



### **AS A FATHER ...**

Here are some Father's Day greetings I came across this week. I think they're supposed to be funny. Let's see:

*Happy Father's Day from your favourite child (we won't tell the others).*

*Dad, I wouldn't trade you for anything! Not that anyone's offered it. Happy Father's Day.*

*Please accept this Father's Day card as a token of my poverty.*

*I may not be the perfect child, Dad, but that's OK – I forgive you.*

*Hope your Father's Day is as fun as life was before we turned up.*

*Even though you never bought me a pony, I still love you. Happy Father's Day!*

*You're the best Dad anyone could wish for. Just don't dance.*

Now here's what I noticed about the Father's Day cards out there. They either avoid the embarrassing stuff, or express it all for us.

Those 'here's why I love you' cards.

As we'll see in this psalm – a good one for Father's Day – we need to say such things to our heavenly Dad, as well:

### **Psalm 103**

It can be easy to take God for granted. So, King David begins by having a chat with himself. He reminds himself of how amazing his *av* or dad is. Only the dad he's talking about is? God Himself.

He has 3 words of advice:

**1) Remember God's Grace** (vs2-5). David commands himself to praise God with all that he is – words, actions, thoughts, feelings. And then he tells himself why:

- He forgives us and heals us. Now David here isn't talking about the healing of every physical sickness. He's talking about the healing of our sinful traits and the consequences for eternity. Hence the link here between healing and forgiveness (Isaiah 53:5).
- He redeems our lives and crowns us. What does 'redeem' mean? 'To buy out of slavery.' The picture is of God lifting us out of the slave pit of sin. But that's not all: He's crowned us with love and compassion, too. I.e. He's made us His princes and princesses!
- He satisfies our desires and renews our youth. We can have all sorts of desires, not all of them good. But God is able to change those desires and satisfy them, with good things – like an eagle moulting! Or a 'new creature in Christ', as 2 Corinthians 5:17 says.

In Jesus, this is what God has done – for all those who trust in Him. So, praise Him! When you feel like it – and when you don't. Obedience trumps feelings, guys!

**2) Remember God's Love** (vs6-18). David casts his mind back to the wilderness-wanderings of the Israelites. And he cites a statement made by God when He gave the second set of 10 commandments to Moses, following the golden calf incident (Exodus 34:6-7). God showed *chesed* or kindness to Israel, despite their unfaithfulness. And He shows kindness to us. In what way?

He will not continually accuse us (think Aslan and Edmund).

He will not harbour His anger forever (He will not bear a grudge).

He does not treat us as our sins deserve (praise God for that!).

Or repay us in the way that we repay Him (praise God again!)

Because His love is as high as the heavens above (to infinity).

He removes our sin as far as east is from west (again, to infinity!).

And He cares for us, as a father cares for his children. Why? Because He knows that we are dust – weak, vulnerable, temporal. Like grass or a flower in a meadow. But if we fear or revere Him (used 3 times here), if we love God and want to build our lives on His words, we will have a relationship with Him that will go on from eternity to eternity (or *m'olam v'ad olam*, from world to world).

And where do we see all this? Yep, we see it in Jesus!

**3) Remember God's Power** (vs19-22). The gods that were worshipped by Israel's neighbours were the gods of particular places: sea, fields, mountains, sky. Or they were the gods of this empire or that. I.e. they had limits.

But the God of Israel, the God we worship, is the God of ... everywhere! Which means He has: no limits! Hence why David says what he says in vs19: everything that exists is under God's dominion or control. He has a plan for the whole world. And that means He has a plan ...

For us.

It's why God says this, in Isaiah 66: "Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool. Where is the house you will build for Me?" (vs1). And Jesus says this, to the Samaritan woman in John 4: "A time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem ... when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth" (vs21, 23).

So, do what the angels do: praise Him by declaring it! Do what the armies of heaven do: praise Him by serving it! Do what every star, planet, tree, animal, molecule, particle does: praise Him by living it!

Do what your soul was made for. Praise Him!

**"Thanks For All You Do ..."**

Now this message can be received in various ways. You might be thinking, "Amen! I could be doing this all day!"

Or you might be feeling something different.

You might be feeling like you've let God down – that you are unworthy of such a Father (newsflash: we all are). Conversely, you might be feeling as if God has let *you* down – that He wasn't there for you when you needed Him (newsflash: He was). Such perceptions are common to God's children: even David felt like this, sometimes. But unlike David, we can know this stuff for certain; we can know that we have a heavenly Father who forgives us and cares for us. How? Because of Jesus.

So, what do we do with this? The key is to start listing things. Hence why the psalm ends as it begins: it's circular. Praise generates praise. You just have to *do* it.

Which brings us to another kind of Father's Day greeting. You know the kind of thing:

*Dad, I know I don't say it enough, but thanks for all you do. I love you lots.*

"Thanks for all you do." So, what has He done? For *you*? What have *you* got to thank Him for today? Let's pray.