

1 John
The Christian's DNA (Part 3)

1 John 2:28-3:3

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Today, I am excited because, in our study of this wonderful letter, we get to learn about our adoption as God's children. The primary background for the New Testament concept of adoption actually comes from adoption that was practiced in ancient Rome. It usually involved youth and adults, not typically infants. The process included two crucial steps. First of all, there was the legal termination of all social and legal connection to the person's birth family. The second step, then, having severed those connections, was the legal declaration that the one being adopted was now a permanent member of the new family.

In ancient Rome, seven witnesses were required to observe the adoption itself so that they could testify after the father's death that he had, in fact, adopted this as His child. Once adoption was complete, the birth father had no authority over his former child at all, all former financial obligations were canceled, and from the moment of adoption, the new father had full authority and complete responsibility for the adopted child's care. And here was the most important element, and this comes to the core of our adoption, in Roman Law, the adopted child had all the same rights and privileges as the child who was born into the family.

The most powerful illustration of that in the history of Rome was an adoption; Julius Caesar adopted Gaius Octavius, the greatest ruler of Rome that ever was, and as the heir of Julius Caesar, the man who became known as Caesar Augustus, had every right to the throne although he was not born into the family. And he ruled Rome as its emperor because he had been adopted and, therefore, had all the same rights and privileges as if he had been born into the family. John wants us to understand that that is exactly what has happened to us spiritually. God has adopted us.

Now, just to remind you of the context where this comes up, we have just begun the second cycle or movement of the three tests of eternal life. John begins the second movement with the test of obedience. In the section we're looking at, we learned that our relationship to sin and

righteousness shows “Our Real Birth.” Look at how you connect and relate to sin and how you relate to righteousness; and when you look at that picture, you will know whether you are dead in sin still, the state in which you were born and I was born; or whether you have, in fact, been born of God. That's the message of chapter 2, verse 28, through chapter 3, verse 3. Let's read it again together, 1 John, chapter 2, verse 28.

Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming. If you know that He (That is the Father.) is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him. See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

This paragraph teaches us that a true Christian has been born of God and will, therefore, be like his Father, “like Father, like child.” If we've been born of God, we have His spiritual DNA just as surely as we have our human parents' physical DNA; and if we have our Father's DNA, then His character and His conduct will be reflected in our own

In this passage, John is focusing on the new birth. And he gives us several crucial insights into the new birth, into being born of God. First of all, we've learned that if we've been born of God, “Our New Birth Will Be Certified at Jesus's Revelation,” that's verse 28. When Jesus comes, it'll be clear that we have been, in fact, born of God. Secondly, we learned that “Our New Birth Is Confirmed Now by Our Actions.” We don't have to wait till then; look at how you live. How you live reflects your true Father. If you have the Heavenly Father's DNA, that will imprint itself on your character and your conduct. Thirdly, we learned that “Our New Birth is Followed by Our Adoption;” that's the message of chapter 3, verse 1.

Now, last week we began to consider this, and we just learned last week, “The Reason for Our Adoption,” and that is, it's the love that the Father has bestowed on us. And we looked at the

nature of that love that would move God to adopt us as His own children. But that's what stands behind our adoption.

Now today, I want us to move to the next expression in verse 1, and that is “The Reality of Our Adoption.” We've seen the reason, but now we see the reality. Look at verse 1 again, “See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, (here it is; in order) that we would be called children of God.” John's point is this, here's how great a love the Father has given to us; it's so great that He calls us His children.

Now, the Greek word for ‘called’ here means ‘to identify someone by either a name or by an attribute.’ That's the idea here. The point is if God calls us His children, it means we are His children, we actually have that quality. God has truly, really adopted us as His own children. We look around us and we see human adoptions often, but understand that human adoptions are faint echoes, mere copies of the real thing that's described in this text. John says that God calls us, and that's by the way, ‘called’ means ‘God calls us’ this, God calls us “Children of God,” children of God.

Now, John uses a different Greek word than he uses for Jesus; John uses, he's very careful in his writings to use the Greek word ‘Son’ only for our Lord, God's only begotten Son. John, to make a point, uses a different Greek word for us; it's ‘techna.’ It's a word, though, that reminds us that we are, in fact, truly children of God. It's John's simple way to say that while we're not exactly like Jesus in the sense of we're not God's eternal sons and daughters, we are truly sons and daughters; He has become our Father.

