

No More A Servant but A Son

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Preacher: Malcolm Macdonald

[0 : 00] We are going to worship God and we're going to sing in Gaelic the verses from Psalm 43 at verse 3.

We'll read these verses first of all in English. O send thy light forth and thy truth, let them be guides to me, and bring me to thine holy hill, even where thy dwellings be.

Then will I to God's altar go, to God my chiefest joy. Ye God, my God, thy name to praise, my harp I will employ.

Why art thou then cast down my soul? What should discourage thee? And why with vexing thoughts art thou disquiet it in me?

Still trust in God, for him to praise good cause I yet shall have. He of my countenances to health, my God that doth me save.

[1 : 09] I adeirin is to hollus glan, ly cwgyrn at ymach. I adeirin is to hollus glan, ly cwgyrn at ymach.

Hy ife hikma at ymach. Ay, ymach at ymach at ymach at ymach at ymach, my son. I adeirin is to hollus glan, ly cwgyrn at ymach. I adeirin is to hollus glan, ly cwgyrn at ymach at ymach at ymach. We've been calledute.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[3 : 50] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[7 : 24] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[10 : 42]

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. He was tried and falsely accused and found guilty of being a breaker of the law and condemned as such and put to death as such.

But he was to be the sin bearer. He was to carry the sins of his people to the cross so that when he died he did not die for himself but for them.

The sins that he was condemned for were not his own but the sins of his people and that through this heavenly transaction in which you found contentment you were pleased in your son in his life as you were pleased in his death.

[13 : 29] And we are assured of that because he was lifted up for our righteousness. The grave could not contain him and it speaks of his perfect fruition as the one who is the sin bearer.

The lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. So as we gather in his name this evening we pray that you would bless us wherever we are found.

Bless our congregation here. Although we are not able to meet physically and publicly we are able to meet at the throne of grace. May we be conscious of doing so.

May we be mindful of others met with us. Even though we may not be physically in their presence. May they pass before our mind's eye.

Lord bless our God. As indeed we pray that you our God who is who is an invisible God who cannot be seen with the naked eye.

[14 : 42] but at your right hand there is the Son of your bosom who is the dust of the ground at your right hand.

Lifted up, raised into glory with a glorified body and the intercessor of this people who turn to you this evening.

Bless us, we pray. Bless our prayers and petitions, those offered in public, in private. Those petitions that we might struggle to bring together, those fears, those cares, those concerns, enable us to present them before you and leave all in your hands.

We are mindful of the needs that we have as a nation. We are mindful of the needs that we have as a community, as a congregation.

And we bring these cares and concerns to you, especially in regard to the ongoing situation arising out of the pandemic.

[15 : 51] We pray that you would remember all affected by it. And as we have made aware even today of the shadow of that illness being cast over us more deeply as a community, we pray that you would remember all affected by it.

All who are fearful of the way it may affect them. Because we know that there are some who are weak and infirm. There are many who have underlying medical conditions and they dread the thought of having an encounter with something that has clearly proved destructive for so many.

So be merciful to us, O God, and keep us safe from this illness as a people.

Remembering all that we commit to you. At this time, those who have other issues to deal with that are more pressing as far as they're concerned.

Physical ailments, mental issues, fears with regard to loved ones, the uncertainties that this current pandemic has brought into the lives of so many.

[17 : 17] We know that there are those who have lost their work and who are currently unemployed and who have financial fears and constraints that place them in jeopardy.

We pray, Lord, that you would remember all such. We pray for young who are denied access to ordinary schooling.

May they not suffer too much from that. There is one certain truth concerning the many means that are placed at their disposal that you are able to bless them to them and to their parents who may be concerned for them.

We pray that they would not suffer unduly because of this period of time away from ordinary schooling. We pray for the community who are very much a community that is very much involved in interactions one with the other and these have come to an end temporarily.

And we pray, Lord, that you would even sanctify these deprivations to us that we would know the meaning of communion and interaction and view it as precious when it is denied us.

[18 : 41] We may believe that there are some who can live and are perfectly content with their own company but most are not and they depend upon the company of others and we pray for them especially.

So remember us and all our needs. Remember our nation, those who govern us. Remember the royal family. Remember the nations of the earth, whatever. This is the greatest need. You are the ancient of days and because you are the ancient of days there is nothing on the scene of time that you have not seen before.

For us this might be an event that has never before been in the world but we may be wrong and certainly there have been other occasions in the history of this world where there have been pandemics and epidemics and various viral infections that have decimated populations in ways that we cannot begin to understand.

