

Series: *Christ Preeminent In You*

Title: "Adoption: The New Relationship" (Colossians 3:1-4, John 20:17)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 1/19/2014

Page 1 of 12

As we continue our study today, let me call your attention once again to our theme passage, which is found in Colossians chapter 3 beginning at verse one. As always, I hope that if you are able to do so, you will open your own copy of God's Word and follow with me as I read this passage, and also as we consider other related passages in the Word of God today.

We are continuing to consider the tremendous truth of the doctrine of our adoption as sons of God. And this great fact, which is so little understood in the church today, so seldom taught from the pulpits of our churches today, this great fact underlies the command that we are about to read in Colossians chapter 3. So let us look together at Colossians chapter 3 beginning at verse one:

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

If you have been following along in this series of studies, you know that we have been seeing the fact that this great command of God, that His people should be heavenly-minded rather than earthly-minded, is a theme that we find throughout the Scriptures. At the present time we are focusing on one of the greatest reasons why we are commanded to seek those things which are above, to set our minds on things above, and not on things on the earth. And that great

Series: *Christ Preeminent In You*

Title: "Adoption: The New Relationship" (Colossians 3:1-4, John 20:17)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 1/19/2014

Page 2 of 12

reason is that God has given to every blood-bought believer in Christ the position of an adopted son of God..

We are told that we have been given "adoption as sons." And we have seen that the picture that underlies this term, "adoption as sons," is the picture of the Roman law of adoption that would have been familiar to Paul's readers, Christians living in the Roman Empire and under the laws of the Roman Empire. The Roman law of adoption gave a unique status to an adopted son that it did not give to an adopted daughter. And adopted sons had rights and privileges that an adopted daughter did not have under Roman law.

And that is why the Apostle Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit speaks of our relationship with God, the relationship that He has granted to us, as "adoption as *sons*." An adopted son under Roman law had the right to the name of his adopted father, the right to inherit his property, the right to be cared for by his adopted parent, in fact all the rights of a naturally born son. And the father who adopted a son under Roman law had the responsibility to care for his adopted son in exactly the same way he would care for and provide for a naturally born son.

This is the picture that is before us in Scripture. And in our last message we surveyed many of the passages in Paul's epistles to the churches, and also some in other parts of the New Testament, that speak of this great truth of our adoption as sons by God the Father.

It is because we have been placed in this new relationship with God, the

Series: *Christ Preeminent In You*

Title: "Adoption: The New Relationship" (Colossians 3:1-4, John 20:17)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 1/19/2014

Page 3 of 12

relationship of adopted sons, that we are to seek those things which are above, where God the Father's only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, is seated. We saw in our last message, in Hebrews chapter 2, that our Lord Jesus Christ is not ashamed to call us His brethren, because we have been adopted by His Father.

Now this does not make us gods, as some of the false religions teach. Mormonism teaches this falsehood. The charismatic, word-of-faith cult also teaches this blasphemy that human beings are gods. We need to understand exactly what God's Word says about this new relationship into which God the Father has brought us. And so today, I want to set that new relationship before you from the Word of God.

We find in the Scriptures that believers in the Lord Jesus Christ not only have a new relationship with God the Father. We also have a new relationship with God the Son, and a new relationship with God the Holy Spirit. Today I want to particularly focus our attention on the believer's new relationship with God the Father. And the Lord willing, in a message to follow, we shall also consider the adopted son of God's new relationship with God the Son and with God the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, we also, because of our adoption as sons of the Father, have a new relationship with this world and with the people of this world, both saved and unsaved. And the Lord willing, we will address that aspect of the doctrine of adoption in a future message of this series.

But today, let us begin to look at the riches of our new relationship with each of

Series: *Christ Preeminent In You*

Title: "Adoption: The New Relationship" (Colossians 3:1-4, John 20:17)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 1/19/2014

Page 4 of 12

the persons of the Trinity, the Godhead.

The God and Father of All Believers

First of all, we have a new relationship with God the Father. As we have seen, because of what Jesus Christ has done in redeeming a people for Himself, God who was our condemning judge is now God our loving Father. The relationship that was broken by the fall of Adam into sin has been reestablished.

The Scriptures tell us in several places that He is "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." But because we are now in Christ, Ephesians chapter 4 verse six tells us that He is the God and Father of us all. In John chapter 20, we read that after Jesus rose from the dead He appeared to Mary Magdalene, and He said to her in John chapter 20, verse 17,

Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, "I am ascending to [notice] My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God."

The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is now the God and Father of us all, all of us who believe in Christ, all of us who have been raised with Christ.

Our Approachable Father

Secondly, Scripture tells us that because of our adoption as sons, God our Father is now approachable. Hebrews chapter 10 verse 19 tells us that because of

Series: *Christ Preeminent In You*

Title: "Adoption: The New Relationship" (Colossians 3:1-4, John 20:17)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 1/19/2014

Page 5 of 12

the shed blood of Jesus Christ, which He has carried into the holy of holies in Heaven, we have

therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He has consecrated for us."

