

Thursday 19th November Alistair Angus Whose son are you? Whose daughter are you?

This is the devotional for Thursday, the 19th of November, hope you all well, and these are uncertain times, I was told yesterday I had to have a COVID test, which I did, then I was told I had to self isolate. But just before I came on live, I had a text message to say that I was clear or negative, so praise God, I can get on with the normal routines of life.

Now, yesterday Caroline made reference to the fact that she had found these devotions really helpful, I agree with her, every time I listen to them, I get some insight into the very nature of God. And I'm trusting and believing that today, as you listen to this one, you will do the same. I also believe that this one follows on the sequence from what George said on Monday, what Andrew said on Tuesday and what Caroline said yesterday. When I listened to part of what Paul said last night, I could either have felt a bit intimidated, or encouraged because Paul touched on some of the areas that I feel that the Lord is calling me to talk about today, I choose to believe the latter, that the Lord is saying to reinforce some of the things and to elaborate on some of the things that Paul talked about.

I always as you know, have to use stories to relate my experience on what I believe the Lord is calling us to do, what He's calling me to do which is, it's really the nub of it because I can only talk about what He's saying to me, not what He's saying to you and trust that there's a bit of an overlap there. So in the summer of 2013, Heidi and I went on holiday, we went to Sicily. And as I always do when I go on holiday I took some books with me and I took a book called *Sonship* by James Jordan. And it elaborated and explored some of the areas that had been circulating in my heart over the previous year. And one phase particularly came to mind because James felt the Lord was saying to him, whose son are you? And at that moment, he realised that he couldn't answer with the glib answer, which would have been, I'm the son of Bruce Jordan, because he had cut himself off from being a son to his father. And I had to confess that up to about a year before, I wouldn't have been able to answer the question in the same way, I wouldn't have been able to say that David Angus was my father because I had cut myself off from being fathered by my dad. So the question I asked today is, Whose son are you? Whose daughter are you? And I believe the answer is pretty well fundamental to how we see ourselves, and how we see God. At creation. God said many things, but one of the things that really strikes me is that He says, 'It is not good for man to be alone'.

As we know, that is primarily said about marriage. But it also covers the whole spectrum of our relationships with all the people around us. Now, as we know, at creation, there was no sin at all. And man, Adam and Eve, lived in perfect harmony with God, their Creator, God their dad actually; up until the point that sin into the world and at that point, they had to cover themselves. And I'm going to suggest to you that in fact, what they said to God was, you are no longer our father, they cut themselves off from that relationship with God as their father, and said, we can no longer be fathered by you because of sin. And that was a tragedy, they became in effect the first orphans.

Now, as we know, Jesus is the perfect access to the Father. He alone makes the way, He takes our aloneness and makes it into atonement. So if you put a cross through the L, you have atonement, and He makes the absolute perfect way.

Now, I'm just going to read a few verses from John 14, I absolutely adore John's Gospel and I absolutely... John 14 is one of my go to chapters in the whole Bible. It says here, 'If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on, you do know Him and have seen Him'. Absolutely fundamental and as we know, the whole of John 14 goes on about the orphan state - He will not leave as orphans and everything. If we now also quickly look at one verse from Hebrews, Hebrews 1 verse 3, it says here, 'The son is the radiance of God's glory, and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful word.'

After he had provided purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven'. So when effectively you look at Jesus, you look at the Father as well. So if you look at Jesus and you say, Jesus, you are so wonderful, you're so beautiful, you are everything we know about Jesus, then you are actually saying the same thing about the Father because the two, their character, their very nature - I talked a few weeks' ago about how Jesus is gentle and lowly, - so if you look upon Jesus and you say, Jesus, you are gentle and lowly, you're also saying exactly the same thing about the Father.

So, for some of us, at the moment of our salvation, at the moment that we give our lives to Jesus, the moment we get born again, we actually accept the Father, we embrace the Father, and we are embraced by the Father. We live in the full realisation that He is our perfect father, He is, He is just so good to us and loves us so intensely, and we enjoy being in his arms and everything. But I have to say that that wasn't my experience. I got saved 42, nearly 43 years ago and it's only comparatively recently that I have seen God the Father for who He is. We used to sing in the late 1980s and those of you who stood or sat around me would have suffered because of this, because I sang it very loudly; a chorus that went 'Father God, I wonder how I managed to exist, without the knowledge of your Parenthood, and your loving care. But now I am your son, I am adopted in your family and I could never be alone 'cos Father God, you're there beside me'. Now singing that chorus did not make me a son, I may have had a head knowledge, but I didn't have a heart knowledge, I didn't actually accept it, I didn't actually believe it in my heart. I didn't live it out at all.

