

# Heirs of God (Part 1)

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[ 0 : 00 ] Because the last four verses of Galatians chapter 3 should be part of chapter 4, we really finished Galatians chapter 3 last week, even though we still have verses 26 through 29 left! to be covered tonight. In chapter 3, we saw Paul explain how Christ fulfills two Old Testament covenants, God's covenant with Abraham and God's covenant with Moses. Starting with chapter 3, verse 26, all the way through chapter 4, verse 7, we have a new section, but the message is going to sound very familiar. Paul reminds the Galatians what they have become since they put their faith in Christ, and he also reminds the Galatians what they were before they put their faith in Christ. Paul first describes the people's current standing before God, and these are the verses that we'll cover tonight. Starting with what we know as chapter 4, that we'll get into next week, Paul then reminds the Galatians of their past status before returning to the present and elaborating even more on the Galatians' current relationship with God. Let's go ahead and read Galatians chapter 3, verse 26, all the way through chapter 4, verse 7, even though we'll only go through the end of chapter 3 tonight in detail.

Starting in 3.26, Paul wrote, For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything. But he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. In the same way, we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the spirit of his son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. So you are no longer a slave, but a son. And if a son, then an heir through God. Here's the main idea for this entire section. God sent his son to redeem those who put their faith in Jesus. All believers in Christ have an equal standing as adopted heirs of God.

God sent his son to redeem those who put their faith in Jesus. All believers in Christ have an equal standing as adopted sons and heirs of God. Over the next few lessons, we'll split Galatians 3.26 through 4.7 into three sections. And in the four verses starting with Galatians 3.26, Paul reminds the Galatian believers that they are regenerated to be sons of God. Regenerated to be sons of God is what goes into your blanks there. We hear the word regenerated often. Simply put, regeneration is the transformation of a person's spiritual condition from death to life through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Every believer gets regenerated or born again from death unto life. However, God does more than regenerate us. God adopts all of us as sons. Look at verse 26. It says there, For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God through faith. To set the context, we'll focus first on just one phrase. Then we'll cover all the verses in the section. And the phrase that sets the context is sons of God. Paul wrote this letter to all believers in Galatia, both male and female. And that is why some liberal theologians say that Paul's writing sounds chauvinistic. Those people claim that Paul's phrasing needs to be changed from sons of God to children of God. Those liberal theologians are wrong. Paul wrote what he meant to write. More importantly, Paul wrote what the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write. And to prove this, we're going to dig deep into the meaning of the Greek word translated as sons. So are you ready to go deep into that meaning here tonight? Well, here's some earth-shaking news for you. According to New Strong's dictionary, the Greek word translated as sons means sons. So aren't you glad you came out tonight on this colder January night to learn that?

Well, here's why that fact is important. Based upon the culture of Paul's day, the Bible is elevating the status of females when it shows that everyone who puts his or her faith in Christ is treated as a son of God. Inheritance in that day was reserved for sons, not daughters. Paul actually was being very countercultural for his day. The full rights of a son, including the full inheritance, are granted to all people who belong to Christ regardless of whether they're male or female. Paul takes the illustration of what happens when someone receives the full rights of a son in adoption, and he uses it to describe what God does in our lives by grace through faith in Christ. The females among Paul's original readers would have understood how significant Paul's wording was. They heard, perhaps for the first time, that God sees females as equal with males. And if Paul had said that all people were children of God, the meaning of his words would have lacked some of the same significance to those original readers.

[ 6 : 48 ] Being treated as children of God would have been good, but for people in the Galatian culture, everyone being treated as a son of God, regardless of his or her gender, had a much different and a much deeper meaning. And that difference is why we must be cautious when somebody says that we should adjust the text of the Bible. You probably have heard the saying, a biblical text without a context is a pretext, and we never want to get into pretext. So with the context set, let's again read the first four verses in this larger section. Here are Galatians chapter 3, verses 26 through 29.

For in Christ Jesus, you are all sons of God through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek. There is neither slave nor free. There is no male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. When we looked at verses 23 and 24 last week, Paul used word pictures to remind us of our condition before we put our faith in Christ and his saving work. Paul likened our condition to being imprisoned or being raised by a stern taskmaster or disciplinarian. Our position changes radically when we put our faith in Christ. Tonight's passage is full of good news for believers, starting with verse 26. We obtain sonship when we are in Christ Jesus through faith.

Faith is the link that brings us into union with the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul uses the term faith because the argument is to prove that we are saved by faith alone rather than by faith and works. When we are regenerated, we believe in Christ for salvation, and this faith brings us into a living union with Christ. That union with Christ is what changes our status, and that union changes our status significantly. God is no longer our judge who through the law has condemned and imprisoned us.

God is no longer our tutor or our taskmaster who through the law restrains and chastises us. God is now our Father who in Christ has accepted and forgiven us. We no longer fear God, dreading the punishment we are the punishment we deserve. We love him with deep devotion. We are neither prisoners awaiting the final execution of our sentence, nor children who are minors under the restraint of a tutor, but we're sons of God and heirs of God's glorious kingdom, enjoying the status and privileges of grown-up sons. We know that God is the universal creator, having brought all things into existence.

[ 10 : 01 ] He's the universal king ruling and sustaining all that he's made. But God is the Father only of our Lord Jesus Christ and of those whom he adopts into his family through Christ. If we would be the sons of God, then we must be in Christ Jesus through faith. It is through that faith that we are in Christ, and it's through being in Christ that we are sons of God. Apart from saving faith in Jesus Christ, all human beings are enemies of God and children of wrath. That comes from Romans 5.10 and Ephesians 2.3.

Like the self-righteous Pharisees in Jerusalem, every unbeliever is a child of the devil. No one belongs to the Father who does not belong to the Son. We know that Jesus said in John 14.6, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Let's explore some of the benefits that God gives believers because of our union with Christ. The first thing that God gives the believer is God himself in the form of his indwelling Holy Spirit.

The Spirit, in turn, assures us that we belong to the Father. The Holy Spirit is who brings us into personal, intimate fellowship with our Heavenly Father, whom we can approach at any time and under any circumstance, knowing that the Father lovingly hears us and cares for us.

Because we are all sons of God, we can come with absolute confidence before his very throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

[ 11 : 52 ] And of course, that is Hebrews 4.16. The benefits of being in Christ build upon each other. Union with Christ is the basis for our acceptance with God in justification.

And it also is the basis for our adoption. Because we are in union with Jesus, who is our firstborn and our elder brother, we are accepted not as servants or slaves, but as sons of God.

Every believer gets the inheritance that belongs to all who are in Christ. God could have stopped with giving us the Holy Spirit. However, God chose to justify us when God accepted Christ's eternal sacrifice on our behalf.

A few weeks ago, when we looked at Galatians 2.17-21, we discussed the meaning of justification. Justification refers to God's declaring a sinner to be guiltless on the basis of faith in God.

It is the free and gracious act by which God declares a sinner right with God, forgiving, pardoning, restoring, and accepting Him on the basis of nothing but trust in God's Son, Jesus Christ, and Christ's saving work.

[ 13 : 11 ] God could have stopped with giving us the Holy Spirit and then justifying us. But the good news keeps on coming. God blessed us again by choosing to treat us as adopted sons and by choosing to give us an inheritance.

The doctrine of justification makes us right before God the judge, but in the doctrine of adoption, we are loved by God the Father. In justification, the picture is legal.

We stand before a judge who makes a pronouncement. But in adoption, the judge not only declares you not guilty, but he also gets off the bench, comes down to where you are, takes your chains off you, and says, come home with me as my son.

J.I. Packer says, to be right with God the judge is a great thing, but to be loved and cared for by God the Father is a greater thing. Let that quote sink in.

To be right with God the judge is a great thing, but to be loved and cared for by God the Father is a greater thing. We likely all agree that those things are good gifts, but wait, there's still more, and we'll see that as we go through these verses.

[ 14 : 34 ] Our sanctification, or becoming more like Christ, also flows from our union with Christ. God could have left us just as we were before our salvation.

Instead, God is sanctifying us and making us more like Christ every day. Listen to how Paul expanded on these benefits we've discussed, and even more, when Paul wrote to the Corinthians. These verses are 1 Corinthians 1, verses 28-31. 1 Corinthians 1, verses 28-31 say, God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that as it is written, let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord. We see from 1 Corinthians 1.30 that God gave us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. Moving on to Romans now, let's look at a few benefits we see there.

