

“From Foster to Family: The Biblical Picture of Adoption”

Galatians 4:4-7

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."

Adoption is one of the clearest earthly pictures of what God has done for us spiritually. It has given me a deeper understanding of what it means to be a child of God. And today, I want to preach to you on **spiritual adoption—and being God's child.**

Many people sitting in church pews experience something that resembles adoption—but only resembles it. Some live spiritually like foster children: they're in the house, around God's people, enjoying some blessings, receiving care—but they've never been adopted into the family of God. They've never been born again.

Friend, there is a vast difference between being near the Father and being His child. Let's walk through this together.

I. The Foster Child: Close, But Not Yet Family

As a foster parent, I've seen firsthand the precious children who enter our home. They sleep in our house, sit at our table, wear clothes we provide, and receive our love and care. Yet, for a time, they are not legally our children.

They may call us "Mom" and "Dad" because they feel safe, but legally, they still belong to someone else. The court holds authority. Their biological parents may still have certain rights. The foster child enjoys many of the same blessings as our biological children, but not all the same rights.

A. The Foster Child's Blessings Parallel the Church

So it is in the church house. There are people who sit in services, sing the songs, hear the preaching, and even feel the warmth of God's people. They enjoy Christian fellowship, they may receive counsel from God's Word, and they may even feel God's convicting hand.

But friend, they have not yet been adopted. They are near the family but not in the family.

Ephesians 2:12 says: "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:"

That is the condition of every soul outside of Christ. You can sit near the blessings of God and still be lost.

B. No Inheritance Without Adoption

My biological and adopted children have equal inheritance in my house. But the foster child, as precious as they are, cannot legally inherit from me unless adopted.

Likewise, you may be around God's people, but unless you are born again, you are not an heir of God.

Romans 8:17 says: "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ..."

The inheritance belongs to the children—not to the visitors.

C. No Discipline Without Adoption

Let me tell you something interesting: discipline is a sign of sonship. With my adopted children, I discipline them the same way I discipline my biological children because they are mine. But I do not discipline the neighbor's child, or even the foster child with the same authority, because they are not legally my child.

Hebrews 12:6-8: "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons."

God disciplines His children. If you can sin, rebel, and live for self without God's correction, it's not because God has grown tolerant—it's because you're not His child.

II. The Adoption Process: God's Gracious Work

In the earthly system, adoption is a legal process. Papers are signed, courts are involved, and once finalized, it is permanent and binding.

A. Adoption Requires Authority

When we adopted, we couldn't simply declare, "These children are ours." We needed the authority of the judge to declare their new status.

In salvation, you don't just declare yourself a child of God. It takes the authority of God Himself to adopt you. John 1:12 says: "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:"

Only God has the authority to make a sinner His child.

B. Adoption Requires Payment

Adoption is costly. Court fees, legal representation, home studies—it comes at great expense. Spiritually, our adoption required an even greater price: the blood of Jesus Christ.

Galatians 4:4-5: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son... To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

Our adoption was purchased at Calvary.

C. Adoption Involves Choosing the Child

In earthly adoption, my wife and I signed papers that said, "Yes, we desire to adopt these children." What a powerful picture: God chose to adopt us.

Ephesians 1:4-5: "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world... Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,"

He wasn't forced. He wasn't obligated. He chose us because He loved us.

III. The New Identity of the Adopted Child

Once adoption is finalized, everything changes for that child.

A. A New Name

When our adoption hearings were completed, our children received a new last name—my name. They are now fully Kleitz children, as much as my biological children.

Revelation 2:17 says: "...and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written..."

When God adopts you, you are no longer identified by your past or sin, but by His name.

B. Full Legal Rights

In the eyes of the law, my adopted children have all the same rights as my biological children. In God's family, there are no second-class children.

Romans 8:16-17: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ..."

C. A Permanent Position

In earthly adoption law, once finalized, it is permanent. My adopted children cannot be "unadopted."

John 10:28: "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."

Your adoption in Christ is not temporary. It is eternal.

IV. The Heart of Adoption: The Father's Love

Adoption begins with love. My wife and I didn't adopt to increase our family size but because our hearts were moved with love for those children.

A. God's Love Initiates Adoption

I John 3:1: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God..."

God loved us when we were unlovely. He pursued us while we were lost.

Romans 5:8: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

B. Adoption Gives Us Intimacy

My adopted children don't address me differently than my biological children. They call me "Dad" with the same closeness.

Galatians 4:6: "God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

Abba means "Daddy." That's personal. That's intimate.

V. The Danger of Staying a Spiritual Foster Child

Friend, I plead with you: don't settle for being close to God's family without becoming part of it.

A. Being in the House Is Not Being in the Family

You may attend church regularly. You may even serve in some ministries. But proximity to God's people does not equal adoption into God's family.

Matthew 7:22-23: "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord... And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you..."

B. Only Adoption Makes You a Child

Good works, baptism, religious affiliation—none of these adopt you into God's family. Only faith in Jesus Christ brings adoption.

John 3:3: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

VI. The Joy and Responsibility of Being God's Child

Once adopted, our lives ought to reflect the family name.

A. Obedience Flows from Sonship

John 14:15: "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

We don't obey to become children; we obey because we are children.

B. Holiness Reflects Our Father

I Peter 1:15-16: "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;"

As adopted children, we represent our Heavenly Father to the world.

C. Love for Our Siblings

I John 3:14: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."

In our home, all our children love each other as siblings—not half-siblings or adopted siblings—just brothers and sisters. That's how it ought to be in God's house.

VII. The Coming Fullness of Our Adoption

Though we are fully adopted now, there is a future aspect of adoption still to come.

Romans 8:23: "...waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

One day, our adoption will be fully realized when we stand before Him, glorified and perfected forever.

Let me close this way.

When the judge's gavel came down at our children's adoption hearing, it was final. The judge said, "These children are now forever yours." That moment still echoes in my heart.

Spiritually, some of you are still in foster care—near, but not yet family.

God stands ready to adopt you today. The price has been paid. The paperwork of redemption was signed in the blood of His Son. The Judge is waiting to declare you His child.

Will you let Him adopt you today?