

Text: John 19:7

Title: "The Son's Father" – Part One

Time: 6/18/2023 am

Place: NBBC

Introduction: O'Hare International Airport in Chicago is named after the first flying ace of WW2, Butch O'Hare. O'Hare was the first Navy pilot to win the Medal of Honor. He did so on February 20, 1942, when after turning back alone from his squadron's mission due to low fuel, he stumbled on a Japanese squadron headed for his defenseless fleet. O'Hare attacked the Japanese planes single-handedly, shot down five of the enemy aircraft, and diverted their flight path away from his fleet.

A generation prior, Chicago was dominated by the infamous Al "Scarface" Capone. Capone led the mob of Chicago in their criminal enterprises, and he was able to do so in no small part due to the skill of his lawyer, "Easy Eddie." Capone made sure his lawyer lived opulently.

At one point, however, Easy Eddie came under the conviction that he was not setting a good example as a father to his son. He wanted out, and he knew that the only way out was to testify against the mob. He did so, and within a year he was gunned down by those he had testified against.

The story of Butch O'Hare and Easy Eddie are connected, because Butch was Eddie's son, the little boy for whom Eddie wanted to set a better example. That little boy grew up to save a naval fleet as a war hero, because his dad made the costly decision that he needed to be a better father. When the authorities discovered Eddy's body, they found a poem folded up in his pocket. It said this:

"The clock of life is wound but once, and no man has the power to tell just when the hands will stop, at late or early hour.

"Now is the only time you own. Live, love, toil with a will. Place no faith in time. For the clock may soon be still."

Today is Father's Day, and the importance of faithful fatherhood cannot be overstated. Every father gets one "clock of life" during which to influence his children for good or for evil. Especially for us fathers whose children are now grown with children of their own, it sure seems like time flies when it comes to fatherhood.

The Gospel of John has much to say about fatherhood, but John's focus is not on a fatherhood that is limited by the clock of time. Instead, John's Gospel describes in great detail the fatherhood wrapped up in one of the exalted titles of Jesus Christ – the Son of God. Jesus is the Son of God because God is His Father, and John wants us to know about this Father.

In our passage this morning, the enemies of Christ have accused Jesus of making Himself the Son of God the Father. But no son makes himself a son. Butch certainly did not make himself the son of Easy Eddie. Jesus is the Son of God, not because He made Himself that, but rather simply because He always has been and always will be the Son of God the Father.

Including the handful of verses that tell us that Jesus is the Son of God, I found a total of 187 verses in the Gospel of John that refer in some way to God the Father. Leon Morris notes that the word *father* is used 137 times in the Gospel of John, and that second place belongs to the Gospel of Matthew with only 64 times [*New Testament Theology*, 248]. Clearly, John is a good place for a Father's Day message, *Father* with a capital F.

John tells us about some of the attributes of God the Father:

- He is eternal (1:1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"; 17:5).
As human fathers, we are limited by the clock of life.

- God the Father is truthful (3:33, 7:28, 8:26-27, 17:17). As human fathers, we are prone to falsehood.
- God the Father is spirit (4:24). As human fathers we are weak in the flesh.
- God the Father is living (5:26). As human fathers we are getting older and dying.
- God the Father is greater than all (10:29, 14:28). As human fathers we are often less than even what we should be.
- And God the Father is visibly glorious (11:40, "Jesus saith unto her [Martha at the resurrection of Lazarus], Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?"). As human fathers our inglorious frailty is often obvious to all.

And yet, though all of these perfections and more are His, God the Father is still a Father. *Father*, of course, is a relational term. God is Father in relation to others. John tells us about three of these relationships possessed by God the Father: (1) the Father's incomprehensible relationship to His Son, Jesus Christ; (2) the Father's amazing relationship to the world; and (3) the Father's gracious relationship to believers. This morning, we will have time to briefly survey the first two of these.

I. God the Father has an incomprehensible relationship with His Son (Jews: "He made Himself the Son of God" - the Father disagreed).

Illustration: This past week I tried to read an article about some of the technical aspects of ancient Babylonian music. I found the article very hard to understand, primarily because I do not know enough about the categories of music theory to comprehend what the author was saying.

Application: God the Father's relationship to His Son is incomprehensible to us in similar sense. We may have a better understanding than these unbelieving Jews, but still we can comprehend only so much. John's Gospel tells us things

about this relationship that we cannot understand fully because we do not know enough about what it is like to be a person of the Trinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Still, John wants us to know some important things about this relationship between God the Father and His Son.

