

‘For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful counsellor, Mighty God, **Everlasting Father**, Prince of Peace.’ Isaiah 9v6

- Brainstorm — what are the characteristics of a good earthly father?

Read John 14v1-21

(NB. It's easy to get sidetracked by asking the question — “how can a son be the father?” Of course the Trinity is beyond our ability to understand in many ways, but we believe by faith that there are three distinct persons in the Godhead (God the Father, Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit) but only one God. William MacDonald writes: “No mortal mind will ever understand the Godhead. We must give God credit for knowing things that we can never know. If we fully understood Him, we would be as great as He!” But we do know that although God the Father and Jesus the Son are distinct persons they do display the same will and character)

- From the passage in John and from your own understanding what father-like qualities does Jesus display?

Now using this passage to help us let's look at a couple of those father-like qualities in greater detail

He provides for us (John 14v1-4)

Every good father wants to provide for his family. He wants to provide a good home, good food, adequate clothing, and as many opportunities for growth as possible.

- In John 14v1 what is Jesus' concern? What does this verse reveal to us of Jesus' character?
- What does Jesus then go onto promise his disciples in verses 1-4? What reassurance does that give us?
- In what ways do we try and provide 'security' for ourselves and our families whilst we're here on earth? What is Jesus view of these things? (see *Matthew 6:19-20* or *Luke 12:22-31*) Of course we aren't called to be irresponsible in our planning and provision in this life, there must be a balance between planning ourselves and trusting Jesus to provide for our needs ... but where do you think that line lies? *ie. Should you take out various insurances? Store up savings? etc*) Are there any scriptures that help us in making these decisions?
- Looking back over his life an old friend said, “I would have spent more time giving and less time acquiring.” Do we possess an eternal perspective like that?
- Jesus provides for our eternal needs, but can you think of any other needs that we have that Jesus provides for? (see *Philippians 4v19*)

He loves and cares for us (John 14v21)

- From v21, how is our love for God shown?

So how then does Jesus show us that he cares for us? “A Father shows his care surprisingly by the discipline He gives. An uncaring parent provides no boundaries.”

- The Bible reminds us that those the Lord loves, He disciplines (see *Heb 12:5-11*, *Prov 3:12*). How does our everlasting Father discipline us? (see *Heb 12v4,7*; *2 Cor 12v7*) And why ... what's the purpose? (*Heb 12:11*)

NB. Discipline is often closely associated with punishment. However it is better to see discipline as being associated with involvement and love. Our everlasting Father cares enough about us to get involved in leading and directing our lives. He takes an interest in developing our character.

- How do we often view the difficult events in our own lives? Do we think “this shouldn't be happening!” or do we ask: “what is Jesus teaching me through this situation?”

Conclusion - Jesus is called the *Everlasting Father* because His love for us his children will never end (see *Romans 8:35-39*)

Prayer Points

- In the lead up to Christmas pray for all of the various church groups as they seek to share the gospel.
 - JAM Club and the need for someone to lead this group.