

LESSON 17: DELIGHTING IN ADOPTION

Intro:

“People need union with the Son because they are separated from God and salvation.” **Robert Peterson**¹⁵⁸

BIG IDEA: God glorifies Himself in making us His _____ in _____.

“Our understanding of Christianity cannot be better than our grasp of adoption.” **J.I. Packer**¹⁵⁹

“Luther’s grasp of adoption was as strong and clear as his grasp of justification, but his disciples held to the latter and made nothing of the former. The Puritan teaching on the Christian life, so strong in other ways, was notably deficient here, which is one reason why legalistic misunderstandings of it so easily arise.” **J.I. Packer**¹⁶⁰

Question 34: What is adoption?

Answer: Adoption is an act of God’s free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges, of the sons of God.

WLC Q. 74 What is adoption?

A. Adoption is an act of the free grace of God, in and for his only Son Jesus Christ, whereby all those that are justified are received into the number of his children, have his name put upon them, the Spirit of his Son given to them, are under his fatherly care and dispensations, admitted to all the liberties and privileges of the sons of God, made heirs of all the promises, and fellow-heirs with Christ in glory.

1. All those that are justified, God vouchsafeth, in and for his only Son Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption, by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God, have his name put upon them, receive the Spirit of adoption, have access to the throne of grace with boldness, are enabled to cry, Abba, Father, are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by him, as by a father: yet never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption; and inherit the promises, as heirs of everlasting salvation.

“Act of free grace”

- Adoption is an _____, not a _____. It is not a _____ but rather an instantaneous change of _____.
- We gain this new status by God’s free grace. We don’t _____ it.
- We are no longer _____, but sons (Gal. 4:7).

¹⁵⁸ Peterson, Robert A. *Adopted by God: From Wayward Sinners to Cherished Children*. Phillipsburg, P&R. 2001, pp. 64.

¹⁵⁹ Packer, J.I. *Knowing God*. Downers Grove, IVP. 1973, pp. 202.

¹⁶⁰ Packer, pp. 228.

To Glorify and Enjoy God

- We had been children of _____ who obeyed the power of the _____ of the air.
- God is under no _____ or _____ to adopt us.
- God does this by the _____ of His own will: wise, holy, righteous, good

³For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. **Titus 3**

“God adopts us out of free love, not because our character and record show us worthy to bear his name, but despite the fact that they show the very opposite.” **J.I. Packer**¹⁶¹

In love ⁵he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ... **Ephesians 1**

- Context: “every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places” with which the Father “blessed us in Christ.”
- This is connected with _____: salvation is adoption as _____.
- It is according to His will, & His _____. We are the passive _____.

“Adoption presents the new creature in his new relations- his new relations entered upon with a congenial heart, and his new life developing in a congenial home, and surrounded with those relations which foster its growth and crown it with blessedness.” **A.A. Hodge**¹⁶²

“All those who are justified”

²⁹For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. **Romans 8**

- Adoption presupposes _____.
- All who are _____ are _____.
- All who are _____ have been _____.
- Adult adoption in Roman Empire: paid off all the adoptee’s _____.
- The Father _____ all of our debts through the work of Christ.

¹⁶¹ Packer, pp. 215.

¹⁶² Hodge, pp. 192.

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- We have _____ fear, the fear of sons, not the fear of _____. We respect the Father.

“Justification is the primary blessing, because it meets our primary spiritual need.” **J.I. Packer**¹⁶³

“Led by the Spirit of Adoption”

¹³For 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. ¹⁴For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. ¹⁵For 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!” ¹⁶The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and 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.

Romans 8

- United to Christ, this change in status is accompanied by the gift of the _____.
- Paul is addressing the issue of _____ or how we live a Christians.
- Sons of God are led by the _____. Sanctification occurs in the context of _____.
- Our obedience takes on the mindset of a faithful, loving _____ instead of a slave.
- It is because of the work of the Spirit that we cry out “Abba!” or “_____!”
- Prayer is a blessing of adoption. Our Father promises to _____ to us.
- Because we come to our Father, we are able to come with _____.
- Thru _____ we “are pitied, protected, provided for” in accordance with His will.
- The Spirit bears _____ to us that we have been adopted by God.
- The Spirit is, in part, the _____ or deposit on our inheritance.

“To those who are Christ’s, the holy God is a loving Father; they belong to his family; they may approach him without fear and always be sure of his fatherly concern and care.” **J.I. Packer**¹⁶⁴

“Chastened but not cast off”

⁵And 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.

⁶For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.”

⁷It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? ⁸If you are left without discipline, in which all have

¹⁶³ Packer, pp. 206.

¹⁶⁴ Packer, pp. 203.

To Glorify and Enjoy God

participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. ⁹Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰For 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. ¹¹For 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. **Hebrews 12**

- He _____ AND _____.
- The author of _____ reminds them of Proverbs. Written to us as _____.
- The Lord promises to _____ everyone He loves & receives as sons.
- Jesus bore the wrath & punishment for our sin; _____ consequences are gone.
- Our Father is concerned with our _____ & _____ us to the Son.
- He _____ us so “*we may share in His holiness.*”
- We are to “*consider all hardship as discipline*”, as the Father _____ us.
- The _____ is conditional. Some people aren’t trained by discipline.
- We are tempted to think that God has cast us off, that hardship is _____.
- The Father makes us _____ righteous, not just positionally righteous.

“From the other side we see that God, while not ceasing to love his children, is wondrously angry toward them; not because his is disposed of himself to hate them, but because he would frighten them by the feeling of his wrath in order to humble their fleshly pride, shake off their sluggishness, and arouse them to repentance.” **John Calvin**¹⁶⁵

“He is totally committed to our well-being and the preserving of his children. We may displease him, but once we are welcomed into his family, we are truly his sons and daughters, and there is no more war.” **R.C. Sproul**¹⁶⁶

“But the greatest abuse you can give a child is to let him do whatever he wants without any correction, chastening, or discipline. .. This is one of the most important distinctions in theology, the distinction between the corrective wrath of God and punitive wrath of God.” **R.C. Sproul**¹⁶⁷

“The Responsibilities of Sons”

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. ²By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. ³For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. **1 John 5**

- We are not adopted by God if we do not _____ Jesus is the Messiah.

¹⁶⁵ Calvin, III, II, 12 (pp. 557)

¹⁶⁶ Sproul, Vol. 2, pp. 68.

¹⁶⁷ Sproul, Vol. 2, pp. 73.

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- We shouldn't think we are adopted by God if we don't _____ God Himself.
- We shouldn't think we are adopted if we don't love His other adopted _____.
- Love is manifested or revealed by _____ to His commandments.
- His commandments aren't _____ because they are the expression of His _____.
- His commandments are not burdensome because we _____ Him and want to _____ Him.
- We don't obey perfectly because we have not been _____ & struggle with _____ desires.

“Adoption puts law-keeping on a new footing: as children of God, we acknowledge the law’s authority as a rule for our lives, because we know that this is what our Father wants.” **J.I. Packer**¹⁶⁸

How does the doctrine of adoption help you to glorify and enjoy God forever?

Conclusion:

¹⁶⁸ Packer, pp. 223.