

Adoption

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 27 October 2011

Preacher: Daniel Swanson

[0 : 00] Hey, how's everyone doing tonight? Thanks so much for being here. This is such an honor. If we could just pray really quickly for our time. Father, thank you so much for this night that you've given to us, Lord.

Thank you for the message that your word just tells us, Lord. So much hope and love. Father, I pray that you would be with us in this room tonight, that you would speak to us through your word. And God, we would just praise you at the end of the night. We thank you so much, and we love you. Amen. So again, thank you so much just for joining me. This is such an honor. And in the back of the room, there is like a box of rotten fruit.

So if things get really dumb and just really bad and blasphemous, you can just chuck this here. But honestly, I wanted to start off the night with a question.

I'm just posed to everyone in the room. If you were talking with a friend who would say they don't trust in Christ with their life and wouldn't call themselves a Christian in their life, isn't really evident of it. And you had to explain to them why trusting in Christ was so vital, why it was so life-giving, why it changes your life.

[1 : 11] But you couldn't use heaven as a reason. Like, what would you tell them? We're going to revisit this question throughout our time together. And I hope that tonight's message is one that is encouraging and also challenging.

So we're talking about the doctrine of adoption tonight. But in order to really talk about adoption, we have to really come to the uncomfortable truth that at one point we weren't children of God and we weren't a part of the family of God.

So it's just something that no one wants to really, really talk about. But at one point we weren't sons. We weren't daughters of God. We weren't in the family of God. And it's not simply that we were just neutral before we entered into the family of God.

It's not that we were just neutral and we weren't against God. It's a lot worse than that. It's a lot more awful and it's a lot more glorious. So what did the Bible say about us before we were actually children of God?

And unfortunately tonight, I don't have to go into too many details because if you've been here, then you've been tracking with what Clay and what John have been talking about as far as our depravity and our need for God and why we need Christ in general.

[2 : 23] But I just wanted to kind of give a few verses just to paint the picture a little bit more clear tonight so that we can know what we're working from. So just three characteristics of what we were before we were in Christ.

The Bible says that we were slaves in Galatians 4 verse 3. So you really don't have to turn anywhere. You can just back up a verse. And it says, In the same way also, when we were children, we were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world.

And it also says the same thing in Titus 3.3 if you're taking notes. The second characteristic is that we're dead. And so not, I mean, obviously we're all alive, that we're all, you know, we're all breathing and our bodies are functioning.

But spiritually, the Bible calls us dead. And so you can, and you can find that in Ephesians 2.1. It says, and you are dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh.

But it also says in, it also says that we're enemies of the gospel. Another reference verse is James 4 verse 4. So we're working from this standpoint that we were at one point.

[3 : 25] And the thing is that this is how the Bible describes us before we were in Christ. And, and so a lot of us have been brought from that into life. And a lot of us in this room are also still in that state.

At least that's what the Bible says about us. And that if you haven't trusted Christ within your life, and you don't, and if you're not a Christian, or if you don't follow Jesus, then it describes us in those ways.

It says that we're slaves. It says that we're dead. It says that we're enemies. And no one wants to embrace this verse. That's not obviously a warm verse to talk about. It doesn't make us feel good inside.

But, but that's what we were working from. That's the truth. That's what the Bible talks about us.

Um, so we have that crucial background set up. We have this background of that.

We were slaves, that we were dead, that we were enemies. We have that set up in the background.

Um, and so now let's define adoption, which is what we're talking about and see like, why is it important? Um, and so simply put adoption is an act of God whereby he makes us members of his family.

[4 : 27] That's it. So it's like, if you just forget everything else, if you just like pass out for the rest of the night, it's like, that's what we're talking about. It's like we were made into the family of God. Um, so it's important to define adoption because it's, it's frequently confused with a lot of other meanings.

Like people confuse adoption with us being saved. Like our, the words are a regeneration and justification, but it's not, it's not those things. It's not that we're talking tonight about when Christ redeemed us, when we were saved, but it's going a step further than that.