[ 15 : 58 ] Romans 8.29 reminds us that we are being conformed to the image of Christ. Romans 8.30 promises us that one day we will be glorified.

Listen to those two verses. Here are Romans 8.29 and 30. Romans 8.29 and 30. For those whom he knew, talking about God, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

And those whom he predestined, he also called. And those whom he called, he also justified. And those whom he justified, he also glorified.

In the process of salvation, Paul lists glorification as the last and final event. The verb used in Romans 8.30 is in the past tense, and that shows the certainty and finality of that glorification. When we talk about glorification, that's the completion, the consummation, the perfection, and the full realization of salvation.

[ 17 : 08 ] Glorification gives us a perfect, incontestable standing before God in the day of judgment. Glorification is the perfection of sanctification, and it pertains to one's inner character, self, or person.

No Bible passage treats justification extensively, but Ephesians 5.27 summarizes the concept. In that passage, Paul wrote of presenting the church to Christ.

What he says of the church, though, is true of every Christian. Jesus will present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she, the church, might be holy and without blemish.

Or in the language of 2 Timothy 2.10, Paul said there, Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain salvation in Christ Jesus with its eternal glory.

Another aspect of glorification is that Christians will reign with Christ. Paul sets out the reign of Christ in general terms in 1 Corinthians 15.20-28.

[ 18 : 26 ] In another passage of admonition, he says that those who endure shall reign with Christ. That's 2 Timothy 2.12. Another view of reigning with Christ as an experience of glorification is found in Ephesians, where it describes the state of the Christian in the age to come.

Listen to how Ephesians 2.4-7 summarize the benefits we get when we are in Christ. Again, these verses are Ephesians 2.4-7.

But God, being rich in mercy because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ, by grace you have been saved, and raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

In those Ephesian verses, we also see that we receive those benefits because we are in Christ Jesus. Or as Paul put it in Galatians 3.26, for in Christ Jesus, you are all sons of God through faith. We've spent a lot of time looking at the benefits we get from being in Christ, but we need to understand those benefits. We need to do more than that. We need to internalize and believe those benefits before we can come close to appreciating what God has done for us when He regenerated us to be sons of God.

[ 20 : 09 ] Going back to our Galatians text, Paul doubles down on emphasizing our union with Christ. Here is Galatians 3.27, For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Denominations have become sidetracked regarding the meaning of being baptized into Christ. Some think that this verse refers to the physical act of water baptism.

We know, though, that the Bible nowhere teaches salvation by physical baptism, and especially not here in Galatians, where the central message is salvation by faith alone, plus absolutely nothing else.

The phrase, baptized into Christ, refers to spiritual identification with and immersion into the life of Christ. Paul speaks of the spiritual immersion into the life of Christ in Romans.

Listen to what Paul says in Romans chapter 6, verses 3 through 6. Again, these verses are Romans chapter 6, verses 3 through 6.

[ 21 : 22 ] Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried, therefore, with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His. We know that our old self was crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we no longer be enslaved to sin.

John MacArthur said, all Christians have been baptized into Christ Jesus, thus permanently being immersed into Him, so as to be made one with Him.

This concept fits the same pattern that we saw back in Galatians 2, verse 20. Remember what Paul said in Galatians 2, 20. He said that we were crucified with Christ.

And look how similar that is to what we just read in Romans 6, verse 6. Here is Romans 6, 6 again.

[ 22 : 40 ] Paul said in Romans 6, 6, we know that our old self was crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we no longer would be enslaved to sin.

When we put our faith in Christ, God treats us like we personally have experienced what Christ experienced on our behalf. But even better than that, when we become one with Christ, God sees us as if, like Jesus, we always have been perfectly righteous.

Those concepts are hard to wrap our minds around, or at least that concept is hard for me to wrap my mind around. And if you feel the same way, others have had the same difficulty.

Listen to this quote by John MacArthur. He said, This is a great mystery that the human mind cannot fathom. But in some spiritually supernatural way that transcends time and space, the person who places his trust in Jesus Christ is crucified, buried, and resurrected with his Savior, baptized into Christ, so that when the Father looks at the sinful believer, he sees his sinless son, faith appropriates the union that baptism symbolizes.

