



Adopted By The King of Glory

Series: The Most Remarkable Run-On in Holy Writ

Ephesians 1:3-14 (5-6)

June 13, 2010

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Introduction: A straight forward and faith-filled reading of this text leads to this indisputable conclusion: There is no true, Spirit-empowered love for God the Father and for His Christ that does not find its source in God's first loving us. The reason that we love God is because God loved us first, loved us with a special, saving love, a love that chose His church from out of sin and death, a love that sent Christ to die in the sinner's place, a love that proceeds in the gift of the Spirit of God who regenerates men and women, taking their dead and stony hearts and replacing them with hearts upon which are written His word and which are filled with a new Spirit and which come to saving faith in Christ as a gift of God's grace. This truth underlies everything -- that we love God for no other reason than that God loved us first. **(1Jn 4:9-10, 19 ESV)** We would never love God unless He first loves us. But our love for God is not meant to be static, it is not meant to be a possession but a progression. Our love for God is something that is meant to grow, meant to be nourished, meant to be watered by the Word of God. There is nothing that should nourish our love for God like the truth of adoption.

Look again at what Paul writes: **In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. (Eph 1:4d-6)** This text is filled with reason to love and honor God, to love Jesus Christ, the Son, but I want us to begin with something that those who have a hard time with predestination usually miss:

Predestination is Rooted in the Love of God

Again, Paul says, **"In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ."** The first thing we must see is that at the root of election and predestination is the unflinching, steadfast, covenant love of God – a love that is unbreakable, indestructible, durable, and from everlasting to everlasting. Love is the motivation. Please don't view God's predestination as a cold, fatalistic doctrine that conceives of God as just flipping a coin in heaven. He determined to set His covenant love on His chosen **"according to the good pleasure of His will."** The word

that is translated as “predestined” is a Greek word which means “to mark out the boundaries of” or “to draw a circle around.” What Paul is saying here is that God has encircled us with His love and made us His children by adoption. The root of God’s predestination of sinners to adoption as His sons and daughters is His love. I want for us to see the

The Astonishing Grace of Our Adoption as the Children of God

Paul tells us here that God has predestined us for adoption. What does it mean that God has adopted us into His family? Adoption is the gracious act of God by which He takes us into His eternal family and makes us one of his sons or daughters. Adoption is that act of God whereby men who were by nature the children of wrath, even as others and were of the lost and ruined family of Adam, are entirely by the pure grace of God, delivered out of the evil and sinful family of Satan and brought fully and completely into the family of God. They take God’s name, share in His gifts and they are made to be the children of God. It is one of the most weighty realities in the universe. God adopts us. He takes us out of the degradation and lostness of our sin, out of the kingdom of darkness, out of the power and sway of Satan and he makes us His own dear children, giving us His name, granting us the fullness of His grace, breaking all of our ties with our old life apart from Him, making us His heir, and forgetting our past. That is the nature of adoption. What Paul wants us to understand here is the grace of God to make us His own children – the wonder of our being made by God His children. He means to show us the Father heart of God.

Our salvation in Jesus Christ is so rich and so deep that the Apostles used quite a few concepts to describe it. Justification--judge in a courtroom, Propitiation – to turn away wrath of offended God, Redemption – prisoner or slave set free, Regeneration – God as Creator. But in adoption, the idea of God as Father is all about relationship -- close, personal, relationship. Love, protection, strength, and care are the images that Paul wants to evoke when we think of God as Father. It’s a term that has significant meaning and impact on our lives. But it is even deeper than that, as a believer in Jesus Christ you’re encouraged to call upon God with an even more intimate term, **Abba**. Abba is an Aramaic word; it’s the way little children speak of their dads, and it means "Daddy" or "Papa." Abba is a statement of intimacy, tenderness, dependence, and a complete lack of fear or anxiety. That’s the name by which God wants to be known to His children. **(Rom 8:14-15; Gal 4:4-6)**

Please realize how incredibly unique this truth is to Christianity. God was not obligated to bring us into His family at all. In fact, all of this is a work of grace, not our right. Do you see that God could have regenerated us, and justified us, given us a new life through the death of Jesus but still held us at a distance? We still would have been saved, and that still would have been grace

enough. But God determined before creation that He would make us His sons and daughters, those whom He had chosen for salvation. He poured even more grace upon us that we can imagine, bringing us before Him as His children before their Abba, their daddy. Entitlement mindset battles against our truly understanding and appreciating the wonder of this truth. Adoption is all of grace. And what this adoption is intended to do is to astonish us at the depth and manner of God's love.

