

john 15:4
A b i d e i n M E



Bible studies for disciples who make disciples

Loudonville Community Church

Volume 4 - Number 10
The week of January 13, 2019

Sermon Series: *The Real Thing*
Love of a Different Kind
1 John 3:1-3

THIS WEEK'S CORE STATEMENT

Hope - a certainty of what is to come *Hebrews 6:19-20*
Coping with the hardships of life and with death because of hope in Christ.

Adopted by the Living God

by Dr. Gavin Ortlund¹

In his classic book *Knowing God*, J. I. Packer wrote:

If you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God's child, and having God as his Father. If this is not the thought that prompts and controls his worship and prayers and his whole outlook on life, it means that he does not understand Christianity very well at all ... "Father" is the Christian name for God.

The doctrine of adoption is indeed integral to the gospel. But in recent years, theological discussion has perhaps been more focused on justification than adoption. And many lay Christians have never considered the rich implications of their adoption. To go deeper into the doctrine of adoption, and especially its practical ramifications, I corresponded with Robert Peterson, professor of systematic theology at Covenant Theological Seminary and author of, among many other books, *Adopted By God: From Wayward Sinners to Cherished Children*.

What does the doctrine of adoption mean, and where is it most prominently taught in the Bible?

It means that the true and living God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, by grace has made believers members of his family with all the rights and responsibilities that go with that status. Paul teaches it in many places in, but especially in Romans 8:14-17, 23, 29 and Galatians 3:25-4:7. I agree with John Murray and Sinclair Ferguson that John also teaches it in John 1:12 and 1 John 3:1.

Do the persons of the Trinity play different roles in the doctrine of adoption?

Yes indeed. The Father is the divine lover who predestined us for adoption and sent his Son to rescue us (1 John 3:1; Eph. 1:5; Gal. 4:4). The Son of God is our redeemer who loved us and redeemed us from the law's threat of punishment by becoming a curse for us (Gal. 4:5; 3:13). "The Spirit of his [the Father's] Son" (Gal. 4:6), "the Spirit of adoption" (Rom. 8:15) enabled us to cry out to God as Father for salvation (Rom. 8:15) and assures us within that we are God's children (Rom. 8:16).

The Trinity loves us dearly and planned our adoption, accomplished the work of redemption necessary to adopt us, and applied adoption to us as God's sons and daughters. This is an important aspect of the triune God's work of redemption and should occupy a larger place in our worship, whether public, family, or private.

What kinds of people might find special comfort, assurance, or joy in the doctrine of adoption? And how so?

Men and women who did not have good relationships with their fathers. As a speaker for a men's conference, I was amazed at the effect of simple messages on adoption on men of many ages. In small groups after the sermons men shared openly how distant their fathers were when the men were growing up. Men wept as the Spirit applied the healing balm of adoption to their heads and hearts. I was moved to be God's instrument as his Spirit began to fill holes in the hearts of adult men with the tender, biblical message of adoption. I saw similar results in couples' conferences with both women and men finding help in the doctrine of adoption as laid out in God's Word.

For those involved in pastoral counseling, when might the doctrine of adoption be of particular value?

There are many answers to this question. One is for people who lack hope. Adoption breeds hope because it not only pertains to eternity (Eph. 1:5), the past (Rom. 8:15), and the present (1 John 3:2, 3), but also the future (1 John 3:2). In the Bible, closely related to the doctrine of adoption is the notion of inheritance: we are God's children and therefore his heirs (Gal. 3:29; 4:7). God's true children suffer with him now and will be glorified with him when he returns (Rom. 8:17). What exactly is our inheritance? Based on the entire biblical story, my answer is: we will inherit the Trinity and the new heavens and new earth (Rom. 8:17; 1 Cor. 3:21-23).

In your own life or in others close to you, where have you seen the doctrine of adoption be of practical value?

I once spoke at a conference whose theme was adoption. When the three speakers talked informally we discovered to our surprise that each of us has unwittingly been drawn to adoption because of a lack in our own relationships with our fathers. God used the biblical teaching on sonship to minister to us and through us to others. In union with Christ, the unique Son of God, I find acceptance by the Father, a new family in heaven and on earth, incentive to live for God, and bright hope for tomorrow. The doctrine of adoption is as warm as the Bible gets. I can hardly think of anything more comforting, more nourishing, more uplifting than the glorious truth that when we trust in Christ, we are made into the sons and daughters of the Creator God.

How would you share the gospel with someone using the doctrine of adoption?

The Bible actually does that very thing. In the first place, our need for salvation is portrayed in the Bible as having to do with our status as slaves to Satan and sin (1 John 3:10; Gal. 4:3, 7). Christ the redeemer gave himself for us slaves and lawbreakers because he loved us. He took the curse (the punishment) of the law that by rights should have fallen on us, not him (Gal. 3:13). Through Christ's work, we have gone from being slaves to sons (Gal. 4:7).

