

BROKEN RELIGION 8 – “ADOPTION”

I want to begin this morning by sharing with you the one main truth we are going to explore from this passage because I want it to inform every thought, every word, every idea you hear and our moved by today. Here it is ...

Embracing our adoption by God - will change our closeness to God. (repeat)

With everything I am, I know God wants to move us towards Him today and I believe God uses this powerful and beautiful truth like dynamite in our soul - to propel us to him - to be closer to him than when we walked into this place. But God tells us this truth will not only affect us today - but it changes us - for all our days going forward.

So, let me ask you a question, Does the word closeness describe your perception of God and your experience with God? God's adoption is meant to bring you close to Him. Let's define close w/ the two things you were created for - the very joy and love of God's presence. You see, God's adoption is about being wanted, personally wanted by God - so you can experience the very presence of God. Adoption reveals God's deep affection for you - because it is in His adoption of you and I that we get the greatest thing of all - the thing we were created for - the joy and love of God's presence. So I'll ask again: Does the word closeness describe your perception of God and your experience with God?

Are you convinced that God is close to you? *Not every moment - but are you reminded of his love for you and do you taste his joy - at all - during your week?* If you are a Christian, who has been adopted by God the implications are serious. If you are uncertain about the position of the Father's heart toward you, it will affect everything about you. If you aren't convinced of his love for you, you will be vulnerable to human guilt, condemnation, and fear. If you don't know the presence of His joy in your life, you will live with an ongoing shame as you look for joy in everything and anything but God.

If you are a Christian, you should be certain that God is close to you. My prayer - *is that the power and beauty of His truth from His mouth would make us certain this morning and even move you and I to Him.* We are asking Him to help us believe that - **Embracing our adoption by God - will change our closeness to God.**

We will answer 3 questions to help us embrace our adoption - so we can be drawn into our God.

01. What about our adoption by God is so powerful and beautiful?
02. Why do we struggle to embrace our adoption?
03. How do we embrace our adoption?

01. What about our adoption by God is so powerful and beautiful?

- **Our adoption is a complex and care-FULL plan of God.**

GALATIANS 3:23-24, 4:4-5 (ESV) 23 Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. 24 So then, the law was our **guardian** until Christ came, *The law was a tuder, a nanny, a security guard, prophet - designed to move us toward Jesus.*

4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

God set his affection on you from eternity past and planned every detail of your adoption. Why?

Where do you look in order to be assured of God's love for you? I ask you this question because we all have a certain impulse to look in the wrong place.

The last time you told someone you loved them - how did you say it. In other words, did you give them reasons like: I love you because - you are so good to me, you are faithful, you are hot, your eyes, your care for me. These are all common ways we explain our love. I love you because. However - what happens when that person is not good to you, or faithful, has a season when they don't care well for you or stops looking as hot as they use to. Do you stop loving them? You see - we all want to be loved but we know, we know deep inside us that if the reason we are loved has to do with what's on our outside (our looks) or what's on our inside (our character) we will at some point fail the person who loves us in both those areas. That's why unconditional love is so powerful - I love you and I always will - just because. I have made the choice to love you. Yes - we have a history and attraction and more - but I choose to love you even if all that gets rocked! That kind of love is powerful and wanted by each of us. So, when you stop and think about God's love and affection for you, where do you look in order to be assured of God's love for you? The impulse - is to look within yourself and say God loves me because I ... However, this impulse will not serve us. If you look at your appearance or heart to find some reason for His love for you, you will either find pride - he should love me because or despair - he shouldn't love me because. Both are deadly - sinful.

Thomas Watson says, "We have enough in us to move God to correct us, but nothing to move him to adopt us and love us as his son or daughter." But hear what God has done in spite of us.

EPHESIANS 1:4-5 (NLT) 4 Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ ... 5 God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family ...

Adoption says: **God is perfect love. / Forever, you have been in His care.**

- **Our adoption changes our legal standing – we are right, holy before God.**

GAL 3:24 (ESV) 24 So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be **justified** by faith. Justified – legal term, to be found just or right before the judge. *Friend's adoption of child.* *Our adoption has changed our legal standing forever. We are right before holy God. Not just right. We are holy, other – like Him.*

EPHESIANS 1:4 (NLT) Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes.

