

Adopted By God

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Bible Text: John 1:12-13; Romans 8:15-17

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Lord Jesus and heavenly Father, we thank you so much for this opportunity to be able to open your word, to be able to dig in there to find that faith, knowledge and assurance, to find that confidence, to find that strength, to find that motivation. Give to us at this time here, bless us with what you have in store for us, motivate us to go out and share it with others so others can come in and be a part of the family. We thank you so much for that opportunity to be one of your family, to be a joint heir with Jesus Christ, to be part of that and look forward to your blessings that you have in store for us here and for eternity. We thank you so much for everything as we pray in Jesus' precious holy name. Amen.

Adopted by God. We are adopted by God if we are one of his, if we are one of the born again, if we are one of the one's that have received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, you've become a child of the family, the family of God. God is the Father and as we read and we'll continue into this, you will see how you are acknowledged as being a son or a daughter of God. Being in that family, you can look at and see the dynamics of the family. Who has the authority, the Father, and he also has the authority to give you blessings and also chastisement. Just like if you have a child and you chastise that child, it's to correct that child. Why? To benefit that child, not to benefit yourself but to benefit that child. So much God had done for us for our benefit.

We look at this all the back to when he gave the Ten Commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai. Why did he do that? Because he wanted to control them? He wanted to overpower them? He wanted to keep them in line for his will and that's was what it was all about? If you look at the Ten Commandments and analyze them, even all the other ordinances and commandments that he's given us all through the ages, it's all for our benefit. It's all to benefit us. It keeps us healthier. It keeps us more obedient in a way that benefits us.

How does he prosper from it? He receives joy in our obedience to him because he knows it's going to benefit us. It's all to benefit us. He came down here, took on flesh, he died on the cross, took on all the sins of all mankind to benefit all mankind. Not to benefit himself, all because he is the loving Father and he loves his children and we've got to acknowledge that and realize that and cherish that.

If you will, turn to John 1. It's such an awesome chapter. We go to it so many times. It tells us so much about Jesus Christ and God the Father and the relationship between us and him. We're just going to look at two verses here in John 1, verses 12 and 13.

“But as many as received him,” who the “him” he's talking about here is Jesus Christ, “to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

He came and adopted us. He called us in to him and we merely receive that, said, “Yes, I would love to be a part of your family. Please come into my heart,” and he does and you do that and it is solid, it is permanent and you become part of the family. Just like some of the laws that you have in adoption in this country and other countries as well, you can adopt a child but you cannot give that child back. You cannot say, “Well, I'd like to trade this one in for another one. This isn't quite what I had in mind.” It isn't a 30 day money back guarantee when you go to adopt a child and it's the same thing in the kingdom here. When we get adopted by God, it's permanent, sealed by the Holy Ghost and we have that confidence in knowing that because of that, we have a home in heaven.

Now, what do we do with that? Do we become disobedient children? Do we rebel? Do we turn against the blessings he has in store for us? Do we go and wallow in our sins once again and be disobedient children? Sometimes we do but does that mean that we're no longer one of his children? No, it means we're one of his disobedient children. If we want to be in the fellowship of God, we've got to go back to him and we've got to ask him for forgiveness, “Please, Lord, take us back into your graces. Please, Lord, take us back on the straight and narrow,” and you have that fellowship once again. But we are the children of God once we receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

We'll turn over to Romans 8 and let's look at verses 15-17, “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear.” What is this talking about a spirit of bondage? Because when you're not one of the family of God, you are one of the servants of Satan. You are bound and a slave to Satan and to your sinful behaviors. The only way to be free from that is to receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and then you're not bound into that fear and that sinful life.

Verse 15, “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” This word “Abba,” the definition of it is like “Daddy” or “Poppa.” It's a term of endearment. Father is recognized as the authority, the position but then you have the intimacy when you throw in the word “Abba.” Like Jesus Christ used in his prayers in the Garden of Gethsemane about the cup passing to him. He acknowledged God the Father when he said “Abba,” that precious term of endearment.