Parallel to justification, adoption is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone (John 1:12; Gal. 3:26). We trust Christ as redeemer in order to be included in God's family. The results are incredible, including assurance (Rom. 8:16) and paternal discipline (Heb. 12:5-11). By God's grace, the teaching on adoption enables us to do what it difficult for some of us—to believe that God truly loves us (1 John 4:16).

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STEP ONE ...

OBSERVATION
What does the text say?

1 John 3:1-3

¹ See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ² Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. ³ And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

- Circle the word **see** in verse 1 write above it *a command*.
- Underline the phrase, **what kind of love** in verse 1.
- Draw connecting lines between the phrase **what kind of love** and the words **children of God** and **beloved**.
- In the margin, beside the word **reason** in verse 2, insert an (=) sign.
- Draw a connecting line between the words **and so we are** in verse 1 and the word **now** in verse 2.
- Underline the phrase, **has not yet appeared**. In the left margin write the words, *already/not yet*.
- Circle all the occurrences of the word **know** in this passage and double underline the words **we know** in verse 2.
- Draw another connecting line between the word **appeared** and the word **appears** in verse 2. In the left margin write *us* and in the right margin write *Christ*.
- Place brackets around the word **because** in verse 3 and double underline the words **we shall see Him**.
- Circle the word **everyone** in verse 3.
- At the end of verse 3 write *Jesus*.

STEP TWO . . .

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

What does the text mean?

The commentary is intended to enhance your own study of the text.

¹ **See what kind of love the Father has given to us.** The word **see** [*idete*] is an aorist imperative, which means it demands our attention and reflection. It has the same force as if to say, *Look!* John wants us to behold and marvel at the *quality* of God's love. There are nine occurrences of the noun or verb for love [*agape*] in Chapter 3. Here, he uses an unusual word in order to magnify God's love: the adjective **kind** [*potares*] means great. God's love is a different kind of love because it is incomparable. The word occurs only seven times in the NT and it always implies astonishment and admiration (see Matthew 8:27; Mark 13:1; Luke 1:29; 7:39; 2 Peter 3:11). Originally, the adjective meant "of what country." In other words, God's love is so foreign to our world we should wonder where it comes from. The love our **Father has given us** [*dedoken*] refers to how He has lavishly and freely poured out His love on us without any thought of withdrawing it. The word order in the original is important. Literally, it reads, "See what manner of love he has given to us, the Father."

That we should be called children of God; and so we are.

God's love is so great that it makes sinners the children of God. Being a child of God stirs within John a sense of wonder, awe and amazement. This is more than just a title but our actual position and identity. We are a divine progeny.

The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Literally, "For this reason," or "On account of this." **The reason** the world does not know us is because it does not know Him. There is an implied tension that exists between Christians and those who do not know Christ. The world [*kosmos*] is the unbelieving world that does not know God and doesn't recognize or understand Christians. We are unknown by the world because it does not understand God. We have different fathers. To be His child is to be treated like He is treated.

² **Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared.** Since God's love is so great, those who have experienced His love are called **beloved** [*agapetoi*]. The full scope of our future state has not been revealed. There is a stark contrast between what we are now and what we will be. The full extent of what we will be has not been made known. However, we do know that Christ will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorified body. **Appeared** [*ephanerothe*]: used three times in 2:28-3:3 guarantees that what we will be will be revealed publicly.

But we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. When Christ appears, we know at the least that we will be fundamentally transformed. Our transformation will be an ultimate resemblance to Christ. We will not be made into little gods. The immediate glimpse of Jesus will complete His redemptive work in us.

³ **And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.** John reveals his reason for writing about the second coming of Christ. To be born again creates in us not only a hope for the future, but also it motivates us toward pure living in the present. Hope produces purity. To be pure means to be free from contamination. **Himself:** It is a continual process of self-purification. The blood of Christ cleanses us (1:7) and we purify ourselves before a holy God. **As he is pure:** Christ is our pattern. We must strive to be like Christ until that extraordinary moment when we see Him with our own eyes.

Complementary Passage

~ Romans 8:12-17 ~

¹² So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.

¹³ For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. ¹⁵ 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!" ¹⁶ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ 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.

STEP THREE . . .

EXPLORING the passage through discussion

Questions

1. Read 1 John 2:29-3:3. The chapter break between 1 John 2:29 and 1 John 3:1 does not end the Apostle's train of thought. What is the connection between 2:29 and 3:1?
2. How does being **born of him** (i.e. God) and being called **children of God** impact our righteousness. Are we righteous because of the new birth or are we righteous because of how we act? Explain.
3. When are you prone to forget that you are a child of God? How do you act when you forget that glorious truth?
3. **See what kind of love the Father has given to us.** Take a moment to read the interpretative comment of verse 1 under Step Two. What makes God's love so incomparable? How would you describe God's love? In what ways have you experienced it?
4. **We are children of God.** What kinds of privileges are given to children by the parents? How does the comparison to earthly parents expand your view of God the Father? On the flip side, how may this comparison constrict it?
5. John acknowledges the tension that exists between Christians and the unbelieving world. How would you describe that tension? Can you provide any examples of that friction? Since the tension exists, how can we seek to understand it, live with it, while seeking to love the unbeliever. How can we also exacerbate it in unhelpful ways?
6. John admits ignorance as to what the redeemed will be like in heaven. What does He reveal? How does that impact you?
7. How does our limited knowledge of what we will become when we see Christ also propel our response in verse 3?
8. 1 John 1:9 speaks of the blood of Christ cleansing us from all sin. 1 John 3:3 speaks of the hope of Christ's return purifying us. What's the difference between being cleansed and being purified? What are a few gospel-centered practices you can share with one another in order to strive in hope for self-purification?

