

SERMON: SAFE IN THE LOVING HANDS OF OUR FATHER**GOOD Morning OIC****AND****WELCOME TO FATHER'S HOUSE AND HAPPY FATHERS' DAY**

Today, I am praying that we will all hear the **Wonderful Words of Life** from the Bible, that God really is, or truly can be, our Heavenly Father. I closed my last Message with the following words, the 3rd verse from a hymn in *The Hymnal for Worship & Celebration*. This has been the OIC hymnal for many years. The song is #484 “Who Is on the Lord's Side?”

Verse #3: *Jesus, Thou hast bought us, Not with gold or gem, But with Thine own lifeblood, For Thy diadem. With Thy blessing filling each who comes to Thee, Thou hast made us willing, Thou hast made us **free**. By Thy grand redemption, By Thy grace divine, We are on the Lord's side, Savior, we are Thine.*

Born-Again Christians are on the Lord Jesus' side. He bought us with His lifeblood. He has given a new heart with a willingness to serve Him. We are on Jesus' side so we are also in His Father's Hands! As my favorite *Seed Planting Bible* verse in **(1 Peter 3.18/AMP)** says: *For indeed Christ died for sins once for all, the Just and Righteous for the unjust and unrighteous [the Innocent for the guilty] so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the Spirit; So in v.18 : that He might bring us to God* means that for any Believer in Jesus, He has brought us to be **SAFE IN THE LOVING HANDS OF OUR FATHER.**

Today I will exegete and focus on some meanings of the Gospel of John, the 10th Chapter, regarding Jesus' claim to be the Son of God. This is to emphasize our Heavenly Father for this message. Much of John chapter 10 is devoted to Jesus' teaching that He is the Great Shepherd, and His Sheep are Christians. The obvious connection that angered many Jews was that when Jesus claimed to be the **Son of God**, He is saying God is His Father. The Jews claimed and professed that the only God is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. TRUE! But, they assumed He was their father by natural descent from Abraham. Jesus would expose that professing God

and obeying Him in spirit, not just in law, are two different things! Jesus begins much of this confrontation here when He says in **(John 10.36)** *I am The Son of God.*

THE GOOD SHEPHERD AND HIS SHEEP – ARE AS: LIKE FATHER IS LIKE SON - FATHERS PROTECT THEIR CHILDREN AT GREAT COST TO THEMSELVES

To show the Character of God, the Father, we will briefly look at Jesus using the analogy or similarity of Himself as a Good Shepherd and his Sheep. In **(John 10.11-13)** Jesus said: **11** *“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep. 12 A hired hand will run when he sees a wolf coming. He will abandon the sheep because they don’t belong to him and he isn’t their shepherd. And so the wolf attacks them and scatters the flock. 13 The hired hand runs away because he’s working only for the money and doesn’t really care about the sheep.*

We see in these Bible verses how hirelings are caring for sheep only for financial gain. It is not work from the heart! Wolves are always out to eat sheep. They attack those caring for the sheep. Sacrificial service and love is then needed! Wolves include *false religious teachers and the devils and demons who inspire them.* Jesus makes it clear that unlike a hireling, He, the Good Shepherd sacrifices His life for the sheep. Here Jesus reveals God the Father's care for Jesus' Sheep, Christians. ...Thus or therefore: **LIKE SON, LIKE FATHER.** As we see in **(John 1.18)**, *No one has ever seen God. But the unique One, who is himself God, is near to the Father’s heart. He has revealed God to us.* Jesus actually spoke this fact to the Apostle Philip in **(John 14.7-9)** **7** *If you had really known me, you would know who my Father is. From now on, you do know him and have seen him!” 8 Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.” 9 Jesus replied, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don’t know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking me to show him to you?*

A CHRISTIANS' RELATIONSHIP WITH THE TRIUNE GOD – THE TRINITY

The Bible reveals that God is Three Persons: Father-Son-Holy Spirit. Christians are instructed in the Bible to focus on Jesus in **(Hebrews 12.1b-2)** *And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. 2 We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith.* Our relationship with Father God and Holy Spirit is not hindered as we focus on Jesus! I like this quote from Charles Spurgeon's Devotional, *Morning & Evening* : “We are too apt to forget that, while there are distinctions as to the *persons* in the Trinity, there are no distinctions of *honour*. We too frequently ascribe the honour of our salvation, or at least the depths of its benevolence, more to Jesus Christ than we do the Father. This is a very great mistake. What if Jesus came? Did not His father send Him? If He spake {spoke} wondrously, did not His Father pour

grace into His lips, that He might be an able minister of the new Covenant? He who knoweth the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost as he should know them, never setteth one before another in his love.”

