemed individually, but God's thought and Christ's thought was this family, to redeem a family, a redeemed family.

And what is a family? Now have any of you friends here got a family? Are you parents? How happy and pleased would you be if every one of your children was a unit in himself or herself, living an independent life without any concern or consideration or interest in any other member of the family. Just so many isolated units in one place, which could not be called a home in that case, under one roof. Would you be happy about that? If they all went off and never had any concern very much for the other members, just individuals, well they might be children of the same parents, might be.

But the parents would feel the real, the real meaning of parenthood had been lost, was not there, if that was the situation. You can see through what I'm saying, how God must feel about anything and everything that is other than a family concept and a family spirit amongst his people. We hear so much, and perhaps we have said and do say so much about the church, and the churches, and the local assemblies, and what not.

You can get very tired of that. It can be so technical, can't it? So technical. What is God's thought in companies of his people in any place? A representation of the family, the family.

Where his fatherhood is the dominant thing, where his son has the place that he ought to have, and where all, all are a unit of a peace. Father, I pray, Father, I pray that they may be one. I pray that they may be one.

How? As thou, Father, and I are one. As the Father and the Son, in fatherhood and sonship, are identical, are one. The Father revealing himself in the Son, and the Son manifesting the Father.

That perfect oneness between those two, that they may be as we are. Prayer of the Lord Jesus, right at the end as he went to the cross, was for the family. And he was now going to the cross to redeem the

family.

Out of his death and resurrection, many sons should be born. There are not lacking some indications that there was a very real answer to his prayer at the beginning. You would never call those twelve disciples or apostles a family before Calvary, would you? Would you? When I should say, Lord deliver us from families, if that's a family.

Quarreling, envying, striding, jealousy, jealous of one another, and what not. But look afterward, and Peter standing up with the eleven, and that wonderful second chapter of Acts. They were together.

They were all together in one place. They had all things in common. No one said that all that he possessed was his own.

Well, we've reached something of the family when the Holy Spirit brings Christ into his place, and God as Father over all. Paul had some conception of this, and you know that in his letter to the Ephesians he prays, the Father of whom every family in heaven and on earth is named. Well, Lord Jesus came, firstly, to secure unto the Father the satisfaction of his eternal desire.

The realization of his own ambition of heart. He came to redeem unto God a family. And not to leave it there.

Not to leave it there. To bring that family to reign in the eternal kingdom. To reign, to govern.

To be the governmental family of the ages to come. This is the means by which he's going to govern this world in the coming ages. By this family elevated to his throne.

An elevated family. The far greater and more glorious counterpart of David and Solomon is the Father, the Son, and then, we use another phrase from Hebrews, the many sons whom he has brought to glory. Bringing many sons.

We cannot just say these things without reminding ourselves that the realization of this, both on the part of the Lord Jesus, and on our part, if the Father is to find his satisfaction, is a costly thing. It's by the way of travail. There's no family without travel.

It's in the very constitution of this creation, God has put it there, that now, family is by way of traveling, by way of suffering. It's costly. In a word, someone has got to be prepared to lay down their life for the family.

That's always involved in this. He did it. And if hence, we're not going to have anything like this amongst the Lord's people unless we're prepared to suffer for it.

To lay down our own lives for it. To set aside all our own personal interests for it. To really put up with a lot that we might bring to the Father, that upon which his heart is so much filled.

It's the way of travel, the way of sacrifice, it's the way of suffering. For this, his body was broken, that we might share that body, as one body, one family. For this, his blood was shed, that we might, in drinking of his blood, in other words, of his poured out life, share as a family, that one blood.

So we come back and close where we began. His prayer. His prayer.

What a cry it is. What an appeal it is. Shall we say, what an agony it is.

Father, the hour has come. Oh, righteous Father. Father, the world has not known, but these have known, as thou and I, that they may be.

Have you been all the time poised, just as the Lord sings something to me, somewhere, somehow, I have violated this family spirit, family disposition, bringing the Spirit of God, who is the Spirit of the family. Is there something he's saying to you, to me? How does this apply to us? Is it just a lovely Bible theme? God forbid. It's a prayer with him.

Let us make it a prayer. And a prayer that will have a very practical aspect, for sometimes we can go a long way toward answering our own prayer. But in this matter, it is not all to be left with the Lord.

He has done his part. Shall we pray? We do ask, we do pray, O Lord, that this matchless name may be to us more precious from this time than it has been. It may have a music in it, a beauty in it, but are not always a challenge in it, and a meaning to us and for us of great preciousness.

We do thank thee, that where I, as they of old, stood in awe and dread and fear of thee, through thy beloved Son, we can draw near with full assurance of faith. We need not fear, but come with boldness to the throne of grace, because now thou hast been manifested to us in him as Father. Lord, lead us into the deeper fullnesses of all this that is contained in that name.

Set thy seal upon our hour together this afternoon. May we have more than words and thoughts, a deep Holy Spirit registration in our hearts that shall correct us, shall guide us, shall influence us in all our relationships. We ask in thy dear Son's name, guard our hearts, our minds, our lips in this time between, so that we may come together again in thy will without the necessity of starting again, able to go right on.

We ask this for Jesus' sake. Amen.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/0/SID0400.mp3>  
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/t-austin-sparks/fatherhood/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**