

The Marvelous Privileges of Adoption, Part 4

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I read in your hearing from the 8th chapter of the book of Romans, verses 31 through 34. Paul, looking back on the very things he has written concerning life in the Spirit that always accompanies justification by faith, life in the Spirit that will find us eventually glorified at the end of verse 30, he now writes,

"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not also with Him freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies; who is he that condemns? It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us."

Well, let us again pray and ask God that by the help of the Holy Spirit, we may understand and receive His Word this morning.

Holy Father, once again, we come conscious of our need. And we thank You for the many promises of Your Word that encourage us to believe that when we come owning our need, lay it before you and seek your help, You delight to answer the cries of Your people. Have You not said that you delight to give good gifts to Your children who ask? We come as Your children asking, "Give us the good gifts of the Holy Spirit's presence and power, attending the teaching and preaching of the Scriptures. Grant us this gift we pray in Jesus' name. Amen."

According to the clear teaching of the New Testament, the path to spiritual maturity is the path of knowing who we are and what we possess in Christ, and then living in the light of those realities by faith and by obedience. It is for this very reason that the main thrust of my preaching in the past year has been one in which I sought to open up the wonder and the glory of who and what we are as justified sinners. I did that in some two dozen messages, and I'm continuing to do it as we come to message number 7 this morning on the Biblical doctrine of adoption. I'm seeking under God to lay out before you as the people of God who and what you are in Christ; that understanding that and responding in faith and obedience, you might grow up into Christ in all things. Having opened up the Scriptures which teach us what adoption is, namely, an act of God's free grace whereby we are received into the number and have a right to all the privileges of sons of God, I'm now seeking to articulate what those privileges are. And we have seen from the Scriptures that those privileges are, 1) We have an irrevocable, inviolable state given to us as sons and daughters of the living God. Once God adopts us into His family, He will never disown us. "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." 2) Christ is constituted our elder Brother in this

family. He is the Son from eternity. He is the Son by incarnation. He is the Son by accomplishment of His redemptive activity. And we are made His brethren. 3) We are made heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ according to Romans 8:17. And then we saw last Lord's Day the fourth of the great privileges of the adopted children of God is that they receive the gift of the Spirit of adoption. Because we are sons, He has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, enabling us to cry, "Abba, Father."

Now we continue to consider the privileges of the blessings of adoption, focusing our attention this morning on what I have chosen to identify this way: the promise of our Father's provision. And in terms of how it unfolds in the actual preaching, I will address the substance of the promise of our Father's provision, the context of the promise of our Father's provision, and the conditions of the promise of our Father's provision.

First of all, then, the substance of the promise of our Father's provision. Among the many promises of our heavenly Father by which He has committed Himself to supply all the needs of His children, there are two I want to examine together with you this morning. One of them focuses upon the spiritual needs of the children of God, and the other, primarily though not exclusively, upon their material or their temporal needs. And what I want to do this morning is to open up these two promises of our Father's provision and to persuade you as the people of God to believe them, to plead them continually before the throne of grace, and then to live in the expectation of their fulfillment in your life.

Now the first of those promises is imbedded in the passage that I read in your hearing, Romans 8:32, a verse in which the Apostle is arguing from the greater to the lesser: "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not also with Him freely give us all things?" Now consider with me, first of all, the greatness of the Father's gift (that's the first half of the verse), and secondly, the guarantee of the Father's provision (that's the last half of the verse). Look now with me at the greatness of the Father's gift. Note, first of all, the person with whom the Father is dealing. Our text says, "He that spared not His own Son." It does not say, "He that spared not the Son." If it said that, we would know exactly to whom Paul is referring. He would be referring to the Son of the Father, even our Lord Jesus Christ. But He doesn't say that. He writes, "He that spared not His own Son," the Son whom the Father loved from all eternity, the Son concerning whom the Father spoke when He was incarnate, had grown into manhood, stands in the waters of Jordan and says, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased." In the Gospel John, chapter 3, verse 25 and again in 5:20, we read, "The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand." And there was this growing love with every act of the Son's obedience in His incarnate life. The Father's love for the Son deepens, so that we read in John 10:17: "Therefore, does the Father love Me because I lay down My life that I may take it again." So when the Lord Jesus culminates His obedience to His death upon the cross, and He is abandoned by the Father, handed over--as we'll see in our text--He was never more loved by the Father. The greatness of the Father's gift is founded upon the reality of the depth of the Father's love for the Son. ("He that spared not His own Son....")

