

Our Adoption in Christ

By Pastor Matt Black

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Lord's Day morning

Ephesians 1:5

Introduction: Open your Bibles to the book of Ephesians. The title of this morning's message is "Our Adoption in Christ." Our text this morning is found in verse 5.

Ephesians 1:5

"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will"

In our text, God again rolls back the heavens and we get a glimpse of what God has done in eternity. As fast-paced and hectic as life can be, we need to slow down, to pause from the pressures of life and remember our position as children of God. We are not like other people in this world. We have been called out of this world—predestined to all the rights and privileges afforded to children of God. Before we know it, this life will be over, and our Father's presence will be the only reality we know, and this life and this world will be like a distant dream.

This world no longer appeals to us because we no longer belong to it.

The god of this world is no longer our father. God has brought us to Himself and made us His children! The highest expression of God's love in the universe is that He would give us the adoption of sons so that all the rights and privileges won by Christ would be ours.

I John 3:1

Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.

Do you understand that we are God's dear children? This did not happen by our natural birth. I have had a mother and a father on this earth, and how grateful I am for them, but they themselves gave me no right to be called by God's Name. It is only by the divine purpose and plan of God that I have been born into God's family! I am a child of God, not just by creation, but by regeneration, and through my adoption I now have all the rights and privileges of a child of God. I'm a joint-heir with Christ! Look at our text again.

Ephesians 1:5

"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will"

We find here in all its beauty, the foundation of adoption is predestination, as it must be.

- I. Adoption begins with Predestination. He "*predestinated us unto the adoption of children*"
What does *that* mean?

A. Predestination speaks of God's Plan. This is something God has intended.

In other words, God has a plan in every event that comes to pass. He has a pattern for every thread on the fabric of history. He has destined all things that come to pass. This plan is referred to in this verse as "PREdestination." It is "PRE" because God lives outside of time and *before* time. And so if God intends something, it must come to pass—it is automatically destined through His omnipotence. God knows all things, and He has *always* known all things. It is not that God predicts all things, but He *predestines* them. He is the *cause* of all things that come to pass. This is what in this verse is called predestination.

1. This does not mean that God is the Author of sin. I say He is the cause of all things, *but let me be clear*; God is not the author of sin. He "cannot be tempted with evil neither tempteth He any man" (James 1:13).

2. But God has Allowed sin to enter this world, so that He might :
a. forever demonstrate His everlasting Hatred for it, and
b. forever display the glory of His Justice against it.

Job 21:30

The wicked is reserved to the day of destruction...they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath.

Sin did not sneak in underneath God's radar screen. God allowed sin into the economy of His creation to show that He is vehemently opposed to it.

Proverbs 16:4

The LORD hath made all *things* for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.

God hates sin, and the very existence of an everlasting hell will forever display God's hatred for sin and His glorious justice toward those who would defy any one of God's commands. In God's economy sin is punished with omnipotent severity. So God is *not* the author of sin, but He has predestined both good and evil to demonstrate the glory of His justice toward sin and sinners and His amazing grace and mercy toward those who have called to be saints. So we see that...

2. God works All things together for His glory. Everything that comes to pass, both good and evil, is predestined by God to work together for God's glory and our good.

Romans 8:28

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to *his* purpose.

As Joseph said to the sinful plots of his brothers...

Genesis 50:20

But as for you, ye thought evil against me; *but* God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as *it is* this day, to save much people alive.

Nothing happens outside of the permission of God. The Bible calls this predestination. Theologians have called it God's decree. As the mighty sovereign, God has intended all things that come to pass. They will indeed come to pass, for as verse 11 says, "He worketh all things after the counsel of His own will."

Spurgeon said it this way. He said, "[Predestination] is [both] a doctrine of Scripture and of common sense that whatever God does in *time* He predestined [i.e. planned] to do in *eternity*."¹ In other words, predestination is simply the architectural plan of history. It is the plan that God formed before time, the blueprint of history. So if predestination entails all things that God intended, then secondly,

B. Predestination also speaks of God's Power. God not only intended all things, He has the omnipotence to carry out all His commands.