Now, that is pretty astounding when you think of what this says, “We are called by God, His children,” when you remember what Scripture says that we are by nature. Think about the expressions that are used of what we are by nature. In Ephesians, chapter 2, verse 2, we are called “...the sons of disobedience.” In Ephesians 2:3, we're called “...children of wrath,” as if wrath was our middle name, it's so certainly a part of what we're going to experience. And then here in 1, John 3, verse 10, notice, “We were by nature...children of the devil.” He says, “By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious.” Everybody in this room is

either a child of God or you are a child of the devil, and that's how everybody is born. So, you're still like you were by nature, how you came out of the womb, a child of the devil, or you are a child of God.

Jesus makes this very clear in John 8:44, He says to those who are listening to Him who are not believers in Him, “You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father.” There is the inscription that rests over every human being outside of Christ, “You are of your father, the devil, and the desires of your father is what you want to do.” Until, Christian, you repented and believed in Jesus Christ, don't miss that, the devil was your father. But all of that changed at the moment of our salvation. God adopted us as His children. That's why J. I. Packer calls adoption, “The highest privilege that the gospel offers.” Do you ever consider that? The highest privilege the gospel offers is our adoption.

John Murray says, “It is the apex of grace and privilege, and it staggers the imagination!” Does it stagger yours? It should. John the Apostle writes, “See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called the children of God.” All true Christians have been adopted as God's children. That's what Romans 8:14 says, “...all who are being led by the Spirit of God, (That is who are Christians.), these are the sons of God.” When you believed in Christ, God adopted you at that very moment. Galatians 3:26 says, “...you are all sons of God (How did that happen?) through faith in ...Jesus...Christ?” When you believed, you were adopted.

But that brings us to the big question, what does it mean to be adopted by God? This again, like regeneration, like we did a couple of weeks ago, is such a huge and important theme. The highest privilege the gospel offers, and yet most Christians don't really understand what it means. And so, I want, this morning, to step away in the rest of our time together from 1 John and consider several crucial facts about the reality of our adoption. Because John's readers got it. He had taught them; he had explained it to them, he had served among them for decades. They understood this but many of us don't. And so, let's step away and take a look at several crucial facts about the reality of our adoption by God.

I want to begin with the background just so you understand where this comes from. In the Old Testament, there were only a few recorded examples of individuals being adopted. The most famous of those examples is Moses, who was adopted by Pharaoh's daughter, probably Hatshepsut, one of the powerful women in Egyptian history. And the other is Esther who was adopted by Mordecai, actually, her older cousin.

This concept occurs most often in the Old Testament, not with reference to the adoption of individuals, but with reference to God's adoption of the nation, Israel, as a people. Sometimes the Old Testament describes Israel as God's Son. For example, Exodus, chapter 4, verse 22, "...you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD, (Yahweh), 'Israel is My son, My firstborn.'"" At other times, God is called the Father of Israel, sometimes by Israel, in Isaiah 63:16:

You are our Father, though Abraham does not know us
And Israel does not recognize us.

You, O LORD, (Yahweh), are our Father.

Other times, God Himself says this. Jeremiah 31:9, "...I am a father to Israel.

But here's something interesting to note, rarely in the Old Testament is God called the Father of individual believers. In fact, you can scour the Old Testament, and there are only a couple of examples. The most famous would be that of Solomon, in 1 Chronicles 17:13, God says this: I will be his father and he shall be My son; and I will not take My lovingkindness (steadfast love) away from him, as I took it from him who was before you." He's talking to David and He's talking about Saul.

So rarely in the Old Testament do you see individual adoption. So, I hope you can see from just that brief survey, that the New Testament concept of adoption of individuals primarily flows not from the Old Testament, but rather from first century Roman adoption as I said a few minutes ago. That's the model that's in the mind of the Apostle. But of course, ultimately, that is a mere reflection and echo of God's eternal plan to adopt us as His own.

Now, before we get any further into our adoption, let me make sure that you understand the differences, the differences between regeneration, the new birth that we talked about a couple of weeks ago, and our spiritual adoption. Understand this, regeneration and adoption are not the same thing. And let me give you several ways it's clear in Scripture they're not. First of all, regeneration precedes faith according to 1 John 5:1, "You are born of God," and out of the new birth, you're given the capacity to believe, and you believe. It all happens in a moment but biblically, logically, regeneration comes before faith.

