

Adoption (2)

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Preacher: Ivor Macdonald

[0 : 00] What we read again is a verse of Romans 8, verses 13 and 14, For if ye live after the flesh ye shall die, but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live.

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. Amen. We're going to be looking again at another aspect of our adoption, adoption as children of the living God.

We began last night and we were looking at the whole theme of salvation as being a liberty from bondage, freedom from bondage, being transferred from one family where we were sons of disobedience and sons of wrath, into another family where we are sons of God.

Freedom from the bondage of slavery. I want us to think about another form of freedom today.

Freedom from powerlessness. Freedom from powerlessness. Freedom from powerlessness. And to think of how the spirit of adoption enables us to mortify sin.

When God the Father brings you and me into his family, he does so unconditionally. We know that.

[1 : 31] He brings us in by unconditional grace. He does not set an entry test for us. We don't have to achieve a certain level of goodness before we can receive the forgiveness of Jesus Christ.

We're not placed on a probation period and then we are brought into his family. We are justified freely by his grace. This is the great news.

This is the radical element to the Christian faith, the message of grace. We do not call people to pull themselves up by their bootlaces before they may receive Jesus as their saviour.

They are saved unconditionally as we trust in Christ. But when we are brought into the family, when we are made adopted children, our heavenly Father is not content that we remain as we are.

He wants to see his image. He wants to see the family likeness in us. Now we saw how the story line of the Bible is one of sonship lost and sonship restored.

[2 : 48] That's when Adam was made, Adam, son of God, was created in the garden. He bore the image of God. But sin marred the image.

That creaturely way in which Adam reflected God. Sin came in and marred the image. And in us, as bearers of Adam's sin, sin has scarred the image of God in people's lives.

No longer will people look at men and women and say, I recognise God in that person. You remind me of the living God. Sin defaces the image of God.

But when grace enters our life, God's intent is that the image should be restored. And the work that we call sanctification, that work of restoring in us the image of God, is the work done by the Holy Spirit.

Now in the Roman world, the concept of being adopted was a familiar idea. It was often a wealthy man, a landowner, the owner of an estate, who didn't have an heir, and who wished to have a son and heir to take over his property.

[4 : 05] And to bear the family name. And to be a standard bearer for the family. And of course the father wanted to see his likeness in the adopted child.

And remarkably, very often it was that the adopted son would go on to reflect the father's character, even more fully than many a natural son.

And that is what an adoptive parent desires, is it not? Now of course that's in the modern contemporary sense. That can be in a wrong way.

There is many a parent who has squashed his or her child because we want them simply to be carbon copies of us in ways that are not essential.

Many a parent has forced his or her child into following in the same trade or profession. Or having the same outlook as they are.

[5 : 01] And it's a great mistake to do that kind of thing because it fails to recognize the wonderful variety in which God has made us. And the individuality of our personalities.

But the good parent, the good father, is one who wants to see good moral qualities in his children. And who sees therefore that there is a responsibility in him to reflect those moral qualities. That they might be copied. And similarly, the son, the daughter, if they do, will be delighted when someone says, you know, he reminds me just of his father.

He's so like his father. In a good way, in an important way. In the way that he demonstrates practical kindness or his outgoing or some such thing. It's something which is taken as a compliment.

It is well met and we're proud. And there's an inner gratification that someone should see us in some good way, some essential way, as like our earthly father. Well, so much more that we should be made like our heavenly father.

[6 : 16] And one of the great questions that arises when we begin the Christian life. And when we realize that we're called to holiness. That we're called to be more like our heavenly father.

The great question that we all ask is, how on earth, how on earth is this going to happen? We're so conscious of sin. We're so conscious of having come from that other family.

Of having been children of disobedience. And following the father of lies. And we wonder how are we going to be made more like our new adoptive father.

And the power comes from the Holy Spirit. Who is the spirit of holiness. Yes.

And also the spirit of adoption. The spirit of adoption. Now I want to look with you briefly this morning at three different things.