STEP FOUR . . .

APPLYING

How is the text lived out?

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the Word but doers ~ James 1:22

You're encouraged to journal your answers to the following questions in order to apply what you've learned this week.

1. How is God making Himself known to you?
2. What is going on beneath the surface of your life that Jesus is trying to change?
3. How is God calling you to serve your family, community, and world?

Prayer

Our Heavenly Father,

Your love towards us is beyond compare.

As your children, we are held in astonishment at Your extravagant grace.

We have been made in Your image,

But we have wandered far from Your likeness.

Thank you for calling us by Your Spirit from death to life,

By redeeming us through Your Son's atoning death.

By your mercy, we are now children of God,

And the story of our restoration is not over.

On that Day when we see Jesus face to face,

We will be like Him in all His glory.

May this hope propel us each day,

To resemble His likeness and live for His honor,

In the holy Name of Jesus, we pray,

Amen.

When Jesus Comes to Live With You

Adapted from Lois Blanchard

If Jesus came to your house to spend His life with you –

If He came unexpectedly, I wonder what you'd do?

Would you give your nicest room to such an honored Guest,

And all the food you'd serve Him, would it be the very best?

Would you keep assuring Him you're glad to have Him there –

That serving Him with your life is joy beyond compare?

But – when you saw Him coming, would you meet Him at the door

With arms outstretched in welcome to your Heav'nly Visitor?

Or would you have to change your clothes before you let Him in,

Or hide some magazines and put the Bible where they had been?

Would you turn off the radio and hope He hadn't heard

And wish you hadn't uttered that last loud and angry word?

Would you hide your favorite music and put some others out?

Could you let Jesus walk right in, or would you rush about?

And I wonder – if the Savior came to spend His life with you,

Would you go right on doing the things you always do?

Would you keep right on saying the things you always say?

Would life for you continue as it does from day to day?

Would you sing the songs you always sing and read the books you read

And let Him know the things on which your mind and spirit feed?

Would you take Jesus with you everywhere you'd planned to go,

Or would you maybe change your plans because He might say, "no?"

Would you be glad to have Him meet your very closest friends,

Or would you hope they'd stay away because they might offend?

It might be interesting to know the things that you would do

If you knew Jesus in person had come to spend His life with you.

A Bible Reading Plan for 2019

(on LCC website)

Sunday, January 13 thru Saturday, December 19, 2019
Genesis 39-41; Genesis 42-44; Genesis 45-47; Genesis 48-50;
Exodus 1-4; Exodus 5-7; Exodus 8-10

THE MISSION OF LOUDONVILLE COMMUNITY CHURCH

We are committed to reaching and teaching people to become devoted followers of Jesus Christ, connecting them to one another and sending them to serve their families, communities and world.

10 CORE VIRTUES OF A DISCIPLE

Love - a sincere affection for others *1 John 4:10-12*

Love is acting in someone else's interest no matter who they may be, no matter how you feel, and no matter what it costs.

Joy - a delight unaffected by circumstances *John 15:11*

An inner delight in God that is sustained in spite of the changing seasons of life.

Peace - an abiding sense of harmony *Philippians 4:6-7*

Relationships are free from friction. Positively, it describes harmonious relations with others in the church.

Patience - a willingness to stick with things *Proverbs 3:3-4*

Being willing to live with a difficult situation for a long time—even if things are slow to change or never change.

Kindness - a sense of compassion in the heart *Job 6:14*

An inner disposition that puts others at ease and out of which kind actions flow.

Goodness - a goodness that flows outwardly *1 Thess. 5:15*

Choosing to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Faithfulness - an unwavering loyalty *Psalms 26:3*

Being the kind of people who keep our word to one another.

Gentleness/Humility - an attitude of humility without any entitlement; a lack of self-awareness *Philippians 4:5; 2:3-4*

Gentleness is power and strength under God's control. Humility is considering others above myself, if I consider myself at all.

Self-Control - an ability to direct your energy wisely

Titus 2:11-13

The strength to restrain our desires, emotions, and actions has to come from within rather than from some outside source.

Hope - a certainty of what is to come *Hebrews 6:19-20*

Coping with the hardships of life and with death because of hope in Christ.

Memory Verse

1 John 3:3

And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.