

Adoption

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- [0 : 00] I'm going to test the memories. I'm going to test the memories of the under 20s. Everybody who's under 20 should be listening.
- And the older people can listen too. I wonder, can anybody remember from a wee while ago now, not the last time I spoke here, but the time before that, what was the name of the animal that symbolically carried the sins of the people of Israel into the desert?
- I'm not asking the adults. Well, I'll ask the adults in a minute. But I'm asking the under 20s now. You're supposed to have good memories if you're under 20. Hmm?
- No? No? No? Yes? No? Yes? What was it, the rest of you?
- The scapegoat. The scapegoat. The scapegoat. That's right. In Christ we have forgiveness of sins.
- [1 : 17] He is the true scapegoat who carry the sins, who have taken our sins away on the cross. And by grace, through faith in Jesus, we're justified, declared not guilty, and were given, imputed, the righteousness of Christ.
- Christ's righteousness added to our accounts, and we become children of God. So when God the Father looks at us, he sees the righteousness of Christ.
- He doesn't see my own filthy rags of righteousness. He sees the righteousness of Christ. He sees the righteousness of Christ. A righteousness that is perfect, impossible to make better, and without flaw, and without fault.
- And that's the righteousness that is credited to your account and my account. So the moment we come to Christ in repentance and faith, we're washed, we're forgiven, we're credited with the righteousness of Christ, and at the same time, we're adopted into the family of God.
- Into the family of God. John 1 verse 12 says, As many as received him, to them gave he power to become sons of God. Adoption.
- [2 : 49] I want to think about adoption this evening. On the back page of the notices sheet, I've given you another question from the Shorter Catechism.
- Number 44, 34 rather. What is adoption? Adoption is an act of God's free grace whereby we are received into the number and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God.
- Adoption. The moment we come to Christ, the moment we're born again, the moment we're justified, we're also adopted.
- Adopted. I want to think about it. I want to think what that means to us this evening. I want to think about it under the headings, again, on the notices sheet.
- Adoption is a change in our relationship. Adoption takes place in a moment of time. Adoption is permanent. God makes us aware that we're his sons.
- [3 : 56] God gives us the privileges of sons. God gives us the responsibilities of sons. When the Bible talks about all these things, it always talks about sons.
- But in Christ there's neither male nor female, so the ladies are included as well. I want to look at it on these headings this evening.

So first of all, adoption gives us a change in relationship. When you're adopted into a family, before you're adopted in, you're not in the family.

But you're adopted in, you're in the family. And we are not naturally members of God's family. Some may say God is the father of us all, he's the creator of us all.

And Paul even quoted that when he was speaking to the Athenians in the passage which was read here this morning. He said, we're all, he's created us all.

[5 : 1 0] But when Jesus spoke to the Pharisees, he said to them, your father is the devil. So they weren't God's children at all. They weren't God's children at all.

In Galatians 4 verse 3 here that we read together, we read in the same way, we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elemental principles of the world.

Not children of God but slaves to something else, the elementary principles of this world. if you turn over in your Bible just a couple of pages to Ephesians chapter 2 verse 12, Ephesians chapter 2 verse 12, we read, remember, remember that you were at that time, that's before you came to Christ, remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

But now in Christ Jesus, you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. And then down to verse 19, so then you're no longer strangers and aliens but you're fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.

No longer strangers and aliens but fellow citizens, members of the household of God in God's family.

[7 : 0 4] So you see, we've got this change in status and the Bible calls it adoption. We've been adopted into God's family. Now a child who has no living parents or who's separated from his parents for some reason can be adopted in our society and there are lots of forms to fill in and it takes a long time.

But eventually when the last form is signed, that child becomes a full member of his new family, full child of his adoptive parents and all the rights and privileges and responsibilities of the natural child should be his or hers.

There should be no difference in the way an adopted child is treated to the way a natural child is treated. He or she is no longer alone, no longer without family or protection and not a member of a family.

God's adoption is when God takes a sinner and he justifies us and he transfers us from the lost human race into the fellowship of the redeemed children of God, the redeemed sons of God and daughters of God and that's what happens, that's what he does.

we are transferred from the lost human race into the fellowship of the redeemed children of God. Romans 8 14 that we read together, all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God for you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear but you received the spirit of adoption by whom we cry Abba Father.