The crux of that quote is the part that says, The person who places his trust in Jesus Christ is crucified, buried, and resurrected with his Savior, baptized into Christ, so that when the Father looks at the sinful believer, he sees his sinless son.

[ 24 : 20 ] That statement is consistent with 1 Corinthians chapter 6, verse 17. Here is 1 Corinthians chapter 6, verse 17.

But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Galatians 3.27 ends by saying that those who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

The phrase put on Christ is another one of Paul's word pictures. It relates to a child coming of age. The phrase put on Christ refers to a chains of garments.

The believer has laid aside their dirty garments of sin and by faith received the robes of righteousness in Christ. But to the Galatians, this idea of changing clothes would have had an additional meaning.

When a Roman child came of age, he took off the childhood garments and put on the toga of the adult citizen. Now we see that the believer has an adult status before God.

[ 25 : 33 ] So Paul is asking the Galatians, why would you want to go back into the childhood of the law? The believer who identifies himself with Jesus Christ through faith is divinely clothed with Christ.

That's a graphic way to describe how Christ's life, presence, and righteousness nature enveloped the believer. Because believers are God's children and because they have the power and assurance of his indwelling Holy Spirit, they are enveloped in the life of Christ and they should bring honor to his name by the way they live.

Only being clothed with Christ provides and preserves salvation. That truth is the heart of Christianity and it is the emphasis of Galatians chapter 3 verses 26 through 29.

Whatever the Lord Jesus is and whatever Jesus has becomes the believers. Because Christ has the love of the Father, so do believers.

Because Christ has full access to the Father, so do believers. And because Christ has the full resources of the Father, so do believers.

[ 26 : 48 ] Given those truths, here are a couple of questions to ponder. Do we really understand and believe those truths? And if we do, do we live like we understand and believe those truths?

believers. Here's another quote from J.I. Packer. He said, 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.

Moving on to Galatians chapter 3 verse 28, Paul builds upon the truth that all believers are equal because they are adopted sons of God. Here is verse 28 again.

There is neither Jew nor Greek. There is neither slave nor free. There is no male and female for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

[ 28 : 02 ] Paul focused on the existing well-defined distinctions of his society that drew sharp lines and separated people. These distinctions conveyed the idea that some people, namely Jews, free men, and males in general, were better than or more valuable than or perhaps more significant than others.

But when you look at the gospel, the gospel destroys all such proud thinking. The person who becomes one with Christ also becomes one with every other believer.

In Christ, we belong to God as his sons and to each other as brothers and sisters. And we belong to each other in such a way as to render of no account the things which normally distinguish us.

When you look at this verse, Paul shows equality across three different things that normally divide people. The Jew and Greek comparison relates to ethnicity.

The slave and free comparison relates to social or economic status. The male and female comparison obviously relates to gender. So let's dig a little deeper into each of those comparisons.

[ 29 : 19 ] The first one we see is equality among ethnic groups. God called Abraham and his descendants, the Jews, to entrust to them God's unique self-revelation.

But when Christ came, God's promise was fulfilled in that Abraham's seed, all the families of the earth, would be blessed. This includes all nations of every ethnicity, color, and language.

We are equal. We are equal in our need of salvation, equal in our inability to earn or deserve that salvation, and equal in the fact that God offers salvation to us freely in Christ.

After we receive salvation, our equality is transformed into fellowship. And that's a brotherhood which only Christ can create.

Joseph Pippa said, there is nothing wrong with cultural distinctives as long as we avoid making them marks of superiority in the church. The fact that Jew and Gentile become one does not mean that a Jew stops enjoying his heritage and that a Roman Christian cannot still glory in certain things in Roman culture and civilization.

[ 30 : 37 ] The church is not the great melting pot in which we must lose all cultural distinctives, but rather a place where cultural distinctions come together under the headship of Christ and actually are part of the beauty of the church.

Heaven will be like a great bazaar, an international market in which all will have been removed that is unbiblical and all that is biblical will be brought to perfection.

