

**Adoption**  
**SERMON**  
By  
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**July 5, 2014**

**TEXT:** Galatians 3:26-4:7

**PROP:** Because we are sons and heirs we need to stop behaving as children. We need to grow up in Christ. We need to be sons!

**Galatians 3:26-4:7 (ESV)**

<sup>26</sup> for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. <sup>27</sup> For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. <sup>28</sup> 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. <sup>29</sup> And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. <sup>1</sup> 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, <sup>2</sup> but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. <sup>3</sup> In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. <sup>4</sup> But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, <sup>5</sup> to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. <sup>6</sup> And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" <sup>7</sup> So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

**Question 31**

What is effectual calling?

Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.

[Effectual=an action producing the intended effect, Effective=the potential to produce an effect]

**Question 32**

What benefits do they that are effectually called partake of in this life?

They that are effectually called do in this life partake of justification, adoption, and sanctification, and the several benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them.

The doctrine of justification is one of the great benefits of our effectual calling. It is of utmost importance to us because we shall not see God when we die unless we are justified through faith alone in Christ. Through faith in Christ we are made right with God. Our sins are pardoned and the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us. What can be more important to us than this? If our religion does not issue in our personal justification, if it does not issue in eternal life then what have we gained? We may find inner peace through meditation in a lovely Buddhist garden or we may take pleasure in the social benefits of a large church but if we have not been justified by faith alone in Christ all is lost. Our religion is vain. As James puts it,

***James 1:26***

26 If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless.

We deceive our own hearts when we prattle on about the great things we have done or how good we feel about what we are doing. In fact we need to be students of the word of God and in the proper hearing of the word works will issue that are pleasing to God. Those who were dead in their trespasses and sin have been made alive by the effectual calling of the Holy Spirit. They were accordingly justified by faith alone and receive many other benefits as well. Among these is the indwelling Spirit of God through whose work we are sanctified and enabled to live more and more for righteousness and less and less for sin. **Right religion issues in right works.** There is however another great benefit of effectual calling that is set forth in our text.

**I. All those who are justified are caused by God to be partakers in the Grace of adoption.**

Galatians 3:24-27 (ESV)

<sup>24</sup> So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. <sup>25</sup> But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, <sup>26</sup> **for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.** <sup>27</sup> For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

That we are sons of God through faith in Jesus Christ means that we are made members of a family to which we had no previous right to belong. In other words we are made members of the family of God by adoption. Adoption is an act of God just as justification is an act of God. We neither can nor will do anything to make ourselves right with God or to bring ourselves into the fellowship of the great family of God which is his church. At the beginning of this chapter in Galatians Paul argues that all of us who believe have been justified by faith following the model of Abraham who “believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” Abraham genuinely believed that YAHWEH was his shield and exceedingly great reward and YAHWEH justified him.

God justifies all of his people in the same way, which is by faith in Christ, and adopts us into his family. Paul’s great argument here is that we are not justified and adopted by virtue of anything we have done but through faith alone in Christ. Faith alone, not faith plus works of merit, saves us. Not faith in **Christ alone** but **faith alone** in Christ and this is a very important distinction. This distinction is at the very heart of the Reformation. Not faith in Christ alone to which meritorious works are added but faith alone in Christ.

All of us who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ are said to be sons of God. The apostle obviously includes Gentiles in his view. Before faith comes to anyone, whether Jew or Gentile they are under bondage to the law. And all who are in bondage to the law are living under a curse because no one keeps the law of God or is even able to keep it. As Paul writes,

**Romans 8:7 (ESV) – 7** For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot.

The moral law of God is not against the promises of god and is good for us but can never save us. The Lord Jesus said,

**Matthew 5:17-20 (ESV) – 17** “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. **18** For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. **19** Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. **20** For I tell you, **unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.**

And that is precisely Paul's point here in our text in Galatians 3. Our righteousness will never be sufficient to save us. The scribes and Pharisees claimed to be righteous but even if that were true it would still be insufficient to save them. The law is therefore a curse if we think keeping it will save us but it is a blessed schoolmaster or guardian to bring to Christ when used properly. When we see that we are not saved by works of the law we are driven to our knees before the cross of Christ and there through faith alone we are justified, we are made right with God. Faith in Christ brings us into the family of God which the law can never do. Through our faith in Christ God regards us as his children and we regard God as our heavenly father and **this is the essence of adoption.**

## **II. We are made adopted members of the great family of God.**

Galatians 3:28-29 (ESV)

<sup>28</sup> 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. <sup>29</sup> And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

We have been here before haven't we? In Christ all the barriers to becoming heirs to the promises of God are broken down. Our nationality no longer matters. Not that it ever did, really. Ruth from the nation of Moab was made an heir to the covenants of promise by the grace of God and she was a mother in the line of Christ. God has always been sovereign in his application of mercy and compassion. But the Jews like to make the point that "salvation is of the Jews." You had to be a Jew to be saved. But that is not true is it? Praise God that's not true because in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek. Remember that even in Abraham's time all the covenant promises depended on the Messiah who was to come and now has come. Therefore the death of Christ ratified and secured all the promises made to God's people in all time.

That Christ Jesus has rendered certain that his people in all nations everywhere are included as Abraham's seed, makes us all heirs to the promises of God. Political and economic barriers have also been broken down because it is neither "slave nor free." Furthermore sexual barriers have been removed. The Samaritan woman at Jacob's well believed and was saved including many more Samaritans from her city. Indeed, the great family of God is termed by Paul as the **commonwealth of Israel**, fellow citizens of the saints and the household of God (Ephesians 2). In Hebrews he says,

**Hebrews 12:22-23 (ESV) – 22** But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, **23** and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,

What a wonderful description of the great family of God. Not a few here and there but a great panoply of human beings who have been brought to faith by the power of the Holy Spirit have been taken into the number and enjoy all the liberties and privileges of the sons of God.

