

ABBA father

We have been doing a series on the names of God.

Doing this enables us to have a better understanding of who God is which in turn enables us to better represent God to those around us.

It's my job as a pastor to equip you and this is what I am trying to do as the pastor here.

- We have looked at **Elohim**, God who creates
- We have looked at **Jehovah, I AM**, God who is and always will be. You can know He is always there with you in spite of everything you may be going through.

Today we are going to look at another name **ABBA**.

There was a band called ABBA, but they weren't named after this particular way in which God identifies himself.

The group negotiated with the canners for the rights to the name. "ABBA" is an acronym formed from the first letters of each group member's first name: ***Agnetha, Björn, Benny and Anni-Frid.***

I know God loves the people who were in that band, but that isn't the reason why He gives himself that particular name.

The name AB in Hebrew actually means God the father.

There are plenty of references to God being a father in the Old Testament.

Deuteronomy 32:6 *Do you thus give back to Jehovah, Oh foolish and unwise people? **Is He not your Father who bought you? Has He not made you and established you?***

Isaiah 63:16 *For You are our Father, though Abraham does not know us, and Israel does not acknowledge us. **You, O Jehovah, are our Father, our Redeemer;** Your name is from everlasting.*

Jeremiah 3:19 *But I said, How shall I put you among the sons, and give you a pleasant land, a beautiful inheritance among the hosts of nations? **And I said, You shall call Me, My Father, and shall not turn away from Me.***

Malachi 1:6 *A son honors his father, and a servant his master. **If then I am a father, where is My honor? And if I am a master, where is My fear?** says Jehovah of Hosts to you, O priests who despise My name. And you say, In what way have we despised Your name?*

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It seemed that in Malachi's time as prophet, **it was taught that God was the father of Israel**, their "*pater*" but they weren't practising what they were preaching and God wasn't being honoured by the priests the way a father should.

In the New Testament they used the word *Pater*, which has the same meaning.

It was interesting. I used to work for a Jewish family in my younger years as a labourer.

They had six properties all over Sydney and **it was my job to help them with the maintenance of their properties.**

The father was Australian and the mother was a Russian Jew who I had a lot of time for.

But the son was called Ian and **he always referred to his dad the Aussie as *Pater*.**

I had no idea what that meant until recently.

To the Jews it is a name used to describe God in that particular role.

We see that particular side of God expressed a lot in the Bible,

We see that in the Lord's Prayer, the model Jesus told us to use when praying to him.

The first thing we are told to do when praying to the Lord is to call him "*our father, who is in heaven.*"

Luke 11:1 *And it happened as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, one of His disciples said to Him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught His disciples.*

Luke 11:2 *And He said to them, When you pray, say: **Our Father, who is in Heaven**, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done, as in Heaven, so also on the earth.*

That was something specifically taught by Jesus to the disciples! When you pray, call God your father in heaven.

Matthew as a first hand witness also included the Lord's prayer in his gospel.

Matthew 6:9 *Therefore pray in this way: **Our Father, who is in Heaven**, Hallowed be Your name.*

Luke's account was second hand, because he relied on primary witnesses to put his account together and as I contemplated this I asked the question, "Why did Luke include this prayer in his gospel?"

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It was written totally independently of Matthew but he put it in there as well, The Lord's Prayer.

I think the answer is found in the first few verses of Luke's account.

Luke 1:3 *it seemed good to me also, following all things accurately from the very first, to write to you in order, most excellent Theophilus,*

Luke 1:4 *so that you might know the certainty of those things in which you have been instructed*

If you read the first few verses of Luke Chapter 1 you will see that **the reason Luke wrote this account was to confirm all that Theopolis was learning as a believer** was backed up with what Jesus taught and did.

Perhaps where Theopolis was attending church there was **teaching going on regarding what kind of God the Christian God actually was**

There were a lot of differing accounts of Jesus life and perhaps they were creating confusion amongst believers as to which one was right.

Luke 1:1 *Since many took in hand to draw up an account concerning the matters which have been borne out among us,*

Perhaps there were differing reports as to what God was like.

Perhaps there was contention as to **whether you could compare God to a father.**

So Luke inspired by the Spirit puts here that Jesus told us to pray to God as if He were our father.

Luke intentionally put in his account that God wants us to see him as "Pater" our father.

After listening and cross referencing what he'd heard from different people, he wrote in Luke 11 that when we pray to the Lord, the first thing he instructed us to do was call God father.