[7 : 14] I want to see how our sonship. Sonship. And I use the term sonship because Roman adoption centered on the adoption of a son.

And the son becomes the inheritor of privilege. So whether we're male or female, there is a sense in which we're sons. Because we are heirs together of God.

And we're going to see how our sonship is evidenced by a war with sin. And secondly how it is we are dependent upon the empowering of the Holy Spirit in this warfare with sin.

And then thirdly our own active part in this warfare with sin. How we are called to mortify sin. The deeds of the body in our lives.

Well our sonship is evidenced by a war with sin. There's a powerful link that the Bible makes between us being children of the living God.

[8 : 16] And our victory over sin in our lives. Verse 14 deliberately connects with the verse before. For as many as are led by the spirit of God.

They are the sons of God. Who are the sons of God? The sons of God are those who are led by the spirit of God. And what does it mean to be led by the spirit of God?

Well back to the verse before which is linked to verse 14. The sons of God are those that are led by the spirit.

And to be led by the spirit is to be mortifying the deeds of the body. So being a son of God is evidenced by this leading.

Which in practical terms finds its outworking in putting together the deeds of the body in our lives. Now notice that this leading by the spirit is a very different thing from what is commonly thought of as being led by the spirit.

[9 : 25] There is a supernatural leading of the spirit that we find in the Bible. Which is in terms of being guided in specifics. And very very often when you hear someone being described as a spirit led person.

Then the idea that springs to mind is of someone who is very mystical. Someone who is speaking in hushed tones perhaps. Talks of God telling me to do this specific thing.

Or to say this specific thing to so and so. And when we have come across as I have come across in the past. And on several occasions.

People who have claimed to have been told by the spirit of God to do something. And that something was actually not really in accordance with God's word. In fact in some respects it was going against God's word.

So it's a much abused term. And here in Romans 8. The idea of being led by the spirit is set in a moral context. The spirit is spoken of as guiding us into right living.

[10 : 36] An individual then who is led by the spirit. In the sense that we have it here. Is someone who is on the war path against sin.

He or she is putting to death the deeds of the body. Mortifying the deeds of the body. Now that raises another question in our minds.

It should do at least. Why is Paul speaking negatively about the body here? What does he mean by the deeds of the body? Well Paul isn't saying that the physical sign of our life is inherently sinful. That has been held even within the church in various times. But that is not a biblical idea. But Paul is simply saying that the headquarters of remaining sin.

Of that sinful nature. Is even in Christians after we have been united to Christ. Is in the body. Sometimes scripture will call this the body of sin.

[11 : 44] Or the old man. And sin finds in our physical nature. Fertile ground. For temptation. For stirring up the lusts of sin.

And so in various aspects of the way we are made. In our bodily makeup. Satan finds fruitful ground. In the very fact that because we are physical beings. We get tired. There is an opportunity for Satan.

To exploit our tiredness. When our guard is down. We have appetites. We have physical appetites. We have sexual appetites. And Satan exploits our physical appetites.

To lead us into sin. And so. We are at war. With. The body of sin.

In that sense. And the fact that we are at war. Proves that we are the sons of God. Because if we were at peace. With the sinful nature.

[12 : 45] If we were not putting to death. If we were not mortifying. The body. Then we would be evidencing. That we were not in the family of God. The family of God.

There is a war on. If we are not engaged in that conflict. Then. There is something. Seriously wrong. Imagine. For example. There was.

A physical. An actual war on. And a squadron of soldiers. Is sent out. To. On a difficult assignment. Perhaps. To take a fortification. And all of the squadron.

Return. And. They are battle soiled. Yes. They have torn uniforms. They have. They are muddied. And bloodied. By the warfare.

But there is one individual. Who comes back. And his uniform is in pristine condition. There is not a hair at a place. And shows no evidence. Of having been in combat.

[13 : 40] The suspicion would be. Of course. That he was. In league. With the other side. He was a turncoat. A traitor. Because he was not at war.

With the enemy. Paul says. The evidence of us being. The sons of God. Is that we are. At war. With the enemy. That we are. Mortifying. The deeds. Of the body.

