

Everlasting Father
Pastor Joe Oakley
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We are in a Christmas sermon series entitled Unto Us. It is based on a messianic prophecy in Isaiah 9:6 which says:

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government will be upon His shoulders. And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Our emphasis in this series is on the attributes of God. So far we've seen how He is our Wonderful Counselor. The focus was on God's omniscience – which means God knows everything there is to know! God cannot learn anything because God already knows everything. We've also seen how God is a Mighty God which means than God is omnipotent or all powerful.

Today's sermon is called Everlasting Father and we will be looking at two aspects of God – He is eternal and He is a Father.

The fact that Jesus is our Wonderful Counselor shows us that in His wisdom He has a plan for our lives. The fact that He is Mighty God shows that He has the ability to carry out that plan. The fact that He is our Everlasting Father shows us His motivation for carrying out that plan. That motivation is the father heart of our everlasting God.

First – I want to talk for a moment about eternity. Some people think eternity means everlasting or forever – but it's more than that. Everlasting means to last forever – to never end. Eternity is continuous, perpetual existence without beginning or end. Psalm 90:1-2 says:

Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

1- This passage teaches that God is eternal.

He is from everlasting to everlasting. He always was; He always will be. He is the Alpha and Omega – the beginning and the end. And He is the beginning and the end simultaneously. For God there is no past or future – only an eternal now.

God is not bound by space or time. His infinity in relation to space is called omnipresence. God does not have to leave point A to arrive at point B. He is everywhere right now.

Likewise, God is infinite in relation to time. God fills all time at the same time. He does not have to move in time from point C to point D. God inhabits all time (past, present and future) right now.

This is how He can answer prayer before we pray and how He knows what has been, what is and what will be. Isaiah 46:9-10 says:

Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.

God exists apart from time, so we can equate the eternalness of God with timelessness.

2- Before the beginning – before time existed - God existed.

Before time began, God existed. Genesis 1:1 says:

"In the beginning God...."

There was never a time God did not exist and there will never be a time He does not exist. In other words – if you could get into a time machine and go a million years into the past, how closer would you be to the beginning of God? No closer. If you went a million years into the future, how close would you be to the end of God? No closer. How much older would God be? No older. God exists outside of time and is not bound by time.

We who are bound by both space and time find it difficult to relate to freedom from either. We even view eternity in terms of time. We say things like "eternity is unending time," or "eternity is time without beginning or end."

However, eternity has nothing to do with time. Eternity is actually a completely different dimension from time. Eternity is timelessness!

We know this to be true because it is true of God.

Eternity began when God began—never!

Eternity will end when God ends—never!

However, God does not possess eternity; He is eternal!

Eternity exists because God exists.

God dwells in eternity, but time dwells in God.

God is the uncreated Creator and every other thing owes its existence to Him – including time.

Since God created time, He cannot be bound or controlled by time.

3- Time is something God created for us.

In Genesis 1:14 God said, *“Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years.”*

Without time we would not be able to order our lives. We would not know when to go to sleep, when to wake up, when to go to work, when to go to church. We wouldn't know that it's 10:15 and be wondering how long this guy will speak. God is not sitting in heaven saying, “I can't believe it's only 10, when will this day ever end?”

God is eternal – which means He operates outside of time. For an eternal God, it is all one great big NOW.

Let me illustrate it this way. Think of two small boys in a small town who lived on Main Street. On the 4th of July the town was having a parade. Their mom told the boys they could watch the parade, but they must stay in the yard.

The boys were excited to see the parade. But when it started, there was one problem. There was a wooden fence in their front yard. It wasn't too tall for adults to see over, but the boys could not see the parade. The younger boy remembered a knot hole in the fence, so he ran to it and watched the parade through the knot hole. He saw clowns go by – bands – people on horses – he saw them all for a brief instance, one at a time.

Then he heard his brother calling him, “Come up here.” He took his eye away from the knot hole for a moment and saw his brother had climbed to the top of the tree in their front yard. He kept calling, “Come up here.” But the younger brother said, “NO, I don't want to miss anything.”

Finally, the older brother convinced him to climb the tree, so he took one last look through the knot hole and then ran as fast as he could to climb the tree so he wouldn't miss much of the parade. And lo and behold, when he got to the top of the tree, what did he see? He could see the part of the parade that had already passed his house, he could see the part right in front of his house and he could see the part that had not reached his house yet.

He saw it all – What was – what is and what is to come. And that is God's eternal perspective. He sees everything – past, present and future now. God is never caught by surprise.

What we tend to have is the knothole perspective. We see whatever circumstance we are in and that's all we can see. We tend to forget what has gone before and we sure can't see the future. We're bound by that little knothole view. But if we stop for a moment and listen – we will hear a voice crying out. “Come up here.” It's the voice of the Everlasting Father calling us to take our place seated with Him in the heavenly places. It's the desire of God to expand our vision – to get us out of a limited knothole perspective and to have an eternal perspective.

4- Not only did God create time, He also controls time.

Jesus said in Acts 1:7

It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.

There are two vivid examples of God controlling time in the Bible. Joshua 10:12-14 records how God made time stand still for a whole day. 2 Kings 20:9-11 reveals that God made time go backwards. Obviously, God not only created time, He also controls time. God alone eternal—totally timeless. 1 Timothy 1:17 says:

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever.

Immortal means that God is unable to decay, diminish or die. God is invisible – but Jesus came to earth to make an invisible God visible. He is Emmanuel – God with us.