Luke 11:2 *And He said to them, When you pray, say: **Our Father, who is in Heaven,** hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done, as in Heaven, so also on the earth.*

Jesus really wanted to portray God as ABBA, God the father.

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After Luke records for us that we should call God father when praying to him, a few verses later he wrote that Jesus said the following.

Luke 11:11 *For what father of you, if the son asks for bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a snake for a fish?*

Luke 11:12 *Or if he shall ask for an egg, will he give him a scorpion?*

Luke 11:13 *If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?*

Luke is telling us here not just that God is our father, but **what sort of father he is.**

He is a father who wants to give something good to His children, to those who ask Him.

He wants to give us the Holy Spirit.

The father wants to give us something good.

God gives himself the name ABBA, Pater, the one who is our father.

Luke among others wants us to know this.

Paul wanted us to know that as well.

Romans 8:15 *For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption by which we cry, Abba, Father!*

- God wants us as believers to know him **not just as Elohim the creator.**
- God wants us as believers to know him **not just I AM** the one who always was and is and will be...
- **God wants us to know him as ABBA,** the one who is our dad.

Luke describes God as “Pater ABBA father” and so does Paul.

As I thought about this I found there is a connection between what Luke wrote and what Paul wrote about ABBA father.

Luke wrote that ABBA wants to give us His Spirit, which is a good gift, **but Paul tells us why.**

Paul even writes here in Romans that **when the Holy Spirit is inside us, one of his jobs is to make sure we know that we know we are Gods children.**

We are part of his family and he is our dad.

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I know that for a lot of people out there that is a hard concept to fathom because their understanding of fatherhood has been tainted by having a bad father.

I was in a men's meeting once and a guy told me how his real mum and dad left him in a back yard to be adopted by another family.

Basically they didn't want him so they palmed him off to someone else.

So when someone goes and tells someone like that, that God is your heavenly father, it isn't really **something they can get their head around because of the example of their earthly father.**

I can understand that, but the fact still remains that **God wants us to see him as a father** and has inspired people like Matthew, Luke and Paul to write that in the Bible.

Luke wrote that as a father God wants to give us His Spirit.

Paul tells us why. The Spirit is there to confirm that He is our father. It's that important to God that we get this.

How does the Spirit confirm to us that He is ABBA according to what Paul wrote in Romans?

He does that by giving us the following three things according to what I saw in these verses.

1. The Spirit gives us a cry.

Romans 8:15 *For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption by which we cry, Abba, Father!*

There is a cry that is mentioned here.

It's a cry that is sourced from us receiving the Spirit of adoption. Through the Spirit that is gifted to us from the father, **we can cry out that God is our father and we mean it totally.**

We all know what is adoption; in the natural sense. **It's when we take into our care someone who was previously a stranger to us.**

We were all strangers to God before we chose to follow him. He was an unknown to us and as a result we didn't really want a lot to do with him.

But that all changed when we chose to follow him. He made himself known to us and **that resulted in us getting adopted by him into the family of God.**

We didn't belong before but by God we do now.

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That's because we have received the Spirit of adoption, which in turn enables us to realise who is our heavenly father and who we belong to.

Being part of a family gives you that sense of belonging.

The Hennessey family moved over to Australia when I was a teenager. I was 14 going on 15 at the time.

But my mum, dad, brother and sister moved over here about 2 months before I did.

It was decided that I stay back in New Zealand to finish 4th form at school so I would be ready to start school certificate year over here the following year.

However when I entered the school system over here the school I attended decided that I had to repeat year 9 anyway so looking back I should have come over with the rest of the family.

I was living with my grandmother who got a bit sick and was unable to take care of me properly, so as soon as my exams were over, my aunty put me on a plane and I was on my way to Sydney, first time overseas to a strange country.

When I arrived here it was hot, the city seemed huge and everything seemed really weird.

My family's mode of transportation was a white panel van and I remember being taken from the airport to Manly beach for a swim being rocked around in the back in the days when seat belts weren't compulsory thinking as a 14 year old the following.

This place may seem strange, but **the strangeness I can cope with because I'm with my family, and that's where I belong.**

As a kid growing up in New Zealand we were always moving from town to town. I attended from ages 8 to 14 7 different schools and had a hard time fitting in because I was always the "new boy in class."

But whenever I felt insecure there was the constant that I was with my family and I belonged to them first and foremost.