So I think at this point, it's worth telling you a bit of a story about me. And I also believe this story will help at least one person watching, I just ask that the rest of you continue to watch. Because I think it's worth, I believe it's worth, I know it's worth watching, just for the sake of those one or two individuals who this will help.

At the age of about 10 as I've already related in previous devotions, I cut myself off from my dad. I'd said to my dad effectively, I didn't tell him, or speak it to him, 'You are never going to see my emotions again, you're never going to see my heart again'. And at that point, he ceased effectively to be a father to me, I cut him off. My dad wanted to father me, but I refused to be fathered by him. Now, if we move on 40 years, and that is well over half my life, but at this stage, I'm working for the church. And I'm working closely with Clive Jackson, who was and is a very dear friend of mine. And one day we have the usual banter in the church office. But I remember saying something to him, and I don't remember what it was and he doesn't remember what it was, which went beyond the standard banter. It was almost certainly deeply sarcastic, it was hurtful. It was unkind, it was untruthful. And as I said it, I felt a deep remorse within my heart, I felt a deep pain within my heart. And as soon as I could I went home, and I cried out to God and said, God, what is it that causes me? Because this wouldn't have been an isolated example, in my life, there would have been other instances, what is it that causes me to act like this, to behave like this? And as I cried out, as I prayed, I felt God say to me, you have an orphan spirit, you are an orphan. And that was true. You know, if you had asked me at that moment, whose son I was, I would have had to say, I'm nobody's son, nobody fathers me, I am alone. So what was I like at that time? Well, I needed approval, I needed this, I needed the pat on the head to say you're doing well. I was often lonely. I was easily offended. I thought that nobody cared. I was always striving to do this and that and everything. So let me just say that the following day, I then went in and I knew I had to talk to Clive, I knew I had to apologise. So I was in as usual first thing in the morning, you know, because that's a sign of, as I've said, of the orphan heart and everything, and Clive comes in and I say, Clive, I need to see you. And he said, I'm really rather busy at the moment, I'll see you later. Now anybody who is or has been an orphan will realise that's the last thing you say to an orphan because an orphan needs it immediately, they need it right there and everything. So I sat in my office waiting there, probably not doing very much. And then Clive comes out and says, I've got a few minutes and everything, I said yeah a few minutes, no this is going to take a bit longer. I went into Clive's office, I closed the door, I sat down and I said, Clive, I'm sorry, the things I said to you yesterday were unkind, they were untrue, and I'm ever so sorry. And I realised yesterday that I spoke them because I'm an orphan. I realised that you you've always wanted to father me, will you please father me, and Clive looked at me with a great tenderness and said, I was going to have to talk to you about that, but you're right. And yes today, I embrace you as a son. And we embraced. And we said quite a few other things as well. And I received not only Clive's embrace, but the embrace of my Heavenly Father. Now, there was something else that had to

be done, because by this stage, my parents were both dead. But I had cut myself off, I had ceased to be a son to my father, about 40 years before. And it may seem a bit strange to you, but I actually had to and Clive helped me with this, I had to speak out to my father and confess to my father that I had ceased to be a son to him, that I had cut him off from being the very thing that he had wanted to be to me for many, many years. I say, I had to apologise, I had to, yeah, get on the knee and everything. And Clive then spoke a blessing over me, he spoke what I know my dad would have been saying over me, 'Son, I forgive you. Welcome back. You know, I'm delighted that you're my son again. I'm so thrilled that you are, you've taken this step and everything. And Clive also spoke the Father's approval and confirmation over me.

