

Who is God the Father?

Bible Study Sermon: “Knowing the Father – As Revealed by Jesus”

Opening Thought:

“When you think of God the Father... what do you feel?”

Some imagine a distant deity, a stern judge, or a force too big to grasp. But Jesus came to **make the Father known**.

John 14:9 – *“Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”*

Jesus described the Father in many layered, subtle, and powerful ways beyond just direct statements or parables. Sometimes He revealed the Father through His actions, tone, prayers, and even contrasts.

Shared Belief Among Most Christian Traditions

Nearly all Christian denominations affirm:

- **God the Father** is the **first person of the Trinity** (Father, Son, Holy Spirit).
- He is **eternal, creator of all things**, and the **source** of life.
- Jesus refers to Him as "Abba, Father" to express intimacy and divine origin.
- Through Christ, believers are invited into relationship with the Father.

1. Roman Catholicism

- **God the Father** is the **creator and sustainer** of all.
- He eternally begets the Son, and together with the Son, **spirates the Holy Spirit** (Filioque clause).

- Emphasis on the **Father's authority and unity with the Son and Spirit** in a perfect divine communion.
- Catholicism upholds the **Father as approachable through Christ**, but emphasizes **sacramental mediation** (e.g., through the Church, the Eucharist, confession).
- Fatherhood of God is also seen through the **Church as "Mother"** — a relational, nurturing balance.

Notable: The Father is the primary initiator in salvation history (sending the Son), and the Church often prays *to the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit*.

2. Eastern Orthodoxy

- **God the Father** is the **sole source (monarchia)** within the Trinity.
- Unlike Catholicism, the Spirit **proceeds only from the Father**, not "from the Son" (no *Filioque*).
- Strong emphasis on **mystery** and **apophatic theology** (what cannot be said about God).
- The Father is deeply revered but approached in **awe and mystery** through **theosis** (becoming partakers in divine nature).
- **Icons, liturgy, and prayers** reflect a deep communion with the Father through Christ.

Notable: More mystical and contemplative approach to the Father's nature —emphasizing uncreated light, divine energies, and sacred mystery.

3. Protestant Traditions (Broadly Speaking)

a. Mainline Protestantism (Lutheran, Anglican, Reformed)

- **God the Father** is personal, loving, and sovereign.

- Emphasizes direct access to the Father **through faith in Christ alone** (no priestly mediation).
- Generally affirms the Nicene understanding of the Trinity, including the **Filioque**.
- Less emphasis on mystery; more on **scriptural clarity** and **grace through relationship**.

Notable: The Father's love is most fully revealed in **sending the Son to redeem**, highlighting grace and covenant.

b. Evangelicalism & Pentecostalism

- Emphasis on **personal relationship** with **God the Father** through being "born again."
- Often focuses on the **Father's love and intimacy**, sometimes minimizing traditional doctrinal language in favor of experience.
- God the Father is active in the believer's daily life, guiding, protecting, and disciplining in love.
- Strong emphasis on **prayer and Scripture** as ways to communicate with the Father.

Notable: The Father is seen not as distant or mysterious, but deeply present and personal.

c. Non-Trinitarian Groups (e.g., Jehovah's Witnesses, Oneness Pentecostals)

- Jehovah's Witnesses: **God the Father (Jehovah)** is the only true God. Jesus is **not divine**, but a created being (Michael the Archangel).
- Oneness Pentecostals: Reject the Trinity. **God is one** and appears in **different modes**—Father, Son, and Spirit—at different times.

Notable: These are generally considered outside **mainstream Trinitarian Christianity**, though they use similar terms.

4. The **Amish** and **Mennonites** are part of the Anabaptist tradition, and their understanding of **God the Father** aligns closely with historic **mainstream Protestant** beliefs, but with some unique emphases shaped by their lifestyle and theology.

Core Similarities with Other Protestant Groups:

- **God the Father** is the **eternal, personal Creator**, sovereign over all.
- He is the **first person of the Trinity**, distinct from the Son and the Holy Spirit, but one in essence.
- The Father's love, mercy, and holiness are foundational.
- Jesus is the **Son of the Father**, fully divine and human.
- Salvation and relationship with God are possible **only through Jesus Christ**.