Unlike our former Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull **my position wasn't based on performance.**

It was based on my position as son of my mum and dad. That sense of belonging is still there when we get together for Christmas and other family gatherings.

When I am with them I know that is what I am a part of.

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I hope I can give my kids the same sense of belonging as they grow up and when they fly the nest and do some special things with their lives, that spirit will always be there to let them know where they have come from.

As it is in the natural, so it is in the spiritual.

Because of the spirit of adoption doing its work inside of us, we now know we belong to Him and we can cry out, ABBA father.

We can truly say He's our dad because of the sense of belonging he has given to us. **We belong to Him.**

The Spirit of adoption is an interesting thing.

Adoption is not a work of grace in us, but an act of grace without us, **having its complete being in the mind of God;**

It was Gods idea that we be adopted into His family.

Ephesians 1:3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ;*

Ephesians 1:4 *according as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,*

Ephesians 1:5 *having predestined us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,*

It wasn't our idea to be adopted, just as it isn't a babies idea to choose to be put up for adoption.

It was all Gods idea and if we can get into our spirits that He wanted us to be part of His family, **that is the thing that makes us cry ABBA father.**

He wanted us to live with Him. That's a pretty awesome thought **and makes me want to declare I'm with Him.**

God the father gives us a cry.

2. God the father gives us a sense of comradery

Romans 8:16 *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.*

The Spirit here is bearing witness not with my spirit, **but with our spirit.**

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Everything is in plural here. **God the father has given us the Spirit of God** to let us know that we are children of God.

He is there not just to remind us of our relationship with Him. He is also given to us to remind us of our relationship with each other.

We aren't just a son of God, **we are sons of God.**

If you look at scripture, you will find **there is a bit of a connection between the Spirit of God and fact we are sons of God.**

Romans 8:14 *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*

Galatians 4:6 *And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

The Spirit has been gifted to us **so we would know why we are brothers in Christ.**

The Spirit he has gifted to us, tells us that we are part of a family, his family.

We have a sense of comradery because we have the same cry in our hearts. **We all call Him ABBA father.**

There should be a bond among Christians that is based on the fact we have the same heavenly dad.

Call it brotherhood, comradery, whatever but according the verse here, the Spirit helps us to realise **there are other people like us who have a common cry in our hearts.**

Comradery is something the world would love to have, but often can't obtain, because **they often prefer results over relationships.**

We have a new prime minister now, Scott Morrison. The Liberal party had a leadership spill last week and that resulted in Scott Morrison becoming the new prime minister.

Malcolm Turnbull was voted out because **the party said he couldn't lead them to a win in the next election.**

As I thought about that I concluded that a lot of the success in different areas of our society is because of good leadership.

Good leadership does bring results and that's ok.

I found some good leadership quotes on the net yesterday.

- ***"Only one man in a thousand is a leader of men — the other 999 follow women."***

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- *First rule of leadership: everything is your fault.*
- *The problem with being a leader is that you're never sure if you're being followed or chased.*
- *Leadership has been defined as the ability to hide your panic from others.*

We need good leadership, but if leadership is there just to produce results, that isn't good.

A good leader I think is someone who not only gets results but **can create good relationships among his followers.**

When you can do that, you aren't anymore just a leader; you're a father because you've created a sense of belonging amongst those in your group.

1Corinthians 4:15 *For though you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for I have begotten you in Christ Jesus through the gospel.*

Anyone can teach but **when someone comes along and gives you a sense of camaraderie through his leadership**, that is a pretty good thing to do and you will get the results anyway because people will want to work for you.

The thing that makes a church successful **isn't always its leadership but its camaraderie.** .

We don't see each other according to our position in the organization/franchise **we see each other because of our position in the family.**

We are sons, not servants and it's the gift of the Holy Spirit from our heavenly father that enables us to recognise that.

The father's gift of the Holy Spirit **helps us to recognise the bond we have to Him (ABBA father) but also to each other.**

As believers we should have a sense of comradery/brotherhood.

My mum and dad provided me with a brother and a sister, people with whom I grew up with.

In the same way I realise that He has given me spiritual brothers and sisters to also grow up with.