So we pray that you would preserve life here encourage those who are responsible for bringing to fulfilment the endeavours of the health services keep safe all those who are involved in delivering such care doctors and nurses and carers of all descriptions those who keep the peace within society those who serve in other areas of life we pray Lord that you would keep them safe also.

So continue with us at this time of prayer give us a spirit of prayer remembering to bear one another's burdens and go before us in all that we seek to do in pardoning sin in Jesus name Amen We're going to hear God's word as we have it in the New Testament scriptures Paul's epistle to the Galatians in chapter 4 Galatians chapter 4 Now I say that the heir as long as he is a child differeth nothing from a servant though he be lord of all but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father even so we when we were children were in bondage under the elements of the world but when the fullness of the time was come

[21 : 24] God sent forth his son made of a woman made under the law to redeem them that were under the law that we might receive the adoption of sons and because he are sons God hath sent forth the spirit of his son unto your heart saying Abba Father wherefore thou art no more a servant but a son and if a son then an heir of God through Christ how be it then when ye knew not God you did service unto them which by nature are no gods but now after that you have known God or rather are known of God how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage ye observe days and months and times and years I am afraid of you lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain brethren brethren

I beseech you as I be as I am for I am as ye are ye have not injured me at all ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first my temptation which was in my flesh you despised not nor rejected but received me as an angel of God even as Christ Jesus where then where is then the blessedness ye spoke of for I bear you record that if it had been possible you would have plucked out your own eyes and have given them to me and might therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth they salously affect you but not well yea they would exclude you that you might affect them but it is good to be salously affected always in a good thing and not only when I am present with you my little children of whom I travel in birth again until

Christ be formed in you I desire to be present with you now and to change my voice for I stand in doubt of you tell me ye that desire to be under the law do ye not hear the law for it is written that Abraham had two sons the one by a bond made the other by a free woman but he who was of the bond woman was born after the flesh but he of the free woman was by promise which things are an allegory for these are the two covenants the one from the Mount Sinai which gendereth to bondage which is Agar for this Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and answereth to Jerusalem which is now and is in bondage with her children but Jerusalem which is above is free which is the mother of us all for it is written rejoice thou barren that bearest not break forth and cry thou that travailest not for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband now we brethren as Isaac was are the children of promise but as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the spirit even so it is now nevertheless what saith the scripture cast out the bond woman and her son for the son of the bond woman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman so then brethren we are not children of the bond woman but of the free and so on may the Lord at his blessing to this reading of his word and to his name be the praise

I'd like us to turn to these verses that we've read and focus our attention on the words of verse 7 in particular wherefore thou art no more a servant but a son and if a son then an heir of God through Christ Christ when we look at this epistle of the apostles we see how how perturbed he was by the way those who were Christians by profession were behaving themselves in verse 6 of chapter 1 we read I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ and to another gospel which is not another but there be some that trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ it is clearly a burden to Paul to discover that those

Christians in Galatia are behaving so inseamly as he would have it as many of you know the epistle contains much of the core teaching of Christian doctrine and in many ways it's similar to the book of Romans if you are interested in reading commentaries on this book you'll find more than one person referred to it in these terms the Magna Carta of Christian Liberty despite the fact that Paul has to spend some time in vindicating his own apostleship and the message which he proclaimed by proving that it was of Christ and confirmed by his fellow apostles he manages to devote a good bit of his time in explaining and defending the doctrine of justification by faith and this is an explanation that he has to give because there is an opposing view that has found a place amongst them for example that circumcision and legal obedience are necessary over and above saving faith or in addition to saving faith so from the middle of chapter three he answers the question why did

[28 : 39] God give the law and it was he argued to make sin sin in the fullest sense introducing the sense of moral gift he also uses the interesting simile of the law being a school master as it is in the Greek the pedagogos under whose authority they were until Christ came however he now comes to present one of the most important doctrines of the Christian faith the doctrine of adoption which in the order of things can be understood to follow the doctrine of justification it is a legal term which describes for us the way a fallen creature someone who is held deserving as he or she is declared to be righteous in law how they have imputed to them the obedience of another and the satisfaction that he gives to

God by his obedience by not only fulfilling the law but meeting the penalty that a broken law deserved what has that to do with adoption well it is only those who are justified that are allowed to partake of the grace of adoption it is described as the climax of God's activity in changing an unbeliever to a believer a sinner into a saint now in order to examine this grace we will look at it under three headings first of all Paul speaks a servant a servant a son and a saint or as we have it in the passage before us in the words of verse 7 the heir of God through

