

“MY FATHER AND YOUR FATHER”

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When Mary Magdalene encountered Jesus after His resurrection, she did not recognize Him at first, thinking He was the gardener. When He spoke to her, she then knew it was Jesus (Jn. 20:11-16). He instructed her, saying, “...go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God’” (v. 17). Why did Jesus not say “Our Father” as He had instructed the disciples to say in their prayers (Matthew 6:9)? Is there in His words an implied distinction between His relationship with the Father and ours?

First, it should be noted that Jesus is speaking of only one Father (cf. Eph. 4:6; 1 Cor. 8:6). There is an understanding that, like Jesus, the Christian enjoys a relationship with the Father in heaven. We are “sons/children of God through faith in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:26). But while I am a son/child of God, Jesus is *the* Son of God. This speaks of a unique relationship that Jesus has with the Father.

Jesus speaks of “My Father” in a sense different than when we say, “Our Father.” Jesus is the “only begotten Son” (Jn. 1:14; 1 John 4:9), and equal to the Father in deity [godhood] (Jn. 10:30-36; Phil. 2:6). In contrast, we become the spiritual children of God by adoption when we obey the gospel of Christ (Gal. 4:5). “And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, ‘Abba, Father!’” (v. 6). The same Father of the only begotten Son is now our Father by adoption. What a wonderful blessing, and what a wonderful Father!