Continue to verse 16 of Romans 8, “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” When we receive Jesus Christ, he comes in to us in the form of the Holy Ghost in that Spirit, acknowledging and speaking to our spirit that is within

us and communicating to God and that seals it and that acknowledges that we are a child of God.

Verse 17, “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” Even though we are heirs, there might still be some suffering here on this planet, suffering that might sometimes seem a little overwhelming but we’ve got to understand, as we continue here, we’ll go down into verse 18,

“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” We’ve got to understand: we’ve become part of the family. Becoming part of the family doesn’t mean everything is going to be great. God owns everything; he spoke everything into existence. When we become part of his family, we become a joint heir with Jesus Christ. We know that forever we’re going to have a claim in all of creation but along with that, while we are still in the flesh, the devil is going to do what he can to stumble you. He’s going to do what he can to hurt you, persecute you. The world is not going to like you because he doesn’t like him. But if we compare those persecutions we’re going to see and suffer as Christians to the glory or the many, many blessings that he’s going to give us for eternity, there is no comparison. The persecutions and hardships that we’ll go through because of the Christian life, is nothing to even be considered in comparison to what he’s got in store for us in the form of blessings.

2 Corinthians 6, if you go on down to verse 14, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?” This verse, of course, is used many times to talk to youngsters about choosing a spouse. It applies to that in that sense but there is far more to it than that. This is talking about you as a Christian associating with non-Christians in a way that it will pull you away from your Christian walk. Because what communion, what association has light with dark? Good with evil? It should not be brought together. You should not be unequally yoked. Don’t team up with somebody who is ungodly. Don’t team up with them in activities; don’t team up with them in your relationship as far as your husband or wife; don’t team up with them in business. You do not associate with the ungodly. We witness to them; we testify to them; we try to draw them in to become Christians. Then you can associate with them in that way because then they are of God as well. But he’s telling us and cautioning us not to do that because it could be harmful to you.

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” When we become his possession in that way, when we become part of the kingdom of God, you don’t take that beautiful, clean garment that

he's given you and splash around in the mud with it, going back into your sins, going back into your association with the ungodly. You don't do that. You should not do that.

Too many of us have done that but take it to the Lord as it tells us in the epistles of John and get it washed in the blood again. Receive that clean garment again. I'm not saying that you become born again and again and again. No, you become born again once. But can you fall from that? Can you backslide? Can you wallow in your sins? Sure. That doesn't mean that you have to stay there. Get up out of that. Go back to the Lord like the prodigal son. What happened to him? He was under the blessings of the Father and he said, "Well, give me what blessings that you have in store for me," and he took those and he ran off and he wasted them in the world and he wound up in the pigpen with the pigs wallowing in that. But he realized the error of his ways and he went back to the Father and the Father blessed him again.

We have that opportunity as well as Christians. If we do get off the straight and narrow, if we do get to wallowing around in there, remember: your Father loves you, he has more in store for you. Go back to him and ask for forgiveness and he'll receive you back into his fellowship because we are one of his. He loves us, cherishes us. Acknowledging our relationship that we have available to us as children of God, we are no longer slaves.

We are not mere servants as it tells us here, Galatians 4:1, "Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: but when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

This is making a comparison and an analogy of Old Testament and New Testament times. Being a child, being a servant, serving in God in the priesthood and so forth prior to the coming of Jesus Christ and dying for us, being our sacrifice and raising again that third day, staying around some 40 days and then ascending to the Father, after that we are able to become one of the adopted children. Not merely a servant but one of the adopted children. That's the condition that is available to us now. It is a relationship that is available to us now.

Verse 6, "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Giving us that opportunity to have that close personal relationship with God Almighty. Never before available to us and never before available to anyone prior to the death, burial, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. That made it available to have that close of a personal relationship. Not merely just to be a servant like in the Old Testament times but to have that next step beyond that which is to be a joint heir with Jesus Christ that is now available to us.

