

Adoption

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[0:00] Do you ever, this is sort of a no-brainer question, but do you ever struggle with the fear of man? Or how about discontentment? You're not happy with what you have in your life?

Or maybe just spiritual coldness. You're not in love with God like you ought to be. Or do you worry about the future? And the near future, what's going to happen tomorrow and next week, and maybe even the far future.

Where are we going? Where is this country going? Where is the church going? What is it going to be like in ten years? Or maybe it's fear, guilty fear.

Charles Wesley penned the hymn that said, Arise, my soul, arise, shake off thy guilty fears. Why would he write that if Christians didn't struggle with guilty fears?

That I'm still not quite right with God. There's a problem there. It's fear that comes from sin. And all those things are common.

[1:11] They're very common for the people of God. Last week we saw, we talked about physical sickness. And some of you perhaps, or maybe some of those people that you've never been sick a day in your life.

You are healthy every day. It's something that you can almost take for granted. That might be the case. You might be physically healthy almost all the time.

But we all struggle with spiritual sickness and spiritual weakness. And if you never struggle with those things, like doubt and fear and depression and just fainting, you're cold in your spiritual life, then you should check your pulse.

Because you're probably not alive. As far as life is for us here, this side of heaven, we are going to be spiritually sick at one time or the other.

Well, if we are sick, spiritually, we need good medicine. And J.C. Ryle has some good medicine for us today. It's strong medicine. It's going to put health into your bones.

[2:18] It's going to pick you up and strengthen you and encourage you. It's going to drive those fears away. Just like the wind will drive the dark clouds away.

Well, this medicine is going to calm anxieties. It's going to help us sleep at night. It's going to encourage us spiritually. So what is this medicine? What is this medicine?

Well, we pick up our medicine bottle and we look at the label. And it says, adoption. Adoption. This is the truth that we want to talk about today.

Our adoption as the sons and daughters of God. So first we want to talk about what it means for us now. What does adoption mean for us now?

What are the implications of that? And then what does it mean for the future? What does it mean now? What does it mean for the future? And then at the end, I'm going to ask you to help me apply these things to what we just talked about.

[3:20] To those spiritual sicknesses like anxiety and discontent. So as we're going along, I want you to be thinking and trying to see how we can apply this truth of adoption to those very common spiritual problems.

So first then, what does adoption mean for us now? What does adoption mean for us now? If God has adopted us, and God is our father, and we are his sons and daughters, then God loves us as a father.

Father. So how do fathers love? Good fathers love tenderly. They love tenderly. So here's a little son, two or three years old, and he wanders into the room, and dad is sitting on the chair.

And there's four other places to sit, but he wants to sit on his daddy's lap. So he climbs up, and the father picks him up, puts him on his lap, and the son puts his head right on his daddy's chest, and he holds him.

So a good father loves tenderly, and that's the way God loves his children. There's tenderness there. Or you can think of a young teenage girl, and she's just going through her first week at a new school, and she comes home, and she's dead quiet.

[4:48] She goes back into her bedroom, shuts the door, and the father goes back, knocks on the door gently, and asks to come in.

She says, okay, come in. And he sits on the bed, and he says, what's wrong, honey? What's this? Well, nothing. Well, did you have a bad day at school?

Yeah. And through her tears, she tells him that, you know, no one likes her, and some guys made fun of her, and so she's sobbing.

Well, the father puts his arms around her and holds her close and tells her, I love you, and I'm going to take care of you. And he sympathizes with her.

He sympathizes with her. And a good father will tell her, no, there's power and strength in Jesus for this situation. And he points that young girl, that young teenage girl, to Jesus.

[5:48] And that's how God loves us. When we're sick and sore and tired, he sympathizes with us and points us to Jesus. Jesus. Well, or here's another story.

We have a 10-year-old boy this time, and he's broken the neighbor's window playing ball. And his brother saw him do it. The neighbor saw him do it. Pretty much it's a foregone conclusion that he's done it.

But he is adamant and refusing to say that he did it. And he gives excuses, and he gives leaky alibis. He alibis. So what does the father do in that situation?

The father that loves. Well, he confronts the son. He confronts the son with the truth. And he tells him, we know that you did this.

He confronts him about lying. And he keeps at it until there's confession, until there's brokenness. And then he disciplines his son.