Um, because adoption is not the act of God making us right before him. And it's not the act of when he declared as vindicated of all sin and blame, vindicated of being enemies and slaves and, and dead.

Um, verse five of Galatians four makes it clear that adopt, that we were adopted into the family after we were made right before him. Um, just read that verse really quickly.

Um, verse four, I mean, uh, verse five, it says to redeem those who were under the law so that we might become sons. We might receive adoption as sons. So it came after.

[5 : 29] So we were saved by God. We were taken from our, from our dead state. We were, so we're saved from God. And then we were brought into his family. So, I mean, like that's just, we need to clear that up right now. Um, but, but why is that important?

Why is the order important? Like, why is it important at all? Um, like, why is it that Christ, that God had to take us from that? That sinful state and bring us into his family.

It's important because like, like, let's just think about like the God that we just sang a song to. I was like a God who's like infinitely perfect and holy and blameless. And it's like, we can't just bring in like a simple man, like straight into his presence.

It's like we, we, the fact is that if you've been redeemed by Christ, you have his righteousness over you. So it's not that we're just merely brought into God's family because like God is so perfect and holy.

Um, so we must be made righteous by Christ sacrifice first. In order for him to welcome us into his family. Um, now I, I, I wanted to go a little bit further so that you guys know where I'm going to be going for the rest of the night.

[6 : 30] I'm going to have a definition that is going to be thrown up on the screen because it's so long and worried that I wanted us to be able to see it. Um, so the Westminster larger catechism defines adoption as an act of the free grace of God in and for his only son, Jesus Christ, whereby all those that are justified are received into the number of his children, have his name put upon them, the spirit of God given to them, are under his fatherly care and dispensations, admitted to all liberties and privileges of the son of God, as sons of God, made heirs of all the promises and fellow heirs with Christ and glory.

Um, so, yeah, I know that was really wordy. Um, so if you can, if you're able to catch all of that, um, I hope you were, but so then why is adoption so crucial and vital?

Um, to be honest, adoption is, is crucial to our understanding of God because without it, um, it changes our view of God completely. Like if you just, if we were just saved and justified and made right by Christ, but the adoption didn't come after that, like God didn't take us into his family, that would completely diminish the glory of God.

Um, and, and the remarkable thing is that many of us live our days as if adoption is non-existent and we don't even really notice it. Um, so, so let me explain what I mean by that.

Many of us have viewed or continue to view God, like many of us here tonight. Um, I know like myself, like at one point or still do view God as someone who is distant, uninvolved, uncaring, and unloving.

[8 : 06] Someone who we can run to when things get tough. Um, and someone who we only talk about in philosophy class and someone we only pray to before a meal. Um, but this is actually called deism.

This has a name. It's called deism. And it was, it was spawned in the 18th and 17th century in the, during the time of the age of enlightenment. I mean, basically just said, like, just to sum it up, it's this view that, that depicts God as a clockmaker.

If you've heard the idea of, of God as a clockmaker who designed the world, he, he put everything into it, designed the world, um, wound it up and then let it go on its course. And then just kind of like stepped back and kind of like does his own thing now.

And isn't really involved in our world at all. So, so deism may sound familiar to you because you heard about it in a history class, but the way it works into our lives and our thoughts is something like God saw our sin.

He sent Christ. He redeemed us. And now he just chills in heaven only to occasionally glance down and shake his head in disappointment when he sees our sin or our need. Um, the problem is that this worldview sends direct opposition to the act of adoption and it sells short the glory and greatness of our God.

[9 : 15] Now, many of us know that this isn't an accurate picture because we read about in scripture, like we know that God isn't a clockmaker and we know that he has a part in our lives, but few of us actually believe that, um, few of us believe that that's not a truthful picture of God.

Um, because if you say that you believe something, but you don't actually follow it out and doesn't affect your life, you don't believe it. Um, so I just kind of want to talk about like, what happens in adoption?

There are two things that happen in adoption. I mean, like first it's the old authority that we served was destroyed by Christ because we lived our whole lives in darkness. The old authority that we had served had to have been broken.