I add also the truth that “**There is no competition in the Godhead!**”

FATHER GOD'S COMPASSION DISPLAYED THROUGH HIS SON'S SACRIFICE

Many Christians had or have now a poor relationship with their father. Maybe he was even abusive. This often creates the wrong attitude to their *perfect Heavenly Father*. Spurgeon also opened this particular devotional I just quoted with: “It is a sweet thought that Jesus Christ did not come forth from Heaven to save us without His Father's **permission, authority, consent, and assistance.**” This devotional writing was focused on **(1 John 4.14/KJV21):** *The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.*

The **PERMISSION OF THE FATHER granted to Jesus is seen in God's plans in eternity past.** Father God planned to send Jesus before the Creation - **(Ephesians 1.4)** *Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes.*

We also see this permission, authority, consent and assistance in the miracles by Jesus. As Jesus said to the Jews opposing Him in **(John 10.25)** *Jesus replied, “I have already told you, and you don't believe me. The proof is the work I do in my Father's name.* These first Century Jews, false Christians, and heresies like the *Jehovah Witnesses*, distort that Jesus always kept His relationship as a Son to a Father. Jesus is equally God. As the Bible teaches us in **(Philippians 2.6)** *Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to.* But unlike sinful men, He could stay in submission to His Father at all times while being Himself. Actually and truthfully, by God's grace or *undeserved favor*, Christians are called to have the same life submission to God as Jesus did to His Father. Christians' sinful nature may hinder this, but, as one matures it becomes a joyful part of every day living. Maturing Christians realize that their identity, as God foreknew them to become, becomes more clear and solid as they submit to their loving Heavenly Father. Note that this includes submission to Jesus or the Holy Spirit as *God is One*. Another truth to meditate upon is that when we remember Jesus' bleeding on the Cross, that God the Father put Him there for us. The Father sent Him!

Again, in **(John 12.49)** *I don't speak on my own authority. The Father who sent me has commanded me what to say and how to say it.* Jesus was not a “robot,” but a Son who loved His Father and

committed His all to doing Father's will...even Death on the Cross. We would do well to meditate on this truth in relationship with God. **Our commitment is to Jesus' Lordship which connects to God our Father.** As the Apostle Paul wrote in **(1 Corinthians 8.6)** : *But for us, There is one God, the Father, by whom all things were created, and for whom we live. And there is one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things were created, and through whom we live.* Thus - **Our commitment is to Jesus' Lordship which connects to God our Father.**

A FATHER'S PROTECTION

Reading **(John 10.27-30)** *27 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me, 29 for my Father has given them to me, and he is more powerful than anyone else. No one can snatch them from the Father's hand. 30 The Father and I are one."*

Here we see great promises by Jesus for our protection by Jesus and our omnipotent Father. Jesus' Sheep have awesome privileges: hearing Jesus' glorious voice, eternal or everlasting life, souls that never perish, and being held safely in Father God's Hand.

It is natural for earthly fathers to have an instinctual drive to protect their family, and especially their children. This comes from being made in God's image. We see this in the first Book of the Bible in **(Genesis 1.26/NASB1995)** *Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."*

Even our sinful nature can not erase God's likeness completely. All cultures around the world, even the *tribal ones that worship nature*, have a sense of right and wrong. The most common right in all societies is protecting the family unit. How much more can Christian fathers draw upon their Helper, the Holy Spirit, to cause them to be more like their Father Creator. Godly families spring up from godly fathers!

Reading **(John 10.29)**: *for my Father has given them to me, and he is more powerful than anyone else. No one can snatch them from the Father's hand.* Our Heavenly Father cares about our physical well being even as His care and perception of little sparrows, and the hairs on our head. As Jesus taught us in **(Matthew 10.29-30)**:

29 What is the price of two sparrows—one copper coin? But not a single sparrow can fall to the ground without your Father knowing it. 30 And the very hairs on your head are all numbered.

But the Born-Again Christian has as his goal a glorious entrance to be with Jesus in Heaven. Father God's care of a Christian physically is clear; but, our spiritual safety lasts forever in our Father's hands. Satan will try to snatch a Christian away from God, but he can not! Satan's strategy is to cause Christians to *think* that they are not safe in Father's hand. Arrows of discouragement and lies are his only weapons to cause Christians to waver in their confidence *in Christ and the Father*. But Jesus has snapped all of Satan's arrows of malice and lies on the Cross for us. *It is finished! No one, {not even Satan} can snatch them from the Father's hand.*

In the Bible verse(**John 10.30**), *The Father and I are one*, confirms that we live *for God the Father through God the Son* as taught us in (**1 Corinthians 8.6**): *But for us, There is one God, the Father, by whom all things were created, and for whom we live. And there is one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things were created, and through whom we live.*

FATHER THE PROVIDER

Most modern societies allow or often require both parents to help in financial provision for the family. During Jesus' time on earth, the Jewish family depended on the Father as the main provider. Israel was then what we would call a *farm* or *rural* society. As on many smaller farms even today, there were many things the mother and children could do to assist his burden. Farm chores such as children taking care of the animals was, and still is, common. Father might plow the fields, but family members can milk the cow or goat, make cheese, grow vegetables or fruits, or make clothing to sustain the family. During Jesus' years on Earth Israelites could purchase property. But the heavy taxation by Rome kept many families near or in poverty. Thus a rural farm family had to be able to grow more than survival amounts to sell produce for money to pay taxes to Rome.