Hebrews chapter 4 verse 18 exhorts us,

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Jesus Christ has opened the way for us into the very throne room of our Heavenly Father. Through the intercession of the risen Christ, seated at the Father's right hand, we now have access to God our Father. When Jesus taught His disciples how to pray, He taught them to pray, "Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name."

We should note also the fact that "Father" as a name for God is a new covenant term. When Jesus died for sinners, when He said from the cross, "it is finished" – literally, it is paid in full – the veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom, indicating that the way had now been opened for believers to come to God the Father directly and confidently, to come boldly, as Hebrews 4 tells us, not because of anything that we have done but because of what Christ has done and because of where Christ now is, sitting at the Father's right hand. This is why, dear friends we must set our minds on things above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

Series: *Christ Preeminent In You*

Title: "Adoption: The New Relationship" (Colossians 3:1-4, John 20:17)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 1/19/2014

Page 6 of 12

In the Old Testament, God is spoken of on a few occasions as the Father, but it is always in relationship to the nation of Israel. "Father" as a name for God in the Old Testament is never a term that is applied to His relationship with the individual believer. God had many names in the Old Testament. But a Jew of the old dispensation did not call God, "my Father" or "our Father" or pray to "the Father." The revelation of the relationship of God the Father to the individual believer is something new as we come to the New Testament. It is something that is unveiled at the first coming of Christ.

Throughout the Gospel records, Jesus always refers to God as "the Father" or "My Father," and in prayer He always addresses God the Father. This is the pattern that Jesus establishes for the New Testament believer. Jesus tells us to make our requests known to the Father, and that is because a new relationship, the relationship of the adoption of sons, has been established through the cross work of Jesus Christ.

The Old Testament way of approaching God was always through a Levitical priest. But now, with the coming of Christ, that has changed. We have been reconciled to God, we have been given the adoption of sons, and the way of direct approach to the throne of grace has been opened for us.

The Adopted Son's Great Privilege of Prayer

It is the Father to whom we have been reconciled through the work of the Son. And we are on solid Biblical ground when we say that God the Father truly only

Series: *Christ Preeminent In You*

Title: "Adoption: The New Relationship" (Colossians 3:1-4, John 20:17)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 1/19/2014

Page 7 of 12

hears two kinds of prayer: the prayer of the one who calls on His name to be saved, and the prayer of the one who is saved. Unbelievers think that they will be heard, but they are not, because they have no relationship with the Father in Heaven. They are not those who have received the adoption as sons.

Dear friends the privilege of prayer is a privilege of grace. The privilege of prayer is the greatest privilege the Christian has. The privilege of prayer is at the heart of what salvation is all about – that through the death, burial, and resurrection of God the Son, we hopeless sinners have been reconciled to God the Father for eternity, and given the adoption as sons.

God the Father is no longer the condemning judge for us. Because of Christ our great Substitute, because of the grace of God alone, and not because of anything that we have done, the God who once condemned us is now our loving Father, and He is approachable at the throne of grace. God our Father wants us to come to Him. He wants us to fellowship with Him. He wants to care for us. He hears and answers the prayers of His adopted sons.

The Father's Loving Correction of His Adopted Sons

Thirdly, He is also a Father who corrects us when we need it. In Hebrews chapter 12, beginning at verse five, the writer exhorts us not to forget, as he puts it, "the exhortation which speaks to you as to the sons." And then he quotes various passages in the Old Testament as follows, Hebrews chapter 12, beginning at verse five:

Series: *Christ Preeminent In You*

Title: "Adoption: The New Relationship" (Colossians 3:1-4, John 20:17)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 1/19/2014

Page 8 of 12

"My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; for whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives."

And then the writer to the Hebrews, beginning in chapter 12 verse seven, comments upon this under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He says this,

If you endure chastening, God deals with you [notice] as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.

Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they [our human fathers] indeed for a few days chastened us as seems best to them, but He [God the Father] for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness.

Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

You may recall once again what we said earlier about the picture of the adoption of sons that we find in the New Testament. The illustration that we have before us in the New Testament of God's new relationship with us is an

Series: *Christ Preeminent In You*

Title: "Adoption: The New Relationship" (Colossians 3:1-4, John 20:17)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 1/19/2014

Page 9 of 12

illustration based on the Roman law of adoption. And under that law, just as the son had certain rights and responsibilities as the adopted son of the father, so also the father had rights and responsibilities regarding his adopted son.

And so it is with our Heavenly Father, who is the Lord God of Heaven. He is a Father who corrects us when we need it. And the writer to the Hebrews is telling us that our Heavenly Father does that correction with far more wisdom and patience and infinite love than any earthly father ever could.