Christ first of all in a servant Paul's argument is very simple the way we are when we are born into the world without a knowledge of Christ as our saviour as we are in a state of nature as we would have it we are either servants or slaves but never sons now many people do not believe this to be the case they refer to God as their father because he is the father as they see it of all creation if indeed they speak of that relationship but the Bible makes abundantly plain that sinners are strangers to God and the Bible reminds us that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God read verse 3 even so we when we were children were in bondage under the elements of the world we were in bondage scripture uses terms that speak of the nature of that bondage we were children of wrath children of the devil even in Paul's epistle to the

Romans he writes know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey his servants ye are to whom ye obey the theologian and preacher Thomas Boston insisted there are but two families in the world and to one of the two everyone belongs one family is that of Satan's and the other family is God's in bondage to the law of God obliged to fulfil it perfectly condemned by it when we don't but Paul is saying you are no more a servant imagine what that would mean to someone even literally just think how it would be spiritually if that were the case someone who was a servant becoming a son and that's what he goes on to say this is a miracle of grace and nothing less you become a son by adoption but a son nevertheless a child of wrath is now a child of God an heir of a lost eternity to an heir of heaven how can that happen what has taken place

God has received you into his family you have access to the fellowship of the family why the only answer is that something has occurred that has changed the status of that person he has become something that he was not when one enters into the privilege of the justified by the door of faith once a person has entered into that relationship that is accepted Christ sacrifices the only ground of salvation throwing off the shackles of bondage to the law at that point you are no longer a slave but a son and that is important that's why it seems so strange to the apostle that there are those who have declared an interest in

[35 : 39] Christ that to all intents and purposes has changed them from being slaves or servants to sons to sons and yet they now appear to be embracing servitude instead of sonship now there are dangers I suppose if we think about the natural relationship of adoption and try and bring elements of it into our thinking here because it may suggest to some that you are in some way denigrating something which is itself quite quite marvellous a child introduced into a family by means of adoption but if we see this that adoption alters a person's condition from not having to having where God's adoption not only gives a change of status effective immediately but there is also the fact that they're made partakers of his own nature bearing his own image that could not happen in legal adoption it cannot the nature of the child is not in any way changed but in a spiritual adoption it is something that happens they are made partakers of the divine nature and come to bear the image of

God a sinner becomes a saint enemies are now reconciled strangers are now friends as one Puritan writer puts it whoever God adopts for his child is like him he not only bears his heavenly father's name but his image when Paul writes to the Colossians he says seeing seeing that you put off the old man with his deeds and have put on the new man renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him he says this is true and if this grace is what it says it is it is important for us to realise it surely it is important to know if you have the grace or not that you truly are a son or a daughter and how do you know well if we go back again to the previous verse and because you are sons

God hath sent forth the spirit of his son into your hearts crying Abba Father it is God's spirit that witnesses with you and confirms to you that you are a son hear again the words of the apostle when he writes in his epistle to the Romans he beareth witness with our own spirit that we are the children of God it is also confirmed by our desire to be like him to lead holy lives as we experience the process of sanctification Paul's epistle to Ephesians for example where we understand them to be led by the holy spirit it's chapter five of

Ephesians verse verse 8 for you were sometimes darkness but now are you light in the Lord walk as children of light for the fruit of the spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth proving what is acceptable unto the Lord and you have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather reprove them and so on they are led by the holy spirit but finally there is this they are heirs through Christ from a servant to a son and not just a son but an heir heirs heirs is heirs heirs heirs heirs and heirs according to the promise this serves to remind each of us as it must the son's salvation is not his own achievement but the gift of

God's grace through Christ they are sons by adoption saved by grace blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead says the Apostle Peter we owe him our all we owe him our eternity of bliss we are his by reason of who he is and the Apostle says you are no more a servant but a son and if you're a son then you're an heir of God through Christ Jesus and there are many people who live in this world and heir heirs some heirs to an estate of considerable extent and wealth but this makes them pale into insignificance because all that is his becomes theirs and each and every one who are his are co-heirs together with him may he bless to us these few thoughts let us pray ever blessed

[42 : 34] God encourage us who are your people to recognize the attributes that arose by reason of our adoption into the family of God we pray that you would open our eyes to see what you are doing in us and through us continue to watch over us we pray cleansing from sin and now may grace mercy and peace from God Father Son and Holy Spirit be with you all now and always Amen