John spoke of this kind of a response in his first epistle: **(1John 3:1)** John uses the word often translated as "behold" here to exhort us to gaze upon in wonderment the fact that we are called the sons of God. Here are some things to consider this morning that I pray will stoke your heart into flame in love for God. If you are a Christian, you need to consider with awe:

God planned your adoption before time began. It was God's idea. It was God's plan all along. What we are to see here and be amazed at is this that God chose you and predestined you in love for adoption before the foundation of the world. God's love for you and its demonstration in your adoption into his eternal family of joy did not start in this world. It reaches back to eternity. Therefore your adoption is not based on your performance or your worth. It is rooted in God's eternal purpose and grace. God will not adopt and then find out that you are not worthy and unadopt. He knows we are unworthy. And he chose us and predestined us for adoption. This is solid and definite and immovable. We must be amazed that

That God would adopt you when He already had a perfect Son. God had no need for children. There was no gaping hole in God's heart that we needed to fill. God already had a perfect Son from eternity, the fullness of His glory and brightness of His perfection. That God the Father should adopt us when He already had a perfect son of His own, the Lord Jesus Christ, is a wonder of is a wonder of love. He did not need sons, but we needed a Father. More than that...

God freely adopted you despite the horrible personal cost to Himself. God's grace to you is free but the cost is unfathomable. To make heirs of wrath and death, children of God and heirs of life, heirs of promise is no simple or easy thing. To purchase us and make us children of God required the blood of His dear, perfect, holy, righteous, worship-worthy Son. It demanded Christ taste the punishment for our wickedness and sin, from His own dear Father. **(2Co 5:21)** **But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. (Eph 2:13) In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us. (Eph. 1:7-8)**

During the Reformation there was a debate about this. A man named Socinius argued that the Bible had two conflicting pictures of God's forgiveness of us. He said part of the Bible teaches that God freely forgives and part of the Bible teaches that He forgives by the shed blood of Christ. Socinius said, "I find it offensive to say that God forgave through the satisfaction of Jesus' blood, because that means that God really didn't mercifully and freely forgive; that He meted out punishment and then He turned around and He gave us something which was not a gift of mercy, but a gift of justice. And so, therefore, I choose to reject the idea that Jesus on the cross purchased the forgiveness of our sins, and I choose to believe that God just mercifully forgave us, apart from what Jesus did."

Socinius thought that he had the perfect argument, but John Calvin (thank God for John Calvin!) gave him an answer: "You misunderstand the Scripture. The Scripture says that at the cross Jesus purchased for us a costly forgiveness that was freely bestowed on those who did not earn nor deserve that forgiveness, because of the mercy of God; so that God's mercy and justice meet at the cross and kiss, and so that His forgiveness is just, and the costly sacrifice results in a free gift of grace, so that God is glorified in all." God's grace is both costly and free. The atonement proves its cost, but God's gracious predestination to adoption proves its freeness, because from before the foundation of the world – before you existed, before you had done anything, before you had chosen right or wrong, before you had trusted in Jesus Christ – God set His love on you. It is a wonder of love...

That God should take great numbers from the out of the devil's family and adopt them into the family of Heaven. In Hebrews 2:10, we read that Christ is bringing many sons to glory. Instead of adopting only one heir, God is resolved to make His family glorious and numerous, to bring many children to glory, to give many children an inheritance in Him. How many is that? We don't know. But we do know the description of John in Revelation -- **(Rev 7:9-10)**

The Matchless Blessings of Adoption

1. **We have new status and dignity.** You see that? We were nobodies. We were lost. We were sons of hell. But God, in Jesus Christ, came to our pit, lifted us out and brought us into his own family.
2. **We have a new Father.** We have been delivered from our old father, Satan and now God is our Father, our faithful and kind and loving Father. **Matt 6:25-34.** The Father will care for you just as we care for our own little children. Not only that, we have full access to our Father at all times. **(Heb 4:16; 10:19-22)**
3. **We receive discipline that leads to godliness.** If you are a child of the heavenly Father, if you have been adopted into God's family, then that means that your Father will discipline

you and train your for godliness. **(Heb 12:5-11)** Discipline is a manifestation of fatherly love.

