

Adoption in Paul

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Date: 11 September 2016

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[0 : 00] This is the first session of our new season, and this is a good reason, I think, if a good reason were needed, for opening by joining together in the Lord's Prayer.

And in fact, as we say the prayer, let's think of and commit back to the Lord all that's going to happen during this season of Lerner's Exchange, which it's my privilege and responsibility to open right now.

So, together, let us pray.

For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen. Do you realize what we've done?

We have just made liturgical use of one of the very basic teachings that Jesus gave over and over in the course of his three-year ministry.

[1 : 42] And what is that, you ask? Why? The teaching that for Christians, God is Father and we are children in the family.

It's teaching of great importance, as a matter of fact. Familiar in one sense. But I think you will agree that our habit is to gloss over the relationship that we express when we say our Father. Father, we take it for granted, we take it for granted, we don't think about it, we move on to next business. My task this morning, which I've set myself, is to think about it, and to help us as a Christian fellowship to think about it.

There's no lack of encouragement in the New Testament to do that. Mark is the exception. Mark's Gospel is a major New Testament book that refers to God as your Father in Heaven, reporting Jesus' teaching, only once.

[3 : 05] In the other three Gospels, there are dozens of references to the fact that God is the Father of Jesus' disciples, and that relationship is absolute and must be absolutely basic to the living of their lives.

I think that in this, we are typical of a great deal of the Christian Church today.

Don't you? Do we focus on the fact that we are children of God? Well, maybe a few of us do, but I guess that the majority at least don't.

We simply accept, yes, when we address God, we say, Father, Jesus told us to, and then on we go. Well, my purpose this morning is to dig into this relationship a bit, so that we are conscious of what we're saying when we call on God the Creator as our Father, and hopefully thereby get into deeper fellowship with Him than we would be otherwise.

[4 : 34] Now, as I said, you'll see me waving this magnifier around. Don't bother. Don't be bothered.

I have to do that in order to keep speaking steadily, which is the way that I would rather speak, and I hope the way that you'd rather have me speak anyway.

All through the New Testament, so I was saying, this relationship is assumed, and again and again expressed.

I said dozens of times. That is true. If you look the matter up in a concordance, turn up Father, Father, you'll be amazed how many times God is explicitly referred to as Father.

Simply in dress. And then, of course, again and again, teaching about the relationship comes with the use of the word, and there's matter there for us to take to heart and learn as thoroughly as we can.

[5 : 51] In a human family, we hope that the kids, from time to time at least, will take an interest in their parents, and in the family of God, there's no doubt that the Lord wants us to take an interest in Him.

So, what we're going to do is to, well, first of all, to verify the rather bold statements that I've been making.

Let me give you one or two examples of ways in which thought about this relationship, family relationship, is developed in the New Testament, so that we do appreciate that there's a great deal here that we need to have under our belt for going to be mature Christians.

Who are the main teachers of doctrine in the New Testament? Well, I imagine we would all of us agree that the teachers of doctrine who unload the greater amount of doctrine on us readers are the Apostle John, both in his reports of Jesus' teaching in the Gospel and in his first epistle, which is a very weighty document indeed.

And then there's the Apostle Paul. No one will doubt that he is a major teacher, indeed, many would say the major teacher of doctrine in the New Testament.

[7 : 43] And then there's the writer to the Hebrews, who I think is sometimes neglected when he shouldn't be.

How long, I wonder, since any of us were on a how shall I say it, a serious trip either in personal Bible study or in group study through Hebrews.

Hebrews is dense, granted, Hebrews moves along steadily with the minimum of rhetoric and the maximum of explanation.

Well, that's very instructive for those who are prepared to take their coat, their jackets off, so to speak, and get down to the business of being instructed.

But it means you can't read Hebrews casually, at least, not the doctrinal parts. I'm not thinking of Hebrews 11, but I am thinking of Hebrews 1 to 10.