Psalm 115:3

But our God *is* in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.

God not only formed the world through Jesus Christ (John 1:1-3), He has predestined every second of this day, and each molecule to be where it is. He is supreme!

John Piper has said this: "Jesus Christ...is always infinitely admirable in every thing and over everything supreme. He is sovereign and supreme over all plants and animals. He is supreme over all weather, all chemical processes and all the amazing grace of antibiotics. He is supreme over all countries and governments and armies. He is supreme over all nuclear threats, He is supreme over politics. He is supreme over all education in universities no matter what they teach. And He's supreme over all scholarship and science and research. He's supreme over all business and finance and industry and manufacturing and transportation. And He is supreme over the Internet and all informational systems."²

Abraham Kuyper famously said, "There is not one square inch on planet earth over which the risen Christ does not say, 'Mine!'"

Psalm 24:1

The earth *is* the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

Do you understand that he has not wound creation up like a clock and walked away from it? We believe that God is *transcendent*—that is He deals in the affairs of men. Because God is supreme over creation, we

¹ Charles H. Spurgeon. *Adoption*. Sermon delivered on Sunday evening February 10, 1861 [emphasis mine].

² John Piper. Message delivered during the *Suffering and the Sovereignty of God* Conference, October 7-9, 2005.

are owned by Him, and He will do with us and with all creation as He pleases and according to His plan.

So predestination teaches us that not only is God in control and the cause of all things, He reigns over them all supreme. He is the sovereign. He not only planned all things, He has the omnipotence to carry out His plans.

Having laid the foundation of God's plan and power in predestination, let us see that...

- C. Predestination ultimately speaks of God's Purpose. Now just think of this—all that has happened in world history—all the days that have passed—the wars, the peace, the good and the bad—all the details of your life from your mother and father, the circumstances of your birth, your ethnicity, your abilities and weaknesses, all the circumstances of your life—your first grade teacher, your basketball coach, your church, your house, the refrigerator you bought last week—all of that has come to pass so that Christ would redeem a people for Himself and that you and I would have all the rights and privileges of being God's own children through His adoption of us. Do you see how our adoption in Christ gives meaning to every detail of your life? God created the world so that He could redeem a group of people for His Name and adopt them as His sons and daughters!

"When God chose you, he had a purpose, and so he predestined that purpose to come about—that you would become a child of God. That you would be part of his family. That you would become an heir of all that God owns.

That you would take on the family likeness."

—John Piper

God's purpose in every event, and every detail is to bring glory to Himself, to reflect Himself in a people that He is redeeming from a sin-cursed world. This is God's plan. He thought it ought. He purposed it. He *predestined* all these things to come to pass.

So adoption begins with predestination, but...

II. Adoption also grants us the Privileges of a son.

Through Adoption:

- A. God grants us a new Name
Our text tells us that we are "predestinated to the adoption of children"—it is God's plan to call out a people to bear His Name—the family Name of God. Yes we are all born into an earthly family, and we bear the name of our earthly family, but for each of us here that call ourselves Christians, there was a day when God called us to take His Name to ourselves. He called us to be born into His family, and He gave us all the rights and privileges of a son.

How did God do this? God looked upon the fallen race of Adam—those who were living for themselves, who had become alienated from God

in their minds, who were under His wrath and deserved nothing but God's hatred and punishment—He looked on those people, and He called out a people that should bear God's family name and be a part of His household. We who were rebels and children of wrath are now called the sons and daughters of the most High God!!

- B. God gives us a new Nature. To be saved is to have the very life of God in our souls. We call this the new nature. We are "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4). We have the Person of the Spirit of God within us. The Spirit's life and awakening presence has given us a new nature.

"Human parents can adopt children and come to love them every bit as much as they love their natural children. They can give an adopted child complete equality in the family life, resources, and inheritance. But no human parent can impart his own distinct nature to an adopted child. Ye that is what God miraculously does to every person whom He has elected and who has trusted in Christ. Christians not only have Christ's riches, we have Christ's nature!

