

A Child of God with Authority

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[0 : 00] I'm going to sing some verses now from Psalm 89. Psalm 89, and we can read from verse 24.

My mercy and my faithfulness with him yet still shall be, and in my name his horn and power men shall exalted see.

His hand and power shall reach afar, I'll set it in the sea, and his right hand established shall in the rivers be. Thou art my father he shall cry, thou art my God alone, and he shall say thou art the rock of my salvation.

I'll make him my firstborn, more high than kings of any land, my love I'll ever keep for him, my covenant fast shall stand.

Whose seed I by my power will make forever to endure, and as the days of heaven his throne shall stable be unsure. But if his children shall forsake my laws, and go astray, and in my judgment shall not walk, but wander from my way, if they my laws break, and do not keep my commandments.

[1 : 25] I'll visit then their faults with rods, their sins with chastisements. Yet I'll not take my love from him, nor faults my promise make, my covenant I'll not break, nor change what with my mouth I speak.

And so on. We're going to sing from verse 26 down to verse 34. Psalm 89. Thou art my father he shall cry, thou art my God alone.

Thou art my father he shall cry, thou art my God alone.

And he shall say, thou art the rock of thy salvation.

I'll make him my heart for high, the kings of Babylon.

[2 : 52] My love I will ever be for them, my common fast trust young.

whose seed I die by my heart, my home will make forever to endure.

And as the days of heaven's throne shall still be unsure, but if his children shall forsake my laws, and no past day, and in thy church shall not walk, but wander from my way.

who've lived my laws, and no past day, keep my commandment.

my love from heaven's grace. I'll visit them, and there falls to cross, their sins with justice made.

[5 : 06] yet I'll not take my love from heaven. nor falls my promise made.

my covenant I'll not break nor change, while great my life, my life I speak.

I'd like us to turn now for a short while to the passage that we read together, the Gospel of John chapter 1.

And we can read at verse 12. John chapter 1, reading at verse 12. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name, which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

As many of you will be aware, there are many today that have an interest in genealogy. Maybe you're one of them.

[6 : 47] They want to get back to their roots and as far back as they can go. For whatever reason, and there's a host of different reasons why a person might want to do that.

In many respects, the nation of the Jews were very focused on where they came from.

It was of import to them which tribe they belonged to and who their tribal heads were. And they wanted to ascertain and keep in memory who their forbearers were and what offices that they should fulfill as a result of that.

When the Pharisees and the Sadducees came to confront the Lord, they often spoke of their own pedigree and contrasted whose pedigree with theirs unfavourably.

We have the occasion where they claimed to be the seed of Abraham and not content with making that claim.

[8 : 12] They claimed their father to be God. But Jesus, when he dealt with them, when he spoke with them, brought before them the fact that they were of their father, the devil, and they were guilty of the same vices that he was guilty of.

The same lust as your father, he said, was their lust. That will you do. In the Gospel of John, later on, chapter 8, I think it is, what is stressed there is that in order to be a child of Abraham, you must show yourself to be of an equivalent faith to Abraham.

Now the words of the passage we are looking at this evening, I think, tells us that. We, in the previous verses, we read that the world knew him not.

We read that his own received him not. But then there are those who did, and who still do receive him.

And in many respects, that statement is itself surprising. You are surprised to read that those who were his own did not know him.

[9 : 56] And those who were in the world did not know him. In a sense, you may say, well, that is not surprising.

But in actual fact, because of who he was, they should have known him. Because the world was created by him, and for him.

And for that reason, they are without excuse. They should have known who he was. But he came to his own, we read, and his own not only did not know him, but did not receive him.

You could say that is a surprise, because they should have expected him. They should have expected him to come in the manner that he did, but they did not.

There is a contrast made between the world and those who are his own. But then we read that there is the exception to this rule, who are taken out of the world in order to receive him.

[11 : 11] And that itself is a startling bit of information. There are always exceptions to most rules.

And because they are ones of the world, you would expect them to be like the world, but they are not. And why is that? How is that? And the answer is simply because God acted in their experience.