On the other hand, adoption follows faith. John 1:12 says to those who believed, "...He gave the right to become (the sons of God) the children of God." A second difference is that regeneration is by the Holy Spirit. Jesus, in John 3, talking to Nicodemus says this new birth is "by the Spirit of God." On the other hand, adoption is by the Father. Ephesians 1 says, "In love, the Father predestined us to adoption."

Thirdly, regeneration is a moral change in us. We looked at Ezekiel 36 a couple of weeks ago; it is a change that God produces in us. On the other hand, adoption is a legal declaration about us. John 1:12, "...to those who believed to them He gave the right (the legal right and authority) to become His children." (Paraphrase.).

Number four, in regeneration, the means of accomplishing it is the Word of God. You've been born again, James 1:18 says, "...by the word of truth (God)." In adoption, the means is faith as I just quoted a moment ago from John 1:12. So understand, these are two different realities. They both happen at the moment of salvation, but logically regeneration comes first, then you are given repentance and faith, you repent, and you believe, you are justified, and all those who are justified are in that same moment, adopted by God. So, what does it mean?

Let's look at the definition of adoption. Now, as I so often do and I'm sometimes lightly made fun of for, let me start with, it does not mean that we become sons in exactly the same way that Christ is. In the most famous verse in the Bible, John 3:16, Jesus is called "God's only begotten Son." The Greek word is 'monogenes.' It literally means 'one-of-a-kind, unique.' Christ is God's one-of-a-kind Son. He's the only Son of God by nature; He is eternally the Son of God.

In our adoption, we are granted the full legal rights and privileges of sonship in a family that we did not belong to by nature, as Jesus certainly did. He was eternally the Son of God. So, what is then our adoption?

Let me give you a definition from Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth, put together by the faculty of The Master's Seminary. This is a great definition:

In adoption, God legally places regenerated and justified sinners into his family, so that they become sons and daughters of God and thus enjoy all the rights and privileges of one who is a member of God's eternal family.

No wonder Packer calls it “the highest privilege of the gospel.” Justification is the legal declaration that we are righteous before God as Judge with respect to the demands of His Law. Adoption is a legal declaration that we who have been justified by the Judge are now members of the Judge's family by His grace. That's what adoption is.

Now let's look at several other important facts about our adoption. We've already touched on this, but I'll just bring it out again. The ultimate cause of our adoption is the love and grace of the Father. Go back and look at Ephesians, chapter 1; Ephesians, chapter 1, verse 4. “just as He (That is the Father.) chose us (Selected us out of a larger group is the meaning of the word.) in Him (Christ, He chose us in Christ. And he did so.) before the foundation of the world.” That means His choice wasn't based on anything in us. And He chose us in order “...that we would be holy and blameless before Him (He wanted us to be like His Son. And he chose us, because) In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself.” The Father, is the ultimate cause and the ultimate cause of the Father moving to do this, look at the end of verse 4, is His love. He set His love on you, Christian. In eternity past, for nothing in you, He decided to love you. And he decided to adopt you as His own child. It was driven by His love. But also notice verse 6, before this whole sentence is ended, he says, “(And this adoption as sons was intended) to the praise of the glory of (What?) His grace.” Here's the other prevailing cause of your adoption; it was the love of God, and it was the grace of God. The fact that there is, in God, as you've heard me define it so many times, there is, in God, this quality that permeates His entire being; that is Who He is that finds joy and delight in doing good to those who deserve exactly the opposite. That's what moved God to adopt you.

What means? By what means did the Father make adoption possible? How could we who were His enemies, we who were completely the opposite of everything that God is, how could we become His children? And the way He accomplished this, the means that He used to get to our adoption was the death of His Son.

Turn to the book of Galatians, chapter 4; Galatians, chapter 4, verse 4, “But when the fullness of the time came, (In other words, when everything in human history and in God's eternal plan was just right,) God sent forth His (His one-of-a-kind) Son, (His unique Son) born of a woman, (That is, He had to be to save us, He had to be like us to stand in our place. And He was) born under the Law, (That is, under the responsibility to keep God's Law, which, of course, He did perfectly, which earned him the qualification to stand in our place. So He was qualified because He was like us, born of a woman. And He was qualified because unlike us, He kept God's Law perfectly. And all of this, verse 5,) so that He might redeem those who were under the Law.” He was under the Law and kept it perfectly; we were under the law and failed miserably. And He came and was like us and lived here as one of us, keeping God's Law so that he could redeem us, so that He could, by his death, purchase our forgiveness. That, here it is, in order that He redeemed us, so, “God sent...His Son,” don't miss the sort of logical order here. “God sent...His Son” in order that “He might redeem” us, in order “that we might receive the adoption as sons (and daughters).” So, the only way your adoption was possible, think about this, and let this sober you, the only way God could ever adopt you, the only way God could ever adopt me, was by the sacrifice of His one-of-a-kind Son, the only way it would ever happen.