Um, if you're taking notes, references for that would be Ephesians two, verse two and second Corinthians five, verse 17. Um, we must be first released from darkness in order to be called children of God.

And this can only be done by God in order to come into light. We must be rescued from darkness. We see this work through justification and regeneration, um, where God, through his infinite wisdom and mercy and grace, uh, he broke the bonds of sin over us.

[10 : 30] Uh, like a really, really good passage that paints this picture really clearly. If you, you'll go to Colossians verse chapter two, um, verse 13, that's a little bit to the right. Okay. Okay.

It says in verse 13 of chapter two of Colossians and you who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands.

This, he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them in him. So that's like the first thing that happens like in, in, in the role of adoption is that God takes us from that slavery and he, and he brings us into, um, or he destroys that.

He makes a public mockery of it by triumphing over them in him. Um, and the second point, the second point is that God takes us.

So with this background of us being dead slaves, enemies, treasonous, um, sons of Raccoon and children of the devil like that. These are the verses that the Bible uses to describe us, um, before we are in Christ.

[11 : 51] Um, it takes those people, God takes those people and he brings us into his own family. Um, sorry.

Uh, so he takes us into his own family and restores that which was broken and lost by the fall. Um, and so this needs, I beg you, like this needs to hit you hard right now. Like this needs to hit you hard.

The fact that, that God takes us from that slavery, from that darkness and brings us into his family. Um, because the only thing that like I can compare this to perhaps is if a friend came up to you

every single day, walked up to you, slapped you in the face and took a nine iron to your shins and knees and said, sorry about that, pats you on the back and walks away.

You're lost. You have no clue why that happened. Then he comes back the next day and he does the exact same thing. And the thing is that there might be one or two people in here who are such forgiving souls, so holy that they can forgive that person and not hold it against them.

But for the rest of us, pagans, like I'm going to come looking for that person, probably with a bat and a couple of homeboys, you know? Um, and we're going to become a lot better friends.

[13:05] But the truth is, honestly, we take this same approach to God. Um, the truth is that we approach a perfect and sinless and holy God. And we do this exact same thing, except 10,000 times worse.

And like, that is the only thing I can compare it to. And so we do that same thing to God. So that same picture of the nine iron, like turn to Romans five really quickly. Um, it is a couple books to the left.

Um, verse six in chapter five, for while we were still weak at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly.

For one will scarcely die for a righteous person, though perhaps for a good person, one would dare even to die. But God shows his love for us. And that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Um, it says that God saw us. He saw us like that. And he sent his son to die for that person. Um, none of us are happy with being called evil and sinful people.

[14:19] No one wants to imagine themselves as the person that's taking the nine iron to the shins. Um, no one wants to really think about that because there's so many things that can distract us from, from, from going there.

Um, but it's like at the end of the day, that's exactly how the Bible describes us. And God sent his son to die for us exactly as we were. Did not say you need to clean up first and you need to make your life right.

And you need to go to church at least 10 more times before I can even consider making you a part of my family. Like, did not do that at all. Um, and if that does not send a shiver down your spine, if that doesn't hit home, if that doesn't mean anything to you, then it's possible that sin has numbed you to their reality.

Because that is honestly the greatest picture of love that you can ever come up with. Like, I don't care how good the notebook is. Like, it's nothing compared to that kind of love. Like, I'm dead serious, you know? Um, I have a friend who once told me that if he's like, he, he was afraid that if he had stepped foot into a church, he would burst into flames because of his sin.

Um, if you also think that you are too far gone, like if you are too far gone from grace, find me after the service and we'll debate which one of us is the worst sinner.

[15:28] And I will win because my life is so jacked up. Um, so now it's like the, the great thing is that we need to talk about the privileges of being a part of God's family.

Um, because God's love and grace is as good as it sounds. Like, I'm not just describing something to you that's romantic and written in a book that's not true and doesn't hold any weight over our lives. Like, this is exactly what has happened.