What Makes Amish/Mennonite Emphasis Unique or Distinct?

1. Practical and Relational Focus

They emphasize **walking humbly and obediently** before the Father, reflecting His holiness in daily life. Their theology isn't abstract but expressed through community, service, and simple living, showing reverence for the Father's will.

2. Nonviolent, Peaceful Nature

God the Father is seen as a **peaceful, just authority**, and His followers are called to imitate His peace. This strongly influences their **pacifism**.

3. Rejection of Formalism and Ritualism

They avoid complex theological debate and prefer **plainness** in

worship and life, focusing on **living in the Father's will** rather than speculating about His nature.

4. Emphasis on Community and Family as Reflections of the Father's Kingdom

The Father's care is mirrored in the close-knit Amish/Mennonite communities—where love, discipline, and forgiveness are daily realities.

Summary:

The Amish and Mennonites **do not redefine God the Father** in a way that breaks with orthodox Christianity, but they **live out their faith with a distinctive emphasis on obedience, simplicity, peace, and community** as reflections of the Father's character.

Jesus' Words: The Father's Nature – As Jesus Spoke Directly - The Father Seeks Relationship, Not Religion

1. The Father Is Spirit

John 4:23–24

“But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

- God isn't confined to place or ritual.
- The Father is *seeking* us. This flips the idea of us chasing God—He is actually drawing near and *desires intimacy* with us. It's not about rituals—it's about *truthful, spirit-filled connection*.
- True worship flows from the *inner spirit* in truth and sincerity.

2. The Father Is Greater Than All

John 10:29 – *“My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.”*

Hebrews 1:3

“He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.”

- This shows the Father's power sustains *everything*—there is nothing outside His control.
- There is no greater security than the Father's grasp.
- Our lives are not held by our strength, but by His.

3. The Father and Son Are One

John 10:30 – *“I and the Father are one.”*

John 14:7–9 - *“If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him... Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.”*

Jesus is the *exact representation* of the Father. This tells us:

- Perfect unity in being and will.
- Jesus is not just *from* God—He is *one* with Him.
- The Father is *not* distant, different, or separate from the love we see in Jesus.
- Knowing Jesus is the way we learn the true nature of God—not through fear, but through *relationship*.
- The Father is *never apart* from the Son or the Spirit. He lives in *perfect union*—and invites us *into* that union. That's divine inclusion—not exclusion.

Let's Examine Jesus' Claim:

“I and the Father are one.” (Greek: Ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ Πατήρ ἓν ἔσμεν — *John 10:30*)

Key Notes:

- “**One**” (ἓν *hen*) is **neuter**, (referring to a thing or concept, not a person)—so He’s not saying, “We are one *person*,” but “**We are one thing/essence/nature.**”
- The Greek construction makes it clear: **distinct persons, one shared being.**
- And contextually, the religious leaders **tried to stone Him** because they knew He was claiming **divinity**, not mere unity of mission.

4. The Father Knows You Deeply

Matthew 6:8 – “*But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.*”

- His care begins *before* your words do.
- Your heart is never hidden from Him.
- The Father is *intimately aware* of your heart. He’s not a bureaucrat waiting for formalities. He’s *attentive*, personal, and generous in ways others never see.

The Father’s Heart – As Shown Through Jesus

5. A Father Who Runs to the Broken

Luke 15:20 – “*And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.*”

- No lecture. No hesitation.
- The Father runs with compassion and restores with joy.
- Jesus could’ve described God any way—but He chose a story where the Father *runs* to His child in love, without demanding an apology first. This shows the *unrelenting grace and restoration* that defines the Father’s heart.

6. A Father Who Delights to Give

Luke 12:32 – “*Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*”

- He delights to share His rule, His joy, and His inheritance with you.
- He is not withholding—He is generous by nature.
- The Father isn’t reluctant. He delights in giving—especially giving *His Kingdom*, which means authority, peace, joy, and access to His presence. He’s not holding anything back.

7. A Father Who Disciplines in Love

Hebrews 12:6 – “*For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.*”

- Discipline is not rejection, it is love’s investment. (Greek word means “teaches, trains, instructs”)
- Jesus never used the word “Chastise” in regards to the father or himself.
- What we DO know, is that through God, all our former sin and sorrow becomes an asset to help others and to humble us - for God does allow us to learn from our own mistakes even when painful, and also

teaches us how and why to forgive others who have harmed us directly.