It is with His own Son that the Father is dealing with the procurement of our redemption. And notice the two things that are said about His dealings with His Son. Negative: He spared Him not. Positive: He delivered Him up for us all.

He spared Him not. To spare is to withhold what is due. We have the little saying, "Spare the rod and spoil the child." What do we mean when we use that terminology? Withhold proper punishment to a child, to spare a child. If a judge spares a criminal, he does not hand him over to the just desert of that criminal's crime. And here we are told that the Father did not spare His own Son. All that justice demanded was completely, unreservedly poured out upon Jesus that we might not only be justified, but that we might be adopted. For remember, we have seen it is on the basis of the redemptive work of Christ that God is able to adopt us as His children. He spared Him not. All that justice demanded was vented upon the Son.

But positively, He delivered Him up for us all. The Father delivered up the Son. It's the standard word for betrayal. (To hand Him over--"Judas who betrayed Him. Judas who delivered Him up.") And here Paul is underscoring that it was the Father in the context of the depth of His love for His Son who did not spare Him, but He delivered Him up for us all. Delivered Him up to what? Delivered him up, first of all, to the hands of wicked men. In Acts 2:23, Peter preaching on the day of Pentecost said, "Him being delivered up by the foreknowledge of God, you by wicked hands have crucified and have slain Him." He delivered Him over to the hands of wicked men. He delivered Him up to the powers of darkness. In Luke 22:53, Jesus said, "This is your hour and the power of darkness." And it was the Father who handed over the Son to the malevolent disposition and activity of demonic powers and all the powers of hell, so that the Scripture tells us Christ was grappling with those powers and conquered those powers in His death upon the cross. And above all, He delivered Him up to the fury of His own wrath. As one servant of God stated it, "It was damnation and abandonment which sin deserved." A man of God from another generation wrote, "Who delivered up Jesus to die? Not Judas for money, not Pilate for fear, not the Jews for envy, but the Father for love. 'He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.'" And one has written,

"It is only as the ordeal of Gethsemane and Calvary is viewed in this perspective of damnation vicariously borne, damnation executed with the sanctions of unrelenting justice, damnation endured when the hosts of darkness were released to wreak the utmost their vengeance, only then will we be able to apprehend the wonder and taste the sweetness of love that passes knowledge, love eternally to be explored, but eternally inexhaustible--explored for all eternity. Text such as these, we will never reach the bottom of them: 'He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.' That's the greatness of the Father's gift."

And what was the intention in all of this? To what end did the Father spare Him not, but deliver Him up for us all, for the people of God? What was God's intention? Well, it was that they might eventually be glorified. He had just said in verse 30, "Whom He foreordained, them He also called, whom He called, He justified, whom He justified, them He also glorified." Hebrews chapter 2 says that the Captain of our salvation in bringing many sons to glory had to suffer. He suffered to bring many sons to glory. Or in the language of John 6:38-40, "I came down from heaven not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. This is the will of Him that sent me, that of all He has given Me, I should lose nothing, but raise it at the last day." He came to actually save His people, not just to provide salvation for everyone indiscriminately and hope that they would accept it. He came down from heaven to save His people. "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." So when the Father delivers Him up for us all, He delivers Him up that by His death on our behalf, we might actually possess a salvation that would bring us into the presence of God.

Glorified, sinless souls inhabiting deathless bodies, and that forever. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all." That's the greatness of the Father's gift.

But now notice, secondly, the guarantee of the Father's provision. Look at the text: "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not also with Him freely give us all things?" Here's the guarantee of the Father's provision. All things are to be given with Christ. Christ has been given to us, the people of God, in the beauty of His person, in the perfection of His work. But with Him, God is committed in His promised provision to give us all things with Christ.

And what are the all things? Cadillacs, 5 bedroom homes, 3 or 4 bathrooms? No, no, in the context, everything necessary to bring me home to glory. If He gave Him up and did not spare Him that He might have a righteous basis to justify us and adopt us, "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" With the gift of His Son, He is committed to give us everything necessary to bring us at last home to glory, and to give it to us as a gift of grace. Look at the text: "how shall He not with Him also freely give us...?" That's an attempt to translate that Greek word (?) to give as an expression of grace, of unmerited favor and kindness, to give us every single thing needed that we might be brought home to glory.

