

Adoption and the Lord's Supper (A Meditation on Eph. 1:5-14)

Last week I mentioned 10 benefits that come down to us as God's children, as those who have been adopted into his family. Today, I would like to continue our theme of adoption as we take the Lord's Supper together. This morning, as we REMEMBER the body and the blood of Jesus, we know that WITHOUT the person and work of Jesus, there is no adoption. This means that ALL the benefits of adoption come down to us through Jesus, particularly his death on the cross. With this in mind, turn to Eph. 1:5-14. As we take the Lord's Supper, I want to use these verses to highlight benefits that come down to us in Christ as God's children.

1. We are redeemed. Verse 7 says: **"In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses . . ."** Today, as we read the words, **"This is my body, broken for you,"** we remember that our adoption into the family of God is because of the precious blood of Christ. As we take the Lord's Supper this morning we know that our adoption is because of the cross of Christ. There is no adoption without the blood of Christ! And there is no adoption if there is no redemption. So, what is the meaning of redemption?

Literally, the word means *"release"* or *"deliverance"* or even *"acquittal,"* and it always included some kind of payment. We see this word first in the OT. In Lev. 25:48 it is in reference to slavery. If an Israelite became poor and decided to sell himself in slavery to a foreigner, a rich relative would be urged to buy back his Israelite brother from this foreigner. In this way, he was a kinsman redeemer. In the same way God is Israel's redeemer from slavery. Deut. 7:8 says: **"But it is because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt."** Do you remember the story of Ruth? Ruth, an Israelite, went to live in a foreign land. While there, her husband and two sons died. So, she returns with her daughter-in-law, Naomi. After coming home, having no means to keep her property and to even stay alive because of poverty, she sends Naomi to glean in the field of one of her relatives, Boaz. And at the end of the story, do you remember what Boaz does? Well, he takes on the responsibility of redeemer. He buys her property. He marries Naomi. He takes them from poverty with no one to care for them and brings them under his care.

In the same kind of way, this is what we see with adoption. Boaz is a picture of the Good Father who adopts us. But, He also redeems us. And what is the price? It is the blood of Christ! In the same way, we are like Naomi and Ruth. We are slaves like Israel was in Egypt. To this you might say, *"Jon, I'm not a slave. I'm free."* To which I would say, *"You are a slave to sin."* Outside of Christ, your master is sin. It is the pride of life, the lust of the flesh, and the desires of your eyes (1 John 2:16). And your slavery in sin is much worse than the physical slavery. Paul says, we were all *"dead in our trespasses and sins," "walking according to the course of this world," "following the prince of the power of the air," "carrying out the passions of our flesh and the desires of the body and mind,"* and *"are by nature children of wrath."* Today, you do not need a doctor for your physical symptoms or a psychologist for your mental state. You need a redeemer

who can deliver you from your slavery to sin. This is the Lord Jesus! And the price of our redemption is his blood! Let's read about this together.

Pastor: But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.

Congregation: For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I give Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in exchange for you. Because you are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you, I give men in return for you, peoples in exchange for your life. (Is. 43:1-4)

Pastor: And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

Congregation: He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. (1 Pet. 1:17-21).

2. We know the will of God. Look at vv. 9-10: **“making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.”** One of the greatest privileges we have as God's children is that NOW we know the will of God. I think the context of this verse first speaks of the gospel, particularly HOW, in Christ, God will reconcile and unite all things in heaven and earth. There is SO much I could say here! In the sovereign providence and plan of God from before the foundations of the world, He has a plan to unite all things in heaven and earth. And this truth encompasses ALL the complexities and difficulties with God's wrath and God's love, God's judgment and God's mercy, etc. As Deut. 29:29 says, **“The secret things belong to God . . .”** But, in a general way, in Christ, God has revealed to his children his will. And this is not a privilege to those outside the family of God.

Think of your own family. Fathers reveal to their families things they do not reveal to other families. We have nick names; special names and phrases given to all kinds of relationships and situations in our family. Not many people know that we call one of our sons “bubby.” Not everyone knows that one of Abby's names is “*Lilluv*.” Husbands and wives, I am sure you have names you call one another that no one outside your family knows. Well, in the same kind of way, as God's adopted children, we are privy to, not just special names and phrases, but to the WILL of God. Today, as God's child, you understand the meaning and purpose of this world (recall my conversion as my “sunglasses” were taken off).

And, Why does this knowledge come down to you? On what basis does a knowledge of God's will come to you? Look at v. 9: **"making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, WHICH HE SET FORTH IN CHRIST."** Brothers and sisters, ALL the will of God comes down to us through the person and work of Jesus Christ. In Col. 2:1-3 we read: **"For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."**

This means, as God's adopted child, you have an understanding the world does not have. This causes you to react in different ways, not to get upset when things don't go your way, not to react with anger in your heart when you are wronged, etc. And this knowledge causes you to read and understand Eph. 1:3-14 as Paul recalls so many revealed truths! This is why we must look to Christ, knowing that ALL our good knowledge about what really matters in this world (and universe) is found in Christ. And this we remember today! Let's read about this together from the Word!