Once we receive that spirit into us, the spirit of the Holy Ghost into us, then we can have that relationship, that close relationship that too many people don't even acknowledge, too many people don't even think about. They still think there's that veil between it, that

we really can't come that close to God, that we have to go through somebody else or through some other process. You have to go and talk to somebody in a booth across from this screen here and confess your sins and ask for forgiveness and he tells you to do this and to do that or whatever. Or, you've got to ask the preacher. Or, you've got to come up to the altar and you've got to kneel down. Or, you've got to do this procedure or that procedure before you can actually speak to God. No. Once you receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, the Holy Ghost moves into you. Then you have that close personal relationship available to you and you can cry out, "Abba, Father."

"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts." When you receive him, he comes into your heart and that Holy Ghost within you, is able to communicate with your spirit and communicate directly with God the Father. But too many times, we detach from that. We just ignore what the Holy Ghost is doing in our lives. We ignore the encouragement. We ignore the advice. We ignore the direction that he can provide to us. And we start thinking, "Well, there's a different way. I have to work this particular way. I have to do this in order to have a relationship with God. I have to serve in this manner. I have to give my tithes. I have to give my offerings. I have to witness so many times a week. I have to lead people to the Lord, otherwise I'm not going to have a relationship with God." Wrong. Those are things that you should be doing as a Christian, sure, to get rewards and blessings and help others but that doesn't change your relationship with God in reference to whether you are or are not a son or daughter of God. You can change your fellowship. You can change your association. But it doesn't change the fact that once you receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you become an adopted child of God. That is solid. That is true. That is secure. That will never cease.

"Wherefore thou art no more a servant," that has to work your way to salvation, that has to be so obedient so that you can be good enough to go to heaven. It doesn't work that way. "But a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." Through Christ. It is his work that is done. It is by his work that you have the opportunity to become a child of God and it is by his work that gives you salvation.

Does this mean that when you become a Christian you don't have to do anything? You just sit back and float on the water and go off into the stagnant water and just ignore everything else that's going on? No. You shouldn't be doing that. What benefit are you? The reason he gives you the very breath within you is so that you can still have an opportunity to serve him as an obedient child. Not serve him as a slave or serve him as a bondservant that has to pay back something but as an obedient child. We have that responsibility as Christians to do that and he's going to bless us. He has so much in store for us if we would just accept it and receive it.

Titus 3:1, giving him instruction of how to instruct others, "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work." So, we are to be obedient in society, not be rabble rousers and troublemakers. "To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men. For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." We've got to

remember where we come from. We see this a lot in people, especially somebody that's been a Christian for a long time and they start getting a puffed up attitude, start getting that nose in the air and start looking down at others who aren't at their level. I've got news for you: if you get an attitude like that, your level has dropped tremendously. We've got to remember where we come from. Just sinners that deserve eternity in hell. But because of the work of Jesus Christ, we have an opportunity to be a joint heir with him. So, don't look down your nose at anybody.

We spoke earlier about association with the evil, don't be unequally yoked. That doesn't mean to have a hatred and strife against those that are ungodly. That means to reach out to them in a way that can pull them in to become Christians. To love them. Don't team up with them but help them. Spread the love. Shine your light into that darkness. Don't enter the darkness and become dark but shine the light of Jesus Christ through you into that darkness. Don't look down your nose at others, others that are newer Christians that haven't grown to the point of where you should be.

Verse 4, "But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Once again, acknowledging. Titus 3:5, acknowledging that we are saved by the grace of God, that we have righteousness by the work of Jesus Christ. Not by our works so you cannot puff yourself up and think that you've done something great or that you are something special and look down your nose at somebody else who has not been given the blessings that you've been given. Because that's what they are, they are blessings: blessing of understanding the word of God; blessing of obedience; blessing of the prosperity that he has given you here; the blessing of health that he has given you here; the blessing of the clarity of mind; the blessing of the understanding; the blessing of vision that you can see.