[6:48] That is how a father loves. And that's how God loves us. Now, of course, as everyone here in this room can testify, all the fathers, even the best of us, are sinners.

We are sinners. And that means we don't love perfectly. There's sarcasm and pride and failure and selfishness.

And because we're sinners, it means sometimes we're harsh and we're lazy and we're ignorant. We don't know what to do. But, brothers and sisters, God is not like that.

God is love. And God is light. And there is no darkness in him at all. And so he loves us with a perfect fatherly love that no father on earth could match.

Well, if that's true, then, brothers and sisters, under your entire life, there is the steady stream and flow of God's heavenly fatherly love.

[8:01] So we go through ups and downs. But underneath all the ups and downs is God's love. And we have failures and victories. But underneath all the failures and victories is God's perfect love.

And so because you're a child of God, God's love for you is constant. Every day you experience his love. So you don't go through a single day in your life.

You didn't go through yesterday without God's love, his fatherly affection filling your life. So when you woke up, his love and his mercy are there when you wake up.

When you sin, his love and gospel meets you. When you're at work and when you are with the children and when you're standing over the sink doing the dishes, when you're in the car and when you lie down, God's fatherly love meets us there.

His love overflows our life. It fills it. We're like a teacup and his love is the ocean. Our lives cannot contain his love.

[9:10] And that's true because of this fact that God has adopted us into his family. He's adopted you.

So what does it mean for us now? It means God loves us like his children because we are his children. And it means other things for us now, too. If you want to turn in your Bibles to Romans chapter eight, verse 13.

It's in this short section of four or five verses that we see some of the other things that it means when it means for us when God has adopted us.

So let's read. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die. But if by the spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

Because those who are led by the spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear. But you receive the spirit of sonship.

[10:12] And by him we cry, Abba, Father. The spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now, if we are children, then we are heirs.

Heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ. If indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. So one of the things that means for us now, you can see it in your text.

If we're adopted, it means that we're led by the spirit of God. As many as says, because those who are led by the spirit of God are sons of God in verse 14.

So let me ask you, what does it mean to be led by the spirit? What does it mean to be led by the spirit? Yes, that's exactly right.

God is going to lead us, through the spirit, is going to lead us into his truth. What Paul is not talking about is some sort of subjective feeling where I don't know what to do with the future and in my life and how to make a decision.

[11:23] And somehow the spirit leads us. That's not what he's talking about there. He's talking about the context is how we live, how we put sin to death, how we live according to righteousness.

And as many as are led by the spirit are drawn, are pulled in the direction of righteousness. So the spirit leads us into the right sort of things.

So many of you probably prayed and read your Bibles today. Why did you do that? Why did you ever start that habit? It was because of the spirit leading you.

And he led you into those things. And the spirit leads us to Christ again and again. When we sin and we fall short, we have a drawing of pulling out a leading to Christ.

And the spirit does that. So those who are led by the spirit are sons of God. So that means if the spirit isn't leading you, if he's not leading you into the word of God, if he's not leading you to the gospel and leading you to Christ, then you really need to question whether you've been adopted or not.

[12:46] Because it says if you're led by the spirit, then you are sons of God. So adoption and leading go hand in hand. They never are separate.

If you're a child of God, then the spirit draws you into righteousness. Well, what else does adoption mean for us?

What do you see in the text? In the text that I read? What are some of the other things that adoption means for us? Exactly. You're an heir, a co-heir of Christ.

So if you were the heir of, let's say, Warren Buffett or Bill Gates, then I'd say your prospects on the worldly scene are looking pretty good.

And I know that they have promised like 95% of their fortune to charity when they die. But if you only receive 5% of billions and billions of dollars, things are still looking up for you.

[13:48] Things would be very fantastic. But wouldn't being the heir of God mean all that much more? He owns all the money in the world.

And he owns the world. And he owns the whole solar system and countless galaxies. He has everything. So we have hope.

We have eternal hope. Because what we receive from God can never be taken away. Our best things are yet to come because we are adopted. And we're going to talk more about that future in the next section.

What else do you see? What else are the implications? Or what does it mean that you're adopted? What do you gain from it? That we're not a slave to sin in the altar? We're not a slave to sin.

Yeah, verse 13. If you live according to the sinful nature, you will die. But if you, by the Spirit, you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. So the Spirit is able to help us put to death the misdeeds of the body.

