

Adopted

1/22/23

Sermon leading back into Ephesians 4

Galatians 4:4–7 (CSB)

⁴ When the time came to completion, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. ⁶ And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “*Abba, Father!*” ⁷ So you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then God has made you an heir.

Ephesians 1:3–6 (CSB)

³ Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavens in Christ. ⁴ For he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in love before him. ⁵ He predestined us to be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ for himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace that he lavished on us in the Beloved One.

Introduction: “Do you understand that if the court approves this adoption, then it will be, for all legal purposes, as if you are the natural father...”

A. Some of my favorite moments of pastoring are attending adoption ceremonies.

1. Tuesday, I was honored to witness John Blaylock’s adoption of Kaitlyn’s daughter Kora.

2. I have permission to share this:

a. It amazed me that at 10 am on Tuesday morning, John was Kaitlyn's husband but not the legal father of Kora.

b. By 10:15 am, John was Kaitlyn's husband and Kora's legal father.

B. With just a word, the judge changed more than a name.

1. Birth certificates, official documents, everything changes.

2. It was amazing to see what one declaration of a judge can do.

3. "Once the court completes the adoption, the spouse has all the same rights and responsibilities that the biological parent has towards the child."

C. If a judge has this much power in an earthly court, how much more power does God have within Creation?

1. **Today, I want to walk us through this concept of adoption.**

2. Because I don't believe most of us grasp what it means to be adopted and part of the family of Christ, I want to take this opportunity to discuss this concept.

3. Next week, we return to the Book of Ephesians.

a. But this idea of adoption is central to the message of Ephesians.

b. So what does Scripture say about this?

1. Scripture says we are adopted into Jesus' family.

A. The apostle Paul loves this theme.

1. As he preached and ministered to non-Jewish people, he constantly reminded them of their relationship status.

2. Status matters:

a. In Paul's world, there was a chasm between a citizen of Rome and a slave of Rome.

b. In Paul's world, Jewish men had access that Jewish women didn't.

c. And Jewish children had slightly more access than a slave or servants.

3. Say what you want, but status matters in America too.

a. There's a significant difference in status between a homeowner and a homeless person.

b. The 1% live lives the rest of us have no concept of.

c. But the most important difference is the eternal difference between someone who has been saved and redeemed through the blood of Jesus and those who aren't.

B. The Apostle Paul gets it.

1. He had it all:

a. He was perhaps one of the most educated people of his day.

b. He came from a middle-class family.

c. He was a Roman citizen and one of the elites in the Jewish realm.

2. Yet, God in his wonderful grace, sent Paul to those who were not originally part of the family of God.

a. A Gentile in Ephesus or Galatia had no claim to the promises of God.

b. What that person needed was for someone to adopt them into the family.

C. The concept of adoption was foreign to Judaism.

1. One of the most popular adoption stories in the Old Testament was of Pharaoh's daughter adopted Moses.

a. But this was not a Jew adopting an outsider.

b. But an outsider adopting a Jew.

2. In Paul's day, the people who practiced adoption the best were the Romans and Greeks.¹

3. But nobody brings strangers into the family better than Jesus.

2. Characteristics of our adoption.

Galatians 4:4–7 (CSB)

⁴ When the time came to completion, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. ⁶ And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba, Father!" ⁷ So you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then God has made you an heir.

A. **First, our adoption was a deliberate action of God.**

1. How many in this room have participated in adoption?

a. My sister and brother-in-law have adopted two girls.

b. I can assure you that there was nothing accidental in their adoption.

c. To adopt involves petitions, courts, lawyers, home studies, frustrations, tears, and so much more.

2. Most adoptions are preceded by tragedy.

a. Death in families.

b. Unsafe situations.

¹ Since the institution of adoption was not Jewish but was widely known in Greek and especially Roman law, Paul most likely drew the term from the Hellenistic world; at the same time, "we should allow for the probability that in his mind it also had other associations"⁷⁶—not least the Old Testament (cf., e.g., Ex. 4:22f.; Hos. 11:1) as its theological background. Fung, Ronald Y. K. 1988. *The Epistle to the Galatians*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

3. There was nothing accidental about God sending His son to this world.

a. The Father knew our condition and our sin.

b. Thus, The Father did not spare His Son from what we would have avoided.

B. Second, our adoption had a price.

1. Paul said that Jesus came to redeem those under the law.

2. This does not refer only to Jews, although that applies.

a. We were under the law of sin and death.

b. Romans 8:2 (CSB)

² because the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.

3. The price of our adoption was nothing less than the life of Jesus.

a. Next week's verse in Ephesians 4 will tell us to "walk in a worthy manner" because of God's calling.

b. Why?

c. Because our adoption and redemption had a high price.

d. And Because Jesus has a great name.

e. How we live matters because our adoption was costly and Jesus has a great name.

C. Third, the Spirit confirms our adoption.

1. It's one thing to say you are adopted.

a. But legal adoptions require proof.

b. For us, our proof is in the presence of the Holy Spirit.

2. How do I know God loves me?

a. It's in the presence of the Holy Spirit.

b. Just because you don't feel loved, that does not mean you are not loved.

