

"Abba! Father!"

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[0 : 00] Before getting into our lesson for tonight, I want to add something or at least clarify something.

! A remark I made last week on adoption. That's what we're studying tonight also. I said last time that in adoption, we become sons of God the Father, and that is true.

I also said that we are treated by the Father as He treats any of His children, including the Lord Jesus, and that is true. In other words, we have full sonship.

But I do want to make a distinction which is probably obvious to all of you, but I sort of, I think, just skirted over this or maybe left it out last week.

Jesus is the eternal Son of God. His sonship is different from ours in that it lasts for eternity both directions.

[1 : 13] And He's always been the unique Son of God, and we have not. At one time, we were at enmity with God.

Because of our fallen nature, we opposed God. We did things displeasing and in opposition to Him. Well, of course, that all changed when God saved us and placed us into His family through adoption.

Even now, things arise in our life due to our sin nature and the fallen, unredeemed flesh that we live in that are sins and violations of God's law.

And at times, it even requires the Father to discipline us, and that does not occur with the Lord Jesus. He never had to discipline the Lord Jesus.

So, I just wanted to make sure you understood that I understand there are some obvious differences between His sonship and our sonship. But we are truly, when we're one with the Father, we are truly His sons.

[2 : 20] I was engaged in some light reading of John Calvin last Friday. I say that a little tongue-in-cheek. You can't read Calvin lightly. And I came across this quote.

This was just in a private study time. And I wanted to share it with you. This is from the Institutes of the Christian Religion, perhaps the greatest and deepest non-inspired work ever penned by man. I'm not smart enough to read it, but some of you may have or will. This is what Calvin said. The object of God's work in regeneration is that our lives might demonstrate to others a harmony and accord between God's righteousness and our obedience that we might thus confirm that He has made His children by adoption.

And that just jumped out at me when I read it. I wasn't studying adoption at the moment, but that just really leapt out at me. I thought that was a great quote for our study on the doctrine of adoption. I also want to say, and this is what we're going to cover tonight, there are some amazing privileges that go along with adoption as the adopted sons of God.

[3 : 43] Probably the chief blessing is that the Holy Spirit takes up residence in our heart. Now we can spend several years on that sentence right there.

This is astounding and it fulfills a promise made to us by the Lord Jesus. In John 14, starting in verse 15, If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

And I will ask the Father and He will give you another helper to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees Him nor knows Him.

You know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans. Now that was poignant for the disciples because in John 14, you may recall, He was telling them, I'm getting ready to be crucified.

He was just hours from the cross. When you get to 13, 14, 15, 16, He's just hours from the cross. And then He enters into His heavenly ministry before He leaves earth in John 17 in His great

intercessory prayer, in which we are mentioned, by the way, not by name.

[5 : 05] The Lord Jesus is about to go away and return to heaven where He ever lives, even to this very moment, to make intercession for His children.

But as promised, He did not leave us as orphans, but sent another called the Helper. I always remember seeing a debate between an evangelical Christian and a cleric from the Islam religion. And Islam teaches that Helper was Muhammad. It wasn't Muhammad. It was the Spirit of God. He resides, the Spirit of God resides in every true believer, will never leave us, and will never forsake us.

What a promise from God. Never leave us, never forsake us. He is busy freeing us from the scourge of sin, growing us in the faith through sanctification, and fostering our fellowship with the Father.

He does many other things. Revealing Christ is His big mission. He does many other things such as convicting us of sin, leading us to confess our sins and our transgressions.

[6 : 31] Paul affirmed this great truth in the book of Galatians, beginning in chapter 4. He says, 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 are 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. We were slaves when we were lost. Slaves to what? We were slaves to sin. But now, we have been adopted and are no longer slaves, but we have become permanent sons of our Heavenly Father.

The Spirit of God takes up residence within us and testifies to our spirit that we are indeed one with the Father. The Spirit thus assures us that in this new relationship that it's true and that we are indeed in a new and eternal relationship with the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ, through the Son.

[8 : 20] Our bond with the Father is so intimate that the Holy Spirit inside us compels us and permits us to cry out, Abba, Father.

That is an informal Aramaic term for Father. The closest we have to Abba in our language is Daddy. That's the closest we can come.

It is a term of tenderness. It is a term of intimacy that exists between an earthly father and a son. In the Middle East, and I've been there many times, you hear children going around saying, Abba, Abba, as they cry out for their father.

The only other time we find this term in the New Testament is found in a moment of great intensity for our Lord as recorded by Mark in his gospel, Mark chapter 14.

And they went to a place called Gethsemane. And he said to his disciples, Sit here while I pray. And he took with him Peter and James and John and began to be greatly distressed and troubled.

[9 : 39] and he said to them, My soul is very sorrowful even to death. Now he's just a few hours from the cross. Remain here and watch.

And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible for you.

Remove this cup from me, yet not what I will, but what you will. I want us to think of all this, you know, it's literally mind-blowing.

We were once alienated from God because of our sin. Now we can cry out to him, Abba. That very intimate, tender term.