If, humanly speaking, if we looked at what is said, we could, and we probably tentatively do something like that. We offer praise where we see the reception of Christ.

When we see a person receive Christ. When we see a person believe in Christ. We would, we would bestow praise in that respect, on that occasion.

The answer really to the question, is praise, is the reception of Christ praiseworthy? And I suppose you could argue that it is because you, you, you, the only way a person can come to know Christ is through the gospel.

[12 : 37] And when the gospel is presented to a sinner, the expectation is that the sinner to whom the gospel is presented would believe.

And that belief is praiseworthy. And that's not always what happens. What we read in, in, in, in John's epism, in his first epism, he speaks there of the reason why it is not something that is, uh, meritorious.

In the sense that God, while he expects a response and he demands a response, the response is the result of his doing.

Behold, John says, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.

Or more accurately, the children of God. This verse itself is saying much, but what I want to, us to recognize when we quote such a verse, and quote it alongside the passage that we have here, is that God is doing this.

[14 : 04] It is God's doing. And we cannot undermine what God is doing. We can't overlook the fact that it is God's doing. And, uh, uh, we cannot separate their, their response from their activity.

But initially, this is down to God.

This is what God is doing. And we must emphasize that. Read again these words. As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.

The word requires us to, to take on board the response. They believed, and if they didn't believe, then they would not become children of God or sons of God.

If they did not receive Christ, then they would not have become the sons of God or the children of God. But, at the, at the well head is the activity of God.

[15 : 41] And John is not embarrassed to emphasize that. John is not ashamed to declare that. Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us.

It is a saving love. It is an electing love. It is a love that is expressed in and through the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is God's doing.

And it is what is necessary before the adoption of sins can take place. Let me quote to you the words of Martin Lloyd-Jones.

What really makes us children of God? It is this, that God has put his own life into us.

We cannot be children of God if we are not like God. The child is like the parent. The offspring proclaims the parentage.

[16 : 45] And God in that way makes us his children. The emphasis that he has there is on God's doing.

This is what God is doing. God makes us his children. But if we go back to the text that we are looking at. We see again that the emphasis is upon this.

To as many as have received him. Those who through the gospel believe on his name. This is the doing of the Lord.

We go on to the third chapter. We see there John again. And the Lord Jesus speaking to Nicodemus. And he makes these words.

Which we all know. A declaration of God's doing. Except a man be born of water and of the spirit. He cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

[17 : 52] That which is born of the flesh is flesh. And that which is born of the spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee. You must be born again.

The wind bloweth where it listeth. And thou hearest the sound thereof. But canst not tell whence it cometh. And whither it goeth. So is everyone that is born of the spirit.

Now in some cases there is embarrassment on the part of some. When that emphasis is made. That it is God that saves.

That it is God that loves with a love that is eternal. And saving. That it is God that calls. That God that works in us through the spirit.

And if that is emphasized. It is an overemphasis. Because then it takes away. From the individual. As far as their response is concerned.

[18 : 56] We want to. Emphasize always. The human responsibility. The need that there is. For us to act. For us to believe.

For us to respond. For us to do. Whatever it is that God wants us to do. To do. But the word of God. Incessantly that.

Both must be taught. But never. At the expense. Of one over against the other.

And certainly not. Over against the emphasis. That is. Upon God's love. Upon God's action. Now what the.

The passage here is reminding of. Is this. It is speaking about the Christian. Believer. As being. Adopted.

[19 : 56] Into the family of God. It is. Bringing to our attention. The fact. That. That. What God is doing. Through the gospel.

Is. Making. A child. His own. Making. And the emphasis. The theologians have. Is. On the word. Child.

As opposed to son. Because. God has only one son. But he has many children. God. Has. Has. Only.

Has. Only. The only begotten son. Although. Paul. In his own epistles. Sometimes speaks. About the. Friendship. Of the believers.

But in the way that. John expresses it here. It is an emphasis. On the. Family of God. And belonging to that number.

[20 : 52] Which are called. The family of God. God. And God. Is the one. Who does this. It is God.

By the spirit. That quickens. And when he does. We are told. He gives. Power. That's the word. We have in the authorized version. But many of the commentators.