[14:56] And we gain life. So we're no longer slaves to sin. What else? Roger? We're part of a big family called him and God. Okay.

We're heirs and we're co-heirs. So we're co-heirs with Christ and we're co-heirs with all the other brothers and sisters who are brothers and sisters of Christ. What else do you see?

Yes, sir. A relationship of intimacy with God. A way that is brought out by the Spirit of God. A father. An approach that we are privileged to make to God.

On the basis of not strangers, but intimate friends and people. Right. At one point in our lives, we either ignored God or we were terrified of God.

And then God brought us in. And we don't have a spirit of fear any longer. We don't have... We know we're sinners. And yet somehow, through the Spirit of God and the work of Jesus Christ, even though we know we're sinners, we still feel like we can go to God and confess our sins and know that we have forgiveness.

[16:11] That even though He's so great, that Spirit within us makes us unafraid. And we want to approach Him and we have an intimate relationship with Him.

The last thing I saw is we received the testimony of the Spirit of God. And you can see that. When we are adopted, God wants us to know that we've been adopted. He doesn't want us living like beggars when we're the children of the King.

And so He puts that Spirit, the Spirit within us, and that Spirit testifies with our spirits that we are sons of God. That we really are the children of God.

Well, those are just some of the blessings that come from adoption. And they are wonderful blessings. Most people in this world don't have any idea who they are.

[17:11] But we do. They don't have any idea where they're going. They don't know what's in the future. They don't understand the present. They don't understand their past.

But the Spirit of God leads all of His children. And it's no wonder that so many in the world are full of fear and anxiety and depression.

Because they're unstable. They don't have any relationship with anything that really matters.

Because they're not children of God. But God has adopted us.

And so He's made us sons and daughters. And He loves us with a fatherly affection. And He's put a spirit of sonship within us. So we know who we are. We know who God is.

And that fear and that independence streak has been broken within us. And so we know where we're going. And we're co-heirs with Christ.

[18:11] So let's move on then from what it means for us now. The things that we experience and enjoy because we're the children of God. To what it will mean.

As I said, it means we're heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ. And that means we have a bright future. We have a bright future. And what will that future be?

What will that inheritance be that we are going to enjoy? Well, it's hard to say for sure. It's hard to say for sure. Listen to the Apostle John. And this gives me encouragement.

Because if the Apostle John was stumped at this, it's okay for me not to have all the answers. Dear friends, now we are children of God.

And what we will be has not yet been made known. So is John saying we have no idea at all what's going to happen in the future? No, he's not saying that.

[19:12] Of course not. But he's saying that our best ideas, our best understanding of what heaven is going to be like, falls so far short of what it's going to be.

The full extent of our inheritance exceeds all of our expectations. It exceeds anything that we could think of or imagine. It means the greatest things that we can think about.

Our inheritance, it far surpasses those. The beautiful things that we think, it's going to be more beautiful. And the wonderful things that we know that we'll experience, it's going to be more wonderful than that.

And the perfect will be more perfect. See, right now we see through a glass darkly. We don't see the future. We don't see and understand God like we are going to.

It's like we're looking through a thick piece of ice. And if you look through a thick piece of ice, you can see something of what's going on on the other side. But it's dark and it's blurry.

[20:17] You can see shape and movement, but you can't see the splendor and the glory of what you are looking at. But we can say a few things.

And that's what we want to talk about. Those few things that we know will be part of our inheritance.

The first thing it means is knowledge. Knowledge.

Knowledge. And we're not even talking so much intellectual knowledge, but an intimate knowledge.

First Corinthians 13:12 says, Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror.

Then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part. Then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. So as it is now, we stand before God and he understands us perfectly.

He knows us completely. And he sees and he understands. But we are so blind to him, aren't we?

[21:20] We don't see his glory like we should. The things that should absolutely make our jaws drop. We just we don't see the glory like we ought to.

We don't see the glory of Christ. We don't understand the cross. We understand some things of it, but we just don't appreciate what it means.

And so we read our Bibles and we miss so much because now we're looking through a glass darkly. And some things about God confuse us. They confuse us.

But God has set a day when the blinders are going to fall off. They're going to they're going to come off. And we shall see Christ as he is and we shall be like him and we should be.

