

# Abba, Father

Notes for Church from the Bible study I led on 25<sup>th</sup> Feb 2021

## **Why did I pick this one of the names of God to lead a study on?**

I understand it. 'Abba' is like 'Dad', or more accurately 'Daaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaad!' or 'DAD!' it is the scared, frightened, overwhelmed, totally upset or completely sorry cry of a child to their loving father. To the one you know loves you, cares about you, accepts you and will be able to sort everything out.

Since the other names on the list were words I was not familiar with, I picked the one I recognised as being in my Bible as it is, not translated or needing decoded or re-coded or reading between the lines to be able to understand. This one is direct and speaks to my heart and soul and spirit deeply.

This one gave me scope to be myself and add my sense of humour, with the Abba songs- at least in my emails to Charles about it, rather than in the Bible study itself, though some song titles and lyrics still crept in...

There are 3 mentions of 'Abba, Father' in the NIV translation that I have as my Bible and they are all in the New Testament. This is not the first mention of God as Father; that happens when Moses is speaking just before he transfers the role of leading God's people to Joshua and goes up the mountain to be seen no more; in Deuteronomy 32 v6 he talks of God as the Father of his people of Israel, of the big group of people, the patriarch of the whole group, looking after them and providing for them.

'Abba, Father' is not the only way Jesus talks of God as his Father, he talks many times about God being His Father, our Father in Heaven, and it was his claim to be in such an intimate close relationship with God that was revolutionary and causes problems with the Jewish leaders. There are many mentions by Jesus of God as Father, especially in the book of John.

But only 3 times is the name 'Abba, Father' used.

First is Mark 14 v36, It was the first of the 3 times when Jesus went away to pray in the garden of Gethsemane- when Jesus' soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death, he is deeply distressed and troubled. He fell to the ground and prayed that if possible, the hour might pass from him. He cried out to God as 'Abba, Father'.

The next is in Romans 8 v 15. Paul writes that we are not living now according to the sinful nature but by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit testifies that we are God's children (and so we can cry out 'Abba, Father) and so then heirs with Christ. We share his suffering to

share in his glory. We are not slaves to fear.

The third mention, and the one I focussed on in the study, is in Galatians. We read from Galatians 3 v26 to 4 v 7. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free.... We are all one in Christ.

If you have clothed yourself in Christ – in a way like Jacob wore his brother Esau's clothes in order to receive the blessing from his father, but in this case Jesus is fully aware and wants us to be clothed in Him to receive blessings in His name from the Father. We're not stealing a blessing we're not supposed to have, or fooling a Father who can't see very well. Both the Father and the Son long for us to claim the blessings in store for us.

The Spirit calls out 'Abba, Father' – we don't have to do it, and in some cases it's when we can't bring ourselves to do it, the Spirit cries out to God the Father, and we are justified to be part of this through The Son.

So when we don't know what to pray or feel we are unable to approach God, feeling '*I don't want to talk, about things we've gone through...*' or we feel we don't understand it, we don't get all the big words and lofty ideas and complicated problems, perhaps '*sick and tired of everything...*' or feel like a silly wee girly '*young and sweet, only 17*' or we have re-enslaved ourself ('*knowing me, knowing you*') to condemnation or judgement or sin or considering ourselves unworthy... '*He seems so far away, though He is standing near...*' we are clothed with Christ, his Spirit is within us so we CAN approach, and He will cry out for us.

*I have a dream, a song to sing, to give me hope, in everything...*

*Don't go sharing your devotion!*

Do you now believe you are a precious child of God, and you can cry out to Him, from exactly where you are?

*I do, I do, I do, I do, I do!*

Aileen.