So we may rejoice in our culture, not arrogantly, but with humility, recognizing that there are good things in various cultures and that some cultures are superior to others.

in the church, however, we do not draw lines on the basis of superiority or inferiority of culture.

Next, Paul addressed equality across social and economic statuses.

There is no distinction of rank, and he signified that by saying there is neither slave nor free. Nearly every society in the history of the world has developed its class or caste system.

[ 31 : 50 ] Circumstances of birth, wealth, privilege, and education have divided men and women from one another all through time. But in Christ, snobbery is prohibited.

Class distinctions are rendered to be void. Finally, Paul addressed equality across genders. He did that when he said there is no male nor female.

male. And this remarkable assertion of the equality of the sexes was made centuries in advance of the times. Women were nearly always despised in the ancient world, even in Judaism.

The women were frequently exploited and ill-treated as well. But here, Paul asserts that in Christ, male and female are one and equal. And this assertion is made by Paul, who is ignorantly supposed by many to have been an anti-feminist.

Listen to how John Stott summarized verse 28. Christians are not literally colorblind so that they do not notice whether a person's skin is black, brown, yellow, or white.

[ 33 : 02 ] Nor are they unaware of the cultural and educational background from which people come. Nor do they ignore a person's sex, treating a woman as if she were a man, or a man as if he were a woman.

Of course, every person belongs to a certain ethnicity and nation, has been nurtured in a particular culture, and is either male or female. When we say that Christ has abolished these distinctions, the distinctions are still there, but they no longer create any barriers to fellowship.

We recognize each other as equals, brothers and sisters in Christ. By the grace of God, we would resist the temptation to despise one another or patronize one another.

We know ourselves to be all one in Christ Jesus. John MacArthur added the following comment. He said, we know that there are obvious ethnic, social, and gender differences among people.

Paul was speaking of spiritual differences. Differences in standing before the Lord, spiritual value, privilege, and worthiness. Consequently, prejudice based on ethnicity, social status, gender, or any other such superficial and temporary differences has no place in the fellowship of Christ's church.

[ 34 : 27 ] All believers, without exception, are all one in Christ Jesus. All spiritual blessings, resources, and promises are equally given to all who believe unto salvation.

Paul emphasized this same point in Romans chapter 10, verses 12 and 13. Listen to Romans chapter 10, verses 12 and 13.

for there is no distinction between Jew and Greek. For the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him.

For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Diversity among church members should be a cause for celebration rather than a cause for division.

We are diverse members. We have different gifts, abilities, and functions, but we are all part of the one body. Just as the toe is different from the ear, the finger is different from the eye, but all are part of one body.

[ 35 : 34 ] The body of Christ is a diverse unity. Because of union with Christ, we are one body and one family. There are no second-class citizens in the family of God.

Listen to how Paul explained this concept to the Corinthians. These verses are 1 Corinthians chapter 12, verses 12 through 26.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 12, 12 through 26, Paul wrote, For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many are one body, so it is with Christ.

For in one spirit we were all baptized into one body, Jews or Greeks, slaves or free, and all were made to drink of one spirit. For the body does not consist of one member, but of many.

If the foot should say, Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body, that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body, that would not make it any less a part of the body.

[ 36 : 50 ] If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them as he chose.

If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you, nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable, we bestow the greater honor.

And our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, given greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.

If one member suffers, all suffer together. If one member is honored, all rejoice together. We need to make one more clarification before we leave verse 28.

[ 38 : 08 ] And that clarification relates to the authority and functions that God has specified in his word. The abolition of distinction of standing is not an abolition of distinction of function or of authority.

God has appointed authority structures between master and servant, and employer and employee. In the family, God has commanded children to obey their parents, wives to be in submission to their husbands, and husbands to be in submission to Christ.

Christ. In the church, God teaches that office bearers are to be men, and that women are not to teach or exercise authority over men. Therefore, within the equality that belongs to all in the body of Christ, there remains a diversity of authority and rule.

The fact that God has ordained different roles for men and women, though, must never be a cause for valuing one person more than we value any other. regardless of our own function within the church, we should never consider ourselves to be superior to any other church member.

