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Sermon Notes

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Adopted Children of God

Romans 8:14-17

Intro: The Lavish Love of Adoption

Abortion an essentially hopeless act

Many women speak of having “No choice” while pro-abortion people speak of “Pro-choice”

Adoption Nation: Donna was lying on a surgical table at an abortion clinic in 1986 when she realized that adoption was the only alternative she could live with. She could barely believe she had walked into this place to begin with; just a few years earlier, after all, she had been president of a Right to Life chapter at her high school. "I was on my back there for what seemed like the longest time, talking to God out loud, asking him, 'What am I doing here?'" she recalls. When the doctor finally approached her, Donna bolted upright and raised her voice: "You will not touch me!" Donna had fallen in love with "Mr. Wonderful" while she was a 20-year-old junior at the University of Kentucky. Two months later she was pregnant, he was gone, and her sister persuaded her to temporarily move in with her in Nashville, so she would have some support while considering what to do. After she left the abortion clinic, Donna began to learn about adoption.

Adoption is a ray of hope for two desperate situations... first, for women like Donna; second, for countless infertile couples around the country, desperate to hold a baby in their arms

Even better, adoption is the very thing God has done for us in Christ

I. Adoption: The Highest Honor of the Gospel

A. Every Spiritual Blessing

Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus!

B. This The Most Amazing

1 John 3:1-2 How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God...

1. God could have justified us without adopting us!!
2. God could have brought us to heaven as His servants!!
3. God did not have to bestow His name on us
4. This is shocking! An amazing blessing! Be stunned O heavens, be amazed O earth, that God should take US to be children of God
5. Remember how Romans described us earlier

Romans 3:10-18 "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips." "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness." "Their feet are swift to shed blood; 16 ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know." "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

The Grace of God has brought us a long way from that status!!! Now we are beloved, adopted children of God!!

C. Liberal Misuse: Everyone a “Child of God”

1. Fatherhood of God, Brotherhood of Man
2. Simply by being a human being
3. Great efforts in social justice... a big advantage
 - a. liberals led the way in the “social gospel”
 - b. widows, orphans, the poor ministered to because all were “children of God”

Illus. Mother Theresa, “Sees Jesus in everyone...” Jesus wearing a difficult disguise today

- c. BUT since they were already children of God, the gospel didn’t need to be preached at all!!
4. Problem: misunderstanding of the Gospel itself

- a. Jesus preached the Gospel above all else

Mark 6:34 When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.

- b. social gospel not enough... not enough just to eat the loaves and have your fill
- c. repentance and faith required or wrath would come

D. Immense Privileges, Incredible Promises, Great Responsibilities

E. Central Question of Existence: Am I A Child of God??

- 1. All humanity in two groups: Children of God, Children of the Devil

[Jesus, to the Pharisees who sought to kill him] John 8:44 "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning..."

1 John 3:10 By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

- 2. At one point, we too belonged to the devil's family

Ephesians 2:1-3 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

- 3. By simple faith in Christ, we become children of God

John 1:12-13 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

NOTE: the right to BECOME a child of God... no one is born a child of God, and it is an immense privilege to be called a child of God... we are given this privilege by simple faith in Jesus Christ... simply by believing in Christ's name, by receiving Him by faith

II. Am I a Child of God?

A. Those Who Receive Christ by Faith

1. John's clear testimony

John 1:12-13 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

2. Paul's consistent doctrine

a. in Romans

Romans 3:28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.

Romans 4:3 What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ

b. in Galatians

Galatians 3:26 You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus

Simply, you hear the Gospel of Christ... of His being made man, of His miraculous life, of His substitutionary death, of His physical resurrection... and you believe in Him! You receive Him as Lord and Savior! You see yourself united with Him by faith

If so, the Bible calls you a "child of God"

B. Those Who Are Led by His Spirit

vs. 14 FOR all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

1. Absolutely essential to our assurance... are we daily led by the Holy Spirit??

2. Do we see step by step growth in godliness through putting sin to death??

vs. 13-14 ...for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. FOR all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

3. In context, the “leading of the Spirit” is the internal work of the Holy Spirit in causing you to put sin to death in your life
4. Refers to STRONG GUIDANCE, a program of growth into Christlikeness

Illus. New York City fireman on September 11, 2001... General Washington crossing the icy Delaware River into Trenton on December 26, 1776 ... then commanding them to attack Princeton

5. Spirit communicates the way of holiness and causes you to walk in it

Isaiah 35:8 And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness. The unclean will not journey on it; it will be for those who walk in that Way; wicked fools will not go about on it.

Isaiah 20:21-22 Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it."

6. “Live by the Spirit”... Galatians

Galatians 5:16, 25 So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.... Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

Being “led by the Spirit” means a day by day guidance into a life of holiness in imitation of Christ

7. How does the Spirit lead?
 - a. same word used of donkey and colt Jesus rode on

Matthew 21:2 Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me.

- b. Spirit’s leadership different... He leads by wisdom and truth

Psalm 32:8-9 I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you. Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you.

Proverbs 4:11 I guide you in the way of wisdom and lead you along straight paths.

He instructs us in the way we should go... He teaches us the right way... he counsels you and watches over your every step... when you go the right way, He commends you and encourages you. When you stray from the path of wisdom, He corrects you. When you willfully wander away, He rebukes and disciplines you

c. He leads also by love and goodness

Hosea 11:4 I led them with cords of human kindness, with ties of love; I lifted the yoke from their neck and bent down to feed them.