Remind us that the actual word. That is translated here. Power. Power. Is a word. The word. Exousia. Which means. More.

More. Accurately. The word. That we would. Would have. Translated. He gives.

The right to. For example. John. John. Calvin. And others. Say. The correct. Translation. Of.

[21 : 49] The word. Exousia. Is. He gave them. The right. Or he gave them. The authority. To become. Sons. Now.

It's not that. That. The translators. Are getting this wrong. Wrong. But the word. That is translated. Can at times. Be translated. The way.

It is translated. Here. And at other times. The way. It is translated. The way. Calvin. And others. Wanted to be. Translated. He gives.

The right. He gives. The authority. And. Given the context. The. The proper. Understanding. Of what. Is being taught. Here.

Is this. That. I think. Somebody. Had put it. Like this. It is. God's. Power. And we've. Already.

[22 : 48] Emphasized. That. In the. Quickening. In exercise. It is. The execution. Of his power. That brings. About. The.

The. Quickening. From. Death. To life. The. What. Nicodemus. Finds. Difficult. To.

Understand. How. Can a person. Be born. Anew. When he's. Already. Out of his. Mother's. God. But the.

Understanding. That we have. To. Bring. To bear. Upon. Our. Thinking. When we're. Looking at. This.

This. That flesh. Gives. Birth. To. Spirit. And. What. Paul. Declares. Emphasize.

[23 : 43] Just as. Surely. Emphasizes. It. That. Which. Is. As. The. Spirit. Of. God.

And. They. Are. As. Those. Who. Have. The. Spirit. Of. When.

The. Fullness. Of. Time. Made. Of. A. Woman. To. Redeem. Them.

That. We. Another. For. The. Reset. Of. The. The. The. The.

The. Son. Number. He. that the adoption of sons could take place. We know Christ took our nature. If you think about Paul's teaching to the Philippians, he speaks about the humiliation of Christ.

[24 : 46] He speaks about the servanthood of Christ. Or as some would prefer it, the word servant to be the word slave. And the emphasis there falls upon this change that has taken place, where the one who was king of kings becomes the servant or the slave, so that those who are slaves would become kings.

He becomes, he takes out poverty, so that we might become rich. And the riches of his people are the riches of sons and of daughters.

Christ came in order that that might take place. It took the form of a servant. And no matter how closely you look at what God is doing in Christ, what God is doing in the life of his people, it should never cease to fill you with amazement at the end result, at what what he is directing your attention to.

He is bringing men and women of a law estate into the relationship of a family. And it is not a paper exercise.

It is not an academic process. The way I was thinking of it is like this. You might think you always have to be very careful and be sensitive to the fact that you might overemphasize the transaction that takes place when a child is adopted into a family.

[26 : 38] And you may say that that child is a lesser individual as far as family belonging is compared to the blood-born child.

That is always a danger when you're comparing a spiritual situation with a natural one.

The natural one might think that all you have to do is go along to the town hall and get yourself a piece of paper and on that piece of paper it states that you are the son or the daughter of so and so.

And that piece of paper proves the case. Sadly in our day and generation what you're finding is that a piece of paper will prove not just who your parents are if you want to prove that by that means.

It will also prove what kind of sex you have whether you're male or female or both or none. And the world in which we live is saying that it can't be done, it can't be decreed.

[27 : 54] That's all you need, a piece of paper to prove this. This is not what is being taught by John. what we read here is something that takes place in the spiritual realm and in the spiritual realm with the authority whereby God is executing his will.

They become sons and they become daughters and he gives them not just a name to be listed or numbered amongst his people, he gives them the nature of sons and daughters.

It's something more than that. They're not just named sons and daughters. You're not named sons and daughters because it's written down somewhere that that's what you are.

You don't become a son or a daughter of Christ because of God because your name is on a church roll. you are born again by the spirit of God.

You become one with Christ. You experience regeneration. You experience the life of God in you and that makes you like him.

[29 : 19] He gives them the nature that is his nature. Look at verse 13. They were born not of blood, he says. some of the translators say not of blood, plural, not of the will of flesh, not of the will of man, but of God.