What's needed? Well, my Bible tells me he that endures to the end, the same shall be saved. If I'm to be glorified, I must persevere in the way of holiness and obedience. With Him, He will freely give to me this thing called persevering grace. If I'm to be brought home to glory, I must overcome the world. He that overcomes the world, the Scripture says, is a child of God. "This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith." How will I overcome a seductive world constantly seeking to draw me down and to encase me in its perspectives and its goals? "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

A wily devil prowling about, seeking whom he may devour, whom resist steadfast in the faith. Where will the grace be found to resist the devil, to resist the seductive world, to resist the power of my own indwelling sin and maintain a course of personal holiness and growing conformity to Christ? Here's our text. Here's the promise of the Father's provision: "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

Child of God, as surely as you have been given an irreversible and inviolable status as a son or daughter of the living God, you have been given the privilege of being brought into the family of God with Christ as your elder Brother, an heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ. And you've received the Spirit of adoption, giving you the disposition that enables you to call God "Abba, Father." You and I are to take hold of this promise of the Father's provision.

He gave His Son, a person. Everything else is a thing. Your perseverance in holiness, your perseverance in overcoming the world, your perseverance in resisting the devil, meeting all those conditions that God says are absolutely necessary if you're going to get to heaven. They're not optional. Holiness is not optional. "Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord." Overcoming the world is not optional. Resisting the devil is not optional. They are necessary, but those are things. He gave His Son.

How shall He not with Him also give us all of the things that are necessary? With Christ, He has given us all things in the word of His promise.

If there were a wealthy man who for no reason that you could ever discover set his affection upon you and said, "I want to give you \$10,000, no strings attached." And he sits down with you at a table, and he marks out the money in 50 dollar bills; there all stacked there. And you say, "What's the catch?" He says, "No catch. It's yours. Out of the goodness and grace of my heart, it's all yours." Would you be reluctant and think you were imposing upon his generosity to ask him for a paper bag to put the money in? "I'm not sure I can ask him. I mean, you know, a paper bag is a paper bag. And I don't want to presume upon his kindness and his generosity." Come off it, he's given you the \$10,000, no strings attached. Ask him for ten bags.

He that spared not His own Son, the beloved of His heart. Think what it meant to the Father to hear His Son cry, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me!" What did that mean to the Father? That's His well-beloved Son, the one of whom He spoke and said, "This is My Son, My beloved, in whom I am well-pleased." But He spared Him not. When it was time for the Son to bare in His soul the punishment against our sin, and to be plunged into the abyss and the darkness of abandonment by His Father. He spared Him not. He delivered Him up. How shall this God not with His Son freely give us all things, everything necessary to bring us through this life and into glory? That's the promise of our Father's provision.

Child of God, He argues from the greater to the lesser. And He wants you, and He wants me in the struggles and in the defeats and in the discouragements and in the perplexities of the Christian life to come before Him and say,

"O my Father, Abba, Father, You did not spare Your own Son. You delivered Him up to the hands of wicked men, to the powers of darkness, to Your own wrath unleashed in fury upon Your Son. O my Father, will You not with Him, in addition to Him, give me the grace I need to conquer this sin, this sin that is an impediment to my growth in grace, this sin that is a barrier to my ongoing conformity to Christ. O my Father, give me the grace in union with Your Son to conquer this sin, to mortify this sin."

When there is pressure from the world in this or that area to conform in your thinking and in your ambitions and in your desires to say, "O God, help me to see this world for what it is. And with Your Son, give me the all things of grace to be an overcomer. Have You not said, 'This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.'? And I would trust You, my Father, to give me the grace to overcome." This is the promise of our Father's provision of everything needful to bring us through this world and safely home to glory. And God delights when as the people of God, we hold the promise up before Him and say, "Father, this is Your commitment to me as Your child. I hold You to it. Fulfill it in me by Your grace."

Now then, turn with me to the second promise of our Father's provision. And that's found in Philippians 4. This first one we looked at relates primarily to the Father's provision of every spiritual need that we have as the people of God. Now we come to Philippians 4:17-20. You remember the circumstances. Paul is in prison at Rome. The church at Philippi that has had a special place in his heart for years has sent a gift by the hand of a man named Epaphroditus. And Paul is basically writing a thank you letter. This letter of the Philippians is Paul's extended thank you letter to that church. And he says,

"[In reminding me of your kindness to me, I'm not just throwing out hints that you'll send some more money and stuff.] Not that I seek for the gift; but I seek for the fruit that increases to your account. But I have all things, and abound: I am filled, having received from Epaphroditus the things that came from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God. And my God shall supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Now unto our God and Father be the glory for ever and ever. Amen."

