

Small children often learn to say “Dadda” before they say “Mamma.” After all the extra time mom spends with the child, nurturing. How come “Dadda” first? Doesn’t seem fair! Apparently, Dadda is easier sound for a baby to form.

Calling upon God our Father may be difficult. We may think of God the Father as aloof, distant; or harsh, frightening. Our sinfulness against our heavenly Father would have to make us fear Him, even wish He were distant. But that’s not the Father we have. God our Father so much desires to be close, intimate with us that He sent his Son to redeem us from our sins. St. Paul write, **God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’** Abba, Arabic for father, but not just any father, best translated, “God our Father, Father!”

Baptized, thus adopted, named by Him, you enjoy the constant attention and care of a perfect father, that you can now pray the “Our Father.”

I don’t know about you, but sometimes I think that the world has gone crazy. I know every generation since Adam has said the same thing – ‘how much worse can it get?’ Every ‘next generation’ seems to take that as a challenge.

Even using the Scriptures here, St. Paul writes. **There is neither Jew or Greek, male or female.** Now Paul is pointing out that our heavenly Father doesn’t play favorites. He is no respecter of persons the Scripture says. Fathers don’t play favorites. So if your child, grandchild comes to you, asks: Am I your favorite? You tell them ‘yes’. You tell that to each one, you are each my favorite. Your Father uniquely, specifically to you, loves, cares for you as His favorite. He makes no distinction, for you are all equal heirs in His kingdom as His dear baptized child, His adopted offspring out of this world. Our Father gives you an identity. The world will hate to hear this, but your identity is not from you, but whose you are, who you belong to. Your identity is not from your desires or your feelings. Your acts do not define you. The Lord gives you an identity at the font. The name of God placed upon you in your baptism. You are no longer your own. You belong to your Father. You are defined by His Word. You are not the old creation marked by sin for death but His new creation, child of God marked by His grace for a future that lives as this world is dead.

This passage, **no male or female** used 130 years ago to promote first time in all world history women’s ordination; now its used to continue to promote genderless, sexual, lifestyle sins, no boundaries as God-pleasing. While ignoring all the other parts of how God gives the blessing of your created identity, your vocations and duties as male and female, as husband and wife, as son or daughter. Jesus Himself, **Have you not read he who created them from the beginning made them male and female. Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, the two shall become one flesh.** So much more on that.

Yet evil and sin is not just out there. It dwells in each of us. Here’s a question, an exercise, its not always a good exercise to think of, but, if you could commit a

crime, commit a sin and have no consequence, no shame, not get caught, not have to pay the price for committing a sin, what might you do? It's so much more than not paying taxes. What might you do or take or touch or not pay back? Be honest. Repent. Your Lord's works of a cross to forgive, define you.

A problem we all underestimate or think: evil and the demons don't surround us, aren't working against us, or we would be more fervent in prayer, more on our guard, fight more against temptations, more focused on the things of God. What's that Luther hymn you like to sing, **though devils all the world should fill, all eager to devour us.**

And Jesus comes upon this horror movie scene in the Gospel. For if you think for one moment what demons, Satan did to that poor man isn't what he *wants* to do to you -to possess you, to drive you, to torment you, to harm you, to destroy you -you are sorely mistaken. This is *exactly* what he wants to do to you. The reason he does not, cannot -the only reason- God does not permit him to do so.

But that doesn't mean that demons, Satan not active in your life, Satan will not stop against the Lord's own. He will work against you to doubt this gospel, to look to yourself. Demons use even the things of this world, that look good, loving, harmless to destroy your faith, to rob you of His life in you, to undue the joy of your salvation, to destroy every relationship with someone you love or someone who loves you. Working tirelessly against you; using things in this world to cause you to be too busy for things of God, or you think the social stuff and entertainment won't hurt you or your children; working to desensitize the world, things in your life -desensitized to sin, to accept all the immorality, violence, language, lies. You might ask would my father or mother think? They would have covered their eyes and ears, while we aren't scandalized. What would your father think? Your heavenly Father, and you know what He thinks, revealed in His very word for you to live by.

But for us fights the valiant one, He hold the field forever. though devils all the world should fill, all eager to devour us. We tremble not, we fear no ill, they shall not overpower us. This worlds prince- satan may still, scowl fierce as he will, He can harm us none. He's judged the deed it done.

What shall we do in response to all He has done? Return to your home and declare how much God has done for you. What Christ said to the man held captive by his demons so long ago and set free by the power of Christ. This is what we hear every Sunday. Depart in peace. The peace of Christ is yours amidst your daily warfare. Demons cannot harm you. You are surrounded by evil, insanity, afflictions yet it will not prevail over you. You are His. You enjoy the company of angels. You are holy. You have a new life to live. Life not on what we were or have done or think or feel, but a new creation, who you are in Christ, life you now live in Him.