Revelation 3:19 (ESV):

“Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent.”
(Reprove - to expose or bring to light)

The Father’s Relationship – What Jesus Shows Us

8. “Abba” – Intimacy in Suffering

Mark 14:36 – *“And he said, ‘Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.’”*

- Even in deep pain, Jesus clung to the intimacy of “Abba.”
- You are invited to speak to God not as a concept—but as your Father.

Why It Matters:

“Abba” is an Aramaic term used by children—intimate, tender, like “Papa” or “Daddy.”

Jesus used this word when in deepest anguish (Gethsemane), showing *closeness even in suffering*. It wasn’t just theology—it was *relational language* that invites us into *familial belonging*.

9. “My Father Is the Vinedresser” – He Tends You Personally

John 15:1 – *“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser.”*

Matthew 21:33–41 – Parable of the Wicked Tenants

“There was a master of a house who planted a vineyard... and let it out to tenants...”

Eventually, he sends his son to collect the fruit.

- He trims, prunes, and nurtures you toward fruitfulness.
- He is attentive, hands-on, and purposeful in your growth.

- The tenants being Religious leaders who rejected God’s messengers, who acted in accordance with the lord of the earth. (Satan)

10. “We Will Make Our Home With Him”

John 14:23 – *“Jesus answered him, ‘If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.’”*

Revelation 21:3

“And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.’”

- The Father doesn’t just visit occasionally.
- He *dwells* with those who love Jesus—*permanently*.
- This is the eternal fulfillment of the desire God had *from the beginning*: to dwell with us and in us.

So HOW did Jesus Reveal the Father?

- By *praying* to Him openly and personally
- Through familial, intimate language like “Abba”
- By mirroring Him in actions and obedience
- Through parables of mercy and joy
- By contrasting Him with earthly fathers
- Through His own death and forgiveness
- By promising His presence as the reward

And WHAT did Jesus Reveal about the Father?

- The Father **shares glory** with the Son.
- The Father **gives** people to the Son as gifts.

- The Father is **protective** ("Keep them in your name").
- The Father is the source of truth and sanctification.
- The Father **desires union** ("That they may be one, even as we are one").
- The Father **seeks** and **draws near**
- The Father loves unconditionally
- The Father gives joyfully
- The Father knows intimately
- The Father disciplines with care
- The Father unites, not divides
- The Father reveals Himself in Jesus

Stepping Outside Religion: WAYS of God's expression.

1. Scientifically (without faith-based assumption)

From this view, "**The Father**" is best understood as the **Origin of all reality**—the uncaused Cause, the necessary Source from which everything else emerges.

- Not necessarily a man in the sky—but the **intelligent framework**, the **initiating principle**, or **field of consciousness** that birthed energy, matter, and the laws of physics.
- In this view, if the universe has an origin, and life carries information (DNA, consciousness), then "**The Father**" is the **architect** and **sustainer** of the system.
- Like the singularity before the Big Bang—but personal, relational, and willful if you allow mind to precede matter.

The Father is the Source Code of reality—with intentionality.

2. Metaphorically

Jesus used metaphor more than precision language. So if we follow His lead:

- **“The Father” is the Root of the Tree**, unseen but supporting all that grows.
- **The Light behind the Sun, the breath behind the wind, the heartbeat of time itself.**
- Like a **great artist**, who is both **within the art and beyond the canvas.**
- A **womb of infinity** from which even the Son is begotten—not created—but expressed.

The Father is the fire that does not consume, the presence that cannot be held, the Love that gives itself away and remains undiminished.

3. Spiritually (in the voice of the soul)

To the spirit, **The Father is Home.**

- He is **the One you come from**, and **the One you return to.**
- The one who **knows you before you speak**, and **calls you by your true name**, not your broken one.
- The Father is **Love in its purest motion**—not emotional affection alone, but **the will to give, to create, to restore, to guide, to discipline**, always in alignment with what is True.

The Father is the whisper in the silence, the one who waits while you run, and runs while you return.

