

# THE "OUR" in the "OUR FATHER"

Mt 6:9; Jn 1:12-13; Rom 8:12-17; Gal 4:4-7; I Pet 1:22-23; Tit 3:4-7

## I. THE "OUR" (in the Our Father) PRIMARILY REFERS TO CHRIST JESUS' FATHER

- A. "His" Father—Jesus frequently refers to "my" Father
  - 1. We pray "to the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit"
  - 2. "We are heirs only as joint heirs in union with the Son" (Thomas Oden, p. 197)
- B. As "children of God," begotten by grace, we may confidently approach the Father (cf Jn 1:12-13)
  - 1. **Justified**; God's act, imputing status, including (Aquinas says)
    - a. Hearing—understanding the offered forgiveness
    - b. Assenting—grace-enabled, freely willed acceptance of offered grace
    - c. Deciding—grace-enabled, freely willed movement away from sin
    - d. Realizing—knowing reality of sins forgiven, guilt remitted
  - 2. **Regenerated**, born again, re-created, imparted grace (cf. Tit 3:4-7)
    - a. Akin to God breathing the breath-of-life into Adam—new creation
    - b. "You have received again the Image whole" (St Gregory Nazianzen)
  - 3. **Adopted**, embraced, entitled, assured (cf. Rom 8:12-17; Gal 4:4-7)
    - a. Welcomed into the family, truly children, widely practiced in ancient world—e.g. five "good emperors," four of whom adopted sons who did well
    - b. Thereby: "enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God; have his name put upon them; receive the Spirit of adoption; have access to the throne of grace with boldness; are enabled to cry Abba, Father; are pitied, protected, provided for, are chastened by him as by a father; yet never cast off, but sealed too the days of redemption, and inherit the promises, as heirs of everlasting salvation" (*Westminster Confession*).
  - 4. **Liberated** to call Him **ABBA**—Ro 8:15; Gal 4:4-7
    - a. Combined Greek/Syriac words for emphasis
    - b. Slaves, servants not allowed to thusly refer to masters
    - c. Spiritual, heavenly transaction with temporal implications, directly given by God
- C. Church history illustrates reality of grace-wrought transformation, becoming children of God
  - A. Augustine: *Confessions* & Garden in Milan
  - B. Blaise Pascal: "Testament" sewn into his jacket
  - C. John Newton—from slave trader to minister & "Amazing Grace"
  - D. Malcolm Muggeridge: *Something Beautiful for God* records Mother Teresa's impact; *Chronicles of Wasted Time* records his confessions
  - E. Andrew Klavan: *The Great Good Thing: A Secular Jew Comes to Faith in Christ*
  - F. Sally Read: *Night's Bright Darkness*
  - G. Eric Metaxas: *Fish Out of Water: A Search for the Meaning of Life*
  - H. Craig Keener, author of *Miracles Today*, interviewed by Lee Strobel in *A Case for Miracles*

## II. The "Our" (in the Our Father) Secondarily Refers to Others

- A. Communion of Saints
  - 1. Church Militant: fellow Believers, here and now
    - a. Gal 6:10: "let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of saints"
    - b. Eph 2:19: "fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God"
    - c. Praying with, interceding for, Christians
  - 2. Church Triumphant: saints & loved ones now in Paradise
- B. All Men
  - 1. Acts 17: "He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth"
  - 2. I Tim 2-5: "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men . . . for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth, for there is one God and one Mediator between God and men the Man Christ Jesus"
  - 3. A certain (if limited) truth to Adolf von Harnack's "the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man"