We'll cover one more verse tonight, and that is Galatians 3.29. Paul closed this section of Scripture by saying, And if you're Christ, then you're Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

[ 39 : 30 ] Because of our faith in Christ, we're considered to be descendants of Abraham. The Gentile Christian is as much a descendant of Abraham as the Jewish Christian is.

The spiritual promise of eternal salvation and blessing given to Abraham belongs to all people who belong to Christ. They are all heirs according to that promise which is fulfilled in Christ.

This is not a reference to the promises given to Abraham regarding the land. The reference is to the spiritual blessings that come to all who, being justified by faith, just as Abraham was, will inherit the spiritual promises given to Abraham.

John Stott sounded very poetic when he wrote the following. He said, We have seen that in Christ we belong to God and to each other. In Christ we also belong to Abraham.

Abraham. We take our place in the noble historical succession of faith whose outstanding representatives are listed in Hebrews 11. No longer do we feel ourselves to be waifs and strays without any significance in history or bits of useless flotsam drifting on the tide of time.

[ 40 : 45 ] Instead, we find our place in the unfolding purpose of God. We are the spiritual seed of our father Abraham who lived and died 4,000 years ago.

For in Christ we have become heirs of the promise which God made to him. I had to look up the definition of flotsam when Stott said that we are no longer bits of useless flotsam.

And here's how the Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defined flotsam. One definition is floating wreckage of a ship or its cargo or floating debris.

Another is a floating population such as immigrants or castaways. Miscellaneous or unimportant material such as a notebook filled with flotsam, which is hopefully not the case for the notebook I have up here.

And then finally, debris or remains, the village was built on the flotsam of war. So what he's saying is that we no longer are useless or unimportant because of the benefits that we get from our union with Christ.

[ 41 : 51 ] We've already talked about most of the spiritual benefits that we get from our union with Christ. And here's just a quick list of the benefits we've discussed plus a few more.

Regeneration, faith, justification, adoption, sanctification, union, redemption, assurance, and boldness in prayer.

All of these things are ours right now as part of our inheritance. Next, our inheritance includes eternal life itself. We've begun to participate in eternal life already, but at our death we'll enter into the personal glorification that will be perfected at the second coming of Christ.

And finally, our inheritance includes the earth itself. The earth does not belong to the wicked. The earth belongs to the family of God.

God in his providence has not necessarily given great possessions to his people now, but what he has given to his people is theirs to enjoy. We'll see even more benefits from the earth when we are reigning with Christ after his second coming.

[ 43 : 08 ] So remember the main idea. God sent his son to redeem those who put their faith in Jesus. All believers in Christ have an equal standing as adopted heirs of God.

This quote is a long one from John Stott, but it reminds us of the significance of being considered heirs of God. All the results that Stott mentions come from just the verses that we've covered tonight.

He says, we have seen the results of being in Christ. They speak with powerful relevance to us today. Our generation is busy developing a philosophy of meaninglessness.

It is fashionable nowadays to believe, or to say you believe, that life has no meaning, no purpose. There are many who admit that they have nothing to live for.

They do not feel that they belong anywhere, or if they belong, it is to the group known as the unattached. They class themselves as outsiders or misfits.

[ 44 : 15 ] They are without anchor, security, or home. In biblical language, they are lost. To such people comes the promise that in Christ we find ourselves.

The unattached become attached. They find their place in eternity, related first and foremost to God as his sons and daughters.

In society, related to each other as brothers and sisters in the same family. And in history, related also to the succession of God's people down the ages.

This is a three-dimensional attachment which we gain when we are in Christ, in height, breadth, and length. It is an attachment in height through reconciliation to the God who, although radical theologians repudiate the concept, and we must be careful how we interpret it, is a God above us, transcendent over the universe he has made.

Next, it is an attachment in breadth, because in Christ we are united to all other believers throughout the world. Thirdly, it is an attachment in length, as we join the long, long line of believers throughout the whole course of time.

[ 45 : 35 ] Each of you, as believers, will get these benefits because, as Galatians 3.26 says, in Christ Jesus, you are all sons of God through faith.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for the reminder tonight of just what it means to be sons of God.

Let us never lose the wonder that you not only chose to redeem us, you chose to adopt us as sons. Let us become even more grateful and even more willing to continue to share that news with anyone we meet.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.