Um, and it's almost too hard for me to comprehend sometimes. And it makes me question whether or not that's actually real because that's just, I don't know anything like that. Um, so that question that I asked at the very beginning, um, about if you could, if you had to convince someone, you had to talk to them about what was so great about being a Christian, what we, and you couldn't use heaven as an example.

Um, like that question, let's revisit that right now. Let's turn to Matthew four, verse 17. Matthew four, 17.

From that time, Jesus began to preach saying, repent for the kingdom of heaven will come when you will all die and miss out on everything fun and neon in life. It doesn't say that.

[16:58] Okay. Well, no, like that's not it at all. Like you just said, if your Bible says the exact same thing that my Bible says, your Bible says, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. So how does the kingdom start now and never end?

Um, I mean, I have four points that we're going to go through, like four privileges. There's, there's a lot more, but these are just kind of condensed that we can talk about tonight. Um, the first one is we get to know God as our father and as our daddy.

John 17, verse three, you don't have to turn there real quickly. I will, because I don't have it. Bookmark. Um, John 17, verse three says, um, and this is eternal life.

They know you, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. No, that this is eternal life, that they may know you. Now, um, for a lot of us, this isn't difficult to find.

This is very difficult to find appealing because the best thing for God to give from, give to us, which is himself is usually like the last thing that we really actually want. Um, a verse, I mean, you don't have to go.

[18:13] There's Psalm 73, verse 23, 24 through 26, which says like, whom have I in heaven, but you, and there's nothing on earth. I desire besides you for my flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the portion and my strength forever.

Uh, C.S. Lewis said it really, really good. C.S. Lewis is the guy who wrote Narnia. I'm in a lot of other great, um, books. Um, he says, we are halfhearted creatures fooling around with drink and lust and ambition.

When infinite joy is offered to us like an ignorant child. He wants to keep on making mud pies, in the slums because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a vacation at the beach.

So the first point that we get to know God is our father and our daddy. The second point is that God loves us and understands us. Now, this is also a foreign concept for some of us to understand because for some of us, our earthly fathers never communicated to us that they care about the things that we care about.

And they never communicated, communicated to us that they love us. Uh, I have the great privilege, privilege of having two awesome parents who are here in the back room, embarrassing me. Um, but, uh, I love them to death.

[19:24] And, and, and the fact is that they did show that, but the honest truth is that for a lot of us here, like, that's not the case. Like a lot of us, like you didn't have an earthly father who was there, who took an interest in the things that you cared about and, and, and said, I love you.

Um, so this is like really hard for us to understand because we frequently apply the, our earthly fathers to our heavenly father. Um, Hebrews 4, 15 is a great verse to check out for that.

Um, but one that we're going to be that you guys don't have to turn to that I've got here is Jeremiah 1, 11. Um, and so this verse isn't strikingly significant, but it is important because in this verse, like God addresses Jeremiah by name.

And, and I know that we're all thinking, well, of course, like he's in the Bible. Of course he's going to address him by name, but that doesn't make any sense at all. Like it's just, this is Jeremiah. Who's really no one. And God says to him, and the word of the Lord came to me saying, Jeremiah, what do you see?

Um, that sends shivers down my spine. Every time I read it, because I would assume that the God of the universe has a lot more important things to do, like direct flaming death ball comments away from hitting the earth or keeping our universe from being stuck into oblivion.

[20:34] Um, but the fact is that he knew Jeremiah's name and he knows my name and he knows your name. Like, just let that sit in just for a second. The God of the universe who's made all of this, like knows your name and cares about the things that you care about.

Thirdly, he cares for our needs and he gives us good gifts. Um, Matthew seven, verse seven through 11. Um, really quickly, if you just want to turn there.

verse seven, ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find knock and it will be open to you for everyone who asks, receives the one who seeks finds into the one who knocks, it will be opened.

Or which one of you, if his stone, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asked for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him? Yeah. Like, unfortunately, like the truth is that like Satan has planted this lie, like deep in everyone's minds, including mine, that God does not want to give you good things, is not interested in your life, does not care about you, and is not as good as his word says he actually is.