He is Father. Just as the Son of God also has that privilege. The glorious thought is, this thought is exceeded by the fact that in the garden, when Jesus cried out to Abba as his Father, his request was not fulfilled.

[11 : 00] His request was ignored. Why? So that our request to Abba would be heard someday. He was reconciling us to Himself through the death, burial, and resurrection of His Son.

As our Father, the Lord is quick to show us kindness. Listen to the word of the psalmist in Psalm 103. As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear Him.

such compassion was also related to us by the Lord Jesus Himself. In Luke 11, what father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will, instead of a fish, give him a serpent?

Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?

Now, because of the compassion the Lord exercises towards His own, and remember, adopted children are His own, we have no need to become anxious concerning our daily necessities.

[12:25] And He said to His disciples, this is Jesus talking, Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on, for life is more than food, and the body more than clothing.

Consider the ravens, they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds?

And which of you, by being anxious, can add a single hour to His span of life? If you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest?

Consider the lilies, how they grow, they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed like one of these, but if God so clothes the grass which is alive in the field today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will He clothe you?

O you of little faith, and do not seek what you are to eat, or what you are to drink, nor be worried, for all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you have need of them, instead seek His kingdom, and these things will be added to you.

[13:54] It reminds me of Matthew, he said, seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all this will be added to you. Any father would delight in being able to leave his children an inheritance.

Well, listen to the inheritance our heavenly Father wants to give his adopted children. Luke 12, fear not little flock, for it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Wow, that's an inheritance. He wants to give us the kingdom, allowing us to live in that kingdom with Him, present with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Another great privilege, being the adopted sons of God, is that we may approach the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in all His glory, by prayer.

You realize we have that privilege, guys? We come into His presence. Jesus came and lived among us to reveal the Father to us. During the incarnation, when He walked among us, He said that our heavenly Father was ready to give good gifts to those who ask.

[15:16] You can find that in Matthew 7, Luke 11. We saw earlier how God provides for us the necessities of life, but remember He does that principally through prayer.

And we receive not often because we don't ask. When the Lord Jesus taught His followers how to pray, instructed them to say, Our Father in heaven. Listen to the great words of the writer of the book of Hebrews.

I love this verse, chapter 4, verse 16. Let us then with confidence or boldness draw near to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Do you ever have times of need? not over a few every hour, right? We can then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace.

I've told you many times that the Greek language, the language of the New Testament is much more expressive than is the English. The Greek word for confidence means boldly, confidently, freely, openly, and plainly.

[16:33] Again, very expressive. God wants to hear from His children. God wants to make provision for His children.

But we should all keep in mind something that when we do approach Him, we are approaching one who is absolutely holy, absolutely without blemish.

I'm teaching this just coming on the heels of having read Leviticus and now I've moved into Numbers. The holiness of God. Think of the implications though of drawing near to the throne of grace.

That's just staggering. A few years ago I was reading a sermon by Charles Spurgeon who addressed that very thing. Now we all know that Spurgeon lived his life under an English monarchy and we fought a revolution to keep from having a monarchy.

He said no one would stand in the of course he's English saying this no one would dare stand in the presence of an earthly king while playing with a feather.

[17 : 52] I mean can you imagine going in and you're playing with a feather. But Spurgeon went on to say many approach God in prayer with that type of a flippant attitude.

I cringe every now and then I'll hear this and I haven't heard it in our church in a long time but the man upstairs is watching or our buddy. Guys, it's the holy God of the universe.

The Trinity, the holy God, the one true God, the holy God of the universe. There's another blessing of adoption that we probably wouldn't typically consider and I mentioned it briefly a while ago and this is a blessing believe it or not.

It is the loving fatherly discipline we received from God. We received that from the Lord. Again, here are some words from the author of Hebrews 12.

Have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him.

[19 : 05] Now listen to this. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves and chastises every son whom he receives. Discipline is a blessing that comes from our relationship as the adopted sons of God.

Consider this passage from Proverbs chapter 3 verse 11 and 12. My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline or be weary of his reproof for the Lord reproves him whom he loves as a father, the son in whom he delights.

Fantastic. God is in the business of bringing us to spiritual maturity. He does that through a process known as sanctification.

And by the way, we start on sanctification next Monday. You're going to be hearing a lot about that. When we depart from God's will and engage in sinful enterprises, the Lord can providentially bring about various hardships or afflictions in our lives.

This is God's way of warning us about sin's consequences, which is designed to lead us to repentance. Now, let's be truthful here.

[20 : 33] Such discipline is not enjoyable when we are in the midst of it. We should focus on the fact that our heavenly father only does that to his sons.

He only does that to his children, men and women that are believers. Unbelievers are not subject to such discipline. Now, they have their own division, but not the discipline of the Lord to bring about sanctification or holiness.

us. If we are not being disciplined, then the Bible describes us as illegitimate children and not sons. That's how we're described.

God's discipline is a sure sign that he loves us and wants the very best for us. And I thought it appropriate.

Let me read this whole portion from Hebrews chapter 12. And again, I'm backing up a little bit.

Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself so that you may not grow weary or faint-hearted in your struggle against sin.