[8 : 57] Well, just let me point out quickly some of the major emphases regarding the family, God the Father and we the children, which you find in these three writers.

John, well, John is constantly circling round the theme of becoming and then being a Christian. You become a Christian by faith. That's affirmed in the preface to his gospel. I expect you could recite the words.

As many as received him, to them he gave, the Greek word is best translated, I think, privilege, to them he gave the privilege of becoming children of God, even those who believe on his name.

And then, through the rest of the gospel and through 1 John, as I said, he circles round the theme of how different our lives should be when we become children of God and are in that relational sense alive in the Lord.

[10 : 27] And, of course, in the spiritual sense also of having the divine nature implanted in us which gives us instincts and priorities which we didn't have before.

Well, that's the family likeness. Yes, of course, it's very simple when explained. I only want at this stage, however, to point out that there is a great deal in John about it.

And then there's Paul. Well, Paul was a very didactic sort of person, that's very obvious. in both Romans and Galatians, which are major teaching units, the notion or the declaration of the reality of our being children of God and God being our heavenly Father comes out strong at key points.

let me show you. Galatians, let's start there. Galatians is a book weightier than some people recognize, I think.

It's a book in which the reality of faith, the range of reality that the word faith covers, is set out in a way which Paul means to be utterly memorable, and I think is.

[12 : 14] Galatians chapter 2 verse 20. This is how Paul, having got this far in his argument, expresses the matter.

I have been crucified with Christ. Christ. Nevertheless, I live, but it's no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.

That's the difference, the difference that's been made. And that's not the whole of the story. The life that I now live in the flesh, I live by faith.

faith. See, faith is being described here. I live by faith, this faith, in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

That's faith and nothing less than that. That's what Paul wants us to learn from Galatians 2.20. And assuming that we've picked up the point, and that as believers we understand it and are seeking to live by it, crucified with Christ.

[13 : 33] Yes, that's me. And living with Christ and his teaching as the directive focus of my choices and my priorities and my attitudes and so forth.

Yes, that's the mindset that marks the Christian. And now we jump forward into the beginning of Galatians chapter 4.

Now, says Paul, contrast that with the way it was for you in any religion that you had before you became a Christian, before you abandoned the attempt to work your passage to heaven, which is what so many people who are not Christians do, but you give that up and you embrace with both hands, you might say, the new life in Christ, which is in fact yours.

For you wouldn't be the believer that you are if the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ weren't in you, animating you, prompting you, directing you, keeping you going, opening up Scripture to you, so that your life is life in the Spirit, just as truly as it's life in Christ.

Yes, we should come back to life in Christ as such before and through. Well, here we are, says Paul, in this new life, which is in contrast with any sort of religious life that we had before.

[15:38] more. And then we read this, it's verses 3 through 6 of Galatians chapter 4.

When the fullness of the time had come, God sent his son, born of a woman, born, no, sorry, born of a woman, made under the law to redeem those who were under the law that we might receive what?

Well, here it comes the adoption of sons. That's Paul's way of summing up the glorious reality of the salvation that comes to us.

I don't know how you summarize your salvation when you're asked to testify to it, but here is Paul saying, well, to say adoption of sons is as rich and full and thrust full a proclamation of who you now are, what your identity has become, as you can find.

So, so that we might receive adoption as sons, he writes, and because you are sons, God has sent the spirit of his son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

[17:14] father. Yes, if you're a believer, you find in yourself an instinct or an urge to treat God, God the creator, as your heavenly father, trust him for all needs and all circumstances, focus on him as the one whom supremely you're concerned to please in the way that you live your life, please, serve, so, and, well, you can think of other words which would express that thought, and, that's the difference that the spirit, the spirit of the son makes, but it is, as he says, that God has sent the spirit of the son into our hearts, crying, that is to say, generating in us the cry, the cry of address,

Abba, Father. Christians have an instinct for treating God as their father who loves them and practices perfect parenthood in his relation with them.

In the world, fathers in families don't always behave that way, but in the realm of Christian reality, God the father behaves towards his children always in that way.