[9 : 0 0] So no longer slaves, no longer strangers and aliens but children of God. Behold the amazing gift of love the Father has bestowed on us the sinful sons of men to call us sons of God.

What kind of love reaches down, lifts the rebel, the sinner from the gutter and gives him a place at the king's table.

Amazing love, astonishing love and that's the love that God shows to us when he adopts us into his family. Our status is changed.

We're members of God's family. Second thing I want to say is adoption takes place in a moment of time. 1 John 3 verse 11 John wrote see what kind of love the Father has given to us that we should be called children of God and so we are.

See what kind of love the Father has given to us that we should be called children of God and so we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

[10 : 28] this you can't be half adopted either you are or you aren't. You know our society as I've said it takes time but God doesn't need forms.

He sees our hearts. He's the one who calls. He's the one who justifies. He's the one who adopts. God's when we receive Jesus as our Saviour and are born again of his Spirit.

And so you are John could say to them. Sons of the children of God and so we are. It's not something that we're waiting for.

It's not something that's going to happen when we're better Christians as it were. It will be fully adopted. When we get to heaven it will be fully adopted. we're adopted now.

Fully adopted now. The youngest child in the family, minutes old, is a full member of that family, isn't he? We've got a granddaughter who's what, two weeks old but she's a full member of the family already.

[11 : 34] And we who are by nature children of wrath have become sons and daughters of the King. An act of God. We're not waiting for it.

It's happened. It's happened. Again, that hymn that I quoted, Behold the amazing gift of love the Father has bestowed on us, the sinful sons of men, to call us sons of God.

Concealed as yet, this honor lies by this dark world unknown, a world that knew not when he came, even God's eternal son. High is the rank we now possess, but higher still shall rise when what we shall be after be is hid from mortal eyes.

Our souls, we know when he appears, shall bear his image bright, for all his glory full of skulls shall open to our sight. A hope so great and so divine may trials well endure and purge the soul from sense and sin as Christ is pure.

Our hopes are great and so divine. Adoption then takes place in a moment, the moment when we come and trust in Christ as our saviour.

[12 : 55] Adoption is permanent. You can't be unadopted. Let's read some more verses together. Let's read some verses from John chapter 10.

John chapter 10. Reading from verse 27.

It's a great passage where Jesus is speaking as a good shepherd and telling his disciples all that that means and how he knows them and how they listen to him and how he calls them.

And we come to verse 27 of John chapter 10 and we read these words. He said, My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me.

You see we're speaking about believers here, right? He says, I give them eternal life and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand.

[14 : 02] My Father who has given them to me is greater than all and no one is able to snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one.

Jesus said, I give them eternal life, they will never perish, no one will snatch them out of my hand. Can anyone snatch it out of Jesus' hand?

Well, no, can't be done. But we know there's a double security here. Because he says in verse 29, My Father has given them to me is greater than all and no one is able to snatch them out of my Father's hand.

So, you know, it's as if we're doubly held. Held in Jesus' hand, held in the Father's hand. no one can snatch it out of that hand, out of those hands.

Not the devil or his angels, not death nor life nor tribulation or distress, or persecution or famine, or nakedness or danger or sword or things present or things to come or anything.