Some people think Jesus began when He was born in Bethlehem. Not true!

5- Since Jesus is God – He always existed.

John 1:1-2 says:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.

Everything about Jesus is eternal. His name is eternal, His word is eternal, His purpose is eternal, His kingdom is eternal, His judgment is eternal and His life is eternal. Micah 5:2 says this about the baby born in Bethlehem:

But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity.

Angels, people and all other created things are not eternal. Everything had a beginning except God, so He alone is eternal. However, angels and people are everlasting, which means they had a beginning, but will never end. Eternalness is more than being everlasting and it belongs to God alone.

We can only understand this with God's eternal perspective. You see, from God's perspective – life goes on forever and everyone who has ever lived is still alive. Luke 20:38 says:

He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to Him all are alive.

I like the way the Amplified version says it:

...to Him all men are alive [whether in the body or out of it] and they are alive [not dead] unto Him.

All people who have ever lived are either alive on earth – alive in heaven with God – or alive apart from God – that’s called hell. That’s why Ezekiel 33:11 says that *God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked*. Why? Because they are eternally separated from Him.

That’s also why Psalm 116:15 says *Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints*. Why? Because they are eternally with Him.

Every person is everlasting and they will live forever either in the glory of heaven or in the torment of hell. But not everyone has eternal life – only those who have received eternal life by accepting Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Romans 6:23 says:

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

This eternal life is not something possessed apart from God. In fact:

6- Eternal life is Jesus - who is our life.

Everyone has a desire to live forever. That’s because Ecclesiastes 3:11 says:

He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.

People have eternity in their hearts – they have a longing for eternity - but they need God’s revelation of how to have eternal life. We must realize that God does nothing without a purpose. And God's purpose is not hidden; He has revealed it to us in Christ. Ephesians 3:10-11 says:

God’s intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to His eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The book of Ephesians reveals that God is a Father who desires children. However, God does not want just any kind of children. From the beginning God has declared His purpose to man. In Genesis 1:26 God said:

Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...

God's purpose has always been to have children in His own image. When Adam and Eve fell into sin – that image was spoiled, so God sent Jesus to restore it.

That's why Revelation 13:8 calls Jesus ...*the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*

Our everlasting Father had a plan for us from the beginning. Romans 8:29 says:

For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers.

There is God's eternal purpose: as a Father – He wants many children just like Jesus! To accomplish that 1 John 5:11-12 says:

God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

Eternal life is not something you can have apart from Christ. He is the resurrection and the life and when you receive Him you receive eternal life. Eternal life is Christ in you! 1 John 5:20 says:

We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know Him who is true. And we are in Him who is true — even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

The baby in the manger was born to die for our sins so that we could become God's children. Isaiah 53 talks about how when Jesus died, He had no physical offspring or descendants. Verse 10 says:

Yet it was the Lord's will to crush Him and cause Him to suffer, and though the Lord makes His life a guilt offering, He will see His offspring.

When you think of the baby in the manger, never forget that those tiny hands and feet were formed to receive the nails of Golgotha's cross.

Never forget that the warm and soft little body, wrapped in swaddling clothes, one day would have a spear thrust through His side.

Never forget that the royal blood of the Christ child would be poured out for our sins.

7- Not only is God eternal – but He is our everlasting Father.

The Old Testament rarely refers to God as Father. However, when Jesus came on the scene He introduced God as Father. He referred to God as Father more than 170 times.

You can tell how well someone knows God by the way they relate to Him as a Father. Many people have a hard time relating to God as Father because they never knew their father or their father abandoned them or abused them.

One of the main reasons people have wrong views of God is our tendency to project onto God the characteristics of the people we look up to. We tend to believe that God is going to treat us as other do. But we must realize that our heavenly Father is perfect – unlike our earthly fathers.

Earthly fathers may have conditional love – but our heavenly Father always loves us unconditionally.

Earthly fathers may abandon us – but our heavenly Father never leaves us or forsakes us!

Earthly fathers may seem distant and uncaring – but Jesus is Emmanuel – God with us!

Earthly fathers may not always do what's right – but our heavenly Father is always good and kind.

Human parents may hurt and disappoint us, but we can always depend upon our Everlasting Father. Psalm 27:10 says:

When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take care of me.

That's why we must do what 2 Corinthians 4:18 tells us to do:

We fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

No matter what we may be going through; no matter how other people may treat us; no matter what this life brings us, we can have peace and contentment. Because we know that everything in this world is temporary. It will soon pass away. But our life in Christ is forever. He is eternal and His love for us -- His goodness, compassion, and kindness -- will never end. We are His children and He is our Father, now and forever.

That's why He taught us to pray to, "*Our Father in heaven.*"

We don't pray as servants to a boss.

We don't pray as students to a teacher.

We pray as children to a loving Father!

We don't pray to a hard taskmaster who just wants us to toe the line.

We pray to a loving Father who wants to give abundant life.

We don't pray to a miser who wants to keep blessings from us.

We pray to a loving father who daily loads us with benefits.

When we pray to God we don't have to beg and plead.

Our heavenly Father wants to meet our need!

My question to you is this: Is the everlasting Father your father?

You might feel far away from God today.

You might be like the Prodigal son – you’ve gone your own way and done your own thing and you’ve made a mess of your life.

You might not even be sure that you are a child of God. John 1:12 says that *all who receive Christ, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.*

Jesus died on a cross to open the way to the Father. Wherever you are in life, the Everlasting Father is calling you home today. Place your faith in Jesus and be restored to the Father.