And to do that. To mortify. The deeds of the body. That means. To. To see. The vigor. And the power. Of sin. In our lives. Becoming.

Progressively. Weakened. How do we do that? We deny it. The oxygen. That it needs. To survive. We. Cut off. Its supplies.

At source. We oppose it. At every turn. In the aftermath. Of the. The terrorist.

[14 : 35] Strike. On the twin towers. In New York. America declared. A global war. On. Terror. Well. Every child.

Of God. Is called. To a war. On sin. Is called. To be. On a war. Path. To mortify. The deeds. Of the body. John Owen.

In his. His masterpiece. On. On this subject. He says. Unless. We are killing. Sin. It. Will kill us. Unless you are killing.

Sin. It will kill you. It is. As important. As urgent. A matter. As that. The evidence. Of. As being. Sons of God. Is that.

We mortify. The deeds. Of the body. We are at war. With sin. And secondly. It is the Holy Spirit. Who. Empowers us.

[15 : 29] In. This. Conflict. Specifically. In verse 15. It is the spirit. Of adoption. Who empowers us.

In this war. With sin. It is by him. We put. To death. The misdeeds. Of the body. We mortify. The body.

Now. Again. There are a couple of questions here. How is it. That the Holy Spirit. Is connected. With our sonship. And how is it. In turn. That this. Spirit. Of sonship. Enables us.

To put to death. The deeds. Of the body. How is the spirit. Connected. With our sonship. I think it is a real question. Because.

We can. We can think. Easily enough. Of God the father. Being connected. With our sonship. He is the one. Who. Is the. The agent.

[16:25] The prime agent. In taking the initiative. In bringing us. Into the family. And we have this. Relationship to him. We are. Enabled.

To. To cry. Abba. Father. So that's. That's. Plain enough. The son. The Lord Jesus Christ. His role. As well. In our adoption. Is clear.

Because he. Is. Who has. Cleared the way. For us. To be adopted. He has paid. The price. Of our. Adoption. By his royal blood. Being shed.

On the cross. Of Calvary. He has. He has enabled us. He has brought us. Into the family. But we ask. How is it. That the spirit. Is. Involved.

In our adoption. As children. And it seems. From what. Paul goes on. To say. In verse 15. That. The spirit. Has to do.

[17:17] With our. Affection. Our. Effective state. Towards. The father. It is by. The spirit. Of adoption.

Paul says. That we cry. Abba. Father. So. There is. This. New. Spirit. Of. Sonship. Placed. Within us.

By. The spirit. We cry. Out. To God. With this. Daringly. Intimate. Term. Of address. The spirit. Assures us. Of. As being. The children. Of God. Assures us. That we are. Loved. And accepted. Of God. And it is. Precisely. That. Which.

Enables us. Which empowers us. In our warfare. With sin. Which enables us. To put. To death. To mortify. The deeds.

[18:10] Of the body. Because the spirit. Comes to. The child. Of God. And brings. To our mind. Such an awareness. Of our privileges. Of adoption. That we are strengthened.

In our fight. With sin. It is wonderful. In all of this. That. That. That. That. We see so clearly. That the Holy Spirit.

Is a person. He is not spoken. In terms of being. An energy. Or a force. But. He is spoken of it. In a personal way. He is.

He is leading us. He is. He is. Enabling us. He comes. And. Leads us. To. Oppose sin. In a.

In a gospel way. Not in a legal way. But in a gospel way. Enables us. To put. Our sinful. Nature. To death. It is.

[19:03] His work. To bring us. To mortify sin. At its root. And first of all. He. Brings to our mind.

The love. Of. Our heavenly father. For us. To be called.

A child. Of God. We are no longer slaves. The scripture tells us. We are not people. Who can. Who can mess around. When our master's eye. Is not on us.

We are not that kind of people. We are not slaves. But we are sons. And our father. Loves us. Dearly. And that is a great empowerment.

In our resistance of sin. And one of the. The prime. Biblical examples. Of this kind of thinking. Empowering someone. In the face of temptation. Is in the life.

