

The Doctrine of Adoption

The Transforming Power of Adoption

What is your only comfort in life and death?

That I with body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ; who, with his precious blood, has fully satisfied for all my sins, and delivered me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me that without the will of my heavenly Father, not a hair can fall from my head; yea, that all things must be subservient to my salvation, and therefore, by his Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life, and makes me sincerely willing and ready, henceforth, to live unto him.

-- The Heidelberg Catechism Q/A 1

1. A transformed view of God

a. How do you view God?

b. Perspective Shaping Scriptures

- i. **John 1:12-13** – But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave **the right** to become children of God.
- ii. **Eph 3:14-19** – I bow my knees before the Father...that you being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with the fullness of God.

c. What if you had a poor example of an earthly Father?

2. A transformed defense against Satan

a. Satan's temptation of Jesus – "If you are the son of God" (Luke 4)

b. Satan's temptation of the believer

- Physical need (stone into bread)
- Earthly power (all the kingdoms of the earth)
- Spiritual proof (throw yourself off the temple)

The Doctrine of Adoption

The Transforming Power of Adoption

2. A transformed obedience

a. Not surprised by trials and suffering

- 1Pe 1:8 Though you have not seen him you love; though you do not now see him you believe
- Heb 2:10 “bringing many sons to glory...perfect through suffering.” Christ brings many sons to glory, but through the path of suffering
- Rom 8:17 “fellow heirs with Christ provided we suffer with him...”

Ferguson –We may be tempted to despair that we will ever live worthily of this wonderful calling. But our assurance and confidence in our relationship to God lie not in ourselves, but in the fact that through faith in Christ we have become sons of God.

b. Responding as sons

- 1) Claiming (in faith) our divine right to sonship
- 2) Repeating the father’s words
- 3) Seeking to please the Father out of gratitude and expectation of future grace

c. Not as indentured servants.

3. A transformed life of faith in the Savior Son

- Adoption is a transformational doctrine – to whatever degree it is the controlling thought and perspective of God and your Xian life, it will change your life. It leads us to strive to be like our father, not to earn his love but to earnestly please him, to be what he has made us to be, and to receive what he has promised to his children.
- Transform your joy, service, fruitfulness, your relationships

The Doctrine of Adoption

Application Questions

1. Meditate on Ephesians 1:3-6.
 - a. What is the relationship between “every spiritual blessing” and adoption?
 - b. What is the effect on your soul as you contemplate the fact that God predestined you to adoption “before the foundation of the world”?
 - c. What is the purpose and end result of adoption for the Christian?
2. How have you viewed God in the past? Has his fatherhood been the controlling idea? If not, what prevailing idea of God has supplanted his fatherhood? And why?
3. Are there any particular temptations you are presently facing by which Satan is sowing seeds of doubt upon your sonship in Christ? What are some Scripture verses you can study to fight these attacks?
4. Have trials and suffering taken you by surprise in the past? How will a Biblically robust understanding of sonship prepare you for the next ordeal?
5. To what degree have you attempted to earn your status as God’s child? Have you been relying on your performance as a son or on the performance of *the* Son, Jesus Christ?
6. Meditate on the Heidelberg catechism quoted in the outline. What *is* your only comfort in life and in death? Do you believe that on account of the Father’s great love for you, that all things are made subservient to your salvation?
7. Can you identify some areas in your life in need of transformation as you embrace the joy and assurance of the Father’s love for you?
8. Is your appreciation and application of the doctrine of adoption increasingly rich and robust even as your doctrine of sin?