

ADOPTED – FROM SLAVES TO SONS

Selected Scriptures

Introduction:

Over the past few months on these mornings when we gather at the Lord's table, we have been looking at some of the aspects of the glorious salvation that God has provided for us. Back in September, when we began this short series of messages, I mentioned a book that I had been reading. In that book, the author mentioned the importance of being constantly awed by the magnitude of what God has done and is doing in our lives, particularly in our salvation.

The apostle Peter tells us that the prophets, who wrote about the grace that was to come, did not fully understand what it was they were predicting. That's because it was a mystery – a truth that was hidden until the time that it was to be revealed. But at the time that the prophets spoke, they did not fully grasp what it was that they spoke about. Even the angels long to look into and understand the glory of God's salvation plan.

Since then we have looked at a number of things which occur at that precise moment when we through an act of faith receive Jesus Christ and His salvation. And I emphasize that it is a precise moment. Even though there is a process by which we become aware of our need of a Saviour, and we gradually overcome our fears and questions and eventually surrender to the Lord Jesus, yet there is no doubt, according to Scripture that there is a precise moment when, by the Spirit of God we are born again and become a new creature in Christ.

And there are many things which happen in that moment of salvation. We mentioned four of them and have looked briefly at three of these items. We will cover the fourth tonight. But first a bit of review...

1. Justified – a new position. There is a change in God's attitude toward the sinner because of Calvary. 2 things: The penalty for our sin is removed; We are given the righteousness of Christ. Two results of that: peace with God; freedom from condemnation.

2. Sanctified – a new purpose. There is a two-fold aspect to sanctification: we are set apart for God's purpose at the moment of salvation – positional sanctification. Then we begin the lifelong process of growing in holiness – practical sanctification.
3. Redeemed – A new master. When we are saved, we are purchased by Christ out of the slave market of sin and Satan. We are set free from slavery to sin and Satan, but then become slaves to righteousness – Romans 6.

There is one more thing, which we want to look at today, that occurs when we come to faith in Christ. This is what the Apostle Paul calls adoption.

The Definition of Adoption

First, we need to clarify this term adoption. The Greek word is used only 5 times in the NT all by Paul. It means literally, "to place as a son."

Scofield says: "Adoption, 'Placing as a son' is not so much a word of relationship but of position. The believer's relation to God as a child results from the new birth (John 1:12,13), whereas adoption is the act of God whereby one already a child is, through redemption from the law, placed in the position of an adult son."

And so we have not only a relationship with God as His child, but a special position as His sons, full-grown, with all the rights and privileges of an adult son.

The Meaning of Adoption

We are all familiar with the idea of adoption, as we know it in our society and culture. In our own family, we have a granddaughter who is adopted. While she is not part of the family by birth, she has been brought into the family by choice—by adoption—and is every much a part of the family as the other children. Neither we nor her parents think of her any differently than the other children.

The very idea of adoption is one that includes thoughts of compassion, kindness, and love. It is the desire to take in a child from outside the family, show them the love and affection of a parent, and make them genuine part of the family.

In Roman times there was a process that was practiced on occasion, where a slave would be adopted and welcomed as part of the family. Such an occurrence, while it was not common, changed the life of a slave in immediate and incredible ways. He was instantly released from bondage; he entered into a new family relationship; and all ties to his previous family and life situation were forever removed.

It is easy to see the spiritual comparison to that kind of adoption. As slaves to sin, we are redeemed (as we spoke about last time) and set free from that slavery to sin. Now we are adopted into God's family.

But there is another kind of adoption from Roman culture that also has some spiritual comparison. It is the concept of a child being placed into full sonship as an adult in the family. Paul talks about this in Gal. 4:1-7. But, to really understand this we need to know something of the culture of that day.

Discuss the difference between a child (Minor with no rights) and a son (with full rights and privileges).

Refer to Gal. 4:4-5 – you see, Jesus Christ came, not only to redeem us and to set us free from slavery to sin and Satan, but also to place us as adult sons with all the rights and privileges that go along with the family name.

The Benefits of Adoption

What are the benefits of adoption. We will mention two here:

1. As an adopted son we are no longer under slavery to the law. We become bondservants of righteousness, to live by faith, to obey out of love rather than constraint and to be free of bondage to sin and Satan.
2. As an adopted son we now possess the right to an inheritance - that is ours to enjoy forever. And the guarantee of that inheritance, the deposit or down payment which we have been given is the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13-14). And with the Holy Spirit come the assurance that we are His - not only His children, but His sons, and because we are sons we are heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ – *read Romans 8:12-17.*

Wo, what an amazing thing it is to be adopted into God's family...

Conclusion

Yes, the death of Jesus Christ on a cross 2000 years ago, and the shedding of his blood on that cross has done much for us. We speak of-ten of having our sins forgiven, but I trust that we have been reminded that there is more to our salvation than only that. We have been:

- Justified – a new standing
- Sanctified – a new purpose
- Redeemed – a new master
- Adopted – a new relationship and position

And all of this happens at that moment when, by the grace of God through faith in His Son we come into a personal relationship with Him. Have you made that decision?