

Children of God, Co-heirs with Christ, Co-sufferers with Christ

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[0 : 00] Someone who is not a Christian comes up to you and asks this question. Someone asks this question, you believe in a God who is love.

Where is the evidence of that love in your life? I wonder how you'd answer him.

Well, scripture gives two great landmarks by which we can see displayed before us always that God loves us.

The first is the cross of Christ. This is love, says John.

Not that we love him, but that he loves us and sent his son to be the propitiation, the sacrifice of atonement for us.

[1 : 04] That death on the cross by which he died our death, that displays his love eternally for us. But the second great landmark, and this is what I want us to look at from the letter to the Romans today.

The second is our adoption into his family. See, says John, see what kind of love the Father has for us.

That we should be called the children of God, and that's what we are. In a general sense, as creator of every single human being, God can be said to be the Father of creation.

In him we are indeed his offspring. But to personally come to God, and to expect him to treat us as his child from birth by nature, that is a delusion.

We are, by nature, alienated from God. We are children of wrath. We do not belong to the family of the living God.

[2 : 33] And in fact, if we have not belong to Christ, that timeless prayer that Jesus gave us and which we said together, is not ours to say.

Because he is not yet our Father. But wonderfully, wonderfully.

The Lord Jesus Christ has opened up a way for disgraced sinners to become the children of God. As many as received him, Jesus, and believed in his name, to them he gave the right to be called the children of God.

And we become so when we are adopted into his family. And if you want to see how this adoption works for you, what it means for you to have been adopted by the Father, then the best thing for you to do is to look at the relationship that God the Father has with his eternal Son.

[4 : 01] His unique one and only Son. To see that bond that there is between God in heaven and the Lord Jesus. Now, the relationship that we have as adopted children is not quite identical with his.

But there is so much more. There is so much there that we share with Christ. Margaret and I lived in Central Africa for a while.

While we were there, there was a young man that came to our church in his late teens. And he was scruffily dressed, gentle and quiet and very easy to talk to.

He was intelligent. And he seemed to have a love for the Lord. And we learnt that his parents had died and he'd been taken in and adopted by his uncle.

And his uncle had sons of his own, natural born sons. And when we heard about the family situation, we discovered that John, that was his name, who never had a clean T-shirt without holes to come to church in.

[5 : 27] And who had been left after secondary two without any further education. And we learnt that his adopted brothers were really finely dressed.

And they were being paid, two of them were being paid through a private college. And our hearts went out to John, but we realised that that man's, that young man's existence was the polar opposite of what it's like for you and me to be adopted into the family of God.

Because when we have believed in Jesus and become the children of God, we are treated in the very same way as the elder brother.

And so you hear the voice of God speaking to Jesus in his baptism. This is my beloved son in whom I'm well pleased.

And then, as a Christian, you know that that's how the father looks on me. A beloved child in whom he is well pleased.

[6 : 54] Or you hear Jesus praying to his father in heaven. And you hear him say, Father, I know that you always hear me.

That's exactly how it is for the adopted children. We know that he always hears us. Or then we go to the eve of his death and Jesus says to the disciples, You're all going to leave me.

But my father never leaves me. And that's how it is for the adopted children. He never leaves us.

Or then think of the way that the older brother treats you. And how different from the way that the natural born brothers treated our friend John in Zambia.

What does the older brother say about us? Well, he says at the point of his ascension, I'm going to my father and your father.

[8 : 20] To my God and your God. And there's no distinction. Or we could go to the second chapter of Hebrews, Where there's some amazing things said about Christ's relationship to us, his brethren.

He says to his father in Hebrews 2 that, Here am I and the children you've given me. In other words, Jesus doesn't view any rivalry or jealousy or being muscled out of the family circle When he sees this great multitude of people coming to a father in heaven.

And then perhaps a most amazing of all in that chapter, he said, I'm not ashamed to call you brothers.

And can you imagine how staggering, Can you see how staggering that is? That here are we, We're ashamed of ourselves.

And we can hardly take it in that the spotless, sinless son of God Should be glad to have us as his sister and brother.

[9 : 50] And yet he said, I'm not the least bit embarrassed by you. And that is the way that we as adopted children Have what someone has called the highest privilege in our salvation.

That we can call God our father. Someone has said that God's Christian name Is father.

Father. Father. If you're not a Christian this morning, Can you really miss out on this?

Maybe you're wondering, How much time does it take for me to come into the family?

How much do I have to do? How much? How long do I wait? Adoption procedures can be months, even years.

[10 : 58] In our society. But into the family of God, It's just like this. As many as received him, Jesus, Believed in his name, The name, Jesus, Christ, Lord, Savior, King, The one we worship.

As many as believed in his name. To them, He gives the right To be called The children of God.

Now, We move on in the verse Where it says, In verse 17, If you were children, Then you were heirs.

Heirs of God. If you were children, Verse 17, You are heirs. Heirs of God. Now, God is The one who Provides our inheritance.

He gives whatever's coming to us. As the great, Generous God. But there's something more here.