- [15 : 17] Can snatch it out of that hand. Held, held time, adoption, adoption, adoption, adoption.
- The top lady wrote in a hymn, my name from the palms of his hand, eternity will not erase. Impressed on his heart it remains in marks of indelible grace.
- Yes, I to the end shall endure. As sure as the earnest is given, more happy but not more secure than the glorified spirits in heaven.
- More happy, yes, but not more secure than the glorified spirits in heaven. Adoption is permanent. Fourth point, then, I want to make is that God makes us aware that we are his sons.
- He gives us the assurance that we are his sons. Galatians 4, verse 6 that we read together, we read that God sent the spirit of his son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father.
- [16 : 40] Verse 6, because you are sons, God has sent the spirit of his son. That's the spirit of Jesus into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father, Abba, Daddy, Daddy.
- Romans 8, 15, you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons by whom we cry, Abba, Father.
- And in verse 16 of Romans 8, the spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God. God. See, here we have the promise of assurance through God's spirit in our hearts.
- A slave may serve his master out of love, but sometimes he serves out of fear. He is, after all, a slave and could be sold, but the son is a member of the family, and that cannot change.
- It's a permanent adoption, no longer a spirit of fear, but a spirit of the child, Abba, Father. God gives us this assurance that we are his.
- [17 : 49] Now, I know this is a subject that troubles many believers. Some of us have had problems with assurance. I've had problems with assurance.
- And there are many reasons for this. Perhaps we haven't fully understood how Jesus has completed the work of salvation, the price is paid, nothing to be done.
- He's done everything to bring us into his Father's kingdom. We can't undo it. Our righteousness is in heaven. Perhaps the devil comes along and he accuses us.
- And he can always find something to accuse us of, can't he? And we've listened to him. He comes along and he says, you can't be a Christian. If you're a Christian you wouldn't be like this. We listen to him.
- We forgot that our righteousness is in heaven. And that Jesus is our righteousness. And then some of us, I think, are simply prone to worry and doubt.
- [18 : 56] And our temperaments are that kind. And the devil uses this to trouble us. And to make us doubt. The psalmists knew this problem.
- Psalm 51, 5 to 11. Let's turn with me. Psalm 51. No, I've got my...
- Now my reference is wrong. Sorry. My reference is wrong. Why are you cast down on my soul?
- And why disquieted within me? Hope and God. For I shall yet fear him. For I shall yet trust him, my helper, and my God. Psalm 42. Psalm 42.
- Psalm 42. I'm not a very good concordance in my own head, I'm afraid. Yes, Psalm 42, 5 to 11. We have it there.
- [20 : 13] Why are you cast down, O my soul? You see, the psalmist was having doubts. Why are you in turmoil within me? Hope and God, for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.

My soul is cast down within me. Therefore, I remember you from the land of Jordan and of Hermon, from Mount Mizar. Deep calls to deep at the roar of your waterfalls.

All your breakers and all your waves have gone over me. By day, the Lord commands his steadfast love, his covenant love, and the night his song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life.

I say to God, my rock, why have you forgotten me? Why do I go mourning? Because of the oppression of the enemy. As with a deadly wound in my bones, my adversaries taunt me.

Why do I say to me all day long, where is your God? And then, why are you cast down on my soul? And why are you in turmoil within me?

[21 : 12] Hope in God, for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God. See, David, the psalmist, he knew, he knew what it was to be cast down.

And he looked to God and encouraged himself in the promises and in the power of God. That's what we must do, because the Lord gives us assurance through his word, through his promises, to meditate on them, think about them, apply them to our hearts.

I believe, Lord, help thou my unbelief. The Lord grants assurance that we are his adopted children.

Fifth, fifth point I want to mention is that God gives us the privileges of sons. We're heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.

first thing once you're adopted into a family, into God's family, is that God becomes our father. It should go without saying, shouldn't it?

[22 : 30] Jesus called God his father and he taught us to do the same. Our father in heaven, hallowed be your name. So I'm going to say that father is the Christian name for God.

and our heavenly father cares for us. We know that and listens to our prayers.

He's a caring father. Jesus said, look at the birds. Your heavenly father feeds them. Are you not much more valued than them? Look at the birds.

Do not be anxious about anything. Your heavenly father knows what you need. he's a caring father. He's a caring father. He's a listening and compassionate father.

One who hears our prayers and who feels our need. Jesus says, ask and it will be given to you. Jesus said, you, he said, you know how to give good gifts to your children.

[23 : 38] If your son asks for bread, will you give him a stone? If he asks for fish, will you give him a serpent? He said, if you, if you, being evil, know how to give good things to your children, how much more will your father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him?

He's one who hears our prayers and who feels our need and who loves to bless. He bends down to show himself strong on our behalf.

And we've got access to the throne room of heaven at all times. No need for an appointment. The way has been opened through our Lord Jesus Christ.

There's a famous photo of J.F. Kennedy, the American president, sitting at the desk in the Oval Office. There he is, the most powerful man in the world.

