November 27

**Galatians 3:26**

 I write these devotions on Thanksgiving week. The festivities that await will be past by the time you read, or listen to, these devotions but I pray the genuine reasons we have to celebrate by giving thanks will not quickly pass from our minds. I suppose the theme of the week has inspired me to write this week about the chief reason we, as Christians, have for being thankful. That reason is clearly alluded to in 1 John 3 when the Apostle reminds us that God has given us His love such that we can be called “children of God”.

 The very fact that we are children of God is the most marvelous, stupendous, unbelievable and unparalleled truth in the universe. J.I. Packer’s thoughts on this topic are perhaps the best extrabiblical meditations I’ve ever read on the subject. Packer says this in his famous work “Knowing God” about the beauty of our adoption “Adoption is the highest privilege of the gospel. To be right with God the Judge is a great thing, but to be loved and cared for by God the Father is greater.” Do you see what Packer is intimating here? His point is that, in Christ, God is not only no longer mad at us, He has also ushered us into His eternal care and love.

 The question before us is how does God accomplish such a marvelous feat? We know that God does not look at our moral standing and decide that some of us qualify based on our own merit. We also know that God does not simply look the other way as He sees the stain of our ever-present sin. Instead, our conviction is that God deals with our sin and offers us grace in Christ and that offer is made to us in the Gospel of Christ and the way we take hold of the offer is not by our works but by our faith, which is itself a gift from God (Ephesians 2:8-9).

 This is Paul’s point in Galatians 3, we are brought into communion with Christ by faith. Our standing in God’s family is not dependent upon our performance and this is great news! Today, if you have believed (and therefore are actively believing) in Jesus Christ as your Savior, you have been adopted into God’s family and your standing before Him will never change. He sees your sin, He knows your failures, He is aware of your struggles and your temptations and the nature of all of your efforts to obey Him and He calls you a Son or Daughter of His anyway.

 I can think of no better reason to be thankful than this. The God of all things calls me a child of His. I am a part of His royal family and this takes place by faith. I pray that you pause today to give thanks, and I also want to try to deepen our thanks or at least remind us of the reason we have to be thankful this week in a very specific way. When we read the text in Galatians, the first question the astute reader should ask is “faith in what”? What exactly must I believe to be saved? The answer is the Gospel of Jesus Christ and that Gospel I want to walk through with you over the next 6 days.