### **III. Being adopted, we are no longer slaves and children.**

**Galatians 4:1-7 (ESV) – 1** 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, **2** but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. **3** In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. **4** But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, **5** to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive **adoption as sons**. **6** And because you are sons, God has 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 an heir through God.

The issue here is not at all like a poor man suddenly made rich by winning the lottery. Here we have the difference between a mature adult and a child or slave. Children and slaves still have not received the rights and privileges that accrue to sons but they live under the direction of guardians and stewards.

God’s people in Old Testament times were in the position of being as slaves and children because the redeemer had not yet come. But now in the fullness of times, Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law so that we all receive the adoption as **sons**, not merely **children**. That Christ has redeemed us makes all of God’s people in all time, sons of God and heirs of God. Praise God that he gave his only begotten Son to redeem us through his death else we would yet be as Israel, children and slaves.

Because we are sons and heirs we need to stop behaving as children. We need to grow up in Christ. We need to **be** sons! That is what we are in Christ and we need to act like it! As sons we have been changed, indeed we have been doubly changed.

**Ephesians 5:8-10 (ESV) – 8** for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as **children of light 9** (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), **10** and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.

The first change is that from darkness into light. Without this change heaven is unavailable to us. The children of darkness will never know the joys of heaven.

**2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV) – 17** Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. **The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.**

The second change is that from old to new. Without this change we are unfit for heaven. Without both changes it would be better if we were never born for we will surely fall into eternal perdition.

In order to receive the adoption as sons it was necessary for the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity to be terribly humiliated. The importance of redemption from the curse of the law is seen in the fact that this glorious person, YAHWEH God the Son, for whom, through whom and by whom all things were created, must be born of a woman. That is not to say that childbirth is degrading because a woman was involved but it is to say that through childbirth the Son of God was born into a world of sin. He, Jesus, was born under the law, he of whom Isaiah writes,

***Isaiah 33:22***

For YAHWEH is our Judge,  
YAHWEH is our Lawgiver,  
YAHWEH is our King;  
He will save us;

To redeem us from the curse of the law the holy Jesus was subjected to the most ignoble, profane and blasphemous treatment known to man. God the Son was subjected to all this that we might receive the **adoption as sons** and all the benefits that flow from it. And what are these?

We see from our text that God sends forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” And what a wonderful benefit this is! Paul describes this most delightful and encouraging advantage in,

**Romans 8:12-17 (ESV) – 12** So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. **13** For if you live according to the flesh you will

die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. **14** For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. **15** For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the **Spirit of adoption as sons**, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” **16** The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, **17** and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

We live in constant fear that we will fail to meet God’s requirements to enter heaven if our salvation depends, in the smallest part, on our ability to keep the law. That is the curse of the law and it is a spirit of bondage. But the blessed Holy Spirit, indeed the Spirit of Christ bears witness to our adoption as sons and we are set free from this worry and fear and we are enabled to cry out Abba, Father. Abba, the Aramaic word for father was the common way a child would address his father in Paul’s day and here it serves to inform us that the indwelling Spirit of Christ produces a natural desire to come to our heavenly father with boldness. A boldness that is typical of only such a filial relationship.

Thus another benefit of adoption as sons is our access to the throne of grace. Again Paul writes,

**Hebrews 4:16 (ESV) – 16** Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Furthermore we are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by God as by a father. We are sealed unto the day of redemption. We inherit the promise of eternal life and we are heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. What an enviable position to be in, to possess without doubt the blessed hope of eternal life with Christ. And it is no small point that by adoption we bear the name of Christ for we are called Christians. How can we even begin to speak of such blessings? How can we live in such a period of history known as the fullness of times when our adoption as sons is a reality guaranteed to us yet continue to be relatively disinterested in the blessings of adoption?

The all important question that all of us must ask of ourselves is, am I so united with Christ as to be included in the blessings of his salvation? Such a union can only be formed through a genuine belief in **THE LORD JESUS CHRIST** that he is our shield and our exceedingly great reward. It is a faith that is rooted in the truth of God’s Word and wherever that faith really exists there is that union, and there are all its blessed results.

We need to take heed to ourselves to see that we are not walking in darkness but in the marvelous light of Christ. We need to see that old things have passed away and all things have become new. It will be a fearful thing, if with such a redemption as we have seen here in our text, such a plain and accurate Bible, so free and full a salvation that we yet perish in our sins. No common hell must then be our hell. It will be deeper even than that of the pagan mind in proportion to all the light and privilege that we have been given.

But why should we perish in hell? Salvation in Christ is brought very near to us. Why should we not believe unto salvation? All things are ready for us and available to us. Redemption has been accomplished. The Holy Spirit has been freely given. The Bible has never been better translated and more available. There is nothing in the way but an evil heart of unbelief which is a state of mind that is utterly irrational and ruinous. Why would anyone refuse the blessings of adoption? Why choose to be a slave to sin and live under its curse?

On the other hand as one of God's dear saints, made such by his matchless grace, rejoice that you are treated as a son by God. We must find our heart's delight in Christ and his kingdom. We are not slaves but sons therefore let us come boldly to the throne of grace to worship our God and Savior. Let us rest in Yahweh and find our confidence and hope in him alone for he truly is our shield and our great reward. Let us say with Asaph:

**Psalm 73:25-26 (ESV) – 25** Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. **26** My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.