What is the instrumental cause of our adoption? How does one actually become a son or a daughter of God? You were born and I was born, and we lived as children of the devil for years. So how does one get, what cause, what's the instrument that God uses to transition us from being a child of the devil to a child of God? And the answer is faith in Jesus Christ. Go back again to John 1. We've looked at it several times because it's so instrumental in our understanding of this. Verse 12 says, “...as many as received Him, (And at the end of the verse, he defines receive him.) ...to those who believe in His name.

To as many as believed in His name, to them, He gave the right (the legal authority) to become children of God.” Having already been born of God, verse 13. (Paraphrase.) So, the instrumental cause then is faith. In Galatians 3:26 makes it crystal clear. Listen to this, “...you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.”

Can I just say, if you're here this morning and you're not a follower of Jesus Christ, and you're hearing all of this and the Lord's at work in your heart, and you're saying, “I'm tired of the father I have, who is a cruel, abusive taskmaster. He keeps promising me that my sin is going to satisfy me, and it never does.” And suddenly, your eyes are opened this morning. You're like the prodigal son sitting in the pigpen, who says, “Wow, look at the Creator of the universe, look at what He's done through His Son, and you're wondering, ‘How can I get from where I am to where He is?’” The answer is, believe, repent of your sins and believe in His Son, and to you, He will give the right to become a child of God. So, our adoption, then, was planned and eternity past, it was purchased in the death of Christ on the cross, and it was applied to us at the moment of our salvation. That means, brothers and sisters, we are now, right now as we're in this room, we are children of God!

And John captures this. Look back in 1 John, chapter 3, verse 1, he says, “...and such we are.” John's point is that our being called the children of God is not some analogy. It's not some metaphor; it's reality! It's not just a title; it's a fact! In fact, look at 1 John 3, verse 2, “Beloved, now we are children of God!” God the Father has already legally placed us into His family; we have become the sons and daughters of God, and we enjoy all the rights and privileges of a member of God's eternal family. Now, as I have said to you before, I think all of us, myself included, if we're honest with ourselves, we tend to think that that statement that God has now legally adopted us, we are His children by adoption, we tend to think that that statement should be followed by the caveats that come at the end of the commercial.

You know, you're listening to the radio, and if you listen to the radio, and, you know, there's this commercial, and then at the end of that commercial, in very fast speech, somebody gives all the caveats. We kind of think that this should be like that, something like, “God has adopted us. But the adoptive father makes no guarantees, explicit or implied, and said adoption may be

rescinded at the discretion of the adopting parent for reasons, including but not limited to...” you know, that's kind of what we expect, right? Because that's who we are. Brothers and sisters, there are no caveats. There's no fine print. When God saved you, He legally adopted you in the very same sense that a human parent adopts a child. God truly thinks of you, Christian, as one of His children. Galatians 4:7, “Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son, (a daughter).” You are God's.

Now, along with our adoption, there are some amazing privileges. And I want us to consider those; there are many profound immense privileges that come with our adoption into God's family. Next time, Lord willing, we'll go back to our text in 1 John 3, and look at the rest of verse 1, and verses 2 and 3. But this morning, I want to use the rest of our time to give you a brief list of the privileges of our adoption that appear throughout the New Testament because, again, I just don't think we get this. I don't think we understand this the way we should. So, let's consider, first of all, “The Current Privileges of Our Adoption,” right now, today, as you sit here. What are the current privileges of our adoption?

Number one, “God has given us the Holy Spirit.” Galatians 4:6, “Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts,” because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts. Because you've been adopted, you have the Holy Spirit.

Secondly, “God has given us access to Him in prayer.” I don't think we really fully appreciate this. Galatians 4:6, “Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, (And then he goes on.) crying, ‘Abba! Father!’” Romans, chapter 8, verse 15 says, “...you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received, (Christian) a spirit of adoption.” I think Paul has a play on words there by a “spirit of adoption.” I think he means The Holy Spirit, the Spirit who accomplishes our adoption and comes with our adoption, but I also think he means the mindset of adoption, by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!”

