

Call no man father

Outline for a talk on this issue. Please forgive things that are ungrammatical or incomplete. I rarely talk from notes, and my outlines, when I use them, are not meant to be a finished product.

Matthew 23:(9) **And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.**

We

- Call priests, deacons, monks Father , nuns mother
- Have spiritual fathers
- Godfathers

Some who believe that all that can be known about Christianity is in the Bible think this is

- unbiblical
- blasphemous
- an abomination

What are we to say?

1. Scripture proves this is biblical.

Unfortunately, some who read the scripture do so with their own opinions, and not with the aid of the wisdom of the church, so they may not agree.

2. Compelling argument - the church always did this. If the church is true, then the practice is true.

Cannot use that too much with Bible only people, **but the seed should be planted.**

UNDERSTAND HOW TO INTERPRET SCRIPTURE.

- It is literal, metaphorical, hyperlative, mystical.
- It does not take the time and effort to explain itself, as if it were on a PowerPoint slide.
- It was written in context by those who understand its ethos.

Literal:

John 6:52-56 The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? (53) Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, **Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. (54) Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. (55) For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is**

drink indeed. (56) He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

Why is this literal?

- Another time.
- The church **ALWAYS** believed it.
- No controversy among believers until the Protestant reformation!

Another example....

Mat 22:37-39 **Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.** (38) This is the first and great commandment. (39) And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

Metaphorical:

John 6:32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

Hyperlative:

Luke 14:26 If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

AND OUR VERSE IN CONTEXT:

Mat 23:1-12 Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, (2) Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: (3) All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. (4) For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. (5) But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, (6) And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, (7) And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. (8) But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.

(9) And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.

(10) Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. (11) But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. (12) And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

EXEGESIS of this verse.

1. Not possible to understand this verse without:

- The context (surrounding verses)
- The rest of Scripture
- The mind of the church and its traditions - **ALWAYS PLANT A SEED!**

Context: Surrounding verses.

- Pharisees are hypocrites, proud, scheming, and unworthy of the title "Rabbi" because of their attitudes
- Do not seek after acclaim.
- Know where (from whom) your ministry comes from.

LARGER CONTEXT:

A teacher must remember these three things.

- **He IS a teacher, he IS a FATHER,**
- **but he IS NOT the Teacher or the Father who IS.**
- He is unworthy.
- His teaching and fatherhood comes from God

1. James 1:16-17 Do not err, my beloved brethren. (17) Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.
2. Luke 17:10 So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.
3. Eph 3:14-15 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, (15) Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

Why are we teachers, fathers, creators?

- Because we are made in the image and after the likeness of God.
- We are called to act like God.
 - be priests
 - father children
 - heal, preach, etc. (Good Samaritan - innkeeper told to take care of him)
- 81:6 **I said: Ye are gods, and all of you the sons of the Most High.**
- (and never forget from Whom we receive our "God-hood")
- **EPHESIANS 3:14-15!**

CONTEXT: All of Scripture.

Jesus and Paul called men "Father"

- Paul: 1Co 4:15-16 For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, **yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.** (16) Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.
- Luke 16:24 the Rich man cries out; "Father Abraham, have mercy on me."
- John 3:9-10 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? (10) Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things
- 10 commandments: Eph 6:2 Honor thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;)

Paul:

- He teaches TO CALL HIM FATHER!
- Paul was a spiritual father.
- Why?
- We follow the example of Paul, because we need examples that are accessible to us.
 - 1Co 11:1-3 **Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.** (2) Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you. (3) But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.
- Same reason - veneration of Saints, telling their stories, asking their help.

John Calvin wrote, "While Paul claims for himself the appellation of father, he does it in such a manner as not to take away or diminish the smallest portion of the honor which is due to God...God alone is the Father of all in faith...But they whom He is graciously pleased to employ as His ministers for that purpose, are likewise, allowed to share with Him in His honor, while, at the same time, He parts with nothing that belongs to Himself."

Bibliography:

1. Mostly, I must credit the services of the church and the ethos of the church. If a person sticks around long enough, even if he is a dunderhead, stuff sinks in. Without reading the Scripture attentively, attending and listening to the services and spiritual struggle, there is NO CHANCE to understand this stuff.
2. The Explanation by Blessed Theophylact. (Gospel of St Matthew)
3. <http://www.saintandrewgoc.org/blog/2013/9/25/call-no-man-father.html>
4. The wonderful exegesis of Eph 3:14-15 was found in Fr Thomas Hopko's homily about "Call no man Father".
http://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/hopko/call_no_man_father. Fr Thomas (Not Fr Hopko, PLEASE!) is often good for some excellent insights and historical details, and I listen to his stuff with discernment. There is usually something to glean.

These notes are at:

http://www.orthodox.net/catechesis/orthopraxis_and-call-no-man-your-father-upon-the-earth-for-one-is-your-father-which-is-in-heaven_matthew23-9.doc

http://www.orthodox.net/catechesis/orthopraxis_and-call-no-man-your-father-upon-the-earth-for-one-is-your-father-which-is-in-heaven_matthew23-9.pdf

The talk should be at:

http://www.orthodox.net/catechesis/orthopraxis_2013-11-02+and-call-no-man-your-father-upon-the-earth-for-one-is-your-father-which-is-in-heaven_matthew23-9.mp3

in a few days.