[22:09] And the sad thing is that we've all bought into it. Fourth and last point that I have is that God gives us the privilege of suffering for his name.

Wow, it just got like really, really heavy in here because everyone was with me for the first three points and was psyched about those. But now that I said suffering for his name, it's like, where are

those rotten tomatoes that you falsely promised us?

Um, but here's the truth. The word of God is at odds with the world and has been since the fall of man.

We can dress up the gospel as cool as we like, and we can put on our tight jeans and our level five deep V necks and our flashing lights and sound.

But at the end of the day, the gospel is offensive to this world. If you don't believe me, then I would suggest reading the latter half of the gospels where Christ gets crucified. It's not popular to be a follower of Jesus, nor has it ever been.

[23 : 17] Jesus promised suffering because he suffered and he was murdered. So, but, but, but so why is suffering a privilege then? Like, why, why is it that I included on this list of suffering being a privilege?

Um, and here's why. Um, um, turn to, or actually, yeah, turn to John 14 verse 18, since I think we're already kind of in that book or were at one point.

So this is like the context, like, let's just set this up really quickly.

This is Christ talking to his disciples right before he's about to be delivered up to, um, the Pharisees and those that are about to flog and crucify him. Um, so, so that's the setting.

And, and so he's telling his disciples that he's about to go away and he's about to be crucified. They don't really understand what he's saying. Um, but he says in verse 18, he says, I will not leave you as orphans.

[24 : 23] I will come to you. Now, the original Greek word there is orphanos, which means parentless or comfortless. I will not leave you comfortless or parentless. Um, so let's back up two verses, um, to verse 16.

And I will ask the father and he will give you another helper to be with you forever. Um, now another Greek root word, um, is this word helper translates to parakletos, which means comforter or advocate.

Um, we rejoice in our suffering because first of all, it brings God glory. Like this is how his word is spread is through, um, his gospel being proclaimed and their gospel is not popular with the world. So we rejoice in our suffering because when it brings God glory, and that's the best thing that like, honestly, we can ever have. Um, but secondly, like with those verses, we get the Holy spirit who brings us comfort.

The Holy spirit brings us joy and it brings us peace. The question that's frequently raised in church, and I'm sure you've asked it yourself, like just as much as I have, because along with so many of our doubts, like just, I mean, if we're going to be real, like that's exactly what happens because we have so many doubts about our faith, um, that just brew on the inside.

[25 : 47] But one of the questions that we get asked a lot that I've asked a lot is why do I not feel and see the Holy spirit's presence in my life? Like, why don't I see him working? I'm like, I read acts.

Like I read this and I see that the Holy spirit is powerful, but I don't feel him working in my life. And one of the ways that that question is answered is by examining your life.

Like, what does it consist of? Are you giving your life? Where are you rejecting the carnal, temporary, fleeting passions of this world and giving your life to Christ? Um, um, because that, that word that we just said, comforter, um, like it, it means to come.

So, I mean, advocate and comforter. And then, but the, but the answer to that question of why do I not feel the Holy spirit's presence in my life? Whose name is the comforter? Whose name is the advocate? Is because like, we're so comfortable here.

I mean like that's, that's our, that's our, our temptation here is that like, we're not openly being persecuted. There's no one about to rush through the doors and haul us all off to jail because we're meeting here. Like that's our trial is that we are so comfortable here.

[26 : 54] And so many people say like, I don't feel the Holy spirit's presence in my life. And his name is the comforter. So the question is like, if you're already so comfortable with your life, like if you're, you're so comfortable here, like why would you ask for more of the comforter?

Like if you're comfortable, why would you ask for more comforted? Comforted. Romans eight. Turn there really quickly. Verse 14 is where we're going to start.

It says in verse 14, for all who are led by the spirit of God are sons of God.

For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption as sons by whom we cry, Abba, father, the spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that

we are children of God.

And if children than heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs of Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. Now, back up to verse 15 says, by whom we cry, Abba, father.

