

The Heart of Adoption

Our identity in Christ as the foundation for living and loving
2 Corinthians 5:14-21; Coast Community Church; Mark Johnson; 2-28-2021

Importance of the Doctrine of Adoption

Today we are going to spend some time looking at the doctrine of adoption. Why is it important for us to have a deep and rich understanding of this doctrine? It is a unique part of salvation that we, as reformers, tend to skim over in favor of highlighting the doctrines of Justification and Sanctification. Adoption, on the other hand, informs our understanding and fuels our love in at least four key ways.

1. Adoption informs our understanding of ourselves
2. Adoption informs our understanding of God
3. Adoption fuels our Love of God
4. Adoption lays the foundation for our love for others

1. God's kind of love pictured through the tangible act of Adoption upsets culture and biology to bring lavish and undeserved blessing. Genesis 48:1-22.

In the story of Ephraim and Manasseh's adoption into Jacob's family and inheritance, we see that the type of adoption that Jacob embraces means that Ephraim and Manasseh are not second-rate children. Instead, they are preeminent to receive blessing as his first and second born (vs. 5). We see that the blessing is not based on merit (vs. 8) but on love. What kind of love? Love that Jacob had for his son, Joseph (Vs. 11). We see that God defines relationships by His grace, lovingkindness and generosity, not our sense of cultural or biological "rightness" (Vs 17).

2. Our understanding of adoption in the New Testament cultural context helps us to understand the spiritual reality of adoption.

When Paul communicates about the spiritual reality of our adoption in Christ, he uses terms and concepts referenced from the Roman practice of adoption. Understanding the Roman culture's concept of adoption helps us to see what would have been obvious to the recipients of Paul's letters. In Roman culture, parents had the right to disown their biological children at any time. Adopted children, on the other hand, were desired and freely chosen. Adopted children could not be disowned, so their identity was permanent. The adopted child's debts were absorbed, new rights and responsibilities were given and they were provided with joint-share in the inheritance. How does this help us understand God's love for His children?

- Children of God are freely chosen (Eph 1:4-5, John 15:16, Jeremiah 1:5)
- Children of God are adopted forever (John 10:28)
- Children of God have their unpayable debts absorbed (Ephesians 1:7)
- Children of God receive joint-share in the lavish inheritance of His firstborn son (Romans 8:17, 1 Peter 1:4)

3. Our understanding of the spiritual reality of adoption lays a foundation for our hope and fuels our praise. Ephesians 1:1-14

One of the ways that the book of Ephesians is broken up into is Indicatives (Chapters 1-3) and Imperatives (Chapters 4-6). The first half establishes "what is". What God has done and what our identity is in Him. The second half unpacks what our response should be, the commands of God, based on these realities. The book of Ephesians opens by telling us the reason and the result of all of these things: (Vs. 3) "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ". Why? Because He has held back

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no Spiritual blessings from His children. God displays his attributes of mercy and grace in both choosing to love the least of these and providing every Spiritual blessing, and, the more fully we understand these realities, the more our response becomes one of gratitude and praise.

4. The result of this new spiritual reality in the life of God's children is a call to the obedience of faith in every area of our lives. 2 Corinthians 5:14-21

When we are adopted into the kingdom of heaven, our old identity, with its trajectory resulting in death, done away with. Our new identity in Christ brings new inclinations and affections, new responsibilities and a rich inheritance in heaven. Our hope shifts from people, circumstances and things to eternal realities and a firm foundation of hope in Christ. The Holy Spirit begins to sanctify our hearts to conform us so that we look more like Jesus. Our response, by the empowering grace of the Holy Spirit, is to go to work heartily with our new vocation as ambassadors for Christ. We carry the message of reconciliation with Christ into the foreign soil of the world with our words and our actions as we seek to join in the family business.

5. The kind of sacrificial love that God calls us to is exceptional and supernatural, but commonplace in the family of God (Luke 17:9-10)

We seek to reflect Christ by demonstrating His kind of love. Love that is unrestrained and abundant for the weak, the destitute, the voiceless and the marginalized (Proverbs 31:8-9). Those who cannot pay us back (Luke 14:12-14).

- Christians should have a heart for adoption because God has a heart for adoption
- Christians should have a heart for evangelism because God has a heart for evangelism
- Christians should have a heart for discipleship because God has a heart for discipleship
- Christians should have a heart for missions because God has a heart for missions

Are we all called to adopt from overseas, evangelize the nearby city weekly, lead a discipleship group and prepare for the mission field? Maybe! But perhaps your role looks different. Whatever your individual role may be, you are to look for the things that reflect the heart of God, identify them, affirm them and support them. What might that look like?

- Do you know a family going through an adoption process? Affirm them! And see if you can help them prepare for a home study or support them financially!
- Do you know a family preparing to go to the mission field? Support them! And see if you can help them with childcare as they go through training
- Do you know someone with a discipleship group? Encourage them! And see if they could use council in managing some of the unique challenges they have encountered in their group

The unity of the local church is more sure and firm than biology not because the bond of flesh and blood isn't strong. It's just that the bond of the blood of Jesus Christ which establishes us as brothers and sisters in the family of God is far stronger.

What is to be our response, now that we can see our desperate neediness, the holiness and righteousness of God, the mercy and grace of His shed blood for our sin and the unimaginable inheritance freely given to His children? Blessed be God!!