[21 : 41] You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him.

For the Lord disciplines the one he loves and chastises every son whom he receives. It is for your discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons.

For what son is there whom the father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them.

Shall we not much more be subject to the father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness.

For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

[22 : 55] amazing, amazing. There's another great privilege I want to mention, and it's enjoyed by true believers, and that is the unity we experience with each other.

The very unity we're experiencing here right now. There's a common name for that. It's called the church.

church. We call it the church. The ecclesia, the set apart ones, the called out ones. We are all blessed to live in the church age, and it is a blessing.

And when I say that we are members of the church, I'm referring to the body of Christ, also called the invisible church, and sometimes referred to particularly by the old Puritans as the holy Catholic church.

Now when I use that term Catholic, divorce your minds from the church at Rome. It doesn't have anything to do with the church of Rome. We are nothing to do with the papists. Here's a definition of the holy Catholic church.

[24 : 04] In Christian theology, one holy Catholic and apostolic church is a phrase describing the nature of the Christian community and or the Christian church in the various meanings it has.

It appears in the Nicene Creed, it appears in the Apostles Creed, it indicates the four marks of the Christian church, unity, holiness, universality, and apostolicity, if I pronounce that right, and is based on the premise that all true Christians, irrespective of race, nationality, or sex, form a single, united group, the body of Christ, found by the apostles, and innately holy.

That's why Sunday morning is so important, and Sunday night, and Monday night, and Wednesday night, it's important guys. You've heard the analogy many times, the logs in the fireplace, and you got a couple logs in there, and you separate them, they go out, bring them back together, they catch fire again.

Sunday morning, we're burning logs, we're getting strength from each other, and from the Spirit of God who is with us. and the body of Christ and our church, true believers are united by virtue of the electing work of the Father, the redemptive work of the Son, and the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit.

We have those in common. That is why we're referred to as a family. There's the analogy, we're a family. That is why early on in the life of the church, members referred to one another as brother and sister.

[25 : 47] There was this intimacy. So let me go into the final blessing of adoption. Time is going to get away from us. I will mention this one is the privilege that we all share in a future inheritance of eternal life.

Paul says that those adopted by the Father are also heirs. We mentioned that. We are heirs of God the Father, fellow, heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ. On earth, the heirs of parents are usually children and grandchildren.

They inherit the parents' possessions to carry on the legacy of the family. It's a bit different as heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. Peter tells us this in 1 Peter chapter 1.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to His great mercy, He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading.

Well, I want some of that. Where is it? Peter tells us, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

[27 : 15] Wow, what a homecoming that's going to be. We know that the inheritance is both genuine and unique because we are described as fellow heirs with Christ.

That's major. That's major. It's amazing. Everything that the Lord Jesus receives by divine right as the natural Son of God, we receive by divine grace as the adopted children of God.

Everything that the Father possesses, the Son also possesses. All that are in Christ as a result of redemption and adoption, share with Jesus in those possessions.

possessions. Now we have neither time nor space to list all the possessions we shall inherit, but chief among those is a glorified body after the likeness of the Lord's resurrected body.

Our bodies will be free from all sin, from all infirmity, and fit for eternal life. Eternity. Presently, we groan under the weight of sin.

[28 : 28] It presses down upon us, but the day is coming, and I hope it's soon when that will disappear, and what a day that will be. What a day. So tonight we're going to conclude our section on adoption.

It's probably the shortest topic we've studied in Salvation God's Way, but it's nevertheless important. How should our adoption by the Father impact our daily lives while we're still in this world?

and in these bodies? Well, it should be in the form of progressive sanctification leading to an increasingly holy life that we live.

We're to be imitators of God. 1 Peter chapter 1 verse 14, as obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct since it is written, you shall be holy for I am holy.

I'll give you a little heads up for next year probably, but I'm devouring books on holiness right now. You may hear from those next year. chapter 2, the apostle Paul said this in Philippians chapter 2, do all things without grumbling or disputing that you may be blameless and innocent children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation among whom you shine as lights in this world.

[30 : 12] Make a commitment guys, you're going to be a light in this world. And when somebody named Jim calls you and he's got terminal cancer and he's supposed to have already been dead, you'll know what to do. Be a light to the people like that.

Paul says this in 2 Corinthians, since we have these promises beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.

I heard Ravi Zachariah and I really appreciate his ministry. He's an apologist. I mean, he apologizes, he defends the faith. He's probably the best there is right now.

And I can't imagine that Ravi spends his whole night in a night club somewhere carousing with women and liquor. I just don't think that happens. But he starts every morning at 7 o'clock on his face in his prayer closet and cleansing himself from the defilement of body and spirit that happened the previous day.

I mean, I don't know, you know, he's kind of like Luther. How do you confess for 15 hours in a monastery? What did you do the night before? But that's, Ravi starts every day in repentance on his knees or on his face.

[31 : 31] It's not a bad place to begin your day. Now, a few minutes ago I used that word progressive sanctification. salvation. That is where we will go starting next time in our study of salvation in God's way.

Thank you. God bless you.