John 1:12-13

But as many as received him, to them gave he power [right, privilege] to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

You see we are born into God's family through regeneration. Nicodemus was told by Jesus that "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

Paul told Titus:

Titus 3:5

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

This "washing of regeneration," and being "born again" is all the same thing. It is God infusing the life of the Spirit of God into a dead sinner. God Himself is the Source and Giver of His life, so that we are "partakers of the Divine nature" (II Peter 1:4), "created in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:10), "born of God" (John 1:13), "born again" (John 3:3, 7), "a new creature [creation] in Christ" (II Corinthians 5:17).

You see if our life has been infused with the life of God within us—the new nature—then we are children of God. Paul says if we are led by the Spirit of God, then we are the children of God (Romans 8:14). He says in Romans 8:15-16 that we "have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father," and that "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

So God gives us a new name and a new nature.

- C. God also promises us a new Body

The final privilege of adoption is that of our final redemption when we shall all be given a glorified body. There will come a day when we no longer say with Paul, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver from the body of this death?" There is coming a day when we will put off this sinful corpse of flesh that we have inherited from our father Adam, and we will put on a glorified body like our risen Saviour. In that day sin will have no more power over us. The power and the presence of sin will be completely eradicated! God will join our soul with a perfect glorified body on that Last Day, and we will have final redemption.

Romans 8:23

Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body.

1 John 3:2

2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

I Corinthians 15:51-54

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

D. God brings us into New Family.

1. God pities us.

Psalm 103:13

Like as a father pitieth *his* children, *so* the LORD pitieth them that fear him.

This morning when I awoke, I heard the cry of my son William. I was not at all upset at it—in fact I got a bit excited—my heart went out to him, and as I picked him up and held him I told him that he was my boy, and that I loved him. Those cries went silent and he was comforted by his father.

Don't you know that God loves us more than any earthly father? Don't you know He pities your cries? He pities you! His heart goes out to you. He is a thousand times more cut to heart when we cry to Him. He is our father.

Galatians 4:6

And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

Did you come here this morning with a heavy heart. Have you given up? Do you have no one to turn to? Cry out to

God. He will hear you. Christ is touched with your heavy heart. Cry out to Him. We may have “boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus” (Hebrews 10:19) because we are God’s dear children.

So God pities us...

2. But as a Father, God also chastens us. Aren’t you so glad that God loves you too much to let you wander in sin? He won’t let you dive off the precipice into the darkness and filth of this world.

Hebrews 12:6

For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

Praise God for the firm and loving hand of a Father who will not let us wander.

“Prone to wander Lord I feel it, prone to leave the God I love”
–Robert Robinson

Spurgeon said “God’s strokes are fewer than our crimes and lighter than our guilt—yet at the same time He never spares the rod.”

God loves us too much to leave us in our own sin. If you are a child of God, you ought to bless Him for every moment of His chastening.

We see that God pities and chastens us, but also...

3. God protects us. Because you are God’s child, God is by your side, and no one can touch you without His permission.

Hebrews 13:5

I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

If you have been rescued by grace, you will be received into His glorious presence by grace “without spot or wrinkle.” You will be preserved and protected by grace. There is no possibility that you could fall from grace, for then this promise would not be true. If God could become less than Almighty, then you might have reason to fear, but as long as the Almighty, omnipotent God is your Father, you cannot fear.

Isaiah 41:10

Fear thou not; for I *am* with thee; be not dismayed; for I *am* thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

I love the verse in Jude 24 “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling.” I think of my own mother who held my hand. And when I tripped on the sidewalk we were on, there was my mother, holding my hand. Not a thing happened to

me because my mother was there—she had my hand. That's how God is. Have you blessed God for his protection?

What a blessing that God pities us, He chastens those whom He loves, He protects us and keeps us from falling. But He also takes care of all our needs.

4. God provides for us.

Psalm 84:11 For the LORD God *is* a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good *thing* will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

5. God educates us. We are in the midst of home schooling. But God has a type of home schooling of his own! He has promised that all those He calls to be sons He will teach!