It's not simply that God Gives us our inheritance.

[12 : 22] But that God Is our inheritance. You see in the Psalms, Quite often, Speak about God being Our portion And our inheritance.

Have you come across that? That God is our portion And our lot. He's given us A beautiful inheritance. I wish the translators Had found a better word Than portion.

It reminds me of school dinners. But it is actually A wonderful thing That our inheritance Is to have God As our very own.

And we will spend Eternity Enjoying him. But then, Next, We see in verse 17, If children Then heirs Heirs of God And fellow heirs Of Christ Fellow heirs of Christ God has Appointed Christ The heir Of all things.

That's what it says. And yet, We are fellow heirs With Christ. So, That God Gives To the Lord Jesus Absolutely Everything.

[13 : 45] He inherits The cosmos He will rule Over the nations And Kings Of the earth Will bring their Treasures To him And he Will share it With us His brothers And sisters So we will Rule With him Will become Kings And queens With him We Who are Poor in spirit Will inherit The kingdom But I want you To see Very particularly At the end Of the verse That in Becoming Co-heirs With Christ We share In his Glory If children Then heirs Heirs of God Fellow heirs With Christ Provided we Suffer with him In order that

We may also Be glorified With him Jesus Has already Prayed For us To his father In John 17 I pray father That those Whom you've Given me May see My glory And for sure We will See his glory And share it And We Can expect In The great Eternity To see The power And the wisdom And the knowledge Of Christ And to share It To come Into it And to have This Fellowship With Christ In all That he has And all That he's Inherited But I want To If I may Home in

On one Feature Of his Glory That we're Especially Going to Share And that Will be The glory Of his Holiness We already In some Small way As we look At Jesus Beholding him We are being Changed from One degree Of glory To another His glory Little by little That when He comes For us In an Instant We will Be transformed Into his Complete likeness And the Prospect Of that Should surely Fill us With Overwhelming Anticipation I think

This is One of the Great Antidotes To us In our Comfortable Western World Being so Attached To what We have Here But when We realize That what We're going To is a Life Sharing The glory Of the Holiness Of Jesus That is Something That should Bring our Thoughts Towards Heaven He was The one In whom There was No deceit In his Mouth Said the Centurion At the Cross He was The one In whom There was No No sign Of sin No inner Corruption No unbelieving Heart He was Holy And innocent And utterly Separate From sinners And the Inheritance That we Have Is that We will Share That We will Be like Him Then we'll See his Face And never Never Sin And then The last Thing I Want to Look at In verse 17 Are these Words Provided That we Suffer With him Heirs With Christ Fellow Heirs With Christ That is Provided That we Suffer With him There is This Proviso If we Are Adopted Children Then we're Going to Be sufferers

[18 : 48] With our Elder Brother Paul wrote Elsewhere It's been Given To you It's been Granted To you Not just That you Believe In the Lord Jesus But that you Suffer For his Sake And If we Are Of the Frame of Mind That we're Always Seeking To escape Suffering Then we Are going To be Losing Our Identity As members Of the King's Family Because Suffering Is a Given It's a Necessity In the Family Of God Was it Not necessary Says the Scriptures That Christ

Should suffer And what Was necessary For him Is necessary For you And me Now A couple Of things About this Necessary Suffering First of All Our Suffering Is like The Suffering Of Christ It's Like the Suffering Of Christ But it Is not Identical To it Our Suffering Is not Redemptive We do Not Assist The Lord Jesus In Paying For Our Sins When He Went To the Cross Carrying Our Condemnation He Went There Alone And He Got No Aid From Us As We Were Thinking On Wednesday's Prayer Meeting He Was The Scapegoat Who

After Our Sins The Sins Of The People Had Been Placed On The Animal It Was Sent Out Into The Desert Place Utterly Alone And We Have Not Gone To That Far Place That Descent Place To Pay For Our Sins He Did It All So Our Sins Have Caused His Suffering And In That Sense There Is A Distinction Between The Suffering Of Jesus And Our Suffering Nevertheless We Suffer With Him Says The Scripture Our Suffering Has A Cross Shape To It We We

And Peter Says Something Similar And So What We Have Here Is That When We Suffer We Suffer Along With Jesus Can You See A Parent With A Child Going Through Unimaginable Pain And The Parent Heart Becomes Bound Up With The Heart Of The Child And We Multiply That A Million Times And We See Christ Entering Our Suffering And Making It His Suffering So That When Jesus Arrested Paul Saul Of Tarsus

Outside Damascus And Accosted Him He Said To Saul Saul Why Are You Persecuting Me And Jesus You See So Entered Into The Persecuted Saints Whom Saul Had Been Hounding That Their Pain Became Jesus Pain Now You May Ask Yourself What Category Of Suffering Are We Talking About For Sure We're Talking About The Persecution Of Saints Remember Said Jesus A Servant Is Not Greater Than His Master If They Persecute Me They're Going To Persecute

[24 : 11] You And so It is That When When people Are faithful To Christ They can Expect To be Hated By The World In Some Way Or Another

