

The End of Adoption

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Date: 06 May 2012

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[0:00] Last week, we looked at the subject of adoption and honor. And we had three main points. Do you remember what our three main points were? They weren't very long or difficult, but what were our three main points? The first one was...

Anyone? God honors us in adoption. He honors us in adoption. What was the second point? Yes. So we owe honor to God. Honor your father and your mother, the fifth commandment says. And how much more do we owe honor to our father in heaven? Then the third point was...

So we are to honor one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. If God has honored us in adoption, then we rightly should owe respect and honor to our brothers and sisters.

[1:03] Well, God has honored us in adoption. And I want to review that point in a little detail this morning before we go on and talk about what we're going to talk about today.

Remember the Roman background for adoption. In adoption, a man was exalted to a higher status generally than what he had previously enjoyed.

He was given glory that he didn't have before. And when God has made us his sons and daughters, he honors us. He gives us a status that we didn't have and we couldn't enjoy before.

He's changed us from slaves to sons. So we looked at Galatians 4 and following, and I want to read that now. But when the time had fully come, God sent his son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons, that we might receive adoption.

Because you are sons, God sent the spirit of his son into our hearts, the spirit who calls out, Abba, Father. And so you are no longer a slave, but a son.

[2:19] And since you are a son, God has made you also an heir. So God has given us this great intimacy when he has adopted us. He's given us this honor, a new honor.

We were nothing before. We were slaves in sin. We were slaves to the principles, the basic principles of this world. We were under the guardianship of the law, he says in the previous verses. And so the law, in a way, stood between us and God. It condemned us as sinners. And so we were denied intimacy with God because we were lawbreakers.

But when Jesus Christ came, he redeemed us from under the law. And so now the law cannot condemn us. It can't enslave us at our guilt.

And we have full rights as sons. We've been given this exalted status, this new intimacy with God. Now, let me ask you. I want to think about this.

[3:22] And I want you to think about this and draw some lines here. If we are living in that, we are living on that, we are trusting in this great grace that God has given to us.

If we're living in that, if we feel adoption is honor, what kind of sins will that destroy in our lives? What kind of sins will that destroy in our lives?

If we're living according to the spirit that testifies that we are sons, that cries out within us, Abba, Father, what kind of sins will that destroy in our lives?

What do you guys think? Should. Love of self. How self? Right.

Remember, we've talked about this. There's always red tape in adoption. There's always legal problems. And our sin stood as a legal problem before God could bring us in.

[4:25] And what was the price that God paid in order to bring us into his family? Well, it was the death of his own son. And that has a way of undoing that inward bent in our own lives as we see God's outward bent of love towards us.

What else? If we're living in the goodness of this. Yes. To make it very practical. If I'm a Christian, a follower of Christ, I do not want to do things that stain the dignity and the name of Christ.

So I want to live in a way that brings glory to Christ and not shame. Right. Very good. Anything else? There's lots that I can think of.

Yes. Exactly. Exactly. That's one thing that I thought of. Materialism. Where do we get our status from? Do we get our status from our cars and our clothes and our house and our furniture and the physical things of this world?

And if we're a materialist where we get status from that or we don't have status because we don't have those things, then we're going to be coveting.

[5:42] But if we realize that God has honored us, we already have a status that no material things could bring us. And so we don't need the things of this world to exalt us because God has already honored us and in making us his children.

What else? Yes, mom. I think of idolatry again. Very good. Idolatry. Roger. Because we've been forgiven, there's no excuse for us to not forgive if any offense is going against us.

Yeah, I think legalistic pride where I think that's the heart of that, where because if we think I've achieved something because of my own obedience, if I've gained this certain status because of what I've done, then we find it very hard, don't we, to forgive others?

Because we don't put ourselves in the same category as sinners because I have achieved this. But when we realize God's adopted me and it's all of grace, he's forgiven me and it's all of grace, then I can't look down my nose at other people and refuse to forgive them.

What else? Steve. Steve. This doctrinal identity in being a son of God really breaks the chains of addictive sins in this way.

[7:17] And I think that's when the old sin, my old master calls and commands me to do those addictive things that used to be who I was in my way of life.

I can in a real way say that that's not me anymore because I am now a son of God.

And that's not who I used to be. It's not who I am anymore. I do not need to indulge in those things. And in that way I am free.

Very good. So living in the goodness of this can break us free from any number of addictive sins.

Yes, Jackie.

I just want to say you get peace because when I get to know my Father and when the trials come, then I know everything came through his loving hand to me.

[8:19] It gives peace to the list of I don't understand. It's hard. And I can know that it came from a loving heart. Exactly.

We were going to talk about what kind of virtues does this bring? What kind of fruit does this bear when we're living on this? So let's transition to that. Jackie talks about peace.