[20:14] Of Joseph. Remember when Joseph. Is being tempted. By Potiphar's wife. The temptation. Was such a powerful temptation.

Because. It was. It was repeated. Again. And again. She was persistent. In seeking to seduce. Joseph. And Joseph.

Did exactly. What was right. He sought to avoid. Her company. He kept well clear. Of her. You tried to ensure. He was never alone. With her. But the woman.

Persisted. And when. He is unable. To avoid. Being alone. With her. He responds. To advances. By. Reminding her.

And himself. Of the. The privilege. In which. He stands. In. Potiphar. His master. And her husband's. House.

[21:09] My master. Does not. Concern himself. With anything. In the house. Everything he owns. He is entrusted. To my care. No one. Is greater. In this house. Than I am.

My master. Has withheld. Nothing. From me. Except you. Because you are his wife. How then. How then. Could I. Sin. Against God.

And do such. A wicked thing. And you see the parallel. That is exactly. How the Holy Spirit. The spirit of adoption. Empowers us.

Because he comes to us. And reminds us. Of our great privilege. How can I. Of all people. Who have been adopted.

Into. The family of God. Into the royal household. How can I. Sin. Against love. And scorn.

[22 : 04] Privilege. And turn my back. Upon my father. And grieve him. In doing this. You see.

It is the power. Of. Filial. Love. The love of our father. And. And likewise.

And closely related. The spirit. Brings. Into bear. The sin. Killing. Presence. Of the cross. Because we have been brought. Into this family.

At the cost. Of the blood. Of the Lord Jesus. And again. It is the power. Of love. In resisting. Sin. He. He.

He. He. Bids us. Ask. Of ourselves. How can. I. Of all. People. Who have been rescued. From. From all. The consequences. Of such. Acting.

[22 : 59] And thinking. How can I go back there. How can I sin. How can I crucify. Again. The son. Who loved me. And gave himself. For me.

No. I could not. And notice that this empowerment. Is only.

Something which. Belongs to the Christian. Only the Christian. Will find the Holy Spirit. Of any help. In. Defeating sin.

And so. We need to. To bear that in mind. Perhaps. You're not a Christian. This morning. You're in church. But actually. You're not a Christian. And you. You don't know. Really. What it is to be.

In the family of God. And therefore. What. What you need. More than anything else. To do. Is to. To receive. The Holy Spirit. By believing. In Jesus Christ.

[23 : 54] As. Your Savior. From sin. The Holy Spirit. First work. Must be done. In your life. Because. If. The Holy Spirit. Has not come.

And brought you. By faith. To Christ. Then all the resisting. That you will do. To temptation. All the. The desire of your life. To live a good life. Will be done.

In the flesh. In the power of the flesh. And not the spirit. And that will lead to. Frustration. And futility. And the attitude.

Of a Pharisee. Of a legalist. And what will happen. Is that you will simply. Fence your life around. With rule upon rule. And you will be dealing. With the fruit.

The consequences. Of sin. In your life. Rather than the root. Of sin. But that's something. That every Christian. Here this morning. Has to bear in mind.

[24 : 48] As well. That it's always possible. To revert to that kind of thinking. And to fight sin. With the law. And to end up. A legalist.

Rather than to. Mortify the deeds of the body. In the power. Of the spirit. Of adoption. You think of. Of the commandments. And how. As Christians.

They're given to us. As a means. Of glorifying God. And think of how. The mind of the Pharisee. Can so abuse. The commandments. Think of how the Pharisees.

Did abuse. The fourth commandment. And how. They. They lost sight. Of the spirit. In which we were to. To honor God.

And God. Told the people. In the old testament. To call the Sabbath. A delight. And Pharisees. Rather than do that. Fence around.

[25 : 44] With all. All manner. Of rules. And the spirit. Of sonship. Alone. Will enable us. To deal with. The root. Of sin. The.

The inner. Spring. Of affection. Which causes us. To turn aside. From sin. And to follow. And to please. Our heavenly father.