We also find here one of the great assurances of salvation. The writer tells us that the fact that God does correct us is proof that we are truly His adopted sons and not illegitimate children. Satan will try to convince you, dear friend, that you are not truly a child of God. And the times when Satan will most often try to do that are the times when God is correcting you as a loving Father.

Do not listen to the voice of Satan who says that the correction that you are receiving is because you are not, to render the words of the book of Hebrews most literally, because you are not a true son but a bastard. That is what Satan will try to tell you dear friend. But if you have truly received the Lord Jesus Christ, if you have truly received the grace of God saving you from eternal damnation, if God is truly doing the work of sanctifying you, setting you apart, preparing you for life in the world to come, then He will correct you in this present life. And that correction is not, as Satan will tell you, because you do not truly belong to God, but that correction is indeed the proof that you truly belong to God.

Series: *Christ Preeminent In You*

Title: "Adoption: The New Relationship" (Colossians 3:1-4, John 20:17)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 1/19/2014

Page 10 of 12

A Father Who Receives Repenting Prodigals

Thirdly, God our Father is also the Father that Jesus described to us in the parable of the prodigal son in Luke chapter 15. He is a Father who receives disobedient sons when they repent and return. When the son who had strayed from the father's house repented and came back, and said, "Father, treat me as one of your servants, I am no longer worthy to be called your son," the father did not reject his son, but rejoiced that his son had repented and returned.

The prodigal son never stopped being a son. But because he was truly a son, even though he had strayed, even though he had removed himself from the discipline and the protection of his father's house, because he was truly a son he did return to the father's house.

The individual who may at one time or another profess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, but who abandons the faith never to return, and dies in rebellion against God, proves by those actions that he was not truly one of God's adopted sons. He proves that he was not truly a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

But dear friends, the true adopted son of God, even though that individual may backslide into grievous sin, if that individual is truly a believer, if that individual is truly someone who has been given the adoption as sons by God Himself, then that individual will return. That individual will not die in rebellion against God. This once again is a proof, and a distinction, of who is and is not truly an adopted son of God.

Series: *Christ Preeminent In You*

Title: "Adoption: The New Relationship" (Colossians 3:1-4, John 20:17)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 1/19/2014

Page 11 of 12

What Do You Think of Your Father?

Dear friend, let me ask you this question today: What do you think of your heavenly Father? If you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, do you think of your relationship with God as that of a relationship between a Father and a son? Do you think in terms of the keynotes of that Father-son relationship that we find in the model prayer that Jesus gives us in Matthew chapter 5?

This was the basis on which Jesus taught the disciples to pray in Matthew chapter 5: He taught them, first of all, that they should pray to the Father. That is the very essence of prayer – the believer, the adopted son, engaging with his loving Father, the God of Heaven, one-on-one. The model prayer that we have in Matthew chapter 5 is a prayer to the Father that begins with reverence – "Hallowed be Thy name." It is a prayer of submission to the Father – "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, in earth as it is in Heaven." And it is a prayer of dependence – utter dependence upon God the Father for our daily bread, for deliverance from sin, for protection, for sustenance, for everything.

Now this is not to say that there is not a place for public prayer or corporate prayer in the Christian life and in the Christian church. But the primary focus of prayer is the individual Christian meeting with his Father. The Biblical definition of prayer is the Christian believer coming *to* our Heavenly Father, *through* the person and finished work of the only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, and *in* the Holy Spirit. Everything that the Bible says about prayer, everything that the Bible says

Series: *Christ Preeminent In You*

Title: "Adoption: The New Relationship" (Colossians 3:1-4, John 20:17)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 1/19/2014

Page 12 of 12

about our relationship with God the Father, hangs on that framework.

Nowhere in Scripture are we told to pray to Jesus. Nowhere in Scripture are we told to pray to the Holy Spirit. We are told that we are to pray to the Father, through the intercession of the Son, and by the Holy Spirit. And God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are the two greatest prayer warriors, the two greatest intercessors, that the adopted son of God possesses. We are going to look at that aspect of our relationship as the adopted sons of God the Father in our next message, the Lord willing.

About the Broadcast

The Scripture-Driven Church airs each week across the United States and around the world. Our goal is that of the Great Commission: to preach the Gospel to the world, and to equip believers to stand upon and live by the sole authority of God's Word, to the glory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

How You Can Help Us

Above all, please pray for us. The prayers of our listeners and supporters are vital to all we do. We thank you for bringing this ministry before the throne of grace.

The broadcast is supported entirely by the gifts of God's people. If the Lord leads you to help us financially, you can:

- Call us toll-free at 888-804-9655 to give a gift by credit card
- Give a gift online at our secure website, www.teachingtheword.org
- Mail your gift to TeachingTheWord, Box 2533, Westminster, Maryland 21158

TeachingtheWord Ministries is recognized as a tax-exempt religious organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the U. S. Internal Revenue Code.

**May the Lord richly bless your personal study
of His inspired, infallible, inerrant Word.**