Isaiah 2:3 [The LORD] will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 31:33 But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

1 John 2:20 But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

1 John 2:27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

So we have seen that God has predestined the events in our lives so that we might become children of God, and that when we become children, we are no longer an enemy of God, but we are given all the privileges of being in God's family. But there is a price to be paid for all of this. We see this in our text:

Ephesians 1:5

"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will"

We are adopted "by Jesus Christ to Himself." We cannot come to God alone, we must come through the cross work of Jesus Christ. The Bible calls this work "propitiation."

III. Adoption is made possible through Christ's Propitiation. "by Jesus Christ to himself"

What we learn in this text is that Jesus—King of Kings and Lord of Lords—is strong enough to save the most wicked sinner. He is sovereign enough to

break through the hardest and most arrogant self-righteousness. It took Jesus Christ's substitution for us to bring us to Himself. Nothing less will bring us to God. Your best righteousness is too weak to bring you to God. In fact if God were to awaken you, you would realize that you are constantly offending Him even in your so-called righteousness and good works. Your best tears will not save you. Emotion never saved a soul. You may have your most sentimental feelings toward God, and it will not save you. Many people are sentimental toward God on occasion, but they never leave their sin because they love it too much. You may by your own will power say that you will come to God. You will also fail at that. You cannot come to God in your own power, in your own merit, or in the way that you devise. No, if you will come to God, you must come to Him through Jesus. You must hate your sin; you must hate your life; you must hate your good works. You must believe that you deserve the torment that Jesus received on the cross. You deserve the omnipotent and crushing wrath of God for your sin. You must come to God through what the Bible calls "propitiation."

1 John 4:10

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

But what exactly *is* propitiation? We find a beautiful picture of it in Isaiah's 53rd chapter.

A. Propitiation requires Substitution for Man's sins.

Isaiah 53:5

But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

B. Propitiation requires the Satisfaction for God's wrath. God could only love you if the reason for His hatred of you was removed. God hates sin and sinners. The only way this hatred is removed is if His wrath is satisfied.

Isaiah 53:10-11

Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin... 11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied...

Calvary fulfilled God's wrath for you!!

C. Propitiation requires Punishment.

Isaiah 53:11b, 12b

By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities... he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

So we see that our adoption is predestined, that there are privileges given by God because we are made His own children, and that there was a price to be paid for this adoption. Finally, we come to the answer to the question "Why did God adopt us?"

Ephesians 1:5

“Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself,
according to the good pleasure of his will”

IV. Adoption is according to God's Pleasure.

There was nothing in us that made us appeal to God. In fact we were disgusting children in His sight. We were dead in trespasses and sins—His enemies. But yet it was God's highest pleasure to adopt us.

The most important doctrine in Scripture is that of God's sovereign pleasure. His sovereign pleasure is what makes Him God. God had our adoption in mind when He created the world. It was the best thing that God could do. It was His highest pleasure to do it.

Conclusion: This morning are you living as a son or daughter of God in Christ's Kingdom? Are you trusting God as your Father. Do you cry to Him “Abba, Father”? Do you love Him? Are you waiting for His appearing? Have you lost yourself in Him? Have you looked to Him as your propitiation so that when you see Him you will have no fear, but nothing but love? Are you a child of the heavenly Father this morning? Are you a joint-heir with Christ?

Perhaps you are here today and you know by your life that you are not a child of God. You have never had the life of the Spirit infused into you. You must understand this morning that salvation is of God alone. You must come to the point in your life that if you are to be saved, that God must save you, or you will not be saved at all. Do you feel right now that God has a right to destroy you this instant and that by grace you feel that you must run to Jesus at this very moment. I tell you to look to the Lord and be saved! Repent of your life of lust and pleasure! Hate your sin! Hate your life! Turn to Christ. Take God as your Father. Exchange your family name and be part of the Kingdom of God.

Closing Hymn: 558 When I Can Read My Title Clear