Saying this is not natural. There is no way you can say that your pedigree as a Christian depends upon who was your father or who was your mother or who was your grandparent.

Nothing whatsoever to do with the flesh. The Jew might look at this and say well I can go right back to Abraham. I can go right back to the earliest days and prove my pedigree in this way.

John is writing here that that is not what is necessary as far as the children of God is concerned. In Calvin's commentary he states the following When the Lord breathes faith into us he regenerates us in a hidden and secret way that is unknown to us.

But when faith has been given we grasp with a lively awareness not only of the grace of adoption but also the newness of life and the other gifts of the Holy Spirit.

[30 : 56] What does Calvin mean by that? Well he readily confesses that when God saves when God works in the life of an individual when God regenerates when God by his spirit sows the seed of life in the soul of man that is something that is hidden from sight you can't see it I can't see it but you see the after effects of it you see the life that results from it there's actions there's motions that are spiritual and can only be spiritual we often hear it said of a parent and a child that the child is like them and you'll find many people making comparisons oh how like the mother oh how like the father or even how like the grandfather or grandmother going back further they'll see characteristics and traits that are identifiable and they say we see these things they tell us of their parentage they tell us of who they're from there's there's characteristics there's traits there natural traits that we recognise but more importantly when it comes to the spiritual child of God there are equally recognisable if not more so traits and characteristics that should point them in the direction of knowing that they are adopted into the family of

God that mark each one of his people can you say that about yourself Paul says God has sent the spirit of his son into their heart whereby what whereby they cry Abba father is that a recognisable characteristic or trait that marks you out as opposed to someone who knows nothing of God the life of prayer the life of fellowship with God's people the life of lapping upward of God the hunger that is within you that is God given graces and gifts that God has bestowed upon us that marks us out as those who belong to his family I was just reminded of this as I was preparing this in the afternoon

I've told the story before it's a story of a I'm not really sure it just came to my mind and it's a story of a convert of a past generation I'm not sure who the minister was it was either Mr Lachlan McCall or McKenzie I'm not sure but in his congregation he had somebody who was considered to be of a weak mind people treated him like a fool he didn't he wasn't clever like everybody else he didn't have much learning and he wasn't very simple but when he was converted he spoke often of the minister through whom the conversion took place not only did he speak of and he couldn't but speak of every service he attended it was

Mr Lachlan said this and Mr Lachlan said that and people used to tease him for what he was saying but he wasn't going to stop he was praising the ministry that was feeding his soul but one day he was walking home from church and he was silent he wasn't saying much and the people who were walking with him recognised that and they said to him what was wrong did not did Mr Lachlan not have anything good to say today and he didn't say much if anything at all all he said was isn't Christ good isn't Christ good he said and then they carried on walking and after a wee while he said do you not think Mr Lachlan is a wee bit like him and this was somebody who saw

Christ in somebody else who was of the family of God now I wonder if that is true of us when people look at our lives when people hear what we have to see can people look at us and will they say to themselves oh there's one of these people who are of the family of God there's someone who has the grace of God in their heart and their life maybe they're not able to speak like that maybe they're not able to describe you like that but what will they say what can they say if you are one of these this is what is true as many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God even to them that believe on his name and everyone that believes on his name who have this authority who have this power from God their

[37 : 15] Christ likeness is part of the package and it should be encouraged and it should be in evidence so that God's family will be known for their for their traits and characteristics that mark them out for who they are may he bless to us these few thoughts let us pray heavenly father we give thanks that you are our heavenly father that you are God and you are our God most high and that you have given us the grace by which to communicate with you and speak to you as our God and our father and we pray for forgiveness for every trait and characteristic that is ours that is not of your making these things that we have continued in that we have remained under the influence of we pray for grace to overcome these things and that we would be more and more like our older brother cleanse us from every sin we pray in his name ask all with his mercy in mind pardon us amen we're going to conclude singing from psalm 103 we're singing in gaelic at verse 12 psalm 103 and at verse 12 verse 12 psalm 6 phrases feh psalm 10 psalm hadn't tea behind psalm 32 in speaks .

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[41 : 30] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.