

**November 19, 2023**  
**Stand Sunday**

There are a number of themes in Scripture that have caused numerous Interpretational debates!

- 1.) The TIMING of the Rapture
- 2.) The Gift of Tongues
- 3.) Wherever Two or Three are gathered in my name, I am in the midst of them... is not about believing for a miracle through prayer, but about resolving church conflict!

However, I believe there is ONE scriptural passage that is without DEBATE!

James 1:27 (NIV)

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

Paul helps define this struggle in Romans 7 and 8 where we see a real theological difference come to our understanding.

Chapter 7 is all the struggle of I, Me, Mine... It's used over 40 times and Paul's conclusion is that it all leads to death. He declares, "The wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?"

But in Chapter 8, by way of comparison, he admonishes us and encourages us to live Life by the Spirit!

Our Mindset (without being led by the Spirit) will always be about pleasing the FLESH! My selfishness, my desires, me holding and clutching tightly to I, Me, Mine.

In fact, Jesus warned about this kind of mentality when He said this...

Matthew 6:19-21 (NIV)

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The understanding to this is: What LIFE am I trying to please?! My Flesh life or my Spirit life?!

The answer is... the one I'm giving the most attention too!

The Story of Adoption is Our Story! We've all been ADOPTED! Adoption gives us...

I. A FUTURE

Humanity was created in God's image.

*Genesis 1:27 (NIV)*

So God created mankind in His own image...

In His own likeness, for one purpose: to reveal God, to reflect God's glory, to express God's character, to put His glory on display.

But quickly in Chapter 3, we see the Fall of Man. We are now a humankind that is sinful, incapable of reflecting or expressing the Glory of God on our own.

That is why Romans 3 tells us that we have all come short of what? The Glory of God.

That is universally true of fallen humanity. We can't do what we were created to do. We're corrupted, marred, distorted. We're LOST!

The Penalty?

*Romans 6:23 (NIV)*

For the wages of Sin is Death...

*Romans 5:1-2 (NIV)*

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now STAND. And we boast in the hope of the GLORY of God.

Adoption gives us a FUTURE, and it also gives us...

## II. A Father

When you look at Jesus, you see the perfect image of God in human form.

*John 1:14* says "we beheld His GLORY." And what glory was it? "The glory of the only begotten of the Father."

Before Christ, we were Lost. Incapable of seeing God or Knowing God in his splendor. But Christ not only gave us a seat at the table, He gave us Intimacy with the Father!

Our adoption was more than just in name, it was now by birthright. We have the RIGHT to be called the children of God! Through Christ, and the work of the Holy Spirit, we have not just a Father, a God to be feared or revered, but an "ABBA" Father, one that wants to GLORY in these children!

How many remember bugging your parents when you wanted to show them something you could do? We may or may not remember all of those moments, but I bet you can remember all the times your parents failed to show up or GLORY in your accomplishments!?

When Jocelyn was young, we took her to the zoo. One of the highlights is always the lion exhibit, and the hope is to get the Lion to roar! So I start making movements, bang on the cage, and all of a sudden, one of them lets out this massive roar!

When that happened, Jocelyn went from flat-footed to jumping up on me, legs wrapped around my waist, arms around my neck, and started to cry. And I say to her what every good father would say: "I will protect you!"

We all know, if that lion could come out from behind that cage, there is nothing—nothing—I can do to protect her, other than to say to her, "You run!" And to the lion, "You eat me!"

That's the best I can do to protect her, and that's what every dad would do—I'll protect you. That's why I'm here. I've got you covered.

In that moment, she didn't question if she was truly mine. She didn't question that she could possibly be adopted, and I might not consider her one of my own. She never asked to see paperwork. Why?

Because there was a SPIRIT within her, all her days, that testified to her, that day and always, that I'm her Daddy!

That Spirit within her testified...

- When I need protecting, I know who has me.
- When I'm in trouble, I know who will rescue me.
- When I'm surrounded, I know who's willing to step in and shield me from the roaring lions!

And because we have been Adopted by the Father, there should be a SPIRIT within us that testifies that there is a great and glorious God who loves us beyond our wildest imagination.

Adoption gives us a Perfect Father, and in addition, we get...

### III. A Family

Question: Do you know what every kid "wants" who's in the Foster system?

They want a FAMILY!

The mission of the Keystone Alliance would hopefully get some of us to ADOPT, but when that's not feasible, there are dozens of other ways to help bring hope to kids struggling in the system.

A year ago, Vince Smith was here, we gave them a \$500 gift and committed monthly to support the efforts here in Erie County. But I believe with all my heart that We can do MORE!

God has blessed us with an amazing family at RLA, but there are still seats at the table that are in need of being filled!

You may be living in the Spirit of Fear today, rather than the Spirit of Adoption?! You need a Father, and you need a Family!

My challenge to you this morning is: Don't sit on the edge of the couch, not sure if you're an Heir, you can jump into the lap of a God who loves you!