This gift has come from the church at Philippi by the hands of Epaphroditus. Paul likens the gift in Old Testament terminology to a sacrifice that had a sweet order in the nostrils of God. It's very interesting. He uses the same terminology of the sacrifice of Christ in Ephesians 5, verses 1 and 2: "Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odor of a sweet smell." Did you ever think that burnt flesh was a sweet smell? It's acrid. It's terrible. But the burnt flesh of an offering given to God is a sweet smell in the nostrils of God. And Paul says that this gift that came out of the poverty of the people of God at Philippi (for they were a part of those churches that Paul makes reference to in 2 Corinthians 8) who were generous of their giving and gave out of their poverty. It was an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God. And then to encourage them, he gives them this wonderful promise. And here we have in the language of this text another commitment of our God and Father with respect to meeting the needs of His people. And I want you to notice three things: the certainty of the Father's provision, the measure of the Father's provision, and the end or goal of the Father's provision.

First of all, the certainty of the Father's provision. Thinking now of those Philippians who had given generously that Paul's need might be met, Paul says, "And my God [it's very interesting that he speaks of God in this personal way. This is not an ordinary way of Paul's speaking] shall supply every need of yours." Here is the certainty of the Father's provision. Now when he says, "My God shall supply every need of yours," is he thinking primarily of material things or of spiritual or of both? Well, look up to verse 16: "for even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my need." It's the same word in the original: "You sent to my need, my material need. I needed things to carry on my ministry. You sent and supplied my need" So in terms of the context, I believe it is right for us to say the primary emphasis of this passage is our heavenly Father's word to the Philippians, that with respect to their material needs, there is a certainty of the Father's provision. "My God shall supply every need of yours."

Now, secondly, I believe it's spiritual because the Apostle himself did not have his God at all times supplying his needs. Earlier in the chapter, look at verses 10-12:

"But I rejoice in the Lord greatly, that now at length you have revived your thought for me; wherein ye did indeed take thought, but you lacked opportunity. Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know also how to abound: in everything and in all things have I learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in want. I can do all things in Him that strengthens me."

There are times when Paul's God did not put food on His table. He went to bed hungry. That's what he's saying, plain as day: "There are times when my table was

empty. What did I do? I didn't grouse against God. I didn't doubt His promises of provision. I found in that secret." Notice he said, "I learned the secret." He came to grips with that reality of God's providential dealings, and he said, "I learned how to find contentment in both want and in plenty, and I found it in Him that strengthens me. I can do all things in Him that strengthens me." So when he now turns to the Philippians and says, "My God shall supply every need of yours," though the context puts the pressure upon a promise of the certainty of the Father's provision on material needs, it goes beyond that into circumstances where their material needs may not be met for a while. And Paul's God will provide for every need they have, even for the grace to learn the secret Paul learned: both to abound and to be in want. There's the certainty of the Father's provision.

You say, "Well, Pastor, that's God kind of covering His bases, isn't it?" Yes, it is because He's God. And there are lessons He has to teach His children in want that they cannot learn in plenty. And because God is concerned to teach us the sufficiency of His grace, there are times when He will press us so that with Paul, we will have to say,

"I've learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in want. I can do all things in Him that strengthens me. My Savior gives me strength to praise Him when I go to bed hungry. My Savior gives me grace to praise Him when I have want as well as to thank Him and to be grateful when I have plenty. But there is the certainty of the Father's provision."

The child of God will never lack grace from God to embrace the will of God.

But then notice the measure of the Father's provision. Look at the text. The certainty: "My God shall supply every need of yours." Here's the measure: "according to [the little Greek preposition kata, the measuring rod of God's supply] His riches in glory in Christ Jesus." There's the measure of the Father's provision. "God gave to me out of your relative poverty. But God will give to you out of His riches. You Philippians, you gave to me out of your poverty. God will give to you out of His riches."

And then the words "in glory" and "in Christ Jesus." I scoured every book in my library that had anything to say about Philippians 4:19, and I confess, I'm not sure what those two little prepositional phrases mean. "In glory in Christ Jesus" is a literal rendering of the Greek structure. But the measure of the Father's provision, I find myself this morning leaning toward considering the term "in glory" adverbally. So we could say, "My God shall supply all of your need gloriously." He's a great God. He's the God who owns the cattle on a thousand hills. He's the God who can make provision in ways we could never, never imagine. And so He'll supply your need gloriously. He'll do it in a way that manifests His glory, His wisdom, His power, His control over all people and all things.

