

Series: Legalism. License. Liberty!
Message Title: ***The Blessing of Adoption***
Date: Sunday, November 5, 2017
Scripture: Galatians 4:4-6
Speaker: David H. McKinley
Location: Warren Baptist Church, Augusta, GA

Introduction

For the past 31 years, I have shared a seat at the table of adoption. In 1986, 1989, Connie and I found ourselves in a place we had not anticipated, and for which we were not prepared. We were childless.

But God in His amazing mercy, grace and love gave us the privilege of sharing and experiencing something that has been richer, deeper and better than we could have ever imagined—adoption! We did not have children biologically, but providentially, and God’s will and way are always good, acceptable and perfect.

“God allows us to travel pathways we would have never chosen to experience blessings we could have never comprehended.”

Far from being a human story, adoption is part of the story of the grace of God in the life of every believer.

“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’ So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God” (Galatians 4:4-7 ESV).

Think about this: “... so that we might receive the adoption as sons” (Galatians 4:5b ESV).

The blessing of adoption!

“Here Paul calleth the blessing, to which he had given divers names, as the blessing of the seed of Abraham – righteousness, life, the promise of the Holy Spirit, deliverance from the law, the adoption. All these the word blessing doth comprehend. For when the curse is abolished, then succeedeth the blessing, and, by what merit have we received this blessing, this adoption and inheritance? By none at all...but the merit of Jesus Christ.” —Martin Luther

Adoption *is* a blessing—an all-encompassing, life-long, unchanging and ever expanding blessing.

Why? "Adoption is all about a relationship." See Galatians 4:6. It is a position with practical benefits, not a practice to earn a better position or benefits.

Does it surprise you that Paul would jump to this image to break the stigma of the "Judaizers" who kept wanting to go back to good works when what they needed to see and know was the work accomplished for them?

In Galatians 4, Paul takes a theological debate and overlays it with the beautiful and helpful picture of what God has done for us in Christ, and it all revolves around adoption.

Adoption is portrayed throughout history, and it is included in the history and testimony of the Bible. God's heart for orphans and adoption is displayed and woven as a theme in Scripture. Think of the story of Moses, Esther, and even Jesus (Joseph, the carpenter).



Adoption Begins With Necessity

Children have a need and cannot achieve their own resolution. Someone has to respond, intervene or provide a way out of the isolation and separation of an orphan.

Many reasons lead to adoption. I, for one, am grateful to those who have courageously and willingly given a child. Yet there are times when death, neglect and desertion occur. Humanly, the reason for the need is not as important as the awareness of a need to respond.

Yet, spiritually (see Galatians 4:3), we were bound under sin and the law. We are lost, separated from God, and without a home. We are helpless and hopeless apart from the intervening work of God for us.

Adoption is a Grace-Driven Activity

“But God” intervenes and meets us at our point of need and does not ask for our credentials (Are we good enough or is our situation bad enough?), but rather, in grace He reaches into the circumstance of a fallen

humanity (our need) and provides a way home.

God does something for us we cannot do for ourselves. He chooses to offer us a hope and future.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us for adoption to Himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace, with which He has blessed us in the Beloved” (Ephesians 1:3-6 ESV).

By His grace (His amazing grace!), the focus shifts from our predicament and need to a hope and a future that is eternal.

This is what happens for a child, humanly, in adoption! They are chosen. You also are chosen to take part and share a new life in a new family. You are a chosen child!

There is no second class status, but rather, the amazing and incredible reality that you were chosen and embraced by the arms that received you.

Chosen children and the sacrifice and investment made for them creates some amazing love stories ever told. And, in the end, the giver is also the receiver! I have had a front row seat to an amazing journey with my children.

Adoption is Costly

Paul has been driving home the point that God worked extensively and exclusively through Abraham, and all who come to God by faith are exclusively brought into God's family by faith.

God moved and worked on our behalf to provide a way for us to become part of His family. It is not something we influenced or leveraged, but rather, something that came from the heart of God.

When a family moves toward adoption, it begins with a process and then moves to a

particular person. Parents don't always know who or where, but there is love and care to take part and to change the life of one brought into the family.

There are legal, financial and typically, procedural efforts that have to be addressed. To give up a child is costly; to take in a child is costly.

In this text, we see all the beauty and blessing of this fulfilled in Christ and His work for us. Jesus entered into our world and our need. We no longer have to be captivated by the law, but captivated and included in God's love.

It was an act of sacrifice and an expression of love.

“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree’—so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith” (Galatians 3:13-14 ESV).

“For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by His blood, much more shall we be saved by Him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by His life” (Romans 5:6-10 ESV)

This is amazing!

Children rarely know the costs and cares of those who move to adopt them, but by grace and love, they experience the effect of that work on their behalf.

Adoption Brings New Identity

Through adoption, you are associated with and belong to a new family. You get a new name and you get a standing invitation to dinner! “sons” = those who belong to and share identity with a particular family

“For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 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!’ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 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” (Romans 8:14-17 ESV).

We have the Spirit of God and we belong to God’s family. This identity changes everything in life for us:

- You are free—no longer captive to the law, but held in grace
- You have a future
- You have no fear—there are great privileges of access, inclusion and acceptance

I love the famous photo of young John, Jr. peering out from underneath the Resolute Desk in the Oval Office when JFK was president. John Jr. had access to his father because he was the child of his father.

“Abba Father” You have access to and acceptance in the presence of God.

“know God” and more, “be known by God”. See Galatians 4:8.

In Matthew 6:9, Jesus taught us to pray, “Our Father...” —not appealing to a judge, but to a Father who loves and cares for us. He allowed His Son, His only begotten Son (your brother) to suffer and offer access and acceptance through His name.

When you are adopted, you not only take on a name, but you become a member of a family. You gain brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents, and more.

There are new relationships and new responsibilities. Families are unfolding realities. They are living and growing relationships. We grow in love, trust, devotion, loyalty and service.

Adoption Provides Lasting Security

You belong in the family. You share the blessing. You take part in the inheritance, and you will not be left alone.

Adoption is a legal action with life-long consequences. For this reason, Paul used the Roman legal system to reflect the stability and security of adoption. It is not subjective or sentimental, but rather, it endures and remains.

It is in no way a second rate status, but rather one of full acceptance, consequence and importance.

“Adoption has everything to do family and a future.” It is not a contractual or a conditional relationship; it is a permanent, legal and enduring relationship that forever incorporates you into a new relationship—a family with whom you have standing and security.

The blessing of adoption is that someone...

- sees your value and invests in you
- chooses you and wants you to share life with them
- gives you total access and offers complete acceptance
- includes you in relationships with others that benefit your life
- provides the security of belonging today and the blessing of a future beyond your past

God did all of this in Christ for us! The story of adoption is not limited to those who have adopted children into their family. It is the story, the testimony and the security of every believer.

Recognizing this great and gracious work of God on our behalf, nothing has higher value or greater significance for each of us than understanding God's adoptive action toward us.

Finalization. When parents stand before the judge as the final process in adoption, the judgment is rendered and irrevocable.