We will behold the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus. And as much as any human being can understand God, we will understand him.

[22 : 18] Well, now there's all sorts of divisions in the church, isn't there? There's all sorts of divisions. You have different ideas and you have spiritual blindness.

And so people that are really brothers and sisters in Christ, they see things differently and they they come to different conclusions. But the family is meant to be perfected.

So now there's Calvinists and Arminians and Baptists and Presbyterians and Pado-Baptists and Credo-Baptists and Amillennialists and Premillennialists and a thousand other things.

But one day that that situation is going to come to an end because we will all see God's glory. The former ignorance, the former confusion when it came to the word of God will be a thing of the past. See, we were meant to stand side by side with our brothers and sisters in complete agreement and a great loving family, like Roger said. And this is part of our inheritance that the blinders are going to come off and we will see the glory of God and we will understand the things that we don't understand now.

[23 : 29] So what will our adoption mean for us in the future? So it means knowledge. It also means holiness. It means holiness.

The battle for holiness is tiring and wearisome and our progress is slow. We have besetting sins that we fall into time and time and time again.

And we have fits of sinfulness where our hearts get so cold that we would just rather be left in our sin than deal with God.

But every time in our coldness God comes and he arouses us and the battle starts over again. But the battle will not last forever.

God has predestined us. Predestined us to be perfect. To be like his son. Romans 8.29 says, Those God foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his son.

[24 : 37] Part of our inheritance, part of the things that we are going to enjoy, is being just like Jesus. It means complete holiness. So the pursuit of holiness now is painful.

It's cutting off right hands and gouging out right eyes. But one day that work will be over. Right now we're like potters. We are like the clay.

And God is the potter and he's pushing us. And he's molding us. And he's conforming us to get us into the right image. And that is painful. But one day the son will have a perfect spotless bride.

And we will be completely beautiful. We will be completely beautiful. There won't be any sin in our hearts. We will never commit a sinful action.

Everything about us will be right and good and pure and lovely. And we will enjoy perfect holiness.

[25 : 44] And by that I mean, you know how you enjoy a right peach? And it fills you. And it fills your mind. We are going to enjoy holiness like that.

It's going to be perfect. Perfect. And that's part of our inheritance as the sons and daughters of God. Another part is rest.

Rest. So the battle is ongoing. The battle is hard. But there's a promised rest at the end. See, we wake up in the morning. You woke up this morning and you were in the battle.

You were in the battle. And we sit there in our lazy voice. And we read God's word. And Satan comes. And he attacks us. And he plagues us with doubts and fears.

And we go to work. And we're surrounded by people that don't love Jesus. That don't love God. And don't like us.

[26 : 44] And our children tempt us to sin. The ones that are closest to us tempt us to sin. And then the whole time, we have a traitor within.

That's trying to drag us down into depravity. So the battle is constant. We cannot get away from it. We always have to be on guard.

We always have to have the full armor of God on. Because if we don't, we're lost. We'll be swept away. So sometimes there's surprise attacks. Sometimes there's a massive assault by Satan and

sin.

And other times it's just little flare-ups. A little guerrilla warfare. But the battle is going on all the time. Do you ever get tired of it?

Do you ever get tired of it where you just wish that you could live in a world without Satan? And without his demons living in it?

[27 : 42] Do you just wish for five minutes that you could live without indwelling sin? Or just for five minutes you could do something that wasn't tainted? Well, the battle is constant.

But the word of the Lord says, There remains a rest for the people of God. There remains a rest for the people of God. There's a great rest coming. When the battle will be over.

Satan will be defeated. Our flesh will be defeated. The world will be defeated. And we will wake up. And we won't have to watch and pray. Because there'll be nothing to watch against.

And you will work every day with people that love the Lord. And want to serve Him with all their hearts. And you will worship God without your thoughts being dragged down.

You will have complete rest. So now we're running a marathon. It's a long distance run. And every day we run it and run it until the end.

[28 : 47] But there's a final, a coming in, when we will enjoy rest. And that's part of our inheritance as the children of God. That God will give His children rest.

What will our adoption mean for us in the future? It means rest. It means holiness. It means knowledge. It means full communion with Christ. Full communion with Christ.

Do you find it pleasant now to get up? And I'm not saying all the time. But it is pleasant when you do it. To wake up early. And spend time with Christ.