Who would have ever thought that much of the generosity for the offering at Jerusalem would come from the crushing poverty of the saints in Macedonia? God was glorified. So Paul begins those two chapters I preached on last year by saying, "I want you to know the grace of God that was given to the churches at Macedonia, that out of their deep poverty, there was a richness of generosity." God was glorified by doing that. And it could be that this is what Paul is saying: the measure of the Father's provision will come out of who He is in Himself, a glorious God who can work gloriously in a way that manifests His glory. Trust Him, He's your heavenly

Father. And He has given a promise of His provision. And the measure of that provision is that He will do so gloriously.

But then He says, "in Christ Jesus". He's going to do it because of your connection to Jesus, because you're the real deal. That little phrase "in Christ Jesus" is one of the most significant phrases in all Scripture. It's a description of what a Christian is. Look at the opening verse of this letter: "Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus that are at Philippi." Paul's description of a real Christian is that it's someone in union with Christ Himself, not someone who's made a decision about Christ, someone who believes a string of things concerning Christ, but someone who is in Christ, in vital union with the Son of God, a union that from the human standpoint is effected by the embrace of faith, faith that takes a whole Christ with a whole heart, and from the divine standpoint, by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit who unites us vitally and truly to Jesus Christ. Romans 8 makes that abundantly clear: "And if Christ is in you [speaking of the Holy Spirit's indwelling]...." So Paul says to the Philippians, "Here's the measure of the Father's provision. He will supply all of your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Because of your connection with Christ, because you are united to Christ, because you belong to Christ Jesus, this promise is yours."

Then Paul points to the end or goal of the Father's provision. Look at it in verse 20: "Now unto our God [and he doesn't stop there] and Father be the glory for ever and ever." In the light of the promise He has made, what's the great end of all of it, that God our Father who is committed to provide for his children, that this God would be glorified in the midst of His children and by the praise of His children. He is contemplating this promise. He says, "My God--this is what He will do. And He does it as a faithful, loving heavenly Father." And so he says the great end of this provision is that God will be glorified. "Unto our God and Father be the glory forever and ever."

And then he adds a word, and he says, "Amen." He doesn't put it on as just something that is a little bit of filler. His heart is so taken up with this prospect, that as God fulfills His promise as a faithful Father to the Philippians, supplying their every need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus, this God will be glorified, He will be praised, He will be honored. Then Paul says, "So be it." And he adds his own amen as an affirmation of his heart, that this is the great longing of His own inner being, that in fulfilling this promise, God will be glorified and praised among the Philippians, by the Philippians, by the Apostle when he hears of God fulfilling that promise. And this is the great passion of his heart. "Amen [so be it, let it be]."

So child of God, this is your Father's promise of provision to you if.... I'm going to pause for just a few moments and deal with this "if." Remember who the Philippians were. They were not a bunch of fat cats sitting back indulging themselves, indifferent to the work of the Gospel, unconcerned about God's servants and the progress of the Gospel. No, when you read this letter, Paul can say as he does in this first chapter, that his heart was particularly bound up with these people. And he was thankful for this fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until now. He tells them later on in the letter that "you're the only church that stood with me when I went forth." Maybe it was a case where Paul made an exception to be supported by them, when ordinarily he did not take support from the people. But be that as it may, this church had a peculiar concern and interest in the spread of the Gospel, in the servant of God. They did not have their noses stuck in their own navels. They were Gospel-oriented; they were missionary-oriented. And now once again they send to the Apostle's needs, and he

says, "You Philippians, living in that way, with that outward-looking, Gospel-obsessed passion and desire, God will not be your debtor. God will supply all of your need."

And in great measure, I believe it is right to say that disposition marks the vast majority of you sitting here this morning. And as it does, and you continue in your commitment to give principally, deliberately, sacrificially to the work of God, you have every right to plant your feet on this promise and say, "God, this is what You said. You have said You would supply every need of mine according to Your riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Now Father, bring it to pass. This is Your promise." As surely as you plant your feet for the meeting of your spiritual needs upon Romans 8:32, argue with God and say, "God You did not spare Your Son. You gave the greatest gift. You gave Him. Anything else is a thing. Now Lord, I need this thing. And You have said if You spared not Your Son, how shall You not with Him freely give us all things, everything necessary to get me safely to heaven. Lord, this is Your promise. I stand upon it."

And then with regard to your temporal and physical needs, take this promise of Philippians 4:19 and stand upon it. Stand upon it in the presence of God and plead it before Him. And trust Him to fulfill it, and to fulfill it in such a way that glory and honor and praise will be brought to this great God and Father who is committed for the provision of all the needs of His dear children.

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