So it's so important. To see that difference. We can focus on. The fruit of sin. The consequences of sin. And we can respond. By being legalists. And deal with. With the consequences of sin.

By a. A plethora. Of rules. And the Holy Spirit. Alone. Will enable us. To deal with. The root of sin. By bringing. To our mind. The love.

Of our heavenly father. And the power. Of the gospel. To deal with it. So. Our. Sonship. Is evidenced. By the fact. That we are.

[26 : 40] We are on a war footing. Against sin. And in this warfare. We are empowered. By the Holy Spirit. The spirit. Of adoption. Who. Energizes.

Us. By. Touching. Our affections. And reminding us. Of our love. The love. Of our heavenly father. Manifest.

In the gift. Of his son. The Lord Jesus. That empowers us. But we. Are not. By virtue. Of that power. Exempt.

From involvement. We are of course. Active in this. And this is the third thing. The concluding. Aspect. That we look at now. The. Spirit. Of sonship. Comes. To.

Enable us. To be active. In all. Of this. We are. To be involved. We are. To put.

[27 : 35] To death. If ye. Paul says. In verse 13. If ye. Through the spirit. Do mortify. The deeds. Of the body. Ye shall. Live.

And so. We are called. To be. Active. We are called. To be watching. And praying. Against temptation. We are called. To cultivate. Opposite virtues. So that. By the help. Of the Holy Spirit. We can. Drain. The life. Out of. Particular. Bad. Habits. I want to close. By. Being as practical. As. As I can. And. Thinking with you. On what this involves. In our Christian experience. What does it involve. To. To mortify. The deeds.

Of the body. Well. First of all. It must involve. Our awareness. Of. The. The serious. Of sin. We. We. [28 : 29] We. To recognize. Fully. How serious. Sin. Is. And one of the great ploys. Of Satan. Is to. Cause us. To trivialize sin. To minimize it.

For example. If. We. Minimize. Lust. By speaking of. It being. Just. Boys. Fun. Or some such. Minimizing. Description. Or. If we. Rename. Course talk. And call it. Banter. Then we are. Deluding ourselves. Sin. Will.

Kill. You. Unless. You. Kill. Sin. It is a. Deadly. Serious. War. We are. Involved in. And therefore. We need to ask.

The Lord. To give us. A real. Awareness. Of our sin. Indeed. To load us. With a proper. Sorrow. For our sin. Recognizing. Its seriousness. In our lives. And to humbly. Acknowledge.

[29 : 24] Its presence. In our lives. And its potential. To grow. And to become. This monstrosity. If it is. Left unchecked. Sin. Is serious. And mortifying.

The deeds of the body. Involves us. Acknowledging. That sin. Is serious. Secondly. We are called. To be watchful. Of sin. We. Need to ask.

God. To give us. An awareness. Of how sin. Operates. In our lives. What is my. Besetting sin. What is your.

Besetting sins. What are the sins. That keep on. Cropping up. In. Your life. That may be. That there is. Some form of sin. That you are. Prone to.

Because of your. Temperament. All of us are different. And Satan. Exploits. Our differences. In personality. In different ways. If you are.

[30 : 19] A quick tempered person. Then. Satan. May exploit. That aspect. Of your personality. To give you. A sharp tongue. If you are.

A depressive person. Then perhaps. Your temptation. Is to turn. To. To drink. Or to drugs. As a. As a. As a. Means. Of. Of relief. If you are.

A lively. Sociable person. Then Satan's. Temptation. May be. To. Make you drift. To go along. With the crowds. To be easily. Swept along.

Into. Corrupt. Conversation. Or excessive. Drinking. Or something like that. And so. We need to know. Our own. Personality. We need to know. Our second sin. That we may be. Watchful. And be particular.

In taking action. Against it. There are. Circumstances. In which. We are. More open. To sin. If.

[31 : 15] A person's. Particular. Temptation. Just to be. Very specific. Is that. He views. Pornography. On the internet. Then.