[28 : 15] I mean, this is not, I mean, I've resorted to this as well, where I want to believe that this verse is talking about like a cutesy child cry of like, of just like a father, like I love you.

And it's like this cutesy cry that we have in our minds, just resting quietly in the arms of the father. But it's the exact opposite. It's, it's one of a child who's tripped and fallen and is crying out, daddy, like, I need you father, help me.

Um, and, and that verse that, that, those two words, Abba, father, that probably strikes a bell with a lot of us because we can remember that like on the cross when Christ called that out, like right before he died.

Um, so I wanted to wrap this up by drawing all these privileges together into one central idea.

When we become children of God, our identity changes. We're no longer enemies of God.

[29 : 16] We're no longer slaves. We're no longer dead in our sin. Um, but we're his children and, and you are no longer that guy who struggles with lust or that girl who struggles with body image.

Um, but you are a son and a daughter of God. So I have two challenges tonight. To end our time.

Um, and there's, there's two of them. So the first one is to believers and Christians who are in the room.

Um, believers like, do you view yourself that way? Do you view yourself as a son of God and a daughter of God? Do you view others that way that are also believers? Do you know and believe in God in the way that he's depicted in the scriptures?

Or do you view him as a clockmaker who set the world in motion and then is uninvolved, uncaring, and, and couldn't care about our lives at all? Um, have you realized the benefits that you've received from being in Christ?

Or are you living in a way, are you living your life in a way that fails to accurately portray the glory and greatness of our God? We are called to be imitators of Christ.

[30 : 22] Um, are you still living in a way that does not, are you still living in a way that does not imitate Christ, but it does in fact imitate your former darkness that you've been brought from, that Christ redeemed us from?

Like, are you an imitator of Christ? Or are you an imitator of that darkness? Like, um, the first Peter four one verse 14 and 16 says, as obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct.

Since it is written, you shall be holy for I am holy. Finally, my last question for, for the believers in this room is, are you showing people that don't trust in Christ, the things that you stand against?

Um, and then, but also, and not lovingly showing them the things that you stand for. Like what, like what does your life consist of when you're around people that, that don't trust in Christ and that are looking at you and they're examining your life because they, because you call yourself a Christian. Like, are the only things that they see just the things that you stand against? I don't drink. Um, I don't smoke. Um, I don't cuss. Like, is that the only thing that your life is showing? Or do you show them like the love and greatness that you have been shown by Christ?

[31 : 38] Um, the second one is for nonbelievers here. People that don't, that wouldn't call Christ their savior. Um, I beg you, please come to Jesus. Like consider him whose love is 10,000 times more radiant and pure and true than anything, you know, or ever will know.

Um, if Christianity has ever come across to you as a religion where Christians wait around for heaven and abstain from drinking and gambling and cussing and all the fun things in life while being unloving and uncaring, I deeply apologize for I am guilty of these exact same things.

Um, but if you're hiding behind those reasons, I also must tell you that you're using those people who are simple, just like you and I, as an excuse to hide from facing the truth of a relationship with an amazing God that calls for your entire life.

And you are missing out on a kingdom that far surpasses the fading glories of this life, which are at best getting old. Um, this kingdom starts now and will never be shaken.

Let me, let's just pray for you. Let me just pray for you guys. Holy father, thank you so much for loving us in a way that we could never understand.

[33 : 06] Father, that's so unlike anything we ever have seen. God, I praise you so much for that. God, I thank you for not just leaving us, um, in the state that you just saved us and left us alone and you don't care about our lives anymore.

But fact, but the fact is father that you brought us into your family and you love us. And God, you, um, care for us deeply. God, I pray that we would, um, just wake up to that reality.

God, that this would pierce our hearts and this would not just be something that you teach us tonight. And we forget, but father, this would be something that we live by. And God, I, I pray for that. You just convict, um, those in this room that need to be convicted father, that you would just work in those lives right now.

God, um, thank you for being powerful and being far more than I can, more than anything I can ever understand or grasp. Lord, um, I love you. And God, I love these people that are in this room.

I praise you, father, in your holy and precious name. Amen.