And here is Paul saying it, because you are sons, God has sent the spirit of his son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father, so you're no longer a slave.

That was the spirit of any religion that you had before you became a Christian. deep down it was a slave spirit. It didn't carry with it knowledge of or real communion with a God who loves you.

[19:39] It was rather an attempt to attract the attention and maintain the goodwill people of a God whose favour you had to win by endeavour of some sort or other.

But for the Christian, well, you're in the family now. You have been given the identity of a child of God. You're in process of being given the nature of a child of God to go with it.

God's making a new creature out of you. And that's the life that as a Christian you should be conscious of, thoughtful about, thankful for, and enthusiastic in living.

It's a wonderful thing to be a Christian. well, this is Paul speaking the way that he does.

He's actually a very compressed writer. That ought to be said loud and clear. Because, I suppose, he knows that papyrus costs money and hiring an amanuensis to take down the things that he says.

[21:09] That costs money also. He's clearly developed the skill of compression and in so many places, in relation to so many matters, he deals with things so briefly, in such a compressed way, that he's taken you on beyond them before you really felt the point and the power of what he's just been saying.

So, you have to go over and over with Paul to make sure you've got the full significance of what he's sharing with you. Well, here, the fact that he's sharing is that we're new beings in Christ, we have new instincts, we have the spirit in righteousness, we have the, how does one say it, the sense of rightness that goes with the thought of God as the Father who cares, to whom we, as his children, shouldn't be inhibited about talking and spelling out our problems and so forth.

We cry Abba, Father. Abba was the standard family name for God, as I expect to know, in the Aramaic speaking family of the first century.

And it's the word that is, first of all, used by the Lord Jesus and then by Paul and the other apostles every time that the reference is to the Christian as he or she relates to the Father, and the Father accepts it and relates to us in terms of it.

Yes, we cry Abba, Father. In other words, well, no, these other words actually are different, but they're expressing the thrust of this phrase.

[23 : 39] We have an instinct for saying Dad. which is the word that most young males, certainly, and lots of females too, learn to use in the family to address the one who's their father.

father. Yes, exactly, that's how it works. So you're no longer a slave, you're a son. And then he goes on to elaborate just a little, despite what I've just said, when it's really important, he does allow himself to elaborate, it, and here in Galatians chapter 4, that's what he's doing, I look at verse, oops, where are we, verse, yes, verse 9 of the chapter, now you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God.

That's terrific, isn't it? it's great that we know God, it's greater still, that he, all the time, everywhere, and in every situation, knows us.

Yes, we've come to know God, or rather to be known by God. And so it goes on, Paul opening up the realm of intimacy between the father and his spirit renewed child.

Then, in Romans, you've got similar stuff in chapter 8. I am one of those conventional evangelicals who proclaims in all company that Romans 8 is the mountain top of scripture.

[25 : 48] chapter. There isn't really another chapter that goes beyond it in terms of celebrating the blessings that are ours as believers who have become God's children.

And again, the spirit is brought in. Romans 8 verse 14 here we go. Sorry, verse 13.

All who are led by the spirit of God are the sons of God. Sons specifies children.

In John's gospel you have Jesus and then in 1st John you have John preferring over and over to refer to children sorry to refer to believers as children of God which of course is in our usage not a sexed word let's say it that way.

In Paul more often you have God as father and children as sorry am I saying I think I'm saying this backwards forgive me but I am over 90 and every now and then my mind slips.

[27 : 30] Let me say it again. John in the gospel and in the first epistle both more often refer to Christians as the children of God and being a Christian is being a child of God.