1. The relationship is eternal:

1:1-2, “In the beginning was the Word [the Son], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.”

17:5, “And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.”

17:24, “thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.”

2. In that last verse, we see that this eternal Father-Son relationship is eternally loving. John describes the Son as having been in the bosom of the Father (1:18). “The word ‘bosom’ denotes intimacy and affection, and here it indicates that [Jesus] comes to us from the very heart of God” (Morris, 248).

Jesus knew from experience the Father’s unfailing love for Him: 3:35, “The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.” And Jesus loves the Father in the same way: 14:31, “But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do.”

3. God the Father’s relationship to His Son is further described as a unique and exclusive relationship [“only-begotten” 1:14, and 3:16 refers to this uniqueness – no one else is God’s Son the way Jesus is].

4. It is also an equal and mysteriously intermingled relationship [“I and the Father are one” (10:33) – there is some sense in which the Father and the Son are indistinguishable – they are both the one true God];

5. and the relationship between Father and Son is a validating and witnessing relationship [5:37, "And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me" - the Father wants everyone to know, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased"].

6. Perhaps more than any other feature of this Father-Son relationship, the Gospel of John emphasizes that the Father sent the Son, and that the Son willingly obeyed this command.

The chief purpose of the sending of the Son was for the Father to glorify Himself in Him and in His disciples [17:4, "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do"]. The Father sent His Son on a mission to do His will and His work. At least 15 of the references to the Father in John tell us that the Son did the Father's will and work, not His own. The chief work of the Son was to give the words of the Father to others (12:44-50). Heeding these words is not optional.

And what encouraged Jesus each step of the way in the completion of this work of the Father was the thought that He would some day return to the Father. He spoke of this blessed future often, even after His resurrection from the dead (20:17, "Jesus saith unto her [Mary Magdalene], Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.").

Given the nature of the relationship between God the Father and His Son, the fact that the Father gave His Son for the sake of the world is truly amazing. And that brings us to the second relationship of the Father described by John's Gospel.

II. God the Father has an amazing relationship with the world ("by our law, He ought to die" - the Father agreed).

Illustration: One need only do a quick Google search to find many news stories about the fathers of murder victims. Today will be a difficult Father's Day for these dads. Theirs are stories about grief and a cry for justice. They are stories about the difficulty of coping with terrible, tragic, and senseless loss.

Application: John reports the news of the murder of Christ, God the Father's Son, but it is not a story of grievous tragedy and senseless loss. In fact, we learn from John that the death of the Son of God was instead a willing gift from the Father to save sinners like you and I from our sin. That is what makes God' the Father's relationship with the world truly amazing.

3:16-17, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

4:10, "Jesus answered and said unto her [the Samaritan woman], If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water."

6:32-33, "My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world."

10:17-18, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again [the resurrection]. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."

19:11, "Jesus answered [Pilate], Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin."

I might think that you all love me, but I know I would be fooling myself to think that any of you (Maureen included) would

exchange your son to die instead of me. Nor would I exchange mine for you.

And yet, this is what God the Father has done for us. Paul expresses his amazement over this in Romans 5:6-8 "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God [the Father] commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ [the Father's Son] died for us." Are you amazed by that? Do you believe that?

If your answer this morning is "No, I do not believe that, and I am not amazed by that," please understand that the Gospel of John is clear that rejecting this relationship is dangerous:

3:18, "He that believeth on him [the Son] is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God [the Father]."

3:36, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God [the Father] abideth on him."

Clearly, John says there was a point in the past when God the Father loved the world by sending His Son to save sinners from their sin, but in their rejection of that love in unbelief, there is now a sense in which it must be said that God is wrathful over the world that refuses to accept His love:

5:42-44, "But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?"

But through the power of God the Father, we can believe this morning. Because of God the Father, we can be amazed that He gave His Son to die for us. He is drawing us to believe.

6:44-45, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me."

6:55, "No man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father."

Conclusion: John's Gospel explains that God the Father enjoys an incomprehensibly wonderful relationship with His Son, and yet He gave His Son to secure a Father-child relationship with any sinner who will simply believe. He writes in 1:12: "But as many as received Him [Jesus as Savior and Lord], to them gave He the right to become the sons of God, even to those who believe on His name." Have you received this gift of salvation? Is the Son's Father your heavenly Father?

"A man came—I think it was actually in Philadelphia—on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, 'Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.' That is the distinction—the sermon, and the 'lightning and the thunder.' To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters."

—David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

Preachers and Preaching