When I feel like God is my Father, then whatever life brings. And life is hard, isn't it? It's difficult. But when I experience those things as coming from my Father, He knows, He loves, He understands, then there's peace. And we've talked about peace.

Peace is not, in this world, it's not an absence of conflict and strife. It's finding rest in God in the middle of all that. So what other fruit comes from living in the goodness of our adoption, of knowing that God is my Father?

[9:28] We talked about peace. Yes. Yes, Stan. Thank you. It increases my faith. It's a heavenly Father. I watch how He feeds the birds.

He takes care of them. He's going to take care of me. He knows what I need. It increases my faith. Yeah. I think that's related exactly what to Jackie.

When we're like the pagans, running after the things of this world, it's not a peaceful way to live. But when we know that God is my Father, He's going to provide what I need, then we have faith.

What else? What other virtues comes from living in the goodness of adoption? Yes. Yeah.

Kindness. Yeah.

And it's not only that God has been so kind in the past, but God is presently so kind to me. As I live, I'm experiencing more and more of my Father's generosity.

[10:37] Every morning, He's showing me His kindness as He feeds me, as He cares for me, as He makes sure that none of the trials come are too much for me, but He always provides a way of escape.

He always provides a supportive hand. I'm experiencing that kindness. And so I can be kind to others because my Father's kind to me. What else?

Ed? The confidence we have in our Father. A human Father may ultimately throw his child out and say, I don't want you anymore.

But our Heavenly Father, who has chosen us from eternity past, will never cast His off. He will deal with us, chastise us, but He'll keep us and love us all the way through eternity future.

Yeah. Amen. I don't remember the passage, but where, you know what? A mother might forget her child at her breast. That might happen, which is almost inconceivable.

[11:44] And that might happen, and the Lord says, but I won't forget you. Isaiah. I thought so too, but I... Julie. I think just a hope for the future, a little bit of something certain.

You have so much thought. Hmm. Yeah. Again, I think that's taking what Stan said and just stretching it out. When the future is so uncertain, to know, as Ed said, this love is there.

It's going to meet us in a week. And it's going to meet us in six months. His loving kindness pursues us all the days of our lives. Love.

I just thought, you know, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Did I forget any? That comes from living according to the Spirit.

And the Spirit is the one who says, he's your Father. Cry out, Abba, Father. So when we're living in that, the fruit of that are these things. Contentment is the opposite of covetousness.

[12:52] When I know that my Father has decided for me what is good, I can rest in that. Whatever that might be. Well, I hope you can see the kind of sanctifying effect the gospel, the adoption included, can have in your life.

Now today I want to talk about... Yes, Steve. Sorry. One more, I think. Yeah.

It opens our eyes up. It makes us generous. If we see that we were like the baby in Ezekiel, I think, that's just left on the side of the road, and the man comes along and rescues.

If we see ourselves like that, our eyes are going to be opened to those who are most destitute in our world. Today we're going to talk about our grand destiny, though.

This isn't the end of our series on adoption, but we're going to be starting to transition to other aspects of it. And so today we want to talk about our grand destiny.

[14:09] Where is adoption leading? And I want to ask you to turn your Bibles to Romans chapter 8. Romans chapter 8. It's such a tightly knit passage.

It's hard to know where to jump in and begin. Because one thought leads to another thought, and another thought leads to another thought. And so we have to break the chain of the argument somewhere.

Romans 1 through 4 is all about justification. Romans 5 through 8 is all about how we can have hope in this present world against sin, for the future.

And so we're going to begin looking at Romans 8 verse 15. And again, this is right in the middle of an argument.

But here we go. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear. But you received the spirit of sonship, adoption. And by him we cry, Abba, Father.

[15:23] The spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now, if we are children, 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.

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.

For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves who have the first fruits of the spirit grown inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

For in this hope we were saved, but hope that is seen as no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

[16:48] Verse 16 testifies. The spirit testifies that we are God's children. That's our present. Status. Status.

John says, see how the great the love of the father is that we should be called the children of God. And that is what we are present reality. But then we go to verse 23 and Paul says.

Something very interesting. The spirit. It's only the first fruits. Of this, the down payment, the guarantee. And we grown inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

So we kind of think, well, which is it? Are we adopted? Or are we still waiting for our adoption? And of course, it's both.

Adoption, like so many other things in the New Testament, is now and it's not yet. It's all ready, but we're still waiting.

[17 : 56] It's been inaugurated. Our adoption has begun, but it is not complete. So on January 11th, Stephanie and I went to a nondescript five or six story building in Addis Ababa.

And outside the door, there were four or five Ethiopian soldiers in light blue uniforms. They frisked a couple of us.

They frisked one guy two times and he still had a knife when they were done. So, yeah, I was feeling secure. We went up several flights of stairs and people were hanging out all over the stairs and in the hallways.

