

The Marvelous Privileges of Adoption, Part 2

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In Psalm 111:2, the psalmist exclaimed with a praised-filled heart that the works of the Lord are great, sought out or pondered by all those that take pleasure or delight in them. And surely, among all of the great works of God worthy of the worshipful reflection of the true child of God, none are greater than those works which comprise what the writer to the Hebrews describes as our so great salvation. Having considered God's great work in providing a salvation in Jesus Christ that results in the justification of hell-deserving sinners, we are now searching out an even greater blessing of God's saving grace, the blessing of adoption into the family of God. We come this morning to our fifth message concerning this provision of redemptive grace, the contemplation of which caused the Apostle John to exclaim, "Behold [stand back and wonder], what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called children of God." And we are.

As we come to the fifth message this morning, what have we discovered thus far in our consideration of this amazing aspect of God's saving grace called adoption? Well, after identifying three crucial distinctions and giving an earnest pastoral warning and entreaty in the opening message, we then focused on the central place of adoption in the eternal plan, the actual procurement and the personal application of the salvation of sinners. And we saw from the many passages that we studied together that adoption is central in the saving purpose of the living God of heaven. We then examined together, secondly, the basic meaning and significance of adoption. And I said in concluding that study that I could do no better than to quote the Shorter Catechism, the Baptist version. In answer to the question, "What is adoption?", "Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby all those who are justified are received into the number and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God." And then several weeks ago we moved on to this third major category from the central place of adoption in the plan of salvation to the basic meaning and significance of adoption to begin to consider the privileges of adoption. What was it that made the Apostle John break out in holy ecstasy when contemplating his adoption and cry, "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God."?

What are the distinct blessings and privileges that come to those who are adopted? Well, I answered that question along two lines as we began to consider the many blessings and privileges of adoption. Number one: as justified and adopted sinners, we are given an irreversible legal status as sons and daughters of the living God. John 1:12 was our key text: "As many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His name." And when we come to faith in Christ, we are given this legal status as the sons and daughters of the living God. And a note that I did not sound sufficiently that I want to add as a little

appendix to that brief review is that that legal status is never an end in itself. But it is a means to the end that God might have with us and we with Him real, felt, intimate familial communion, son to Father and Father to son.

Just as surely as a couple desire to adopt a son or daughter goes through all of the legal process, all of the legal forms, all of the examination of their home and of their persons, all of the outlay of money, and then the day comes when all of the paperwork is done. And in the family court, the judge declares that that child is theirs. They don't just then walk away and say, "Now we have a legal status of the child. That's taken care of. That's it." No, that is all to the end that that mother might hold the little one in her arms, or that not so little one sit at her table; that that father might embrace that child that's been adopted. And so it is with our heavenly Father. On the basis on what Christ has done to resolve all of the legal barriers to a holy God entering into communion with sinful men and women, God takes care of all of those things and gives us the legal status of sons and daughters. To what end? Not simply that we might say we have a heavenly Father, and God might say He has a bunch of adopted kids, but that the living God who made us for Himself might enter into true living communion with us and we with Him.

There are two little phrases in two pivotal passages on adoption (or one grows out of that) that underscore this. In Ephesians 1:5, a text that we looked at when considering together the place of adoption in the scheme of redemption, showing that God purposed before the foundation of the world that those whom He would save would be adopted. Notice this little phrase: "Having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto Himself." That's it. Foreordaining us to adoption through Christ unto Himself. The heavenly Father desiring that He should have people who were His sons and His daughters. And then in chapter 2 of Ephesians, the other direction is set before us in verse 18. For through Him, that is, through Christ we, both Jew and Gentile, have access in one Spirit unto the Father. On the basis of the work of Christ, we have access to the Father. We have a way into living, vital communion and fellowship with Him. And so the first great blessing of adoption is that we are given the status, this irreversible status of sons and daughters, to the end that there might be this relationship of intimate, realized, precious communion between us and our heavenly Father, and our heavenly Father and us.

And then we saw, secondly, as justified and adopted sinners in Christ, we are given the privilege of becoming the brothers and sisters of our elder Brother, the Lord Jesus Christ. For in His saving activity, God is not only building a spiritual temple, establishing a church, constituting a bride for His Son, creating a kingdom, but He's also creating a family. And according to Romans 8:29 and Hebrews 2:11-12, Jesus is the firstborn in that family, that is, the preeminent One. And all of His true disciples are constituted His siblings. The writer to Hebrews says He is not ashamed to call us brethren. Paul says that He is the firstborn among many brethren. And what constitutes us siblings in that sense is that we both have the same Father. That's what makes us brothers and sisters, when we have the same Father. And though He is Christ's Father in a way that He is not ours, it is not a different God who is our Father. Hence, Jesus could say in John 21, "I ascend unto My God and your God and My Father and your Father." Christ is our elder Brother who has come into our condition, lived where we lived, experienced temptation and disappointment and grief and even death itself. And we can commune and fellowship and relate to Him as our elder Brother, our elder Brother in all the strength and power and wisdom of His

divine nature, and yet our elder Brother in all the sympathy and empathy of true human nature. He is one of our kind.

Well then, we come to consider this morning the third great blessing or privilege of adoption. Not only do we have the privilege of being given this legal status with its open door into vital communion with God as our Father, not only Christ as our elder Brother, but thirdly, as justified and adopted sinners in Christ, we are made heirs of a rich inheritance. And I'm going to attempt to open up this astounding reality under three headings.

The first is: the fact of our status as heirs established. Turn with me, please, to the book of Galatians. In chapter 3 and verse 26, we have this simple statement of the Apostle: "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus." What does this verse tell us? Well, it tells us that faith in Jesus Christ without exception brings the status of sons, simple and straightforward. If you are not a believer in Christ Jesus, you are not a son or daughter of God. But if you have come to what the Bible means by faith in Jesus Christ, not a mere nod of the head to the facts of the Gospel, not a mere tipping of the hat to Jesus, not a mere little emotional experience that somehow was connected with Jesus. But you have been brought by Spirit-wrought faith into attachment to Jesus Christ in all the glory of His person, in all the perfection of His work. He's conquered your heart; He's conquered your mind; He's conquered your will. He is yours; you are His. That's the Bible's description of what's involved in saving faith. Verse 26: "For you are all sons of God through faith." If you have come to faith in Jesus Christ, you have the status of a son or a daughter.

Now look at chapter 4 and verse 7: "So that you are no longer a bondservant, but a son." In the context, Paul is talking about matters that have to do with being under the Mosaic economy, and that even God's people under that economy did not know the liberty that we now know, so that you are no longer a bondservant but a son. Now notice, "And if a son, then an heir through God." 3:26 says if you are a believer, you are a son of God, you are a daughter of God. And if you are a son, then an heir through God. According to verse 26 of chapter 3, faith in Jesus Christ without exception brings the status of sons. According to 4:7, the status of sons without exception constitutes us heirs by the appointment of God Himself. The reading that some of you have in the New King James Version and the old Authorized Version, "heir of God through Christ" is not what Paul wrote. The best manuscript evidence points to the fact that what Paul wrote are these words: "but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God," that is, you are given this status of sonship, and with it, you become an heir on the basis of God's decision and God's activity.

Notice in this section the things that God the Father does. Verse 4 of chapter 4: "When the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son." God sent His Son. And when the Son is embraced, verse 6: "Because you are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts crying, Abba, Father." God the Father sends the Son, and when people embrace the Son by faith, then become His children, God sends the Spirit into their hearts enabling them to experience and express that new relationship of adoption by crying to Him, Abba, not Daddy. That's a popular way of trying to express it. No, it's a word of intimacy, but it's not a word of a babbling little child (Papa or Daddy). It's difficult to bring it over into the English. And men who are much more astute in their understanding of the original languages than I just waffle about just trying to give the proper nuance. But this much is clear: the same God who sent His Son to redeem us sends the Spirit into the hearts of the redeemed. But He does

more than that. This same God who constitutes a Son is the God who makes us heirs. He sent the Son; He sent the Spirit. And we who have embraced the Lord Jesus are His sons and daughters. God has no son, no daughter by adoption who is not an heir through God, that is, by God's determination, by God's decision, by God's activity. And it's interesting that even in the text, the language that is used: "and if a Son...." Notice the singular. "You are no longer a bondservant [he's not thinking collectively now. He's using the second person singular], but a son [not sons], and if a son, then an heir through God." He's getting away from all the collective, and he's saying to every single believer among the Galatian churches, "You must understand individually and personally if you've embraced the Lord Jesus by faith, you are a son. And if you are a son, then you, even you individually, personally, you are an heir through God.

Dear believer in Jesus Christ, God has said that upon believing, you're made His child; having been made His child, you've been constituted an heir, one with a God-given, God-secured right to a God-provided inheritance. And what an insult to God to be indifferent to what this means. What a grief to God to see us unbelieving in the face of being told its meaning.

So we move, then, from the fact of our status as heirs established to consider, secondly, the meaning of our status as heirs explained. We must both ask and answer the question, "What is an heir?" Well, ordinarily, we think of an heir as someone who has a legal or an assumed right to take possession of a promised inheritance either of possessions or position at an appointed time. In our society, the appointed time is generally the death of the one who appoints the heir, but not in Biblical times and not in the general use of the word. So we can think of an heir as someone who has a legal or an assumed right to take possession of a promised inheritance, either a possession or position at an appointed time. It may be at the death of the one who is the possessor of the position or the possession. It may be when someone comes to years of maturity as we have in the analogy that Paul is using in Galatians 4.

But let's look at a couple of Biblical passages where the term appears, and we'll get a feeling for its significance in the Biblical literature. Its first appearance is in Genesis 15. Now I turn there not because I believe that this so-called law of first mention is an accurate way to study the Bible. But often when something is first introduced, it gives us a very helpful clue to its significance throughout the Scriptures. The Lord who has appeared to Abraham and told him to get out from his land and go to a place the Lord would show him--we read:

"After these things the word of Jehovah came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. [I will protect you as you go out in faith and obedience to My directives. But I am also your reward. Abraham, what will you receive as the ultimate reward of your faith-impelled obedience? You will receive Me as your reward. I will be your inheritance.]"

Then we see the matter of position in a passage such as 2 Chronicles 21:1-3:

"And Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and Jehoram his son reigned in his stead. And he had brethren, the sons of Jehoshaphat: Azariah, and Jehiel, and Zechariah, and Azariah, and Michael, and Shephathiah; all these were the sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel. And their father

gave them great gifts, of silver, and of gold, and of precious things, with fortified cities in Judah: but the kingdom gave he to Jehoram, because he was the first-born."

Jehoram inherits the position of king because he was the firstborn. There was an inheritance given to the other sons, but to the firstborn was the right of receiving the throne. And then in Matthew 21, one of the parables of our Lord, we have the use of the term heir in a way that would be common, part of the general understanding of His hearers. Verses 33-38:

"Hear another parable: There was a man that was a householder, who planted a vineyard, and set a hedge about it, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into another country. And when the season of the fruits drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, to receive his fruits. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them in like manner. But afterward he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But the husbandmen, when they saw the son, said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and take his inheritance."

They recognized that this son was the rightful heir of that vineyard. And they recognized that by getting him out of the way, they would then be in some position to seek to take wrongfully his inheritance.

I've only turned to these passages to try to give you a sense of the flavor of the use of the word. And then I remind you that when Paul deals with the doctrine of adoption and uses that peculiarly nuanced word (?) "the placing of a son," in the Greco-Roman world, adoption was often a means by which a couple with no son would secure a legitimate and desired heir by adopting an adult male, one they judged to be worthy of that position and of those possessions, who would be a good steward of both position and possessions. So when the Scripture says that if we are sons, then we are heirs, what is it doing? It is underscoring that God's adopted children are put in the position where they become the legal possessors of promised inheritance either of possessions or of position. And they are to come into their inheritance in God's appointed time. So then, brothers and sisters in Christ, children of God, as adopted children of the living God, filled with gratitude for our privilege of our legal status, filled with wonder that the Lord of glory does not have any reservation about calling us His brethren, come even a step higher and recognize that not only do you have legal right and a spirit-wrought disposition to relate to the living God as your Father, Jesus Christ as your elder Brother, but you have every right and even a responsibility to recognize that you are an heir by God's appointment.

Having established the fact of our status as heirs, and having spent a few minutes explaining what it means to be an heir, now we come, thirdly, to the specifics of our inheritances as heirs expounded. And under this heading, we'll seek to answer the question, "Of what possessions or positions are we heirs as a result of our adoption into the family of God?" And we're going to look at a couple of pivotal texts, the first of which is Romans 8, verses 16 and 17. Of what am I made an heir as one who has been made a son or a daughter? For if I am a son, I am an heir. And surely I would like to know what is my inheritance.

"The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God [we will come back, hopefully, to expound that verse when we come to one of the other

blessings of adoption, which is the gift of the spirit of adoption. It's not my purpose to do that this morning, just to get the flow of thought]: and if children, then heirs [same certainty as Paul in Galatians 4:7. God has no children by adoption who are excluded from the role of an heir, no children who do not have an inheritance]; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him."

"If children, then heirs." Heirs of what? Look at the text: "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." What in the world do those words mean? Well, we are heirs of two things: we are heirs of God, and we are co-heirs or joint-heirs with Christ. Now what does the little phrase "heirs of God" mean? There are two possible meanings. And here you come into the so-called objective/subjective genitive. It's a linguistic thing, but it could mean this: we are heirs of God, that is, we are heirs by God's activity, by God's decision under God's provision in the same way we might say of an unusually wealthy man, "Who is that man that has such wealth?" And someone says, "He is an heir of Bill Gates. Bill Gates made him an heir; his possessions reflect the wealth of Bill Gates." It could be that this is what the Apostle is saying, that we are heirs of God. And it would simply be another way of expressing what he expressed in Galatians 4:7: "heirs of [through] God." There would be no appreciable difference. It would simply point to the fact that our being heirs is not something we conjured up, something we conferred upon one another, something the church or the ministry conferred upon us. Almighty God conferred upon us the status of heirs, and that's a wonderful truth.

It's taught in Galatians 4, and so in the analogy of Scripture, if someone were to assert that's what it means, that and no more, I'd say, "Well, it means that, but are you sure, no more?" For responsible commentators say (and I find myself moving more and more in that direction in my own thinking) linguistically and by the analogy of Scripture, it could be Paul is saying, "If children, then heirs [and it's as though the children say, 'Yes, yes, Paul, and what's my possession? What's my position? What's the heart of my inheritance? And he wants to blow them away], heirs of God. [God Himself is your inheritance.]" And if he did that, he would show that his mind was steeped in a number of Old Testament passages in which that is precisely what God says and what His people recognize in response to God.

What did God say to Abraham? "I am your shield and your exceeding great reward." "Abraham, what is your greatest anticipation among all the promises God has given to you?" He would say, "It is the covenant promise, 'I shall be your God, and you shall be My people.' My inheritance looks far beyond the land of Canaan which has a city which has foundations whose builder and maker is God. But without God there, it would be no inheritance for me." "Heirs of God" would fit with the promise of God to Abraham.

You remember the Levites, when they divvied up the land, the Levites got no permanent possession of real estate in Palestine. But God says to the Levites, "Don't feel cheated. You've got something better than a hunk of real estate. In Deuteronomy 18, verses 1 and 2, this is what God says concerning the Levites:

"The priests the Levites, even all the tribe of Levi, shall have no portion nor inheritance with Israel: they shall eat the offerings of Jehovah made by fire, and His inheritance. And they shall have no inheritance among their brethren: Jehovah [the eternal God, God of the covenant] is their inheritance, as He hath spoken unto them."

Can you imagine a little Levite boy beginning to understand the significance of his tribal identity. And as he interacts with his daddy and begins to understand more fully the peculiar function that was assigned to the Levites in the worship of God, one day he says, "You mean, Daddy, my friend down the other row of tents says this is the portion of land that he and others in his tribe are going to have, and we've got no piece of land we can call our own?" The spiritually-minded, true Israelite would say with a smile upon his face, "Son, God's promised us something far better than a hunk of real estate, something far more glorious than a pile of dirt in Palestine. He has said, "I am your inheritance." That's what the text says, that Jehovah Himself is their inheritance. And true Israelites, those who are not Israelites in word only could say as we find the psalmist saying,

"Jehovah is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: Thou maintainest my lot [my apportionment, my inheritance]. The lines [that's language from setting up the boundaries of an inheritance] are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage. [My inheritance is God Himself.]" (Psalm 16:5-6).

He understood this; so did Asaph in spite of the struggles he was having as he saw the prosperity of the wicked and the trials of the righteous. He breaks through in communion with God, and this is what he says in Psalm 73:23-26:

"Nevertheless I am continually with Thee: Thou hast holden my right hand. Thou wilt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart [what did He say to Abraham? "I am your shield your protector, your rock, your strength] and my portion [my inheritance] for ever."

And so the Godly Israelites understood this concept, that God Himself, seeing Him face to face, communing with Him in the glorified state, the great inheritance of the people of God is God Himself. And if I've not persuaded you from those passages, turn all the way to the end to the book of the Revelation, chapter 21. And in the marvelous description of the new heaven and the new earth, what does God say? Verse 3:

"And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His peoples, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God: and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away. And He that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He saith, Write: for these words are faithful and true. And He said unto me, They are come to pass. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit these things; and [without this, these things could bring them no satisfaction. Here is the crowning promise of heaven:] I will be his God, and he shall be My son."

Adoption will come to its fullest, most glorious, indescribable glory when God is able to give Himself to us, as it were, without reservation, because we will be in a condition that can contain the undimmed vision of God. Anyone, God says, who would see Him now, he would be slain. It would kill us if our minds were to be given the contemplation of the magnitude and the glory and the complexity of God that we

shall know in that state. It would blow our brains out of our heads. It will take a glorified body and a perfected spirit in a glorified heaven and a glorified earth for God to give Himself to us without reservation as our Father, and for us to relate to Him uninhibited as His sons and as His daughters. That's what He says. This is the culmination. The new heavens, the new earth, and the voice says God's dwelling is with men. He will be with them and be their God.

"I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward."

"Who have I in heaven but Thee? And there is none on earth that I desire beside Thee."

Yes, if we are children of God, God is our Father. Jesus said, "I ascend to My Father and to your Father." But John says in 1 John 3:2, "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as He is."

Paul says in Romans 8, "Heirs of God." Yes, our heirship is by God's design and God's appointment, and therefore, it is certain; it is sure; it is true. But it is God Himself who is the inheritance. Let me ask you, does that give you any goose bumps on your soul if not on your flesh? What's that do to you? Do you sit there and say, "O, that's a bummer--just God? That name that's spoken about in church that bores me to death?" That's the surest indication you're as lost as the devil. If the thought of having God as your inheritance doesn't thrill you and fill you with a longing: "O God, hasten the day when I come into my inheritance."

But that's not all. Look at the text back in Romans 8: "heirs of God, and joint-heirs [or co-heirs] with Christ." Now, what's that mean? This means that the inheritance promised to Jesus as the reward of the accomplishment of His work of redemption as the firstborn to whom it all belongs, He looks around at His vast family of adopted sons and daughters and says, "Father, I want to share it all with them. My joy I want to see mirrored in their joy as I share it all with them." Co-heirs, joint-heirs with Christ.

Well, what is His inheritance? Now here you want your mind to be blown? Turn to Hebrews 1. What is the inheritance of Christ that He desires and is committed to share with us? "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things." Now how would you like to sit at your desk, knowing you've got to preach to God's people, and you want to be honest with the Scriptures, and you come across a phrase like this? He has been appointed as the mediator in Himself as the One through whom all things are created. Everything is His by right of creation. But the writer to Hebrews here is speaking of an appointment that comes to Him in reward for His faithfulness as the Redeemer of His people. And he says He's been appointed heir of all things. And then my Bible says, "heir of God and joint-heir with Christ." What's His inheritance? All things. What's my inheritance? I can't say the words. It seems bordering on gross presumption if not blasphemy. But what says the Scripture? He's heir of all things, and I am constituted as His son, a co-heir, a joint-heir with Christ.

Can we break down any of the "all things" that are His inheritance? Do we have to leave it hanging there as something that our mental fingers try to reach up and grasp, but they cannot seem to grasp it? Well, let's just look at a passage that will break it

down just a little bit. Psalm 2. In the first stanza, you have the picture of the kings of the earth conspiring to break away the cords of Messiah's reign; God's going to laugh. Then He'll speak unto them in His wrath: "I have set My king upon My holy hill of Zion." Now verse 7: "I will tell of the decree: Jehovah said unto Me, Thou art My son; this day have I begotten Thee."

We won't take the time to look into it, but in Acts 13, the Apostle Paul says this passage finds unique fulfillment in the resurrection of Christ. When a Jehovah's witness comes to you and says, "You see what it says? There was a day when He was begotten." No, no, no, the terminology "I have begotten Thee" does not mean "brought Thee into being." According to the inspired interpretation of the passage in Acts 13, when Jesus is exalted and seated as the Messianic King, as the reward of His humiliation and suffering and death, when He is installed and officially in His place, He is begotten unto that position as Messianic King. And when God says, "I have begotten You unto that position," from that position the Father says to the Son,

"Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the nations for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession. [And in the accomplishment of coming into that inheritance, all within the nations that oppose You, I give you the right to break them with a rod of iron, to dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel until in the new heavens and the new earth, there will be nothing but righteousness. This is Your rightful inheritance. The ends of the earth renewed and transformed and purged and expunged of all evil and all rebellion. It's all Yours My Son. Ask for it, and I will give it to You.]"

Heir of all things. Come on now, can you say it? Joint-heir with Christ.

Now go to Revelation where we read this morning. You say, "No, no, no, that's too much." Well, look what Jesus says. He says in verses 25 and 26 of Revelation 2, "Nevertheless that which ye have, hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and he that keepeth My works unto the end, to Him will I give authority over the nations." The overcomer, that's you, child of God. To you, He says these words:

"He shall rule them with a rod of iron. As the vessels of the potter are broken to shivers, as I also have received of My Father. My Father said to Me, 'This day I have begotten You into Messianic kingship and rule and government. Ask of Me My Son, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, the uttermost parts the earth for Your possession. And in coming into that possession, I give You the right to crush all Your enemies.'"

Jesus said, "Thank You, Father, now I want to share it with all of my true brothers and sisters. To him that overcomes. That's My brothers and sisters, who [as Paul says], though they suffer with Me, they shall be glorified with Me. I give to them the inheritance of sharing with Me in My conquest of the nations." That's what the text says. My Bible says it, and I've been struggling all week to try to really believe it. I said today, "Lord, if this things really gets in my gut and I believe it, Dorothy is going to wonder what that noise is upstairs. Because I'm going to have a glory fit, and I'm going to run around this study dancing for joy saying, "Lord, it's too good to be true, but I believe Your Word." Listen to one commentator whose written a helpful little book on adoption. He writes,

"As heirs of God, we await a glorious inheritance. Just as inquisitive children cannot wait for their father to tell them a delicious secret, so we yearn to ask our Father, 'What will our inheritance be like? Romans 8:17 is the key. When Paul calls believers heirs of God, he means not merely believers are heirs of what God has promised but of God Himself. That we are heirs of God means we inherit God. Remarkably, this is similar to what God already told Abraham in Genesis 15:1: 'Do not be afraid, I am your very great reward.' And there is more. Romans 8:17 teaches not only that we are heirs of the Father but co-heirs with Christ. We have the same Father as Jesus. We belong to the same family. And by virtue of our union with the Son of God, His inheritance is ours. Because everything belongs to Christ, His inheritance is the whole world. All believers, therefore, will inherit God and the world, the Trinity and the new heavens and the new earth."

I can't read you, folks. I think you're experiencing what I've experienced sitting at my desk, saying, "O God, give me faith to lay hold of what is clearly revealed." This is our inheritance. If we are sons and daughters, we are heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. This is why when we open up our Bibles in other places, we find language like this. In Matthew 25:34, Jesus will say to the righteous on His right hand, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Or Peter in 1 Peter 1:1-5:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible [it can't be touched by death], and undefiled [it can't be touched by sin], and that fadeth not away [it can't be eroded with time], reserved in heaven for you, who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

We have a death proof (incorruptible), sin proof (undefiled), time proof (unfading), burglar proof (it's reserved in heaven); it's fail proof (we are kept for that inheritance. Time is gone. Children of God, this is the truth that will keep you cheerful in suffering. That's why Paul goes right on in Romans 8:17 to say this will be true of us if we are real sons of God. And if we are, then we'll suffer with him that we may be glorified together. And then he says, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward." Do you want to be cheerful in suffering? Meditate upon your inheritance. Do you want to be free from an inordinate attachment to the stuff of this world? It's all going up in smoke. I'm going to have the world in its glorified state. Why cling to it in this present decaying, sin-marred condition? If God's my inheritance, why try to stuff my heart with stuff when I can stuff it with God Himself.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Whatever a pure heart is, it's a heart kept free from an inordinate attachment to stuff. What kept the patriarchs? Read Hebrews 11. It wasn't that they were yearning and drooling over a piece of real estate to come. It says they looked for a city that has foundations whose builder and maker is God. They saw beyond Palestine. And that's what enabled them to remain true to Him.

But to you who are not believers, it's amazing to me as I've studied these passages that used the word "inheritance," how God makes it plain again and again, the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. 1 Corinthians 6:9: "Or know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" In Galatians 5:21, Paul

lists the works of the flesh and says, "They who practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (cf. Ephesians 5:5-6). And no sooner does John give us that culminating description in Revelation 21:7-8:

"He that overcometh shall inherit these things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son. But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death."

Dear people, as glorious as the inheritance of the people of God is, what awaits you out of Christ is horrific beyond description. I plead with you, go to Christ, because in Christ all of these wonderful promises are yes and amen.

Well, may God help us as His children to appreciate in new ways the blessed privilege of being a son or daughter of the living God.

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