As my brothers and sisters were with me a long time and **I saw them grow up and mature into adults (sort of)**

I know there are people who God has put me with in this church and also when I was in Estonia **that I am also called to grow up with.**

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If you hang around long enough in a church you will see people **“growing up.”**

- **I look at Amber** and how she has come on. She isn't the same person she once was.
- **I look at how Sarah has come on this year.** She has grown up a little bit.
- **I look at JJ regularly taking communion now,** probably feeling the pinch but not shirking the task.
- **I see Junior and the worship team** taking the ushering in of His presence to another level.

There are people that God has put you with long term that you notice over time how they are maturing, growing and doing what they couldn't do before.

You know they aren't going to go anywhere because they belong to a brotherhood, not a leadership structure.

The Spirit gifted to us by father God has enabled us to see that we are children of God, not just a child.

When we realise we are children, part of the same family, we will stay and develop comradery because we know through His Spirit that God the father has gifted us with siblings.

With fellow children comes conflict!

I see that in my own family at home, but what helps them not keep grudges is the fact they have to live with each other.

In churches we have a choice to avoid each other because we might only see each other once or twice a week.

But what we can't avoid is the calling God has put us together with others with whom we are growing up with and we need to get conflicts sorted out.

That's a whole other sermon that I won't go into here, **but I think one key is not walking away.**

If we make the effort to see a disagreement through until we arrive at some sort of resolution, then our camaraderie won't get damaged.

Romans 8:16 *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.*

That is a really good concept to get and **there is a massive emotional reward for those of us who choose to see that.**

God the father gives us a sense of comradery

3. God the father gives us a sense of contribution.

Romans 8:17 *And if we are children, then we are heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ; so that if we suffer with Him, we may also be glorified together.*

Through the gift of the Spirit, the father helps us to see that we aren't just children, we are heirs, joint heirs with Jesus.

Jesus suffered here on earth but his inheritance is that He is now glorified as the father is.

He is in a place of great reward, but the reward was obtained through what He contributed here on earth through His hard work and sacrifice.

It's something that isn't preached very much but as believers we are meant to suffer from time to time.

- **I know that Sarah went through a lot of hardship** when she wanted to explore last year how to apply Christian principles to psychological practises.
- **I know Kingi had to go through a bit in order** for God to get him to the place he is today.
- **I remember seeing the work Dad had to do** to get all those church buildings built in Vanuatu when we were working as a church over there.

There are times when we do have to put in the effort in order for God to move.

But the Bible says here that if we suffer with him, that will contribute to us being glorified with him as well.

When we do things for the church, which is doing things for the Lord, there is often a cost involved.

We might cop some punishment by those outside of church because we make a stand for the Lord at our work place.

- **Eg: Min refusing to sell certain pills** when she worked as a pharmacist.

There are even times when we suffer because of people inside the body, not outside of it.

- **Eg: Once in Estonia I was a youth leader and was sacked.**

How do you get sacked when you are working for free? Some kids didn't like the way I did things and they made sure I got shafted; then they asked me to come back and assist them.

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I felt a little bit gutted but we got over it.

We are all going to suffer a bit when we choose to be a part of the comradery, part of the family.

Jesus got criticised and we aren't above Him so we might have some tough days as well.

But when we do, we have to remember what ABBA father wants to tell us.

If we keep on contributing, just as Jesus did in spite of the tough days He had, we will be glorified just as He is now.

There is a reward waiting for us found in the promise we will be glorified just as He is now.

I looked at a commentary on this statement that said this.

*“There is a glorification of the saints in Christ, and a glorification of them by Christ, and a glorification of them with Christ, **which will consist in likeness to him, and in the everlasting vision and enjoyment of him.**”*

That vision of him I think is when you see Him in other people, people who you have contributed to, even if it's been a bit tough to do that.

- **Eg: What Kingi said to me last Thursday!**

I saw the Lord in Him and **that was my reward for what we went through together.**

At that moment **God the father gave me a sense of what I was contributing towards** through the hard work we put in for the kingdom.

That reward is for everyone who is willing to find their place, make a contribution and serve Him.

We need to do something for our youth before we lose them.

Some of us might have to suffer through misunderstandings, conflict and a lot of hard work before we see the reward of a stable youth work in our church.

But when we see kids reflecting the glory of God, we will get a sense of what we are contributing to.

God is ABBA father, who wants to give us something good.

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He wants to give us His Spirit.

1. The Spirit is gifted to give us a cry.
2. The Spirit is gifted to give us camaraderie
3. The Spirit is gifted to us to give a sense of contribution.

Accept the free gift of His Spirit today!!!

Amen!!!