Now that word ‘Abba’ occurs only three times in the New Testament. It occurs in those two verses I just read about us and our crying to God. The only other time it appears in the New

Testament is in Mark 14, verse 36. It's in Gethsemane, and Jesus was praying, and He said, "Abba! Father! All things are possible for You; remove this cup for Me; yet not what I will, but what You will."

You need to understand the word 'Abba.' It's not a music group from the early 80's. No, this word is from Hebrew, but it's actually an Aramaic word. It comes from Hebrew, but in the New Testament times, it was an Aramaic word. In the first century, it was a very common word used every day in every Jewish home, that is in homes where Aramaic was spoken. 'Abba' was how a small child addressed his or her father. This is the Jewish Talmud, "When a child experiences the taste of wheat (That is when a child is weaned from his mother's milk.) it learns to say, 'Abba and Emma, Abba and Emma.'" In other words, 'Abba and Emma' were the first words a child used to refer to his parents. It's like our word 'daddy or papa.' Eventually, of course, 'Abba' was no longer limited to small children, but it became the way that even grown children referred to their fathers.

Again, I understand this growing up in the south. We grew up calling our father, "Daddy." My siblings who are in their 70's and 80's still refer to our father as "Daddy" when they talk about him. Although if he were still living, he'd be over 100 years old. It's a term of endearment that includes intimacy and respect.

And here's the shocker. This is how Jesus always referred to God. But this was new with Jesus. You search all of the written documents of Judaism, and not one time does a Jewish person ever use 'Abba' to refer to God, but it's how Jesus always referred to God. And here's the amazing thing, this is how Jesus taught us to think of and speak to God as well. The Holy Spirit confirms our adoption by teaching us to cry, "Abba, Father, Papa!" The Spirit makes us aware of this new relationship. The Spirit of adoption teaches us to cry out to our Father in prayer, just as a human child constantly cries out to his father in the midst of difficulty and trouble. It's amazing!

There's a third, current privilege of our adoption, "God cares for us as His children," God cares for us as His children. Let me just give you a little list of what this means. As our Father, He

loves us. Like fathers do, He loves us as His children. John 16:27, "...the Father Himself loves you." John 17:23, Jesus is praying, and He says, "(Father, You have) loved them, even as You have loved Me." And by the way, He always will! Psalm 103 says, "From everlasting to everlasting, is the steadfast love of the Lord." (Paraphrase.)

He has compassion on us. Here's another part of his care for us as His children; He has compassion on us in our weaknesses. Psalm 103, verse 13:

Just as a father has compassion on his children,
So the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him.
(Because) He Himself knows our frame;
He is mindful that we are but dust.

When you look at that little child, one-year-old child, your heart is moved with compassion, you understand their shortcomings, their weaknesses, their issues, and you have compassion toward them because you know, that's what you expect from a child. God's the same toward us.

He protects us as our Father. Proverbs 14:26, "In the fear of the LORD there is a strong confidence, (And listen to this.) And his children will have refuge."

He provides for our needs. Matthew 6, I wish I had time to take you there. Beginning in verse 25, Jesus says, "Listen, look around you, Christian, stop worrying. Look at the birds. God feeds every one of them." (Paraphrase.) Psalm 50, "Every bird of the forest is mine," God says. And Jesus says He cares for every one of them. Do you really think He's not going to care for you? Look at the blue bonnets. Look at how God clothes those temporary blue bonnets; do you really think He's not going to give you what you need? He goes on to say, "Don't worry about these things. Your father knows you need these things. He cares for us." (Paraphrase.)

Matthew 7:11, "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!" He's using an analogy. He's saying, "Listen, Tom, if your daughters know that if they have needs and they come to you and say, 'Dad, I need this.'" And I agree they need it. I'm going to meet that need. It may be in my own way that I determine what is wise; it may be in my own time, but I'm not

going to let my children go without what they need. And Jesus is saying, “Listen, if you're evil, and you do that, what do you think God it's like?”

He lovingly corrects us as His children. Hebrews 12, verses 6 and 7:

...THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES,
(God deals with us as sons.)
...for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?

And by the way, how does He discipline us? Two ways! Most of the Father's discipline of us is His verbal instruction, just like Solomon to his sons in Proverbs. That's why we have the Scripture. He's disciplining you by teaching you how you ought to think and how you ought to speak and how you ought to live. And if you refuse to listen to His verbal instruction, and just as we do as human parents, the Lord may include some corrective discipline as well. But so much of His discipline is teaching us His way. So, God cares for us as His children.