Yes. Paul more often refers to the Christian as being a son of God well all right a son of God gives you the the theological equivalent of your social status but in these days the language of sonship of course can cause something less than delight in the minds and hearts of ladies who feel excluded. This is a 21st century thing as surely you must be aware and you must tell yourself over and over again yes the the the the the constant self consciousness about sex mattering in these matters well it's just it's just become part of our culture in recent decades but the essence of the matter is of course the same for all the children of God both us boys and you girls and you have to realize that in Paul the preference for talking about sons of God is partly deference to the fact that in the ancient world only males could inherit there was no such thing as inheritance for females

I mean the legal codes in Rome and the various countries that made up the Roman Empire didn't allow for that well we don't live in those days so we don't have to make adjustments for that fact when Paul wants to talk about being a child of God he does want always to highlight the fact that those who are children of God are heirs heirs of God joint heirs with Christ that's what he's going to say later on in Romans chapter 8 well we all of us very properly want to be included in that well then in general conversation you don't talk about being a son of

God you talk about being a child of God and then there's no possibility that this is how Paul must have reasoned it out then there's no possibility that the ladies will feel excluded simply because of the social conditions that are the background of inheritance talk did I say that clearly I know that it's a sensitive point with some people and they tend to criticise the Bible for not observing the social sensitivities of the 21st century well what am I to say it would be it would be a miracle and a half if the Bible turned out to have been written with a special concern to do deference to the way that the 21st century talked when in previous centuries all over the world it wasn't so but I'm not going to pursue that except to say note where the oddity comes into the into the situation now what I wanted to show you actually from later on in

[32 : 11] Romans 8 namely Romans 8 14 through 17 that's that's the passage I think yes spirit you've received the spirit the spirit of adoption whereby we cry out of father as we were told in Galatians and the spirit himself bears witness we're told this is verse 18 the spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God and if children then heirs you see if he said if sons then heirs that would create a difficulty for some 21st century female readers that no if children then heirs heirs of God fellow heirs with

Christ provided we suffer with him there's a great deal about suffering as an inevitable part of discipleship in the New Testament we're familiar with it I think so I need not dwell on it now just to remind you that it's there if we suffer yes provided we suffer with Christ in order that we may also be glorified with him togetherness with Christ he wants us to understand is the central integral and integrating fact of the relationship that we're exploring we wouldn't be children of God by adoption as we're going to see very shortly if we weren't in how do I say it in a shared life with the Lord Jesus who is the Father's eternal son I was going to say natural son but the word really doesn't fit the Father's eternal son he certainly has been there forever but the word eternal says that better than the word natural so this is where we Christians are spirit bears witness with our spirit reading again that we are children of God and if children heirs heirs of God joint heirs with Christ as I said a moment ago well this is enough I think to open up to us Paul's understanding of what it means to be a child of God and it's clear that for him sharing with Christ in his inheritance is a very big thing a very big element

I mean in being a child of God but I'm spending more time over this than I ought to I hurry on Hebrews well you need to understand how things worked socially in the first century world Greek speaking Roman speaking all through the empire in all the different sub communities that the Roman Empire contained you have to remember that's the background and then you appreciate the full force of what you have in two places in Hebrews Hebrews chapter 2 comes first here we are there's a passage here which is not always well understood it's a passage in which the writer is celebrating the togetherness of the

Lord Jesus and the Christians and the way he starts to open up that thought is as follows it was fitting that he for whom and by whom all things exist in bringing many sons to glory should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering why well because they have to face suffering and togetherness is the principle in terms of which it works so if the if those whom the Lord the Lord makes Christians suffer then the Lord himself who is their

[38 : 04] Lord should share the same quality of life so that his sympathy with them will be full and complete and it's expressed this way it became him for whom and by whom all things exist in bringing many sons to glory to make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering for that's what he does that's that's the logical flow into the next verse yes that's what he does for the for the one who sanctifies that's the Lord Jesus and those who are sanctified those whom he lays hold of by the spirit brings into the family and sustains within the family those who are sanctified are all of the all have the same origin this that is why he's not ashamed to call them brothers brothers yes you it is a thought a thought worth brooding on the co-creator of the cosmos and of you and me within it consents to be called sorry consents to call those whom he takes into fellowship with himself brothers brothers that brothers means people on the same footing in relation to the father as the