4. Logically (via reason and philosophy)

Reason compels us to define The Father as:

- The **Necessary Being**—the one who **must exist** so that anything else can.
- A being who is **self-sufficient, unchanging, eternal, and personal** (since impersonal forces don't create persons).
- The one who generates both **order and meaning**, making morality, beauty, and consciousness intelligible.
- Distinct from the created world but not distant from it.

The Father is not "one of many possible gods" but the Ground of all Being—the "I AM."

5. Experientially (Lived Knowing)

This is the knowledge born not from theory, but from **encounter**.

- What does it mean to be **forgiven** by the Father?
- To feel **held, seen, or called**?
- How does the Father meet you **in suffering, joy, or silence**?

Jesus didn't just describe the Father—He *walked with* Him, *obeyed* Him, and *trusted* Him.

This way of knowing comes through prayer, silence, presence, and relationship. You might say:

"I knew Him because He found me when I was lost."

6. Historically (Through Human Witness and Tradition)

This involves listening to **how others** through the centuries have spoken of the Father—not just the theologians, but the **saints, mystics, poets, martyrs, and lovers of God**.

- What has been **preserved, argued, affirmed, or transmitted**?
- How did the early Christians, the desert fathers, the reformers, or even oppressed communities speak of “The Father”?

“Tradition is the living faith of the dead, not the dead faith of the living.” — Jaroslav Pelikan

This way of knowing honors the **collective memory** of God’s people.

7. Psychologically (Through the Inner Map)

This lens helps us understand how our **human minds** and **emotions** shape our view of "The Father."

- Do we project our **earthly father’s flaws** onto God?
- How do trauma, love, or upbringing **distort or illuminate** our image of Him?
- How does the Father relate to the **archetype of authority, provision, or discipline**?

This isn't reducing God to psychology—but understanding that *our lenses are often fogged by pain or ego*.

This way of knowing helps us remove false images and see with clearer inner eyes.

8. Aesthetically (Through Beauty and Symbol)

Beauty is a language older than words.

- Can you sense the Father in a sunrise? A symphony? The stillness of snow?

- Jesus said, “Consider the lilies...” —because even creation **reveals the generosity of the Father**.
- The Father is not only *truth*—He is *beauty, order, harmony, balance*.

This way of knowing invites awe, wonder, and sacred imagination.

9. Devotionally (Through Love and Surrender)

This is the **way of trust** and **yielding**. It says:

“I may not fully understand You, but I believe You are good.”

- It's not always about grasping the Father, but **being grasped by Him**.
- It includes praise, lament, silence, and surrender.
- It's how Jesus approached the Father: **in love, obedience, and intimacy**—even in agony.

“Abba, into Your hands I commit my spirit.” — *Luke 23:46*

This way of knowing is the one most available to the soul—even when intellect, senses, or metaphors fail.

The Ways of God: The Awakening requires all parts of us

If you want to know the Father deeply, **no one lens is sufficient**. You must listen with your:

- **Mind** (logic)
- **Heart** (spirit)
- **Eyes** (beauty)
- **Feet** (experience)
- **Ears** (history)
- **Soul** (devotion)
- **Inner child** (trust)

Ryan's Simple Analogy (Though All Analogies Fall Short)

Think of the **sun**:

- The **sun itself** (source) is like the Father.
- The **light it radiates** is like Jesus—always *from the sun*, yet distinct in expression, and inseparable.
- The **warmth you feel** is like the Holy Spirit—present, empowering, and felt.

They are not separate substances. You cannot have light without the sun, or warmth without light. Yet they are also not the same *manifestation*.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What image of “God the Father” did I grow up with?
2. How does Jesus correct or reshape that view for me now?
3. Am I worshipping the Father in *spirit and truth*—or out of routine?
4. Do I feel safe in the Father's hands—or still afraid of Him?
5. What would it look like to *receive* the Father's love, instead of trying to *earn* it?

CLOSING CHARGE / INVITATION

John 17:26 – “*I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.*”

Jesus revealed the name, nature, and *nearness* of the Father—so that we would know we are truly loved, and truly *home*.

Suggested Weekly Challenge:

- Read **John 14–17** slowly during the week, praying:
“Father, let me see You as Jesus revealed You.”