Adoption says: **Our God is holy. / You are like your Father God - holy.** WHY?

- **Our adoption was costly.**

GALATIANS 4:4-5 (ESV) 4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to **redeem** those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

To redeem means to obtain or to set free by paying a price. What was the price that God paid for our adoption?

Last week, Russ told us the answer from GAL 3:13 (ESV) Christ **redeemed** us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. The cost was Jesus taking on the whole weight of our sin (cursed in our place) – all the shame, guilt, and punishment. **It cost God his son – but it gave him you and gave you HIM!**

Adoption says: **Our God is extravagant. / You are highly valued.**

- **Our adoption brings us close to God - as full sons and daughters, heirs of the King.**

GALATIANS 3:25-26, 29, 4:7 (ESV) 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, 26 for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. 7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

The whole point of our being redeemed and made right/holy is to be with God – **to be close to Him.**

I saw a child get a great gift and miss the greater one recently. A 13 year olds dad came home from the war – surprised him, and brought Him tickets to the Super Bowl. The kid went crazy running wild all over the place with the tickets – jumping and screaming. He was enjoying a great gift, while completely missing the greater, His dad.

*We do the same. JI Packer says – **We have a great gift in justification:** The truth that we have been made right with God by Christ's work alone – is no doubt the primary gift of the gospel. Justification is the primary gift, because it meets our primary spiritual need. We were adopted from a horrible situation. Our situation: we all stand by nature under God's judgment; his law condemns us; guilt gnaws at us, making us restless, miserable, and in our reasonable moments afraid. We have no peace in ourselves because we have no peace with God. So we need to be made right and holy before God. **But contrast this, now, with adoption.** Adoption is about family, conceived in love, and it means we get God as father. In adoption, God takes us into his family and fellowship—he establishes us as his children and heirs. Closeness, knowing His certain love and joy -is at the heart of the relationship. **To be right with God the judge is a great thing, but to be loved and cared for by God the Father is GREATER.** This is our great inheritance promised to Abraham's offspring. We get God and all of who He is. **Are you disappointed with this inheritance or excited?***

Adoption says: **God is a good Father who has brought you close to Him. / We are sons and daughters**

of God! God's heart in this passage is that we understand and experience the GREATER! It's possible to understand the great thing, "He sent forth his Son to redeem", and fail to comprehend the greater, "so that we might receive adoption as sons." **Don't miss the greater. Our adoption is powerful & beautiful!**

02. Why do we struggle to embrace our adoption?

The truths of God's adoption of us are vast. We could spend hours and weeks talking about all these truths and more. As many truths as there are, they all center around one beautiful and powerful thought – our closeness to God. *Adoption says God has drawn you close – look at his extravagance, look at his affection, look at his care.*

If this is true, why do we struggle to embrace this – to truly experience closeness to God? There are probably many reasons we doubt the reality of our adoption – but here are 5 our team came up with as we thought thru this.

Doubts that confront adoption:

1) **Grief – Why didn't you come through?**

- 2) **Suffering** – Why didn't you fix this?
- 3) **Effort** – I think I have earned your favor and affection – maybe?
- 4) **Failed Effort** – Why would you love me?
- 5) **Comfort** – Don't need you or want you to rock this boat?

All of these cause us to doubt the reality of our adoption and all are very different in their nature. Some are self-inflicted, some are other's-inflicted, some seem to happen by God's hand, & some seem to have no explanation. *While they are different in nature – they all have one common result. **They make us feel far from God.*** Whether we have moved or God has moved – the result is the same – **God seems far away.**

This feeling – **God being far away** – is normal when the darkness of this broken world overwhelms us either thru our sin, others sin, or just the fact we live in a broken world where broken things fall on us. Listen to how this brokenness affected Jesus in the last moments of his life.

MATTHEW 27:45-46 (ESV) 45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. 46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

*Darkness fell over the whole land. Why? The rebellion and sin of this broken world was being place on Jesus. He was being cursed for our sin. He would get submerged in all our guilt, shame, and punishment. And, in this moment of utter and complete darkness in his soul, the humanity of Jesus (Jesus was all God and man) – cried out "why have you forsaken me." Or – **My God, my God - why are you so far away.***

Was God far away? Some say God turned his face from Jesus. No where in the scripture does it say this. Ps 22:1 prophecies Jesus would say this – word for word. **PS 22:1 (ESV)** "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" It goes on to prophecy the whole scene at the cross and what would happen to Jesus. 1000 years before it happened, detail after detail is prophesied – even this one stunning thing about God.