Although every father (or possibly an uncle in some African cultures) is committed to provide financially for the *extended family*, Jesus challenges all His Followers with God's priorities. He said the following Words that shocked the Pharisees and apparently His own Apostles in (**Mark 8.36**) *And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul?* The Apostles were shocked when Jesus said in (**Mark 10.23-27**) : **23** *Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the Kingdom of God!"* **24** *This amazed them. But Jesus said again, "Dear children, it is very hard to enter the Kingdom of God. 25 In fact, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God!"* **26** *The disciples were astounded. "Then who in the world can be saved?" they asked. 27 Jesus*

looked at them intently and said, “Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But not with God. Everything is possible with God.”

I have sadly watched sincere Christian fathers so emphasize providing for the family that their children saw that priority and made it theirs as well. Children will do as we do, more than they will do as we say! These children had what appeared to be Christian lives that just barely will get into Heaven. Only Jesus can really judge that, of course. But we fathers in Christ should want to train our children to hunger for a close walk with Jesus regardless of the family's financial security. I know of many men who are not called to the Ministry with that goal or priority for their family.

FATHER'S AUTHORITY

Reading again of Jesus having to argue with the Jews about His true identity in **(John 10.31-33)** *31 Once again the people picked up stones to kill him. 32 Jesus said, “At my Father’s direction I have done many good works. For which one are you going to stone me?” 33 They replied, “We’re stoning you not for any good work, but for blasphemy! You, a mere man, claim to be God.”* As the Jews accuse the true God of blasphemy, I want to focus again on the Father's authority over His blameless and sinless Son. As He said in **(John 10.32)** *Jesus said, “At my Father’s direction I have done many good works.* Father's authority is declared in Jesus' words *At my Father’s direction.* Earthly fathers are made in God's image, and as I said before; our sins cannot totally erase God's image in all men. So most fathers sense the responsibility to take authority in the family. Brad Houdyshel preached last week about discipline regarding hard events. The Bible tells us that to mature so as to overcome temptations we need hard experiences to create this discipline. He quoted **(Hebrews 12.7-12)** *7 As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as his own children. Who ever heard of a child who is never disciplined by its father? 8 If God doesn’t discipline you as he does all of his children, it means that you are illegitimate and are not really his children at all. 9 Since we respected our earthly fathers who disciplined us, shouldn’t we submit even more to the discipline of the Father of our spirits, and live forever? 10 For our earthly fathers disciplined us for a few years, doing the best they knew how. But God’s discipline is always good for us, so that we might share in his holiness. 11 No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it’s painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way. 12 So take a new grip with your tired hands and strengthen your weak knees.* Please note that this discipline in Believers from their Heavenly Father may have nothing to do with any act of sin. But it deals with a Christian's *sinful nature* to become more dead from the wise discipline.

Luke was the only New Testament writer who was not a Jewish Believer in Messiah Jesus. This Gentile doctor's hunger for truth rings loud and clear as a bell. This is seen in his Gospel and the Book of Acts. But New Testament theology was set out by Jewish men. The thousands of years of God's defining fatherhood and authority influenced them. God still wants the values for the Older testament to shine through Christians who are not under the Law.

We can understand more of God's will for fathers from the cultural information on the Jewish family from book titled *The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times*. We find that the Father of our Faith, Abraham, was actually a *sheikh*. In that culture the leader of a family was *the father*, and the head of the group of families was a *sheikh*. He was the father of many but like a father as leader to the extended family of uncles, aunts, and servants. The family was therefore a “little kingdom” that was ruled by the father. Children with a strong spirit of rebellion against father's authority might be stoned to death under God's Law. The Bible says this in **(Deuteronomy 21. 18-21)** *18 “Suppose a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey his father or mother, even though they discipline him. 19 In such a case, the father and mother must take the son to the elders as they hold court at the town gate. 20 The parents must say to the elders, ‘This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious and refuses to obey. He is a glutton and a drunkard.’ 21 Then all the men of his town must stone him to death. In this way, you will purge this evil from among you, and all Israel will hear about it and be afraid.*