3. The presence of the Holy Spirit is more than an emotional response.

a. An adopted child can go to the birth certificate, and it will reflect the NEW relationship.

b. We, too, have proof that God, the Father, is indeed our father.

c. So when you feel unloved and broken, when you feel like you are abandoned and forsaken, take more than a moment and call upon Jesus.

d. Why is it that we spend hours and nights and years dwelling on how abandoned or unloved we feel, but will not stop, stare, and soak in this new reality:

a. I am saved, I am redeemed, I am loved, I am adopted.

b. Although I remember my old life, I choose to spend more time staring at my new birth certificate instead of my old one.

D. Fourth, we are given new access.

1. When you and I are introduced to people, it is proper to start with the formal before we move to the familiar.

a. For example: When I meet a new pastor, I call them Pastor or Brother or an appropriate address first.

b. Sometimes people will say, "please call me..." then, with that permission, I become informal.

c. I can assure you that when we were in Judge Gaston's courtroom this week, every adult in the room respected him.

d. The only person who did not say “yes sir” or “your honor” was the 4-year-old.

e. And with the judge, the kid had permissions that the adults did not.

2. When the Spirit comes into our life, we are granted an intimacy that we do not have otherwise.

a. Most scholars do not translate the word “abba” as daddy.

b. That is too trivializing for that day and time.

c. But **Abba is an expression of intimacy and how Jesus talked to the “Father.”**

3. Someday, every person will bow their knee and confess Jesus is Lord.

a. But we get the opportunity to call Him our Heavenly Father, our Abba.

b. We have the opportunity for intimacy.

E. **Lastly, we are given new status.**

1. This is the kind of status that matters.

2. Paul said that, since we are adopted, we are full-grown sons.

a. And as full-grown sons, we have full rights.

b. And thus, we are co-heirs with Christ.

3. **Co-heirs with Jesus: If ANYONE else had written this, I would call it heresy.**

a. Sons and daughters of the Father, and co-heirs with Christ Jesus.

b. But here it is and it’s true.

4. That’s the power of God’s declaration of adoption over us.

- a. With just a Word, we have been adopted into the Kingdom.
- b. With just a Word, our past is changed.
- c. Scripture says we used to be sons of the evil one (Matt 13:38)
- c. Scriptures says we used to be Sons of this world. (Luke 16:8)
- d. Ephesians 2:2 and 5:6 say we used to be sons of disobedience and rebellion.

5. But through Jesus, we are sons of God!

- a. Romans 8:14 (CSB) ¹⁴For all those led by God's Spirit are God's sons.
- b. Of all the verses we memorize, the verses on adoption may be the most important.

3. What do I do with this new reality?

A. You can embrace this truth or reject it.

- 1. You have the choice.
- 2. The call to follow Jesus is a choice.
- 3. But what happens if you reject this?
 - a. What happens if you choose to live as if you still belong to Satan and this world instead of Jesus?
 - b. What happens if you choose to not walk worthy of this calling?

B. What does it mean to reject this truth?

- 1. You live like nothing is different.
 - a. You go about your days, never gazing into the most beautiful opportunity ever presented.

b. So instead of your theme song sounding like this old hymn that says, "Redeemed how I love to proclaim it, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb! Redeemed by His infinite mercy a child and forever I am..."

c. Your theme song sounds more like:

So no one told you life was going to be this way.
Your job's a joke, you're broke, you're love life's DOA.
It's like you're always stuck in second gear,
When it hasn't been your day, your week, your month, or
even your year

2. If your life with "Jesus" looks the same as it did before "Jesus," then what you found was not Jesus; it was religion.

a. To reject adoption is to walk outside the family of God.

b. To be part of the family of God will change you.

C. What happens if we embrace the new reality?

1. Because we are sons and daughters of the Father, I will walk worthy of my new calling and life.

a. Actions that were appropriate before I met Jesus are not appropriate now.

b. The biblical term for this is sanctification.

c. It seems like the Holy Spirit regularly asks me to reprioritize and crucify my desires.

d. **What was permissible in the early stages of my walk with Jesus may become hindrances in later stages.**

2. Because we are sons and daughters of the Father, I will put away all of those characteristics that defined my old life.

a. What is permissible in some families is punishable in others.

b. What was permissible when your father was the Devil is NOT permissible when your Father is the Heavenly Father.

3. Because we are sons and daughters of the Father, I will not dwell on what used to be but give thanks for what is.

a. Funny: I still remember many of the strikeouts and fielding errors I made in high school baseball.

b. As a pastor, I have to write down most of the victorious because those I will forget: But I don't write down the painful moments or my failures because they are etched into my heart.

c. For most of us here, we need not dwell on our past sins because God isn't.

1. What we need to dwell on is not the old certificate that tells of our brokenness and sin but the new certificate that tells of our new family, our new beginning, and God's grace.

2. Philippians 4:8 (CSB)

°Finally brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable—if there is any moral excellence and if there is anything praiseworthy—dwell on these things.

Thus sayeth the Lord.

Prayer!