

Jer. 3:19-23 (WCF 12:1) “Call Me ‘Father’”

For the Children: What do you call your father? “Dad,” “daddy,” “pa”? Not many call their dad “father” these days. You probably started calling your dad whatever you do call him, because that is what your parents wanted you to call him. As you were learning to speak, they taught you to say, “Dad” or something similar. We also need our Father to teach us to call Him “Father” – as we do, for example, when we pray to Him. But it is not just that He teaches us to say the word. He teaches us what it means – that He is our heavenly Father and we are His adopted children through the Lord Jesus. When we realize what it means – the great blessings we have as His children and how He wants His children to live, we will find ourselves learning to repent of our sins. Because He loves us as our Father, He is ready to forgive us our sins when we repent.

Questions: What are some of the blessings of being God’s adopted children? How does knowing this encourage us to repent of our sins? Can a child of God ever lose His adoption?

Introduction:

First Point: The Blessings of Adoption Promised

- 1) An Incentive to Repent: Jeremiah is told to prophesy towards the survivors of the Northern Kingdom (v. 12) – though the message is also for Judah. They have been faithless sons (vss.6,8,11,12,14,22). The incentive is the assurance that the Lord will be gracious and bless them again if they do so. For they are His sons.
- 2) Recognizing Our Adoption: The promised mercy and blessing will come when the disobedient sons recognize their adopted status and its implications for how they should then live. V. 19 shows how ready the Lord is to restore them if they repent, so that they may again be set among His sons. The Lord would not be slow to restore them. Compare with Mt.23:37-39. Even this call to repentance shows His grace and mercy.
- 3) The Blessedness of Adoption: Further incentive comes from the promises connected with adoption – the pleasant land and the inheritance of the nations. This points to the blessings we have in Christ. WCF 12:1 adds: His Name (Character) is put upon us – the “family name” taken by adopted children; the Holy Spirit gives us a “spirit of adoption” (Rom.8:15-17, Gal.4:5-7; the recognition that we are indeed His children, who can now enjoy an open and bold access to Him as our Father; His protection and provision; His ongoing pity, mercy and grace; His Fatherly discipline. These are all blessings particularly associated with the fact that God is our Father.

Second Point: To Bring About Repentance

- 1) Those Who Remain Faithful: Some in Israel remained faithful. Those who are justified and adopted will remain in that status forever. To them, these words are a reminder to keep on in that direction “and not turn away from following Me.”
- 2) Those Who Walk Away: Others who have been members of the church rebel and depart from the Lord’s ways because they were never sons of God in their hearts. They will not inherit the promises. Others, though, may backslide for a time, but the call to repentance eventually brings them back, by God’s grace. Then the Fatherly pity of God causes Him to accept them and restore them.
- 3) Prayer from a Spirit of Adoption: In Jeremiah’s time, King Josiah brought many reforms, including the tearing down of the “high places” – where the people brought elements of Canaanite worship into the worship of Yahweh. See 2 Chron.34:3. However, many were still missing the shrines on the now bare hilltops (v.21). They had forgotten their God. They needed to repent. Until they did so, their crying to Yahweh would not be heeded by Him. When we pray to God, it must be out of the spirit of adoption, with a commitment to living in the way of His adopted children; recognizing that He alone is God and Saviour (vss.22-23; and seeing the need of repentance). Then He will heal the faithless of their unfaithfulness.

Conclusion: