

The Marvelous Privileges of Adoption, Part 3

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Now you may wish to follow as I read that portion of the Word of God which we have just sung back to God, 1 John 3:1-3. John writes,

"Behold [stand back, consider], what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God, and such we are. For this cause the world does not know us, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we the 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. And everyone that has this hope set on Him continually purifies himself, even as He is pure."

Now let us again seek the face of God, that God by the Holy spirit will bless our study of the Word.

Our Father, we are thankful for all of the truths we have been to reflect upon and sing back to You, and by which we have shaped our prayers. But now we come to this pinnacle part of our worship when You, the living God, condescend to speak to the likes of us. We would have hearts ready to hear Your voice speaking through the Scriptures, speaking by means of the human voice of your servant. O Lord, send Your Holy Spirit upon us, that that Word will come to us not in word only, but in power and in the Holy Spirit and in much conviction. We wait upon You in the expectation of faith in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Last Lord's Day evening I was very conscious of one of the younger members of the church kind of lingering a few feet off my right shoulder at the conclusion of our evening service. And when I was disengaged from the conversation that I was involved in, I asked if this individual wanted to speak to me, and she said, "Yes." So we sat down and she said, "I just have a very simple question, and the question is this: are we done with the doctrine of adoption, or is there more?", and to which I answered, "No, we're not done. And there is more to come." Then I proceeded to give her a little synopsis of where I hope to go in bringing this study on this wonderful privilege of redemptive grace called adoption to a conclusion. And so after an eight week parenthesis, we return this morning to our consideration of this highest privilege of all the blessings of God's redemptive grace, that of being constituted the sons and daughters of God. We have seen that as His adopted children, we have an inviolable status. Christ is our elder Brother, and we are joint-heirs with Him.

Now we come to the fourth great blessing of adoption, the gift of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of adoption. And as we take up our subject, there are two pivotal, two crucial passages that set fourth this truth with unmistakable clarity. And I want you to put on your thinking cap and tighten the seat belt of your mental faculties and turn with me to the first of these two passages in the book of Galatians and chapter 4. I want to demonstrate from the Scriptures that every single penitent sinner who embraces Christ as He is offered in the Gospel is not

only justified, forgiven, accepted as righteous, but adopted into God's family. And with that adoption, without exception, is the reception of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of adoption. That's what I want to demonstrate from the Scriptures. Two crucial passages which detail this with unmistakable clarity. Passage number one is in Galatians 4.

Now let me remind you of the overall burden to the Galatian churches. Why did Paul write to the Galatians? Well, he wrote to the Galatians because the Apostle became aware that there in the Galatian region, there were these people that were called the Judiazers. And the Judiazers had come along and said,

"Now wait a minute, Paul's messages was not quite right. Paul taught you that to be a full-blown Christian, that is, to be a child of God, all you need to do is repent of your sins, abandon any hope in confidence in yourself, in rituals, in religious performance entrust yourself to Jesus Christ, and by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, you are a full-blown Christian."

That was Paul's message. You want to be a full-blown Christian? Christ alone, grace alone, Christ alone, faith alone. Along came the Judiazers and said,

"No, no, Paul had not gotten it quite right. If you want to be a full-blown Christian, yes, grace, then Christ and faith, but put a comma leading to circumcision and keeping the entire Mosaic law with dietary rules and regulations, special days and feast days. If you want to be full-blown Christian with capital C, capital H, capital R, then it's Christ plus the Mosaic economy."

And Paul is determined to demonstrate that this is not the truth, and so he argues in various ways in the book of Galatians. And when we come to chapter 4, what we find is Paul in seeking to uproot this message of the Judiazers is demonstrating this simple fact: the Mosaic framework, the Mosaic covenant was given in the history of redemption as God works out His saving purposes in space-time history. The Mosaic covenant was bound by a specific time frame. God brought it long after He made the promise of salvation to Abraham. It was added to but did not replace the Abrahamic covenant. It was overlaid for a period of time. And during that period of time, God's people who truly trusted in the living God, looked to Him alone for salvation by faith--they were, under that covenant, treated like children, who though they are heirs of a great inheritance are really no better than slaves. They've got to keep all of the rules and regulations of their governors and their teachers and their masters. Now, what Paul is concerned to show is, we don't go back to something that had a purpose of God bounded by time, for when Christ came, everything to which the Mosaic economy pointed is now fulfilled. The Mosaic covenant is now behind us. No longer are people under the Mosaic covenant.

Now Chapter 4: "But I say that so long as the heir is a child, he differs nothing from a bondservant though he is lord of all; but is under guardians and stewards until the day appointed of the Father. So also we, when we were children, were held in bondage under the rudiments of the world."

In other words, he says those of us who were part of that economy, as long as that economy was enforced, we were treated like under-aged children. The Mosaic economy was teaching us by types and shadows and rules and regulations and this kind of sacrifice and that kind of sacrifice. It was keeping us in that framework until what? Verses 4-7:

"But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that He might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because you are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. So then thou art no longer a bondservant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God."

Now, what is he saying in these verses? In verses 4 and 5, we have the great goal of God in sending Jesus, when and how He sent them. Look at your Bibles. When did He send Him? "In the fullness of the time." And how did He send Him? "[He] sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law...." And what was God's great goal in sending Jesus when and how He sent Him? It tells us He did so that He might redeem them that are under the law that we might receive the adoption of sons. In other words, Christ was sent when He was sent and how He was sent that He might effect a redemption that when it is applied, would bring the redeemed into the experience of being sons of God, full-grown sons, come-of-age sons, not those who were like sons who were minors and still under tutors and under teachers and under guides, but full-grown sons. That was His purpose.

And then verse 6. Here is the great reality in all who embrace Christ by faith and are constituted God's sons ("and because you are sons"). Now, how did they become sons? Well, he told them in chapter 3 and in verse 26: "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of us as did put on Christ, he says you became Christians when you embraced the Lord Jesus in such a way that you became clothed with Christ, with His righteousness and with His grace. That's what faith does. It embraces; it receives Christ. And Paul says in verse 26 of chapter 3, "You are sons of God through faith in Christ." Well, verse 6 of chapter 4 says, "And because you are sons, God's done something in the case of every single one who by faith has embraced Christ. Because you are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts crying, "Abba, Father." The great reality that comes to every single person adopted as a son or daughter of God is that the God who sent forth His Son to redeem--and you have the same verb--sends forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts. And He sends Him into our hearts for many purposes. And the rest of the New Testament expounds those purposes. But in this context, He sends Him into our hearts enabling us to cry, "Abba, Father." What is he doing? Well, the word Abba is Aramaic for Father. And of course, the Greek word for Father is translated Father. And so Paul is underscoring the fact that when the Spirit of God is sent into the heart of the child of God, it is with a distinct end in view that that child of God may be able not just to whisper, not just to say, but he uses a very forceful verb, the very word used for demons shrieking in the Gospels or Jesus crying out in the temple. It has the element of an intensely emotional outburst. And He says that He has sent forth the Spirit of His Son, enabling us to cry, that is, to have a felt internal awareness of who we are, and in the wonder and glory of it, to give vent to it in the cry, "Abba, Father." Let me read some comments from Sinclair Ferguson's very helpful book on adoption with regard to the significance of this "Abba, Father."

"The late New Testament scholar, Joachim Jeremias, gave considerable attention to the phenomenon in Judaism men rarely if ever prayed to God as Father. Now remember, Abba (Aramaic), was the prostituted language that was the ordinary conversational language of Palestinian Jews. But they did not speak to God with the word Abba. If ever they prayed to God as Father, they certainly did not normally talk to Him using the intimate, affectionate term Abba. Jeremias concluded that in this word, we have the reputation by the church of the way in which Jesus Himself addressed God."

In Mark 14 and verse 36 in the Garden of Gethsemane, it is recorded of our Lord, "And He said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee." So Jesus addressed His Father with this term of intimate endearment. It's not cheeky. It's not sentimental and sloshy. That's why some people say Abba means Daddy. No, no, it's more than Daddy, but it's less than "O Father." Now, Jesus had no problem addressing His God and Father as Father. In John 17, the opening verse says, "Father, glorify Your Son." Later on it's "O holy Father." And later on in John 17, it's "O righteous Father." So don't get the notion that somehow unless we address God with all the lovely little intimate terms we can conjure up, we're beneath our dignity. No, when the Scripture says the Spirit is sent into our hearts crying, "Abba, Father," we know that He is giving us the ability to address God in the very language with which the Son of God Himself addressed His Father. Dr. Ferguson goes on to write,

"The unique, intimate relationship between the Father and the Son was now being shared by the Son with all His people. And this privilege Jesus Himself described when He said, 'All things have been committed to Me by My Father. No one knows the Son except the Father. No one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him.' And when through Christ, coming to faith in Christ, the Father is revealed to us as our Father, He then sends His Spirit into our hearts, enabling us internally to feel the reality of the new relationship established objectively and external to us. Remember, adoption is a legal status. But He sends His Spirit into our hearts, enabling us to enjoy that status and to address the one true and living God as 'Abba, Father.'"

Dr. Ferguson goes on to say,

"It's always a moving thing when someone whom you admire takes you aside and says, 'I'd appreciate it if you would no longer call me Mr. so and so or Dr. so and so, but call me John.' It's a wonderful honor when you've been relating to someone who is above you and over you in knowledge, experience, gifts, station, and you show it by the way in which you address them. And that's proper, but when they take you aside, put an arm on a shoulder and say, 'Al, look, no longer call me Mr. or Mrs. or whatever, but call me John, call me Mary.' But that privilege pales into insignificance by comparison with what we have here. Christ is giving us access to the presence of His Father and saying to us, "You may now speak to Him as I speak to Him with the same right of access, with the same sense of intimacy, with the same knowledge that this God loves you."

Now you say, "What's the big deal with that?" Well, think with me for a moment. Everyone who is a real Christian, a true child of God, has in one way or another, through one means or another, made some very shattering discoveries about God and about himself. If you're a Christian, if I'm a Christian, I've come to some degree of awareness that the God who is infinitely holy, inflexibly just, who will "by no means clear the guilty."

"He is angry with the wicked everyday."

"The wages of sin is death."

"The soul that sins, it shall die."

And when I come to the discovery that God is infinitely holy, inflexibly just and righteous and must punish sin, and I come to some degree of awareness of what I am as a guilty, vile, polluted, defiled sinner, to some degree I must come to that awareness, or I'm no Christian, for Jesus said, "I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

"Faithful is the saying, worthy of all acceptance, Christ Jesus came into the world sinners to save [sinners who have been brought to see and own their sinnerhood]." So here I am in the presence of this holy God in my sin and defilement and pollution, and I hear the Gospel, that if indeed I will entrust myself to Jesus Christ because of the perfect life that He lived before God under the law, the death that He died upon the cross, I can be accepted with this holy, inflexibly just and righteous God. It's an amazing thing. And I lay hold of Christ, and I seek to internalize the wonder of His grace. I'm a forgiven sinner. He has blotted out my sins like a thick cloud. He has put them behind His back. In the language of Scripture, "Their sins and iniquities I'll remember no more." Then I say,

"How will I deal with this God? He's still inflexibly just. He's still infinitely holy. The fact that He sent His Son to die does not mean cherubim no longer veil their face and feet and cry one to another, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty.' He is still burning in His holiness. He is still inflexibly just. How can I approach this God? I do believe the promise of forgiveness. I do believe my sins are pardoned for Jesus' sake."

What does God do? Look at text. "Because you are sons...." How through faith in Jesus, God sends forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts in His secret but real and powerful working, creating in us a filial disposition. And we're able to look up to this God and say, "Abba, Father." It takes the Holy Spirit's internal ministry to bring us to embrace from the heart the status into which Christ has brought us by His saving work. I need a Savior on a cross to save me. I need the Spirit in my heart to enable me to embrace the wonder and the privilege of that salvation. The God who sent forth His Son to redeem us sends forth His Spirit of His Son into our hearts to enable us to cry, "Abba, Father."

Now then, turn with me to Romans 8, the second passage. I'll hold off application till we're done with the second passage. Now, again, just a word about the context. In Romans 8, Paul is addressing the reality and nature of life in the Spirit as the inevitable accompaniment of justification by faith. Paul has established in the opening chapters man's need to be justified, God's provision of justification. And in that justifying grace and salvation, God also secures the sanctification of His people. And now when He comes to chapter 8, he's demonstrating that life in the Spirit is an inevitable accompaniment of justification by faith. And in the course of addressing this subject, he asserts (verse 12) our obligation. "So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh: for if you live after the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit ye put to death the deeds of the body, you shall live." In this life in the Spirit, he says we are debtors. And we are debtors not to live after the flesh, after our base sinful appetites and desires. We are debtors not to live after the flesh, but to live according to the Spirit, and in particular, the Spirit enabling us to continually put to death the deeds of the body, what the old writers would call mortification. Then he says in verse 14, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God." And who are God's true sons? Those led by the Spirit. And what is led by the Spirit in the context? It doesn't mean I have subjective impulses and I say, "The Lord led me to do this. The Lord led me to do that." No, it means you are in the way of progressive holiness. You are putting to death the deeds of the body. You are in an ongoing exercise of Biblical mortification of sin. In the context, that's what being led by the Spirit means. And he says if that is true of you, that you are being led by the Spirit out of the realm of the flesh into the realm of the Spirit, into a life of growing likeness to Jesus Christ, you, and you only, are the sons of God. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God."

Now then, we come to verses 15 and 16. And those are the two verses I want us to unpack. "For you received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but you received the Spirit of

adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit Himself bearing witness with our spirit, that we are children of God." Now notice how the thing is bracketed. He says, "For as many are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." To put it bluntly, if the Holy Spirit is not superintending your life, leading it more and more into a life of conformity to Jesus Christ, putting to death the deeds of the body, the deeds of the flesh, you have no grounds to say you are a child of God. "For as many are led by the Spirit of God, [these, and these alone are the sons of God." And if you are a son of God, a daughter of God, then you have the negative statement, verse 15: "You have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear." What's he talking about? Well, I could go on for 20 minutes giving you all the differing interpretations. But fundamentally, I believe this is what Paul is saying: the Spirit you received (since all believers have received the Spirit) does not engender bondage resulting in legal fears. The Holy Spirit has not been given to you as a son, as a daughter of God, taking you back were your life is crippled with fear and with bondage. That was your state when the Spirit of God began to deal with you and show you your sin, and show you the depth of your depravity. And you had no power to break your own chains; you had no power to renew your own heart. And there was that sense of "What shall I do to be saved? There's an angry God in heaven, and I'm a vile sinner chained to my sin, helpless, unable to do anything about it. And there is bondage and fear." Paul says, "You've not received the spirit bondage again to fear. [That's the negative.] But [15b] you have received...." Notice, he's assuming every true child of God has received the Spirit. And how has He come to them? He calls Him the Spirit of adoption. Now, I thought it was the Father who adopted us. That's right, the Spirit of adoption, is not the Spirit of adoption in that the Holy Spirit is the author of our adoption. But His ministry in connection with attesting in our hearts the validity of our sonship is such He is called the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, "Abba, Father." We've not received the spirit of bondage to again to fear, but we have received the Spirit of adoption by whom we are enabled to say, "Abba, Father."

Now verse 16: "The Spirit Himself bearing witness with our spirit, that we are children of God." In acting this way directly upon our hearts, enabling us to cry, "Abba, Father," the Holy Spirit is bearing witness with our spirits that we are indeed God's adopted children. With our spirits, we assess our lives. We put ourselves out here. When you put yourself out there--and you must do that--and say, "What's out there? Is it a man, a woman, a boy, a girl that truly loves Christ supremely before father, mother, brother, sister, yes, and my own life also?" When I put myself out there and ask myself, "Is that man a man who loves Christ supremely? Is he a man who hates sin, all sin, every sin, sins of thought, sins of attitude, sins of desire, sins of words? Does he hate all sin? Put yourself out there and ask, "Do I love Christ supremely? Do I hate sin universally? Am I being led by the Holy Spirit in a life of ongoing putting to death my sins? Am I, in the language of 1 John, one who is walking in the light as He is in the light? Am I loving the brethren?" ("Hereby do we know we passed from death unto life because we love the brethren.") "He that does righteousness is righteous." In other words, when I put myself outside of myself and look at myself with an open Bible, not my self-deceiving prejudices, but an open Bible ("Not every one who says, Lord, Lord shall enter the kingdom, but he that does the will of My Father.") Am I doing the will of the Father? Am I pursuing a life of holiness? Do I truly love the brethren? Are the marks of a true Christian in me when I take myself out of me, put myself out there and assess myself? Does my spirit affirm I'm a child of God? I must do that. That's my responsibility. "Examine yourself, whether you be in the faith." Put yourself out there; evaluate yourself by the Bible. But now Paul says in this passage, "The Spirit Himself bearing witness with our spirits, that we are children of God." Along with the witness of our own spirit about ourselves, when the Spirit of God is sent into our hearts as the Spirit of adoption, by working in the secret subterranean depths of our souls, an ability to come before God with filial delight and liberty and joy, the

witness of the Holy Spirit with our spirit comes to expression in our ability to cry from the heart, "Abba, Father." That's the witness of the Spirit. And books have been written about "Does the Holy Spirit say to the believer, 'Thou art a child of God.?' " And once the Holy Spirit has whispered that to me, I can never again doubt I'm a Christian. Well, in what voice does the Holy Spirit whisper? Treble voice? Mid-range voice? Base voice? How does the Holy Spirit whisper and say, "Thou art a child of God?" No, no, the Holy Spirit's witness--and there's a lovely construction here. You have the preposition "with" and then the verb "witness". The Holy Spirit bears with witness. It is a simultaneous, inseparable witness: the Holy Spirit bearing witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. B.B. Warfield writes, "The Spirit Himself bears this witness? When? How?" He answers,

"Why, of course, in this very cry formed by Him in our souls, 'Abba, Father,' not a separate witness, but just this witness and no other. The witness of the Spirit, then, is to be found in His hidden ministrations by which the filial spirit, the spirit and disposition of coming to God as our Father, is created in our hearts and comes to birth in this joyful cry. No longer are our prayers formal in likeness to a God who is somehow out there. They become the cries of the son or the daughter, 'Abba, Father.'"

"The Spirit Himself bearing witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." So bring those two passages together now and what do we have? We have Paul saying that now that Christ has come, He has abolished the Mosaic system. All who embrace His salvation come forth full-grown sons. They're no longer sons under the tutelage of the Mosaic covenant. No, no, that is all past. They are now full-grown sons indwelt by the Holy Spirit. And because they are sons, God sends forth the Spirit of His Son into their hearts crying, "Abba, Father." Not that the Spirit Himself cries, but He so works in us that, according to the Romans 8 passage, we cry. He does this for all of His sons. And then the Romans 8 passage confirming, amplifying several subtle nuances of difference but the same essential truth, that if we are indeed the children of the living God through faith in Christ, God has given the Spirit of adoption, enabling us to cry, "Abba, Father."

Now by way of application, let me say several very important things.

The first is this--I've already alluded to it, but now I want to flesh it out more fully--the Spirit bears a joint witness with our spirit. An old Scottish writer three centuries ago speaking to this matter wrote as follows: "If the witness of our conscience be blank and can testify nothing of sincerity, hatred of sin, love to the brethren or the light, then the Spirit of God witnesses no peace nor comfort to that soul." Paul says the Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit (never apart from it), so that if you sit here this morning and say, "O well, I have such a sense of the witness of the Holy Spirit that I am a child of God. Nothing could in any way disturb me." I'd say, "That's wonderful. Now let me ask you a few questions. Do you hate sin, all sin, your own peculiar sins, your pride, your envy, your carnal ambition, your sins of omission and commission, your lust for stuff and things and men's praise?" You say, "Well, no, but I've got a wonderful witness of the Holy Spirit." I'd ask another question: "Do you truly love Christ above all else? Do you seek to know the mind of Christ about what you should think about life and money and things, possessions, entertainment, ambitions? Do you seek in all things to have Jesus Christ touch every area of your life with the scepter of His Word." You say, "O no, but I've got confidence I'm a Christian." No, no, the Spirit bears witness with our spirit. And if our spirit does not bear witness according to the objective standard of the Word of God (of the marks and fruit and grace), then we are under a spirit of delusion. It is a horrible spirit of delusion to name the name of Christ while there is no witness of our own spirit based on the facts of what God has made us and done in us and for us by His grace. On

the other hand, there are many of you that have many indications that your spirit should bear witness to you that you are a child of God. And what is it that's going to give you the full liberty and joy of that measure of assurance? It is God's Holy Spirit given as the Spirit of adoption, enabling you to cry, "Abba, Father." That is God's witness to the fact that you are not deluded, you are not deceived--the Holy Spirit bearing witness with your spirit that you are a child of God. Now, do you see why it's so crucial that we take seriously what Paul says in Ephesians 4, when he urges the Ephesians believers, "Do not grieve the Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption." And in the context, what's Paul addressing?

"Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for building up as the need may be. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and railing be put away from you with all malice. Be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, even as God in Christ forgave you."

How is the Holy Spirit grieved? He's grieved when we have controversies with God at the ethical level. Here in the context, it is corrupt speech, speech that is not perfectly true, that is not kind, that is not gracious, that is not gentle, speech that does not build up but tears down. These are the things that grieve and quench the Holy Spirit. And where the Holy Spirit is grieved by ethical controversies, His ministry is restrained within us. You cannot have a bright, powerful, present witnessing of the Spirit of God with your spirit to your sonship, giving you liberty in prayer, enabling you to cry, "Abba, Father" if you're grieving and quenching the Holy Spirit by ethical controversies with God. It doesn't work that way. And so you've got to go to the point of your controversy and stop rationalizing and own the sin for what it is. Ask God's forgiveness; go to the fountain open for sin and uncleanness. Ask God to grant you a fresh infilling and empowering of His Spirit, not only as the Spirit of empowerment to a holy life, but the Spirit of adoption. Say, "Lord, I want to know that liberty and freedom in prayer that I knew in other periods in my life. Lord, grant it to me again. May Your Spirit bear a bright and powerful witness with my spirit that I am indeed Your child, your son, your daughter.

So what have we learned this morning? I trust we have learned this: that if you've repented of your sin, believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, you've not only been justified and adopted into the family of God, not only been given the status of a son or daughter with Christ as your elder Brother, an heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ, but you have been given the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of adoption. If you are sons, then as sons, Paul says, you have received the Spirit of adoption. And with that wonderful gift of God given to us, we, as the people of God, need to jealously guard our own hearts, lest in any way we grieve or quench the Spirit and, as it were, cut the living nerve of liberty and freedom of access to God as our Father.

And for you who do not have the testimony, the witness of your own spirit, that you are a child of God. If you take the Bible seriously, there's no way you have grounds to call yourself a Christian. What is my word to you? My word is very simple. All of these blessings are stored up in Christ: justification, adoption, sanctification. All of God's blessings, according to Ephesians 1, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus." They are all in Him. And if you get to Him and get into Him, they are yours. Full pardon of all of your sins, acceptance with a holy God. He Himself will have no controversy with you in the day of judgment. "There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." And in Christ, you will also be adopted. "For as many as have received Him, to them gave He the right to become the children of God." And

as a child of God, you will then be given the Spirit of adoption, enabling you to cry, "Abba, Father," enabling you to have not only the status of a son or daughter, but the disposition of a son or daughter imparted by the person of the Holy Spirit sent into your heart, enabling you to cry, "Abba, Father." O what privileges are afforded the people of God in Christ. The very language with which the Son of God addressed His Father--He says, "My children have grounds to address Him in the same way." May God grant that our hearts will bow in loving worship and in unreserved reception of so great and so gracious a Savior.

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