His personality dwelling in you makes sin a very personal issue... he feels slapped in the face when you sin, and he makes you feel that too

Illus. Imagine sign reading: "Do Not Enter" vs. your best friend standing and saying "Do not enter"

The law is no longer a dead letter on a page, but a living word from a God who has been good to you

d. He leads us as God led Israel through the desert

Psalm 78:13-16 He divided the sea and led them through; he made the water stand firm like a wall. He guided them with the cloud by day and with light from the fire all night. He split the rocks in the desert and gave them water as abundant as the seas; he brought streams out of a rocky crag and made water flow down like rivers.

e. He leads us to glory and to the Father

Hebrews 2:10 In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering.

Illus. Daniel Boone & Cumberland Gap... "trailblazer"; the Spirit of Christ is our guide

John 14:4-6 You know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

The Spirit of Christ leads you along the path of Christ to the Father of Christ!! This is how the Spirit leads you

If you are not "led by the Spirit" you are not a child of God!!

C. Those Who Cry "Abba, Father" by His Spirit

vs. 15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"

1. God's Spirit moves in you to call God your Father
2. You cry out "Daddy" to God... the birth cries of a true child of God

Illus. Picking up Nathaniel at a church's nursery... always the issue of identification, a whole system of tickets for security; Nathaniel looked at me, smiled and cried out "Daddy!!" with his arms out to me! This is what the Spirit moves in us to say to God Almighty!!!

3. Not a spirit of slavery at all!! No fear in this love relationship
4. A Spirit of Adoption! Precious, electing, selecting love!

Illus. Friends who have adopted three minority special needs babies and taken them as their own
One of the greatest pictures of God's electing adopting love

If you feel the cry of the Spirit within saying "Daddy!!" to God, you are a child of God

D. Those Who Receive the Internal Witness by His Spirit

vs. 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God

1. A testimony from the indwelling Spirit: "You are a child of God"
2. No limit to what to Spirit can do in this area

Romans 5:5 "God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit whom He has given us."

Thomas Goodwin: He describes a man and his little child, his son walking down the road and they are walking hand in hand. And the child knows he is the child of his father, and he knows that the father loves him, and he rejoices in that, and he is happy in it. There is no uncertainty about it at all. BUT SUDDENLY the father, moved by some impulse, takes hold of that child and picks him up, fondles him in his arms, kisses him, embraces him, showers his love upon him and then he puts him down again, and they go on walking together.

Also Jonathan Edwards, Blasie Pascal, D.L. Moody!! AND Paul...

2 Corinthians 12:2-4 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know--God knows. ³ And I know that this man--whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows-- ⁴ was caught up to paradise. He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell.

3. "My spirit" is my own self, my conscience, my soul

Formerly, my conscience testified against me that I was a transgressor of the Law

Now, my conscience agrees with the Spirit that a radical transformation has occurred in me

If you have no such internal witness that you are a child of God, you may not be one... this is so vital, so crucial!!

E. Those Who Suffer With Christ by His Spirit

vs. 17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him

1. Sufferings required!! No suffering, no kingdom
2. Sufferings common to man
 - a. wrestling with cursed ground for daily livelihood
 - b. suffering from decaying bodies and physical sickness
 - c. suffering from death to loved ones
 - d. suffering from financial trials
 - e. relational difficulties
 - f. myriad trials of everyday life... power outages, car trouble, fires, floods, famines, accidents

These are NOT what Paul is referring to here

3. TWO TYPES OF SUFFERING UNIQUE TO CHRISTIANS:
 - a. suffering from temptation in a quest for a perfectly holy life

Hebrews 2:18 Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Christians must suffer temptation, bear up under it, not yield to it... fight, fight, fight!!! And this is HARD

- b. suffering from persecution from a world that hates God

John 15:18-19 "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. 19 If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.

2 Timothy 3:12 everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted

1 Peter 4:12-14 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. 13 But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. 14 If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

Temptation and Persecution are sufferings unique to Christians

If you are not suffering them at all, you will not reign with Christ at all

Illus. Elizabeth Elliot: "Hast thou no wound, no scar...?"

III. What Are My Privileges As a Child of God?

- A. Eternal Life
- B. Title
- C. Love Relationship with the Father
- D. Free Access to the Throne
- E. Discipline
- F. Provision
- G. Protection
- H. Fellowship with the Royal Family
- I. Freedom
 - 1. From Law
 - 2. From Sin
 - 3. From Fear (of condemnation)
 - 4. From Final Corruption and Death
- J. Immense Inheritance
 - 1. Throne Itself
 - 2. Kingdom
 - 3. Possessions
- K. Glory

IV. What Are My Responsibilities As a Child of God?

vs. 12 "Therefore, my brothers, we have an obligation."

- A. Imitating the Father's Nature
- B. Bearing the Father's Name
- C. Doing the Father's Work
- D. Facing the Father's Enemies

V. Summary

The immense blessings of adoption... adopted into the very family of God!!

A. Are You a Child of God?

- Have You Received Christ by Faith?
- Are You Led by His Spirit Daily to Put Sin to Death?
- Do You Call God “Abba, Father” by His Spirit?
- Have You Received the Internal Witness by His Spirit
- Do You Suffer With Christ by His Spirit: Temptation & Persecution

B. Do You Understand Your Privileges As a Child of God?

Eternal Life—Title—Love Relationship with the Father—Free Access to the Throne—Discipline—Provision—Protection—Fellowship with the Royal Family—Freedom—Immense Inheritance—Glory

C. Are You Fulfilling Your Responsibilities As a Child of God?

Imitating the Father’s Nature: Holiness and Love

Bearing the Father’s Name

Doing the Father’s Work

Facing the Father’s Enemies

ABORTION: World Magazine: “stalemate”... NO... ongoing defeat!

2 Timothy 1:6 For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.