Number four, Christ is our older brother. This is another current privilege of our adoption; Christ is our older brother. Romans 8:29, “Christ is the preeminent one among many brothers.” (Paraphrase.) Have you ever thought of yourself this way? You are a brother or sister of Jesus Christ; He is your older brother. That's how He thinks of it. Hebrews 2:11, “...He is not ashamed to call (us) brothers.” Verse 17 of that same chapter, “...He had to be made like His (brothers) in all things.” To use the words of the creed, “He was just like you except for sin.” He is just like you except for sin. He's your brother.

Number five, we are brothers and sisters in God's family. Ephesians 2:19, “...you are no longer strangers and aliens. . . but...are of God's household.” Galatians 6:10, “...let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.” You belong to the family of God; we are to relate to each other as members of a large family. Is that how you think about the people in this church? That's how you should. What amazing privileges! Now, folks, those are just our current privileges.

Quickly, let me give you a brief list of “Our Future Privileges;” the future privileges that come with our adoption. You see, we don't yet enjoy all the privileges that come. As good as salvation is in this life, it's not all there is! Since we are God's children, we have His promise that we will receive an eternal inheritance. Galatians 4:7, “Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.” Colossians 1:12, “...the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints.” 1 Peter 1:3 and 4:

The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to His great mercy has caused us...to obtain an inheritance.

We are God's heirs, and we are fellow heirs with Jesus Christ.

So, what exactly will we inherit? This is an amazing list. First of all, eternal life in God's kingdom. Luke 12:32, “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom.” Titus 3:7, “...being justified by His grace we (would be made) are heirs according to *the* hope of eternal life,” heirs of eternal life.

Secondly, we inherit everything in the universe. Hebrews 1:2, there we learn that God's Son is the heir of all things. Well, Romans 8:17 says, “If we are God's children, then we are “heirs of God and fellow heirs with Jesus Christ.” (Paraphrase.) He gets everything, guess what, so do we.

Thirdly, we inherit a moral character and a glorified body like Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 8:29 says, “...those whom (God) foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son,” that's His moral character. 1 John 3:2, “...when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.” That's our moral characters, but not just our moral characters, we get a glorified body like His. Philippians 3:20-21 says:

Our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body...of His glory.

I get a glorified body just like His.

And then number four, I get the new heavens and earth, and God Himself. Revelation 21:7, “He who overcomes (That's every Christian.) will inherit these things, (talking about the new heavens and the new earth, and then God says) and I will be his God and He will be My son.” I will be his or her God, and she will be my daughter.

I'm the youngest of ten children. My dad worked hard to provide for our family, but frankly, things were always tight. Growing up, I wore clothes that were passed down to me from my older brothers and from neighbors. In fact, I don't ever remember going to the store to buy clothes; I didn't know you did that until I was in middle school, and I'm not making that up. I worked my own way through nine years of college and graduate school. Before my mom's death, she divided, by ten, what she received from the sale of our childhood home, which frankly wasn't worth much, just the two acres it was on, and she gave me my inheritance, a tenth of the proceeds, about the way it all worked out in the end was about \$2,000. That was my inheritance. And you know what, I was surprised to get that.

My dad died when I was 23, so I've been without him most of my life. I love him. I'm grateful for him. I'm excited to be with him again. But listen, my adoptive Father, my heavenly Father, can't die. And He has lovingly cared for me throughout my entire life, and He has promised that someday He will give me and every other son and daughter of His an inheritance, and that inheritance is absolutely staggering—eternal life in His kingdom! Everything that exists, His own moral character, a glorified body like His, God Himself and His presence in a new heaven and a new earth forever. That's my inheritance and, Christian, that's yours.

Is this how you think of God as your adoptive Father, as Abba? If you're a Christian, if you've repented and believed in Jesus Christ, this is how you ought to think of Him because this is reality. You were once a child of the devil; and at that time, your only relationship to the God of the universe was as your Creator, your rightful King and the one who would eventually be your Judge. But in Jesus Christ, your Creator and King and Judge has declared you righteous, and He has adopted you. And just as was true of Jesus, God is now also your Abba. You're really truly His son or his daughter. It's amazing! God could have saved us; He could have justified us without adopting us. But instead, He made us sons and daughters. “See how great a

love the Father has given to us, that we should be called (by God Himself) the children of God; and such we are.” I hope you will spend the rest of your life here and eternity, celebrating the greatest privilege of the gospel, your adoption!