And finally, we came to a big waiting room and we waited for a half an hour or so until finally a secretary came out and said, Shalom, and that was the orphanage where Cademan was originally taken in.

And we went in with another couple. The judge was sitting at her desk. There's files and papers everywhere. She's a middle-aged, attractive, very articulate woman.

[19 : 12] She took our passports. She glanced through them. She asked us some questions in which our lawyer just said, you just say yes, yes, yes, don't get into anything. And so we said, yes, yes, yes.

She closed the file on her desk. She grabbed our passports and she said, so they are yours. And that was it. Cademan was our son, as adopted as could be.

Then, four days later, we were on an airplane out of Ethiopia. Cademan, our son, was in his orphanage, in his transition home still.

And we were 7,000 miles away here. Now, that day, January 11th, the courts changed his name. He was just Abenezzer before.

And in that day, he became Abenezzer Jason Webb. That's what they do with all situations, even if the girls are given their father's name. And so they changed his name.

[20 : 19] They changed his legal status from orphan to our adopted son. He became a Webb. He was brought into our family, but he wasn't home yet.

He wasn't with us yet. Now, trust me. Cademan wasn't groaning to go home with us.

Like we were groaning to go home and be with Jesus. He was a baby. He didn't know any better. When we came back, he hid in a corner and screamed.

That makes you feel warm and fuzzy. But while we were there, we played with children who had the same exact status as our son.

And they were older, though. They were adopted, but they weren't home yet. They're 9 years old, 10 years old, 12 year olds. And they desperately wanted to be with their families.

[21 : 21] We gave some toys to this one, and he was like, so you know my family? And we were like, no, we don't. We just have these packages. But the thought of his family warmed his heart.

One of them wrote, I love mommy and daddy. And he signed it in his new name, saying, I want to be home with them. He wrote it on chalk on the driveway.

He was adopted, but he wasn't home. He was adopted, but he wasn't fully brought in. And I'm sure there's days where that little boy forgot where he was going.

He forgot what was ahead. And he forgot of how much his parents loved him. And I'm sure there was days when his heart groaned to be with his family.

To leave this whole thing behind and go home. So that's what Paul is saying. Adoption is already. And it's not yet.

[22 : 21] We experience it in part. But there's so much more to experience. And so this morning, I just want to look, the remainder of our time, at two words that describe our future adoption.

The completion of our adoption. The first is likeness. Likeness. So look down at Romans chapter 8, verse 29. For those he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his son.

That he might be the firstborn. That Jesus might be the firstborn among many brothers. So what is the end goal of adoption? Where is this all going?

What is God's purpose for us in our adoption? It's this. That we will be conformed to the likeness of Christ. That Jesus will have lots of little brothers and sisters that look just like him.

That are just like him. So now we have Jesus' record. And so we don't despair when we sin.

Because we have his record. His life, his death.

[23 : 35] It counts for us. But when we are fully brought in, we will have more than his record. We will have his character. We will be like him.

And so now we suffer. We read that. But we share in Christ's sufferings. In order that we may share in his glory. And so our sufferings, Paul says, They are producing an eternal weight of glory.

And so yes, we groan. We groan to go home. We groan like in childbirth. But the groanings are groanings that produce life by God's grace.

So when a woman groans and the pains of childbirth overcome her, it's in hope that she will give birth to life. And so there's groanings inside of us.

Paul says our present sufferings are not worth comparing. They're not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. I think that should correct us.

[24 : 44] Because we have a tendency to focus on our sufferings. Our sufferings are a big deal. And the glory to come to us a lot of times, it doesn't weigh very heavy on us.

But Paul says that if you understand this correctly, these sufferings are not even worth thinking about. Compared to that glory. We will share in his glory completely the glory of Christ.

And so I've quoted this several times lately. But Paul's words to the Corinthians, As we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.

We bear the likeness of Adam and his weakness and his sin. And God's purpose is for us to bear the likeness of the heavenly man, the second Adam, Jesus.

So right now, everyone's favorite question is, Are you adjusting? How are things going? Are you adjusting with Cademan?

[25 : 48] And don't be afraid to ask. If you're wondering, ask. And I'll tell you. The answer is, We are adjusting. We are not adjusted. You see, When Cademan speaks our language, When he likes all the foods that we like, When he acts like a web, When he lives like a web, When he's not afraid of strange sounds, When he laughs at our jokes, Then he'll be adjusted.

Right? When he carries the likeness of a web, Then we will be adjusted. But right now, We're adjusting. So, do you see what I'm saying? Right now, brothers and sisters, We are adjusting to the family of God.

We aren't there yet. We don't have the likeness of God's family completely made in us yet. But we are adjusting.

And one day, We will be adjusted. Completely socialized. Completely characterized. Of a child of God. We will act like the children of God.

Because that is what we are. And so, There won't be any more wavering doubts. There won't be any crouching fears. We will be like Jesus.