And he's sitting there and to get in there you need an appointment. Very few people can just walk in. But peeping out through the knee hole of this desk is his son, aged about three.

[24 : 50] Now he didn't need an appointment you see to get in. He was in there playing about under his dad's desk because the president was his father.

We too don't need an appointment. psalm 103 As a father has compassion on his children so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him for he knows our frame.

He remembers that we are dust. He's a compassionate and caring father. But he's also a disciplining father. Hebrews 12 verse 6 the Lord disciplines the one he loves and chastises every son he receives.

Like all good fathers our heavenly father disciplines us, corrects us, leads us in the right way. He doesn't just want us of an easy time. He aims for our eternal good, for our likeness to Jesus, for the fact that one day we're going to join him in heaven and he disciplines us as a good father disciplines his children.

And we have a father's house. John 14 verse 1 Let not your hearts be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me.

[26 : 19] In my father's house are many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you I'll come again.

and receive you unto myself. But where I am there ye may be also. You know as heirs of God, as joint heirs with Jesus, we've got a place in the family home.

And one day we will be there to share it, to find out what it's like. And it's hard to imagine because eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man, the things that God has prepared for those who love him.

The privileges of the sons of God. And sixthly, and finally, God gives us new family responsibilities.

We read in Romans chapter 8 there, where Paul said, in verse 12, he said, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.

[27 : 35] No, we're debtors to live according to the Spirit, to live as sons of God. Debtors to live in a new way, not according to the flesh, but a life led by the Spirit.

Now, you know, noble families, lords and dukes and people like that, but ordinary families too, would often say to a son or a daughter, don't dishonor the family name.

Live up to your name. Live up to the name. And as Christians, as sons and daughters of the king of kings, we're called to live up to the family name, the name of Jesus, Christian.

And we're debtors to live up to that name. We love our heavenly father and we want to honor him. Our hearts say, daddy, Abba to God, and we want to bring honor to his name.

And we all know what a shame and disgrace it brings to the Christian church when a believer falls into sin. And the enemies of the gospel love to gloat when a church member, a church leader, especially sins.

[29 : 02] And we're debtors, debtors to live a life worthy of the calling to which we've been called. Ephesians chapter 4 verse 1, Paul wrote, I therefore, a prisoner of the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you've been called.

We have been called, we have been justified, you see, we have been credited with the righteousness of Christ. We are children of God, joined to us with Jesus.

Since all this is true, since God has done all this, live like the children of God that you are.

That's the challenge to us all, you see. Live like the children of God that you are. Live to bring honour to the family name, to the name of Jesus, who gave himself for us.

You see, adoption is a great source of comfort and assurance. We're in the family, we'll never be thrown out.

[30 : 09] But it's also a challenge, a challenge and an encouragement to live like the sons of God that we are. But we are sons of God, children of God, live like it, to the honour of God's name.

So adoption, it's a change in relationship, it takes place in a moment of time, it's permanent. God makes us aware that we're sons, grants us assurance, gives us the privileges of sons, and he gives us the responsibilities of sons.

May God bless his word to all our hearts tonight. Let's pray. Father, thank you indeed for your word. Thank you for that great privilege, that great honour that we have to be sons and daughters of the King.

Father, thank you for setting your love on us, thank you for calling us into your kingdom, thank you for adopting us as your children.

We praise you for that tonight, Lord, we pray that you will write your word in all our hearts, take us from this place to live as sons and daughters of the King.

[31 : 32] We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. I'm going to sing now Psalm 121 in the Psalter, which is on page 416 of the Psalm book.

Psalm 121, we'll sing the whole Psalm. I to the hills will lift my eyes, from whence doth come my aid, my safety comes from the Lord through heaven and earth that made.

Thy fruit he not let slide, nor will he slumber that he keeps. Behold, he that keeps Israel, he slumbers not, nor sleeps. This is a Psalm of, a great Psalm of confidence in the keeping power of God, the God who's adopted us into his family.

Psalm 121, page 416. Psalm 121, Psalm 121, Psalm 121, Psalm 121, Psalm 121, Psalm 121, Psalm 121, Psalm 121,