

Do you know who my father is?

Isaiah 49¹⁻⁷; Psalm 40¹⁻¹²; 1 Corinthians 11¹⁻⁹; John 1²⁹⁻⁴²

*God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
[1 Corinthians 1⁹]*

I was greeted by a young student at the door of a classroom one day who, pompously, demanded, "Do you know who my father is?" The response was out before I had thought about it: "No! Does your mother?"

It is John the Baptist who helps us understand that we only ever really know who we are when we know who Jesus is and how we relate to him!

In fact, all the readings have that sense of knowing who we are grows out of knowing God and who he is:

✠ **The Lord called me before I was born, while I was in my mother's womb he named me.** It goes on to highlight the promise, **the Lord, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.**

I find this so thrilling and affirming! There isn't a moment since conception that God hasn't known us, loved us and chosen us! We know who our Father is!

✠ The Psalmist proclaims, **how great your designs for us** and then goes on to say, **In the scroll of the book it is written of me that I should do your will, O my God; I delight to do it: your law is within my heart.**

To embrace what God has for us in life is also a joy and delight!

You may be amazed at how many people say to me, apologetically, 'I'm not religious.' They don't know how to respond when I reply, 'neither am I!' The Psalmist reminds us that God isn't religious, too! **Sacrifice and offering you do not desire!** Instead of being religious we are called to be loving, honest and self-less (just like Jesus). Genes will out - when we live like this, we know who our Father is!

✠ Paul's opening greetings in his first letter to the Corinthians knows that he is **called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God** and that

the Church has been called into being by the **grace of God** and that it is not **lacking in any spiritual gift**. Paul is also certain that God keeps hold of those who are his - **he will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ** and that we can depend on this because **God is faithful**.

I knew when I fully became an adult - it was when my father stopped putting the petrol money in my hand to cover the cost of driving to Scotland to see him! That is a point we never arrive at as Christians - we never grow out of our dependence on God! Because of his gifts and his generosity to us, we know who our Father is!

✠ One of the phrases I mused on in preparing this sermon was John's statement, **I myself did not know him**. John was certain of his own calling and that his ministry was to prepare for the imminent arrival of the Messiah. We also know that John and Jesus were cousins (and that their mothers, Mary and Elizabeth, were close) and so they must have known each other. What John didn't know was God's purpose for Jesus - the Incarnate Son of God grew up fully human and so at the point of Jesus baptism John's eyes were opened, he knew Jesus more fully when, as he says, **I saw the Holy Spirit descending on him like a dove**.

John knew who he was and then he knew who Jesus was, which is why he was able to release his disciples (including **Andrew** who introduced **Peter** to Jesus) to become Jesus' disciples.

When we recognise Jesus as God's Son, as our unique means of forgiveness and we, like Andrew, become disciples then we are adopted into God's family - we know who our Father is!

How 'religiously' we recite, **I believe in God, the Father almighty**, in the Creed that follows this! Will I test whether you are listening or not? Today we will say, **I believe in God, MY Father almighty** because we really do know who our Father is! **I believe in God, MY Father almighty!**