

## DEVOTIONAL AID FOR 26 JULY 2021 – 1 AUGUST 2021



**UPPER  
HUNTER**  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Dear church family,

After almost two months of break from devotional aids, we return from this week. We continue making use of the Heidelberg Catechism, and we are looking at Questions 120 and 121. A while ago now, but last time, we saw how the Catechism began to take us through the Lord's Prayer. This week, we look at the first item in Lord's Prayer, "Our Father in heaven".

Do you have any gut reaction against calling God as Father? In our fallen and broken world, our family relationships are often marred with pain and grief. If you had or still have a difficult relationship with your earthly father, or you grieve the absence of your relationship with your earthly father, then please understand that God knows your pain and sadness. But when our Lord Jesus invites and even commands us to call God as our Father, we must realise that we are being embraced into that perfectly loving relationship between God the Father and God the Son, Jesus Christ. In Christ, because of Christ, based on what Christ has done for us on the cross and His resurrection, we are now adopted as God's children. Because our identity has become so strongly bound to Christ, the Bible actually doesn't merely say we are now God's sons and daughters. Even for girls and women, you are called sons of God in Christ because it is through Jesus Christ God's Son we are adopted into that loving trinitarian relationship.

So it is right to follow Jesus and call God, our Father. More than calling God as the Creator or Redeemer, more than calling God as Almighty and All-knowing, though these are all true about Him, it is the highest privilege of Christians to call God as our Father. And knowing this privileged relationship we are now in because of Jesus should motivate us to pray more persistently, more humbly, and more boldly.

Yours in Christ,

Timothy Lee

<https://www.upperhunterpc.com>

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## THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM<sup>1</sup>

### Lord's Day 46

#### Q120) Why has Christ commanded us to address God as "our Father"?

A) To awaken in us at the very beginning of our prayer what should be basic to our prayer—a childlike awe and trust that God through Christ has become our Father. Our fathers do not refuse the things of this life; God our Father will even less refuse to give us what we ask in faith.

#### Q121) Why the words, "in heaven"?

A) Those words teach us not to think of God's heavenly majesty as something earthly, and to expect everything for body and soul from His almighty power.

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### MATTHEW 7:9–11

*Matt 7:9 Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? 11 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!*

Jesus here teaches us about our heavenly Father. He's comparing God our Father in heaven as someone who is like our earthly fathers but far greater. How striking is Jesus's words in verse 11: "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!" You may have had a father who disappointed you. Your father might have been absent or even abusive. But our heavenly Father is far greater and better than any earthly father. We can trust Him with a child-like faith marked by wonder, awe, and total reliance.

#### Prayer

Father in heaven, our good it is to call you Father. What privilege is this that I mere creature can call you as my Father in Christ? Gracious Father, please fill me with the joy of knowing you, and increase my faith in you so I may boldly ask you for all things I need. I pray in Jesus's name. Amen.

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### JEREMIAH 23:23–24

*Jer 23:23 "Am I a God at hand, declares the LORD, and not a God far away? 24 Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the LORD.*

There are all kinds of idolatrous ideas that threaten the Christian faith. Some "Christian" scholars propose an idea that God is very much like us, human beings, and in fact, as fickle and changeable as we are. In effect, they have made God out of their own image, and assume that God is part of this universe in some way. But such ideas are down right pagan ideas. The Bible shows us from the page one, that God is above and beyond the creation because God has made this world and everything in it. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Genesis 1:1) But this God beyond this creation we live in has nevertheless reached down to us and even made us His children in Christ. What privilege! What wonder! What an awesome and gracious God we have!

#### Prayer

Great Father God, you see all things since you are the creator God, God beyond this world, beyond what is seen. Gracious Father, thank you for showing mercy to me in Christ even when you see everything inside my dark heart. Please help me to keep trusting and obeying you by the power of Your Spirit. In Jesus's name I pray. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> The text of the Catechism is usually from <https://threeforms.org/heidelberg-catechism/>, but time to time, for the sake of clarity, I have also adopted the translation used in *The Good News We Almost Forgot* by Kevin DeYoung.