Pastor: In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.

Congregation: All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. (Luke 10:21-22)

Pastor: I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

Congregation: He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you. (John 16:12-15)

3. We have an inheritance. Look at v. 11: **"In him we have obtained an inheritance . . ."** I must note that this verse is difficult to translate. The translation we have with the ESV and other versions puts the emphasis on the fact that, as God's children, we have been blessed with an inheritance. (But, I must say I believe the best translation puts the emphasis on the fact that WE, as God's people, ARE God's inheritance. This truth is taught throughout the Bible. If you want to go back to see my thoughts, take a look at 2 messages I preached on this subject when we went through Ephesians.) Nevertheless, IT IS ALSO TRUE that as God's children we have an inheritance. (this truth is also taught throughout the Bible).

So, today, for just a moment, I will highlight this truth. As we take the Lord's Supper we know that "IN CHRIST" we have an inheritance.

I remember working in Mexico City many years ago. Weekly we went out into the city where up to 1 million orphans (street kids) live without families. They stay in manholes, in ditches, under various structures. No one likes them. The police often kill them. They sniff glue, they walk around with dirty clothing, they beg, etc. And what is their inheritance? It is pretty much what I have described; dirt, misery, drugs, cold, and then a lonely death. No wonder they want to take drugs! (This picture should prick our hearts!)

At the same time think of the monarchy in England through the years? If you are born into such a family, you are rich! Nice clothing, clean beds, good food to eat, beautiful houses and lands to play and spend your time. What an inheritance!

I know this pictures only the physical parts of an inheritance. But, it is something we get. But, what about our inheritance as God's children. As we just read in Col. 2, "*in Christ*" we get ALL the wisdom and treasures of God . . . ALL, not just the physical stuff we read about when we consider the new heavens and the new earth one day. We read about "streets of gold" and "rivers of living water" and "trees that bloom and produce fruit all year long" and a "mansion with many rooms" Jesus is preparing for us. YES, these things await us. But there is so much more! Today, in Christ, you are chosen, you are predestined, you are loved, you know God's will, you are redeemed by his blood, your sins are forgiven, you have peace with God, you have hope in this life, etc. Why? Because of Jesus. "*This is my body broken for you.*" These things I described are not ours outside of the person and work of Christ! And, do you know what is the best inheritance of all? It is God Himself, which is what we see in Eph. 1:3-14. We see the triune God, (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), giving Himself to us as an inheritance. And this we remember this morning? Let's read a few words.

Pastor: giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

Congregation: He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son . . ." (Col. 1:12-13)

Pastor: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

Congregation: to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Pet. 1:3-5)

4. We are sealed by the Holy Spirit. Look at v. 13: "**In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised**

Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.”

I will mention three obvious truths from this verse. First, this is the promise of the OT that has now been fulfilled in the new covenant. The Holy Spirit is give to All God’s people. He doesn’t merely give the Holy Spirit to certain individuals like the prophets; He gives to ALL. As a fountain flows down to all who gather under the water, so the Holy Spirit flows down to all of God’s adopted children. Second, the Holy Spirit seals God’s people. I think of canning green beans. After I take the beans out of the pressure cooker, they begin to cool and then you hear a sudden “pop” from the kitchen. Why? Because then you know they are sealed; nothing gets in, nothing gets out. They are good until we eat them. In the same kind of way, we are sealed by the Holy Spirit in the great plan of God in salvation. Rom. 8:28-30: **“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.”** Third: In giving us the Holy Spirit, God gives Himself. This is the greatest promise of all, the greatest reality of All! 2 Cor. 4:7 says, **“But we have this treasure in jars of clay . . .”**

Can there be a more glorious truth, that God give Himself to his children? In the end, our inheritance as God’s children is God Himself. And though we do not see him now, we have been given a down payment to our inheritance! And, NOW, as the children of God we have been given everything we need for life and godliness. I think of 2 Pet. 1:3-4 which says: **“His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.”** Let’s read about this from the Word.

Pastor: I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. (Ezek. 36:25-27)

Congregation: If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. (John 14:15-17)

Pastor: When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things

that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you. (John 16:13-15)

Congregation: 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, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. (Rom. 8:15-17)

In conclusion, when we read Eph. 1:5-14 we see clearly the work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit to bless his children with the most glorious salvation! And all this comes down to us through the person and work of Christ as we remember his words this morning: “***This cup is the new covenant in my blood . . .***”