[27 : 03] Completely like him in every way. And then his joy will be our joy. His glory will be our glory. His character will be our character. That's where our adoption is going.

It's going towards likeness with Christ. Now, the second word. That was the first word. Likeness. The second word is inheritance. So, we've read Romans 8.

I read this passage. What is... What is the inheritance? What are we going to receive? What did it say?

What can we surmise from the passage? I agree to my flavor. We're going to inherit the kingdom of heaven. Okay. The whole creation. The whole new creation.

The whole creation that is groaning now, But will be delivered into the liberty of the sons of God.

That is our... That's part of our inheritance. So, our inheritance is going to be this present creation.

[28 : 09] Free from all the futility. All the frustration that Romans 8 talks about. So, right now, God has subjected the creation to bondage and hope.

Well, in hope of what? Did you see what it said? Verse 20. 21. The hope is that the sons of God, When they have their liberty, The creation will have its liberty.

And so now creation groans. It groans under the weight of man's sin. It groans under the curse of God. And so man is cursed.

Man, the head of creation, is cursed. And man is wicked. And so, at best, Men are ineffective at ruling creation. And at worst, They are downright abusive with creation.

But Paul says, The creation, While it's groaning in this present situation, It's groaning in hope, Because it knows that the freedom Of the children of God, The children of God will be revealed. [29 : 18] And so it's looking forward to the day When the children of God will be revealed. And then it's bondage To this frustration, This ineffective rule, This curse, All of that, Will be taken away.

So, That's our inheritance. Our inheritance will be A new earth. A new earth without sin And without a curse.

But it's more than that. Our inheritance will be Heaven on earth. Listen to just some passages From Revelation.

And I heard a loud voice From the throne saying, Now the dwelling of God Is with man. And he will live with them. What is our inheritance?

It's God. And he said to me, It is done. I am the Alpha And the Omega The beginning And the end To him who is thirsty I will give to drink Without cost From the spring Of the water of life.

[30 : 33] He who overcomes Will inherit All this. And I will be his God And he will be My son. So what's the end Of our adoption?

What will we receive? We'll receive God. All of God For all of us. All of God's Provision For all of our Need. And how will he be that?

He'll be our glorious God But he'll be our father. I'll be your God And you will be My sons and daughters. And so Eternal intimacy.

Eternal glory. Eternal joy. So there's Our inheritance Is going to be No more space Between God and his people.

Our sins will be gone. Our enemies will be gone. Our flesh will be gone. Even the veil Between heaven And earth Will be gone.

[31 : 33] God will live with us. They will see his face And his name will be On their foreheads. There will be No more night. They will not need The light of a lamp Or the light of the sun.

For the Lord God Will give them light. And they will reign Forever and ever. So brothers and sisters Encourage Each other With these things.

Yes Talk about what's going on. Yes Talk about how things are going. Talk about this and that. But Let's get Below the surface Brothers and sisters.

God has Exalted us In adoption. He's honored us So graciously. And he's promised us This wonderful inheritance. So we need to Encourage each other.

Is the world Going to tell you About the father's love? Is Satan Going to remind you Of your future inheritance? That's going to have To come from us. We're going to have To be talking to One another about that.

[32 : 40] So Paul wrote about The coming of the Lord And he said Therefore encourage Each other with these words And that's my plea With you. We struggle All of us To one degree or another To believe In God's fatherly love For us And his purpose for us Life is hard There are struggles There are temptations And so we need to Write to each other We need to speak to each other We need to sing To each other Because we need to be Reminded Of God's love for us His purpose for us Where this adoption Is going And that's That's going to be The difference between Stumbling and weakness Just growing fearful And anxious And thriving on the Promises of God And that's going to be The difference between Mechanical ritual When we come And we sing in a few minutes And joyful praise Will we believe

These things or not? And God is worthy of praise And so let's be Encouraging each other To that end Jim That passage you Put in early in Isaiah The Lord told my father It's Isaiah 49 It's actually verse 15 But before that He said But Zion said The Lord has forsaken me The Lord has forgotten me And he says Verse 15 And the mother Forget to be He said He said He said He said I will not forgive you See I have agreed You are on the Palm of my hands And I can testify That my mother Has forgotten A lot of things Because of Dementia and other problems But she hasn't forgotten me And neither will the Lord I've got his word on it And God said If God said That's how it's Thank you Jim Any other comments We have Yes Roger Yeah I think sometimes We tend to think That That When things go bad In our life Or something bad Happens That we're being Punished By God That there is no Punishment Once you're Punishment Once you're Adopted But punishment Is reserved For the ungodly For those who are not saved So it's not Being disciplined And being chastised And we have to We can't lose that Perspective That he's our Heavenly Father And then think Oh we've lost it all We never lose it all Once he's got us He's got us for good And it's

[illegible]