So I can say to you that that was probably the most significant thing that's happened to me certainly in the last 10 years. And I've never been the same since. Yeah, I'm still an orphan and those of you watching are probably saying, You're showing orphan tendencies now. I know I am. And I don't really particularly care to be quite honest, because I know that I am a son of God, I know that I'm fully accepted. I know who I am. I know. I just know it. And yeah, sometimes I laugh at my orphan tendencies. Sometimes I don't mind if people point them out to me, because that is who I am. Now, I'm going to read, and you've all been waiting for me to pull this out. I'm going to read from Luke 15. And I know I'm going over time, and that's the way it is. But this is worth reading. And I'm going to read from the passion translation or paraphrase, whatever you want to call it, but I believe it captures the heart of the Father here. 'Then Jesus said, once there was a father with two sons, the youngest son came to his father and said, Father, don't you think it's time to give me the share of your state that belongs to me. So the father went ahead and distributed among the two sons their inheritance. Shortly afterwards, the youngest son packed up all his belongings and travelled off to see the world. He journeyed to a far off land where he soon wasted all he was given in a binge of extravagance and reckless living. With everything spent and nothing left, he grew hungry, for there was a severe famine in that land. So he begged the farmer in that country to hire him. The farmer hired him and sent him out to feed the pigs. The son was so famished, he was willing even to eat the slop given to the pigs, because no one would feed him a thing. Humiliated, the son finally realised what he was doing. And he thought, there were many workers at my father's house who have all the food they want, with plenty to spare, they lack nothing. Why am I here dying of hunger, feeding these pigs and eating their slop. I want to go back to my father's house and I'll say to him, Father, I was wrong. I have sinned against you, I'll never be worthy to be called your son, please, Father, just treat me like one of your employees. So the young son set off for home. And from a long distance away, his father saw him coming dressed as a beggar, and a great compassion swelled up in his heart for his son who was returning home. So the father raced out to meet him. He swept him up in his arms, hugged him dearly, and kissed him over and over with tender love. Then the son said, Father, I was wrong. I have sinned against you. I could never deserve to be called a son, just let me be... The father interrupted him and said, Son, you're home now. Turning to his servants, the father said, quick, bring me the best robe, my very own robe. I will place it on his shoulders. Bring me the ring, the Seal of sonship and I will bring it, I will put it on his finger and bring out the best shoes you can find for my son. Let's prepare a great feast and celebrate, for this beloved son of mine was once dead, but now he's alive again. Once he was lost, but now he's found and everyone celebrated with overflowing joy'.

That is such a well known story. I'm not going to say very much about it except to say that when the son said give me my share, he was basically saying to his father, 'you're dead now, you are absolutely dead'. And let's read your will, because I'm going to have my inheritance. I'm not going to be a son to you anymore, you can't father me. And when the son returned, the father saw him returning and at the point that he saw the son returning, he knew that he was home. And yes, they had to say some words and everything. And then when he did return, it's quite significant: he got his very best robe, he didn't get a second hand, the clothes, the robe, from the charity shop or anything. No he got the very best, he got the best shoes and everything. And he also got a ring and I have two signet rings. I have a signet ring that was given to me on my 21st birthday, which has my initials on it. And I have this ring here. And this ring, actually has my dad's initials on it, and it's the signet ring I choose to wear, I've put it on myself. And if my dad was alive, it would show that I had his authority, it would show that I am his son, and everything. And today, it reminds me of whose son I am, that I am David Angus' son, because it's got his initials on it. Yesterday, Caroline challenged us to be brave. And I'm going to challenge all of us now, or at least some of us. If, as I've been speaking, you've realised that you don't know God, as a loving father. If you stumble over whose

son you are, whose daughter you are, you don't need to go another day. If you've walked away from Him, hardly think yourself a Christian, think you've done everything wrong that you could have, I want to tell you that there is hope. You can ask Jesus to take you to the loving Father, His Father, and our Father. You can say, Please, Father, take me as your son, take me as your daughter. I confess that I've been an orphan, in your house, in your church, please be the Father you've always wanted to be to me. Thank you for welcoming me into the place that Jesus has prepared for me. If you pray that or something similar, He will meet you, He will embrace you, He will restore you. You may, as I had to do, have to disentangle to confess, I know that we're in lockdown. I know that things are difficult, but there's still FaceTime, there's WhatsApp, there are other social media ways we can connect and everything. Or there's the telephone, you may have friends who can help you, or you can contact any of us in the Father's house office. We're available on our mobiles or whatever or email us and we'll help you. Today you can really say, as I did, some years ago, you can put on that ring that says, whose son you are, whose daughter you are. Have a great day and God bless you.



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