Jesus came to deliver us from the curse of the Law as God showed us in **(Galatians 3.13/NASB1995)** *Christ redeemed us from **the curse of the Law**, having become a **curse** for us—for it is written, “**Cursed** is everyone who hangs on a tree”— **and** verses like **(2 John 3/NASB1995):** ***Grace, mercy and peace** will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.* However, Christians who have been following Jesus for some time, and studying the Bible, realize that the family needs a *reverential fear* regarding rebellion and disobedience. This fear is to be of God and of the father who is appointed as the head of the family. Being under Grace and not under Law, we don't stone our rebellious children to death. Still today God demands that we punish and discipline them for sins of rebellion. **Dear fathers at OIC, we must seek Jesus for wisdom to discern *rebellion* from other sins and childish mistakes!***

As we read in (**Hebrews 12.10**) *For our earthly fathers disciplined us for a few years, doing the best they knew how. But God's discipline is always good for us, so that we might share in his holiness.*

FATHER'S GOOD PLEASURE

You might say, Pastor Bruce, with all this preaching of reverential fear and stoning children to death, where is God's Love? You may feel that way for an instant..but take a quick look back at God placing His only begotten Son on the Bloody Cross of shame and suffering...just for you!

Jesus knew the anxious thoughts of His beloved disciples, as He know ours everyday. He knew that they {and we } were often overwhelmed by His new teaching, despite their love for Him. He wisely said to them in (**Luke 12.32**) *Fear not, little flock, for it is your **Father's good pleasure** to give you the Kingdom.* Then in 29AD, they were also wrestling with their Mentor -Master's recent talks to them of many warnings, not to fear death, not to be greedy, and now stop worrying.

The Apostle Paul repeats Jesus' sentiment for all Believers in (**Philippians 4.6-7**). *6 Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. 7 Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus*

These verses bring my Message to a close. It is an imperfect Message about our Perfect, Glorious, without comparison in the Universe, **FATHER GOD**. As I contemplate God's good pleasure in my life and in the Scriptures, a few thoughts spring up.

1. Remember how much God the Father loves you.
2. We need to learn discipline as soldiers for Christ, to exhibit the Compassion of Jesus to the lost world around us
3. This discipline is made clear in (**Hebrews 12.11-12**) *11 No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way. 12 So take a new grip with your tired hands and strengthen your weak knees. I see that Verse 12 is troublesome at those times in spiritual warfare when our will is just too weak to resist sin, nor for us to take a grip on our spiritual life at all! This is when God's Good Pleasure is most powerful.* As in (**Philippians 4.6b-7**) *Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. 7 Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. **Tell God what you need!*** Do not let the devil lead

you to despair when you cannot find the strength in yourself to resist temptation. **Stop looking at yourself---PRAY!** The shortest and maybe most powerful prayer in the Bible is when Jesus came walking on the water to His beloved Disciples. Reading (**Matthew 14. 25-33**): *25 About three o'clock in the morning Jesus came toward them, walking on the water. 26 When the disciples saw him walking on the water, they were terrified. In their fear, they cried out, "It's a ghost!" 27 But Jesus spoke to them at once. "Don't be afraid," he said. "Take courage. I am here!" 28 Then Peter called to him, "Lord, if it's really you, tell me to come to you, walking on the water." 29 "Yes, come," Jesus said. So Peter went over the side of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus. 30 But when he saw the strong wind and the waves, he was terrified and began to sink. "Save me, Lord!" he shouted. 31 Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him. "You have so little faith," Jesus said. "Why did you doubt me?" 32 When they climbed back into the boat, the wind stopped. 33 Then the disciples worshiped him. "You really are the Son of God!" they exclaimed.*

When we are sinking in sin and temptation we may get terrified as it feels like Satan will destroy us. Jesus and the Father will both reach out to you when like a sinking Peter in (Matthew 14.30b-31) you say: "Save me, Lord!" he shouted. 31 Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him. Please take note that Jesus did not chasten or correct Peter for his "little faith" until **after He reached out to grab him!**

***** Maybe you wandered into this church today... not sure why! God the Father brought you here to join His Family. As I opened this Message with (1 Peter 3.18/AMP):** *For indeed Christ died for sins once for all, the Just and Righteous for the unjust and unrighteous [the Innocent for the guilty] so that He might bring us to God, that He might bring us to God.* This means Jesus died for any unrighteous, unjust person, which is everyone who ever lived. Such a person who decides to believe in Jesus is placed into the **SAFE LOVING HANDS OF GOD THE FATHER.** **If you feel something new inside of you as you think or hear this, go to the Lift Sign after this Message and ask for a prayer!**

4. Whether we have matured in Christ for many years or are newly born-again, remember as Children of God we may feel led to be formal and pray "Father." But I believe that God our Father takes most pleasure when we pray as in (Galatians 4.6): *And because we are his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, prompting us to call out, "Abba, {Daddy-God}, Father."*

Let Us Pray,

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