

Sunday, April 22, 2018  
Fourth Sunday of Easter  
By Nick Thompson

How old is the earth? About 4.56 billion years. How old is mankind, homo sapiens? About 150,000 years. How long have young men and women been struggling with their parents about growing up? About 150,000 years. It began with Adam and Eve and like a snowball has just picked up momentum for 150,000 years. If I could see my father now: He went to heaven with my mom 10 years ago, I know he's in heaven because I helped put him there. He had to put up with me and that took a saint. But if I could see my father now, talk to him now, He and I could sit and reminisce about all the disagreements, all the growing up pains, all the battles for "freedom" I longed for at seventeen. That was the year I joined the Marine Corp because I was tired of my father telling me what to do. At seventeen all the memories of balls thrown, late night stories, laughs and hugs over hot chocolate, all the years of seeing him leave early and come home late to feed and care for a wife and seven kids, doing things for us, for me that I would only come to appreciate later in life; all the memories somehow got lost in the present when I was seventeen, got lost in my desires for me. For a moment in time I became a child who did not know his father just as we sometimes lose track of our heavenly Father. We begin to live in a world that does not know him a world that is wrapped up in ourselves.

I remember the first time I saw my Father, four years later, an entire lifetime from seventeen. We shook hands. Then we looked into each other's eyes and we hugged. We hugged like I was seven years old and had just had a really bad nightmare. I just let myself disappear in the hug and thought of what is now an old Neil Young song called "Old Man."

"Old man take a look at my life, I'm a lot like you were. Old man take a look at my life, I'm a lot like you. I need someone to love me the whole day through. Ah, one look in my eyes and you can tell that's true."

And you know what? My father loves me, and my Father in heaven who gave him to me loves me, as if the struggles of growing up had never occurred, as if I had never rebelled, as if I were always the baby he held in his arms. And in that moment, I understood the prodigal son. I understood the love of the father for his son. And I returned to my faith, the faith of my father and I hoped that one day I

would be like him. And I thanked God for the gift of my father and for the lesson. "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endures forever."

This! This, is why, The Father sent his most precious Son, Jesus, to be our Salvation, our savior. "Beloved: See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God." Despite mankind's 150,000 year struggle with disobedience, despite our rejection, our indifference, our selfishness, our loss of memory, our search for false freedom that each of us struggles with as our faith grows and comes to maturity, our Father in heaven loves each individual one of us as if we were his only child.

"I will give thanks to you, for you have answered me and have been my savior." And so, He sends Jesus, the good shepherd, the cornerstone upon whom our salvation is built, who unselfishly lays down his earthly life so that we, His Father's flock, his adopted brothers and sisters might have eternal life; so that through Jesus we might come to know the love of the Father, know that we have someone to love us the whole day through. The Father sends Jesus, who looks lovingly in to the eyes of each one of us, his siblings, so that we might know it is true, Ah one look in his eyes and we know it is true. "Beloved, we are God's children now; what we shall be he has not yet revealed. We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." And there in his eyes, there in his hug, there in his heart: We will find a love for us older even than 4.56 billion years.