



Reading: **Hosea 11**

<sup>1</sup> 'When Israel was a child, I loved him,  
and out of Egypt I called my son.  
<sup>2</sup> But the more they were called,  
the more they went away from me.  
They sacrificed to the Baals  
and they burned incense to images.  
<sup>3</sup> It was I who taught Ephraim to walk,  
taking them by the arms;  
but they did not realise  
it was I who healed them.  
<sup>4</sup> I led them with cords of human kindness,  
with ties of love.  
To them I was like one who lifts  
a little child to the cheek,  
and I bent down to feed them.  
<sup>5</sup> 'Will they not return to Egypt  
and will not Assyria rule over them  
because they refuse to repent?  
<sup>6</sup> A sword will flash in their cities;  
it will devour their false prophets  
and put an end to their plans.  
<sup>7</sup> My people are determined to turn from me.  
Even though they call me God Most High,  
I will by no means exalt them.  
<sup>8</sup> 'How can I give you up, Ephraim?  
How can I hand you over, Israel?  
How can I treat you like Admah?  
How can I make you like Zeboyim?  
My heart is changed within me;  
all my compassion is aroused.  
<sup>9</sup> I will not carry out my fierce anger,  
nor will I devastate Ephraim again.  
For I am God, and not a man –  
the Holy One among you.  
I will not come against their cities.  
<sup>10</sup> They will follow the Lord;  
he will roar like a lion.  
When he roars,  
his children will come trembling from the west.  
<sup>11</sup> They will come from Egypt,  
trembling like sparrows,

from Assyria, fluttering like doves.  
I will settle them in their homes,'  
declares the Lord.

## **INTRODUCTION**

I wonder what Jesus talked about with his Dad ... Joseph ....?

For many, the word "father" only brings up painful memories or simply a blank face where a familiar one should be.

The sins of the fathers so often create a spiritual hurdle to believing in a good Father.

We can say with a high degree of confidence that Jesus lost his earthly Dad. No details. After the birth narratives, only one incident in Jesus' childhood is recorded – in Luke 2, where Jesus's parents, following their annual visit to Jerusalem for the Passover, are on their way back home when, that evening, they find he's missing ...

Joseph is never mentioned again.

In the gospels, there are a number of references to 'Jesus' mother and brothers and sisters', but never to his father.

So Jesus knows what it's like for his father not to be there when he most needed him ...

He also experienced abandonment by his heavenly Father – on the cross, covered in every sin, his Father turned away from him and Jesus cried out, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me ...?'

Recent testimony – 'I get it. God's my Dad ...'

Tonight, I want you to get it ... and doctrine alone won't achieve that.

Doctrine is a bit like food ... lovely to look at from a distance but only nurtures us when we actually take it inside ourselves.

## **WHY IS GOD CALLED 'FATHER'?**

That is how he chooses to reveal himself in scripture

One reason above all – Father describes his perfect relationship with Jesus, his Son. He wants to invite all of us into the same intimacy of relationship ...

The intimacy of Hosea 11 ...

Other scriptures ...

## **Deuteronomy 1:30-32**

<sup>30</sup> The Lord your God, who is going before you, will fight for you, as he did for you in Egypt, before your very eyes, <sup>31</sup> and in the wilderness. There you saw how the Lord your God carried you, as a father carries his son, all the way you went until you reached this place.'

#### **Isaiah 46:2-4**

<sup>3</sup> 'Listen to me, you descendants of Jacob,  
all the remnant of the people of Israel,  
you whom I have upheld since your birth,  
and have carried since you were born.

<sup>4</sup> Even to your old age and grey hairs  
I am he, I am he who will sustain you.  
I have made you and I will carry you;  
I will sustain you and I will rescue you.

#### **Deuteronomy 32:18**

<sup>18</sup> You deserted the Rock, who fathered you;  
you forgot the God who gave you birth.

#### **Exodus 34:5-7**

<sup>5</sup> Then the Lord came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the Lord. <sup>6</sup> And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, 'The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, <sup>7</sup> maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.

Much of God's fierce passion as a Father comes out in the references to the 'fatherless' (41 times in OT)

#### **Psalms 68:4-6**

<sup>4</sup> Sing to God, sing in praise of his name,  
extol him who rides on the clouds;  
rejoice before him – his name is the Lord.

<sup>5</sup> A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows,  
is God in his holy dwelling.

<sup>6</sup> God sets the lonely in families,

#### **Psalms 103**

<sup>1</sup> Praise the Lord, my soul;  
all my inmost being, praise his holy name.

<sup>2</sup> Praise the Lord, my soul,  
and forget not all his benefits –

<sup>3</sup> who forgives all your sins  
and heals all your diseases,

<sup>4</sup> who redeems your life from the pit  
and crowns you with love and compassion,

<sup>5</sup> who satisfies your desires with good things  
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.  
<sup>6</sup> The Lord works righteousness  
and justice for all the oppressed.  
<sup>7</sup> He made known his ways to Moses,  
his deeds to the people of Israel:  
<sup>8</sup> the Lord is compassionate and gracious,  
slow to anger, abounding in love.  
<sup>9</sup> He will not always accuse,  
nor will he harbour his anger for ever;  
<sup>10</sup> he does not treat us as our sins deserve  
or repay us according to our iniquities.  
<sup>11</sup> For as high as the heavens are above the earth,  
so great is his love for those who fear him;  
<sup>12</sup> as far as the east is from the west,  
so far has he removed our transgressions from us.  
<sup>13</sup> As a father has compassion on his children,  
so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him;

### **Isaiah 9:6-7**

<sup>6</sup> For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given,  
and the government will be on his shoulders.  
And he will be called  
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

### **Jeremiah 3:19**

<sup>19</sup> 'I myself said,  
"How gladly would I treat you like my children  
and give you a pleasant land,  
the most beautiful inheritance of any nation."  
I thought you would call me "Father"  
and not turn away from following me.

### **Malachi 3:17**

<sup>17</sup> '... they will be my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as a father has compassion and spares his son who serves him.

## **ADOPTION**

### **John 1**

<sup>9</sup> The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him. <sup>11</sup> He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. <sup>12</sup> Yet to all who did receive him, to those who

believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – <sup>13</sup> children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

## **Romans 8**

<sup>14</sup> For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. <sup>15</sup> 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.' <sup>16</sup> The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. <sup>17</sup> 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.

## **Galatians 4**

**4** What I am saying is that as long as an heir is under age, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. <sup>2</sup> The heir is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. <sup>3</sup> So also, when we were under age, we were in slavery under the elemental spiritual forces of the world. <sup>4</sup> But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, <sup>5</sup> to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. <sup>6</sup> Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, 'Abba, Father.' <sup>7</sup> So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.

## **1 John 3:1-3**

<sup>1</sup> 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. <sup>2</sup> Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. <sup>3</sup> All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

## **Luke 15:17-24**

<sup>17</sup> '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! <sup>18</sup> I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. <sup>19</sup> I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants." <sup>20</sup> 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 round him and kissed him. <sup>21</sup> 'The son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son."  
<sup>22</sup> '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. <sup>23</sup> Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. <sup>24</sup> For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'" So they began to celebrate.