There are. Circumstances. In which. That will become. A stronger. Temptation. If. If a person. Has a computer. In the privacy. Of the room. They will be. More vulnerable. To being tempted. In that way. And there are. Steps. That they can take. To make sure. That there is. An accountability. In what they watch. On the internet. On computer. If there is.

A particular friend. Who is. Constantly. A source. Of temptation. Or a group. Of friends. In whose company. You find yourself. Drawn away. Then. Then we are called. To.

Be rid of. That particular. Source. Of temptation. A friend. Is no friend. Who leads us. Into sin. If we have a weakness. For alcohol.

[32 : 11] If we have. Been addicted. To alcohol. In the past. Then we need. To. Cut off. All contact. With. Sources. Of temptation.

To stay. Incompletely. There are patterns. Of sin. In our lives. Maybe. As we say. When we are in company.

It may be. When we are. On our own. When there is no one. To watch. What we are doing. It may be. When we are tired. And we feel. Low. And we are prone. To sin. Coming in. Like a flood.

Or it may be. For some of us. That when we. Have. Had. An intense. Spiritual. High. That we. Let our guard. Down. And suddenly. And.

Unexpectedly. We are floored. By Satan. Coming in. When we least. Expected it. When we thought. We were strong. Satan. Exploited. Our circumstances.

[33 : 08] There are. Ingredients. In our lives. Which make us. Prone to temptation. Now. If you. Are someone. Who has. An allergic.

Reaction. To food. Ingredients. Then you are. Watchful. When you go. To the supermarket. To see. That the food. That you purchase. Does not contain.

Whatever it is. Whether it be. Peanuts. Or. Or. Or. Or. Gluten. Or whatever it is. Because you know. That that will bring on. A bad. Allergic.

Reaction. Sin is the greatest. Allergy. And therefore. We need to be. Watchful. That we avoid. The circumstances. The people.

The places. Satan may use. To exploit. The sinful nature. And God calls on us.

[34 : 02] In this mortifying. Of sin. To. Turn off. The oxygen. At the beginning. To be decisive. Whenever.

Sin. Rears its head. If we. Give. Satan. An inch. He takes. A mile. And therefore. Decisiveness. At the very beginning. Is what is involved. In mortifying sin. I remember. When. When my brother and I. Were. Were. Were. Kids. We used to spend.

I think it was. Must have been days. We spent in sky. Building dams. On. The burn. And. We built these. Dams of turf. And. Then we saw. The water.

Wash them away. And then we built them again. And. What would always happen. Was. There would be. A little part. Of that turf dam. That began to be breached.

[34 : 56] Just a little part. And the water. The water would come through. Just by. A little trickle. But unless that wasn't. Built up again. Well. The whole thing. Was blown away.

By the pressure. By the force. Of the water. And it's the same. With. With sin. Unless we. Cut it out. At its source. Unless we're decisive. At its beginnings.

Unless we cut out. The situations. The people. The gadgets. The entertainments. And leave it astray. It will. Overcome us. Unless. We kill sin. It will kill us.

And. Mortifying. The deeds of the body. It's not something. That we do one day. And give up the next. It is something. To which we are called. So long. As we are.

In this life. Until. We are called. Into the presence. Of the living God himself. Where. We will be free. From. The. The. The. The.

[35 : 51] The. The. The guilt of sin. The. The presence. The power. Of sin. Someone was telling me. How. He knew someone. Who. Made a particular point.

Of. Of. Reminding himself. At the beginning of the day. Of. His own. Besetting sins. And then coming near to the Lord. At midday. And asking himself again.

How am I dealing with those. Particular. Things. Those things. Which Satan. Has. Used. In the past. To draw me away. How am I doing.

Being watchful. Unto prayer. And all this. By the spirit. The spirit. Of. Adoption. Who brings into. Our. Situation. The power.

Of a new affection. The love of our father. Enabling us. To defeat sins. As signs. By the gospel.

[36 : 49] Rather than by the flesh. May God enable us. So to evidence. Our sonship. To his glory. Amen.

We're going to sing. In closing now. From Psalm. 100. I'm standing.