4. **We are led by the Spirit of God. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. (Rom 8:14 ESV)** The Spirit of adoption leads us, not in some periodic and occasional sense, not just at times of crisis, or when we are making huge life decisions, or entering the ministry. Instead, Paul's point is that the Spirit of adoption has taken up his residence permanently within us, leading, guiding and directing our lives as we place ourselves under his gracious leadership. This idea of being led by the Spirit of God is not some mysterious thing, chasing after the wind or what the Spirit may be saying, but being obedient to what the Spirit has already said.
5. **We have an inheritance.** You have been made sons of God, and therefore you are an heir to all that he is as well as he has. Peter tells us: **(1Pe 1:3-4 ESV)** We inherit the blessing of reigning with Jesus Christ, we inherit the promises God has made to Abraham, we inherit with Christ all of the blessings of God, but far greater than any of these blessings is this, that we inherit God Himself. Do you see? **(Ps. 73:25-26; Rev. 21:3).** The greatest blessing God's children have is the eternal relationship that we have with the God who loves us deeply.
6. **We have the privilege to imitate him. (Eph 5:1-2)** It is a privilege to imitate God. We used to imitate the devil. Now, based on our place as the children of God, we live and conduct our lives before the face of God and before the eyes of the world so that as they see us, they will be compelled to say, "What a glorious God. Nothing can explain these people except the glory of Almighty God."
7. **We have a forever family.** If you have been adopted into the family of God, we have a redeemed family, a new family united by the blood of Christ. That is what church is. So we give one another the right hand of fellowship, and we encourage all the closeness, and brotherly love that we can muster, strengthening one another and loving one another as brothers, because by this the world will know that we are the children of God.

Do you see? Our adoption by the Father is the foundation of our Christian lives. We are beloved by God. By grace, we have brand new identities as sons and daughters. If we do not realize this, if we are not living in this freeing and joyous truth, we will go back to the old life of striving to earn God's acceptance through our achievements, through our performance of rules and laws.

We have been adopted by God and we have been given such grace as can never be quantified, but that is not the goal anyway. We have been adopted so that we would worship our Father and delight in His favor to us, that we would make much of Him forever, that we would find our greatest and find deep humility in knowing Him and all He has done in and for us. That is what Paul wants for us to see. He wants us to

Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow

“To the praise of His glory.” The ultimate purpose of our adoption is God’s own glory. Scripture tells us that God’s work of salvation is first and foremost for His glory’s sake. **(Isa 43:25; Psa 25:11)** Salvation is not man-centered. Salvation is God-centered. The primary aim throughout all of God's plan of redemption, from election to the total consummation in the book of Revelation - all of it is to bring glory to God and to His Christ. But, it is also for your good because He delights to love you. It’s not as if He just drags us through salvation for His glory’s sake and we accidentally get blessed. We are blessed and He is glorified. It is for the eternal praise of God and the for our joy that God the Father has **“blessed us,”** Paul says, **“in the Beloved.”**

Blessed in the Beloved

Why does Paul refer to Christ as the “beloved of God” here and why does it matter that we are accepted in Him? Get ready, because this is absolutely amazing and the only people that can see the amazing nature of this are those who know the depth of their sin. That term, ‘Beloved’ is a term that God the Father used pointedly to refer to Jesus Christ and it always emphasized His satisfaction, His pleasure in Him. At His baptism...this is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. At His transfiguration...this is my beloved Son, listen to Him. The Son is the apple of the Father’s eye and being in Him, we are accepted by God just as Jesus is. Do you understand what that means? We are called to salvation, chosen for holiness, adopted as the children of God, and even greater than this, to the praise of God’s glory, we are loved by the Father even as He loves His Son.

That crushes me...in a good way. That makes me undone. How can that be? And yet, these are the very words of Christ in that glorious prayer recorded for us in John 17. There in verse 23, as He is interceding for His church, Christ prays: **“I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.”** That is staggering to me. And it is humbling. I don’t deserve that love, and neither do you. But that is exactly the love that the Father bestows upon us in Christ.

We gain a glimpse of the depth of His love for us when we consider the love He poured out on us when He predestined us to be adopted as His sons and daughters. When we begin to see the

extent to which the Father went to secure our salvation, we can do nothing but give Him praise. The great truth of God's marvelous love is not meant to be some mere academic consideration of predestination, or election or adoption. It is intended instead to remind you of the immense blessing of His covenant love, and deep care for you. This doctrine of adoption is intended to humble you and make you deeply grateful to the wonderful God of all creation. It is intended to open to you ever wider the Word of God, the joys of prayer, the wonder of worship, the fellowship of the Spirit and of other believers.

Jl Packer, in his book, **Knowing God**, who wrote, "If you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God's child, and having God as his Father. If this is not the thought that prompts and controls his worship and prayers and his whole outlook on life, it means that he does not understand Christianity very well at all." My prayer is that you will understand Christianity well and live out it's joys to the praise of His glory.

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