PSALMS 22:24 (ESV) For He has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, and He has not hidden his face from him, but has heard, when he cried to him.

God the Father - was there. *Is 53:6, 10 – tell us it was the hand of God who punished Jesus. Not the Romans. God is the judge against all sin. He just used evil men to carry out his act of redemption. He was there punishing Jesus. But he was also there making sure nothing happened that He did not plan to pay for our adoption. Including raising Him from the dead. **God did not turn his back on His Son. (repeat)** He could not, did not, would not.* God the Father – is and always will be close to His SON. *They were and have always been ONE.*

Why did Jesus cry out – "My God – where are you?" Because in the darkness of all our sin on Him – God "seemed far away". **That is what sin does. But to those who are His son/daughter – He is not far away. He will never leave you. He is with you – his son/daughter - in the darkest of times just like he was with Jesus His son. He is there! Your adoption means He will never leave – but even more He will always be close. You are one.** **GALATIANS 3:27 (ESV)** For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. **This is powerful and beautiful. O Lord – help us believe! Imagine if tomorrow – you knew for certain – God was close!**

03. How do we embrace our adoption?

GAL 4:6 (ESV) And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"

- **God empowers us to embrace our adoption through the Holy Spirit in us – who forever cries out – Father God, You are close**

- **It is a cry of closeness.** "Abba" was the Aramaic word (language of the Jews in Palestine) for daddy. All languages have a similar word – dada, papa, abba, bapa (Farsi) Why? It is one of the simplest and therefore first sounds babies can make. It is also defines the relationship. Father – says one thing. Dad/daddy – says another.

We were created to know the love and joy that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit have and enjoy. God created us to know His joy – not to get joy from us.

Here we see the overwhelming closeness – the JOY and love the Spirit has for the Father.

This is the same joy the Son has for his Father. In **Mk 14:36**, Jesus on his last night prays, **"Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. The Spirit cries out for us: Daddy - you are close! You are our joy and love.**

- **It is a powerful, passionate cry – a deep gut level response to the love and care of God.** That is spoken by whom? Not you, not I – *but by the Holy Spirit of God.*

Our doubts about our adoption cause us to believe we will never be able to experience the joy and love of God like this – so we will never cry out to God like this.

The good news – this says, this is The Spirit's cry in us. We don't have to conjure it up. He is crying out – powerfully, passionately – in us. And, the Spirit in us will allow us to experience the joy of God if we submit to and believe Him in the dark and the light moments of our life.

God the Father sent Jesus so we could have the status of son/daughter given to us.

God the Father sent the Spirit so we could experience being a son/daughter.

We do things in a family setting to prove we belong; or, we do things because we believe we belong. The Holy Spirit in you says – you belong – you are family! **Embrace your adoption today!**

* Right now – if you are thinking, John, God can't love me now – if you knew what I've done. If you have been redeemed by faith in Jesus work alone – you have been adopted. Be silent and ask God to give you ears to hear the Spirit. The Spirit is in you crying – Abba, Father. He is close. He cannot leave his child.

* Right now or tomorrow – if you are buried in the darkness of suffering wondering why God is so far away in your pain. . If you have been redeemed by faith in Jesus work alone – you have been adopted. Be silent and ask God to give you ears to hear the Spirit. The Spirit is in you crying – Abba, Father. He is close. He has not and will not leave his child. He is here in the midst of your pain.

* Right now – if you have only known silence for days, for months – maybe years. . If you have been redeemed by faith in Jesus work alone – you have been adopted. Be silent and ask God to give you ears to hear the Spirit. The Spirit is in you crying – Abba, Father. He is close. He never left you – His child.

Before we pray – notice I said – if you have been redeemed by faith in Jesus' work alone. You cannot embrace the hope, beauty, and power of your adoption by God if you have never been adopted. Our adoption comes by faith in the work of Jesus Christ alone. Today – faith Him – and be adopted into God's family.