Lord Jesus is himself they are creatures and the Lord Jesus is a creator but the fact is they are set alongside them alongside each other in this verse as brothers and then Old Testament passages are quoted as being fulfilled in the mind of Christ like this he's not ashamed to call them brothers he says I will tell of your name this is the father's name to my brothers yes that's a word fulfilled in the mind of Christ I will tell your name father's name to my brothers in the midst of the congregation of my brothers you understand in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise and then again behold quite explicit now

I and the children God has given me yes this is the writer to the Hebrews laying the foundation for what he's going to say about the mediation of Christ who extends shall I say the arms of his ministry to touch all those whom he takes into fellowship with himself taking them with him yes as he said into and through suffering but taking them with him into glory as well the togetherness is maximized and this is one of the things that the New Testament writers are concerned to do maximize the togetherness in the family of which the Lord Jesus is the elder brother and the head and then comes a paragraph which we haven't got time

I fear to go into I wish we had in which the writer explains that this being the basic attitude of the Lord and his father there is an abundant basis here for the Lord the Lord Jesus stepping into the role of mediator and therefore of necessity being made like his brothers in every respect so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God to make propitiation for the sins of the people and that as you know is what the central chapters of Hebrews are all about how the

Lord Jesus entered that role made the propitiation on the cross and so redeemed us all for time and for eternity and also by experience fitted himself so that he having suffered by being tempted is able to help those who are being tempted right now well I've spent time on this because I want you to see and with that feel how momentous and glorious it is that the

[44 : 27] Lord Jesus being the person who he is the one eternal son of the father takes this attitude of embrace to those who those of us well this is all of us who are no more than creatures but then creatures whom both the father and the son love and resolve to save well again I'd like to dig deeper into Hebrews and show how this theme of togetherness is followed through and in the togetherness of the son the Lord Jesus sustaining by his word and by his spirit sustaining the saints of God and Hebrews was written he had said to a community of saints who were being given a particularly rough time by their how can I say it their fellow

Jews ethnically whom they had left behind spiritually and theologically in other words they'd become Christians and their sometimes Jewish friends didn't appreciate that and we aren't given the details but one imagines windows being broken and stones being thrown and all that kind of thing whereby the Jews who stayed Jews expressed their disapproval of the Jews who'd become Christians that's the human situation that's the major part of the human situation into which the letter is directed but again the clock is beating me and I must hurry on let me round off as it'll have to be round off by laying out the elements of the doctrine of adoption

God the Father laying hold of us to become his sons of course his children say it whichever way you like let the doctrine as it was spelled out in full by those evangelicals who did spell it out in full and here the point I have to illustrate is that in recent years the doctrine of adoption as a doctrine has been neglected comparatively as compared with the way that it was celebrated in the 16th 17th and 18th centuries particularly in the 17th by the Puritans in the confession of faith the outstanding confession of faith which was produced by

Puritans in the 17th century the Westminster confession of faith put together may I say by a hundred theologians 95 of whom I think were Anglicans and therefore part of the Anglican heritage church even though only the Presbyterian churches have ever picked it up in the Westminster confession let me say say again there is a very impressive condensed but weighty statement of the doctrine of adoption which I'm now going to read out it's chapter 12 in the confession and it goes like this all those that are justified God vouchsafeth in and for his only son

Jesus Christ to make partakers of the grace of adoption by which they are taken into the number and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God have his name put upon them receive the spirit of adoption have access to the throne of grace with boldness are enabled to cry Abba Father are pitied protected provided for and chastened by him as by a father yet never cast off but sealed to the day of redemption and inherit the promises as heirs of everlasting salvation

inheritance sealed you might say indeed scripture virtually does say sealed to the saints to those who believe in Christ embrace him as their savior and let's go back to galatians 2 20 who live by faith in the son of god who loved them and gave himself for them and i put that in the third person because that's what the grammar of my statement suggests but really it's us that i'm talking about we are the ones on whom the savior has bestowed this favor and for whom he died and with whom now he lives and leads well i hope you'll agree that that statement on adoption is very weighty very strong very clear in the