And pray. You read His Word. You speak to Him. Do you find it pleasant? Do you find it pleasant to talk to God throughout your day?

You're going through your day. And you're just talking to the Lord. Enjoying His presence. Well, brothers and sisters, we are going to a place. We are going to experience in our own lives where we see Him face to face.

[29 : 51] And where we have perfect communion with Him. Every day. All the time. So, we have communion now. We enjoy His presence now. But there is a fullness to come.

There is a completeness to communion that we still have to enjoy. So, there's deeper levels of intimacy. There's places of intimacy where we have not yet gone.

But we will go with Christ. And there's heights of love that we haven't reached. But one day, we will reach them. And so, when that day comes, there will be no more partying from Christ.

We won't have any coldness wedge itself into our heart. We will enjoy complete, hot, fervent, sweet communion with Christ all the time.

That's what we will get to enjoy. All right. Well, we've seen that we're sons of God. But what does that mean for us in our sickness, in our ailment, our spiritual weakness, in our anxiety and depression?

[31 : 00] If you remember, I started this lesson by saying that we need good medicine. And this is good medicine for us. But we have to take the medicine. If the medicine is left in the bottle, then it doesn't do anyone any good.

So, we have to apply it somehow to ourselves. And I want you now to try and think of ways that we can apply this to our spiritual sickness.

And let's just talk about anxiety first. Where you're worried. You don't have any rest. You're concerned about what's going on. What does the fact that you've been adopted mean for anxiety? I have a family in the parish. Sorry. Sorry, Lou, go ahead. I have a family in the parish. That makes a huge difference, doesn't it?

If you're going through a problem, the problem might not get any better. But it's so nice to have your mom and dad and your brothers and sisters and your children around you to help you through it. Isn't it?

[32 : 00] Dare. It's so helpful to remember when we're facing constant cross. I was going to say, I am king of kings and lord of lords.

He is God of the universe, creator of the universe. All found, almighty. I mean, when we remember that, it sure makes our problems a free thing. Yeah.

What does this mean? What does it mean for your prayers? You're anxious. It says, don't be anxious about anything. What does this truth have to say to that? Why shouldn't we be anxious?

Should my daughter be anxious about things? She's four years old. Should she be anxious about things? No.

Because she has a dad to take care of things. We don't have to be anxious about things. Because God cares for us. And we don't have to be concerned about trying to figure everything out.

[33:06] Because we have a father that cares for us. Let's talk about guilty fears. Fears that come from a sin that we just don't feel right with God.

That somehow we're still struggling with past sins and afraid for those. What does adoption say about that situation? About that problem?

Roger. We can fold the approach to the throne of grace. We're not in condemnation. We're not just slaves. God has revealed himself to us.

And now we're part of his family. And he treats us like sons and daughters. And that makes the biggest difference in the world. Because without that relationship, you could be crushed.

You could be deemed. But we know that there is no longer any more condemnation. That we can approach it. And you will listen. And you will return. Hmm.

[34:07] We. Justification is sweet, isn't it? To realize I've been justified by faith in Christ alone. And therefore there's no condemnation.

And justification is a court term. It's a law and judge and jury kind of idea. And that isn't the most intimate of ways of explaining our relationship with God.

And sometimes we can feel, yeah, God's justified me. The judge is happy with me. But that's a little bit different. And that's glorious. I'm not demeaning that at all.

But that is different to say that our Father loves us. And that he's justified us. But he's also brought us into his family. And if he's brought us into his family, he's not going to disown us because of our sin.

He loves us despite of our sin. And he's working to get rid of our sin. Well, we've ran out of time. I appreciate your contribution.

[35:13] Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you that you are our Father. That we can call you our Father. Father, that you have redeemed us from slavery through Jesus Christ.

And that now you have put your Spirit within us. And you reveal yourself to be our Father who loves us. Father, thank you that you are such a big God.

You are a strong God, a mighty God. And we don't have to be anxious or fearful about anything.

Because we have a Father who takes care of us. Will you seal that into our hearts?

Will you burn that into our consciences? So when our conscience condemns us wrongfully, that we will remember that we are the sons and daughters of the King.

And that you have freely justified us through the blood of the Lamb. We pray that you would make this real and make this precious to us.

[36:20] It's in Jesus' name I pray. Amen.