Those are all of God. They are not of you. You cannot say, "It's because I study the Bible every single day, that's why I have such an awesome understanding of the Bible." Well, I've got news for you: you could study the bible 1,000 lifetimes over and not have any understanding of the word of God unless God is going to give it to you. It comes from him. Everything comes from him. All the many blessings. So acknowledge that. Acknowledge that it is by the work of Jesus Christ, not by your work.

So, don't puff yourself up and think you're something special because you are a joint heir with Jesus Christ, because you are one of the sons of God that you are better than anybody else on the planet. You're just more fortunate. You've been blessed because he chose you, you didn't choose him. He sought you, you didn't seek after him because it tells us in the word, "No man has sought the Father. The Father has sought them." He called you in. He beckoned you to come in. The Holy Ghost nudging you, asking you to come on in, be a part of the family, wanting to adopt you, wanting to pull you in. It wasn't because you did something, because you were so good, because you gave this money here or there, because you worked this job for charity or you did that particular task for charity, or you did a mission work, or your parents were long time church members that helped build the church, or because you're of the lineage of Abraham or

whatever other excuse you might be able to come up with saying that that's your claim to being a joint heir with Jesus Christ. No, it's right here and it's simple: it's because of the work of Jesus Christ. Not because of our work.

Verse 5, "Not by works of righteousness." It's not because we did something good. "Which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." The Holy Ghost calls you in, draws you in, indwells you and then the light of God shines through you. That regeneration, we become a new creature. The old man is dead and we become adopted sons of God and daughters of God.

Philippians 2:13, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." It's his will if we yield to that, and it will bring pleasure to him. "Do all things without murmurings and disputings." If God has given you a task to do, you'd best not complain about it. Don't grumble and gripe when he puts you in a position that you, yourself, feel uncomfortable with. He put you there, not yourself or somebody else. But if he put you there, you'd best not complain about it.

"Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world." If you're doing a work for the Lord and you're complaining while you're doing it, you just destroyed all the benefit of that work because somebody is going to hear that complaint and he's going to damage your testimony, it's going to damage your association with God, it's going to make void the work that you just did. So, if you're in a task of working for the Lord, do not grumble and gripe about it. You do that work to the best of your ability and give thanks because you're able to do that even if it results in your suffering of persecution because you're doing that work. Give thanks that you have been found worthy to suffer for righteousness' sake.

1 John 3, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not." The love that he bestowed upon us that allowed us to become part of his family. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear," who? Jesus Christ, "we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." This is the amazing thing that we have to look forward to for eternity. We're going to be like Jesus Christ because we'll be a joint heir with Jesus Christ, sons and daughters of God.

Verse 3, "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." If you have that hope in you, you will be obedient, you will want to serve the Lord as a joint heir with Jesus Christ, as a child of God. Not as a bondservant, not as a slave, not doing it, "Grrrr, I have to do this because I am in bondage. I have to earn my way to heaven." That would be working as a servant trying to earn a wage. That's not why you serve the Lord. You serve the Lord because you want to please him because he loves you. You serve the Lord because he loved you first.

And what do we have to look forward to? To be a joint heir with Jesus Christ. To be like him. “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away and there was no more sea and I, John, saw the holy city of New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband and I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men and he will dwell with them and they shall be his people and God himself shall be with them and be their God and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain for the former things are passed away and he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write, for these words are true and faithful and he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcomes shall inherit all things and I will be his God and he shall be my son.” Sons and daughters of God. That is what we have to look forward to right there. The wonderful new creation that he has in store for us. To be able to come down and be right there with us, a close personal relationship available to us as joint heirs with Jesus Christ.

Let's pray.

Lord Jesus and heavenly Father, we thank you so much for the opportunity to be able to become part of the family, to become one of the joint heirs, to be able to come in and gather together and worship and be able to sing songs of praise as a family. Help us always acknowledge that and help us to draw in others to become part of the family as well. Thank you so much as we pray in Jesus' precious, holy name. Amen.