[51 : 22] Westminster documents there is a catechism which is hardly known these days the larger catechism and question number 54 is the question what is adoption and it's answered as follows wait for it almost there not quite as near as i thought i was i've missed it again question 54 sorry i'm wasting your time which i'm sorry to be doing what on earth has happened here what on earth oh i think i know yes oh sorry this is a vision thing i have misread some figures so sorry this right is it isn't it i told you that my fiddling with the apparatus is nothing to do with you so here now is alexandra to fill the gap by saying something that will have to do with you whatever it is can i help you find a page is there an index no i'm looking for question 54 and i'm not seeing it i can help thank

you yes the material yes that's that's what i was looking for and somehow i managed i managed not to find it that if my wife were here that could be the clue for an impressive speech about her husband's clumsiness which shows itself in all sorts of situations yeah wait a minute here we are christ is no there's still something wrong oh forget it let's forget it and perhaps you'd let me read again the definition from the from the confession which says just the same thing do you want me to find it well no i think i can do that it's yes i can chapter 12 of adoption ah sorry about this um it may be friends that um when you when you when you pass 90 you'll have experiences which resonate with what's happening to me at the moment all those that are justified god vouchsafeth in and for his only son jesus christ to make partakers of the grace of adoption by which they are taken into the number and enjoy the liberty and privileges of the children of god have his name put upon them those are called christians receive the spirit of adoption have access to the throne of grace with boldness

are enabled to cry abba father because it's the address that fits are pitted protected provided for and chastened by him as by a father yet never cast off children you see or sons in the family they retain that status once you are adopted into a family there you are and there you stay and so it is in the family of god so the preservation of the saints who are the adopted ones becomes a reality yes and last bit of the sentence here they are sealed to the day of redemption the seal is the gift of the holy spirit to indwell them and they inherit the promises as heirs of everlasting salvation well that's a false statement it seems to me of the new testament doctrine of adoption and a thrilling statement too and

I must say of the new catechism adoption that I helped to draft I don't think we put in a definition of adoption and I now think we should have done and I'll express this view in appropriate quarters sooner rather than later yes because it really is the case you see that the blessing of adoption is very far reaching and it holds together so much more of the blessed reality of salvation which God works for us it's all together in the adoptive relationship in which Christians stand to the father and one needs that what shall I say that organizing impact of the reality of adoption to hold together all the other blessings justification reconciliation reconciliation regeneration restoration so forth adoption is an integrating blessing just as adoption is an integrating fact affecting the whole of your life in its relationships in the human family family it was a little different of course in the first century AD the stress in those days when in society people talked about adoption was on the strength of the family when you adopted into it a young male children of virtue strength and great potential which is the way that they did it they weren't guided by need or rather they weren't guided by the need of the one they adopted they were guided by their own sense of need to strengthen the family and they didn't adopt young children let alone babies they adopted young men who would prove their worth the ordinary candidate for adoption in a Roman or Greek family would have been 20 to 25 years in age but the firmness of the relationship which is what we're talking about now that corresponds exactly now as then then as now and I think that we need to get the doctrine of adoption back into a regular pattern of teaching and become ourselves thrilled by it and thrill others by talking about it realise it friends we are the adopted children of God isn't that a great thing we are the joint heirs with

Christ in the royal family of God isn't that magnificent well I hope you'll agree with me that it is and because of the time on go goodness it's gone further than it should have done apologies for that I now stop here and we'll let monologue give way to dialogue so thanks for listening questions discussion reaction if I haven't got you excited well you'd better not have me speaking again I meant to get you excited and I hope you realise that because I'm excited myself you see with the thought that I'm a child of God I will share that questions comments yeah is there a different use of the about being a child of God too that we find you know from where we are children of [61 : 54] God with an inheritance whether we have accepted it or not and we do find our way back to that relationship it's a little different than being adopted but I wonder if that's a helpful thing when you are speaking with people who are not Christian I'm not sure that it is very helpful because the prodigal son story is a story that is a parable the word parable you know means comparison and a story a fiction it makes its point by comparison with reality if the you can use the prodigal son's story to illustrate many things and one of them is that God doesn't give up on his adopted children just because they have spent time in the wilderness really giving up on him that's what they've allowed themselves to do but he doesn't give up on them and when they turn back to him he receives them they are his children and there isn't any question of them losing their status just because they've

acted the fool

God's God's embrace of you as his child whom he forgives when the child goes off the rails even if the child does it over and over that hasn't changed in the least adoption is a firm status and you can rattle on then about assurance of salvation and such things but that's not quite what you were asking me no if I may say so that I believe is the great mistake that the liberals have made and by making it they have done so much to weaken the church this last hundred well this last hundred and fifty years you know the liberals say if the liberals or anyone else says well we're all of us children of God by nature well then the next thing that they are saying in effect however they express it is so what's the big point what's the big why speak of abortion of adoption I'm so sorry speak of adoption as if it's so wonderful it's wonderful because it's grace to sinners but if you start saying well no it's the natural inheritance of everybody who's born you're devaluing it most radically seems to be anyway

I think what's interesting for me is the bridge between that though is it's not based on our merit so it's accessible to all so it's not that it's exclusive but it is exclusive if you know what I mean well it's yes it's exclusive if you exclude yourself yes but it's not exclusive in terms of God's offer and openness and invitation and that's a central theme of evangelism in all shape all its shapes and forms God is still there and his invitations still stand sorry say that again adoption is it part of baptism although we don't think of it is adoption part of baptism well yes you could say that because when we I mean when we're baptized then we're we're in

God's family but we haven't if we're babies we don't we're we don't we're it's the strength of those who who believe who are presenting us I think that's an overstatement I think what we ought to be saying is that when we're baptized we are received into the Christian fellowship on a provisional basis the understanding is that when we get to years of thought discretion we embrace the Christian commitment which the baptism service expresses but the alternative to that of course which is the way it goes for so many people is that they never do that and so they fall away from that provisional inclusion which was theirs well until they turned their back on the idea of Christian commitment and I know that the world is the Anglo-Saxon world anyway is full of people who are quite sure in their hearts that because they've been baptized they don't need a personal commitment and well alas that is not so a great deal of John Wesley's ministry for 60 years you know was trying from the pulpit and in counselling to disabuse people at that point you made a very big thing of it at the risk of taking us down a completely different road but I'm quite fascinated because I'm not familiar with the Westminster profession but it seems to be that what you read was really insightful and profound so why given that there were so many

[70 : 10] Anglicans on it was it not accepted oh it was politics it was produced during the years in which the Church of England had been declared well sorry when I say Church of England I should say Church of England worship the Church of England order or organisation I better say had been declared unlawful in England because the Church of England had backed the royalists the king believing in the divine right of kings which had caused the civil war and it was the Puritans the commonwealth people who won the civil war and they behaved in the way that people who win wars tend to behave they squelched the people they defeated in so thorough and overdone a way that they built up terrific resentment and so provoked a reaction which swept them away the reaction in this case was the restoration of the monarchy war and that came the king and a royalist parliament and lo and behold the Puritans were immediately put under all sorts of pressure and that's how it was for the next 30 years think and think for a parallel of

Germany put under monstrous pressure by the peace of Versailles after the first world war and that overdone pressure had a great deal to do with the rise of Hitler and the emergence of the second world war but you know when you won a war and you belong to the race of how do I say it people with sinful hearts you tend to abuse the position that you've now reached in which you are the top group and the other chaps are groveling at your feet thank you very much so thank you for that insightful review of scripture church history and world history always a multiple benefit from listening to dr.

packer you may you may mock your 90 years but I I call it sage wage sage wisdom so