Section: Doctrine of Salvation

Wednesday, November 11, 2020

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**TEACHING NOTES**

Welcome church, I’m excited for our lesson tonight. We have 3 Q&A’s that we will be covering tonight so we have a lot to dig into and I’m going to pray for our time then we’ll jump right in.

Pray:

**Q89. What do we receive when we are saved?**

Among other blessings, we receive the forgiveness of all our sins, justification, reconciliation, adoption, and eternal life with Jesus, having now been sealed by the Holy Spirit.

I’m breaking our answer down into 6 points. P1- We receive forgiveness for all our sins, P2- We receive Justification, P3- We receive reconciliation, P4- We receive adoption, P5- We receive eternal life with Jesus, P6- We are sealed by the Holy Spirit.

***P: 1 We receive the forgiveness of all our sins***

If I paid off all my credit cards except for $1 on each, could I declare myself free from debt? What if I only owed a penny? Would the credit companies overlook the fact that I still owed them money? If we have any minute percentage of sin remaining that has not been paid for, we remain condemned. Praise God, Jesus paid for every sin of every one of His elect.

**Colossians 1:13-14 He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.**

Notice the repetition of Scripture to credit God with the work of salvation. Now through His work we have been redeemed; we believers have had our sins forgiven. All of them. This verse does not say “all,” but as I explained with my illustration, we could not be debt free, as this verse puts it redeemed (transferred from domain of darkness to kingdom of Jesus), if there were any remaining debt. If there were remaining sin in need of forgiveness, then we could not be transferred. If you owe 1 penny to your creditor, you are still in debt, right? You guys understand the connection.

Jesus did not leave a debt for us to cover.

**Romans 6:10 For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God.**

When you rightly understand this verse, you will see clearly that through Jesus’s atoning work on the Cross, we who have been saved by the triune God have had ALL (and I mean every single one) of our sins forgiven. The context of this passage is focusing on the elect no longer being enslaved to sin because of Jesus’s work on their behalf. This verse is declaring why the believer is free from sin. Now the believer is not sinless; however, the believer is no longer enslaved to sin nor under sin’s condemnation. If the believer’s sin was not fully paid, then we would still be enslaved to it and condemned because of it. It would still have claim on us. This is the context leading up to this verse. However, Jesus died once for all. This does not mean Jesus died once for all **men**. It means Jesus died once for all of the **sins** of those for whom He died. Do you see how easy it could be to misunderstand this verse? The death Jesus died, He died to sin (you see the context here is about sin), so the “once for all” part of this verse is speaking about the magnitude and satisfaction that His sacrificial death had in regards to the sin of the elect. Jesus died once, died effectively, for all the sins of His chosen ones.

Not only can we see earlier in the context of this verse that Paul is saying these things to believers, but if the verse was saying all sin of all men, then no one would be condemned, because all sin would be atoned for. Since this is not true, not all men are saved, then the idea that this verse is saying all as in every single man or every single sin of every single man clearly cannot be correct. Paul said that because we are in Christ, He has paid for our sin. He has paid it so fully that it no longer has lordship over us, and it no longer condemns us before God. This verse says clearly that Jesus will not die again; it’s finished. Why is it finished? Because for those whom Christ died, there is no remaining sin guilt.

**Hebrews 9:28 so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.**

If the previous Romans passage meant that Jesus died for all men, how can any other scripture say He died for many? The previous passage we looked at must mean He died for all of the sins of those He represented, because this passage says that Jesus bore the sins of many, meaning many men. If the previous passage meant that Jesus died for all mankind, then no other passage like this one can say he died for many without it being a contradiction. “Many” can never mean “all inclusively.” It can mean “all exclusively.” For example, the many referred to in this passage is all of the elect. It is all exclusively, meaning all of a particular type of person. It is not all inclusively meaning all mankind. Does that make sense? If the previous verse was speaking of all mankind, then this one could not say “many.”

Now we know the “many” in this verse is not talking about many sins but many people. You see this passage is speaking about people whose sins were paid for. There are many of these people. The last passage was talking about the sins of these people, and all of those sins were paid for. We can know this is true by paying attention to the end of this verse. Jesus will appear a second time, not to deal with sin (why not? The elect’s sin was taken care of completely), but to take the many for whom He died, those “who are eagerly waiting for Him,” home.

Let me tie a bow on this:

**Hebrews 7:27 He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself.**

So what we know about the priests through previous teaching is that the priests offered sacrifices for the sins of the people they represented (never did a priest offer a sacrifice for the sins for all people everywhere), and they did this repeatedly. So why doesn’t Jesus do this repeatedly? Because He had no sin of His own and He died as a sacrifice once for all of the sins of the people He was sacrificed for. There are no sins remaining for the elect that haven’t been atoned for. The debt of sin has been paid in full.

There is nothing else to make a sacrifice for. Jesus died once for all the sins “past, present, and future” of His people. He does not have to make another sacrifice, because the one He made was totally sufficient!

Now can you see how easy it would be to misinterpret these verses to say Jesus died for all people? This is why we need to be careful when we exegete the Scriptures. Context and related doctrine is vital!

I’m making these points not just to help your reading and understanding of Scripture, but it’s crucial for our first point of this catechism lesson. When we understand WHAT Jesus did- rightly- and for WHOM Jesus did it- rightly- then we have the sound foundation to WORSHIP Him rightly and REST in Him fully! Here is the beautiful part of this: If you are in Christ, your sins have been paid for completely! You have no sin you’ve committed or will commit that Christ did not pay for at the Cross. Your debt has been paid, and as our answer and passages teach, at the moment of salvation, we HAVE “forgiveness of all our sins.”

Debt for your sin is due eternal suffering and anguish, eternal separation from God and anything that is good. If you have even one sin that was not paid for, you will suffer eternally. So, when you hear that Jesus paid that debt completely, how can you not well up with praise, joy, and thankfulness? In Jesus alone, you have forgiveness of **all** your sins! If you are not in awe of your Lord and Savior, you are failing to grasp the gravity of what’s been done for you here.

**1689: 11:3. By his obedience and death, Christ fully paid the debt of all those who are justified. He endured in their place the penalty they deserved. By this sacrifice of himself in his bloodshed on the cross, he legitimately, really, and fully satisfied God’s justice on their behalf…**

The forgiveness and justification we receive is due to the full and complete payment of Christ on behalf of His elect. His paying for our sins is why God can be just and justify those who were once guilty. I hope you are seeing here how these truths are connected and how dependent we are on all of these things that God has graciously done for us to be redeemed. This leads us to our next point:

***P: 2 Justification***

Because our debt was paid, we can be justified.

Since this is the next catechism question I’ll be answering tonight, I am only going to read our definition of justification from our catechism booklet:

**Justification: God declares a believer *not guilty* based on the believer being credited Jesus Christ’s perfect righteousness.**

Now because we are justified, we are able to be reconciled.

***P: 3 Reconciliation***

**Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Since we have been justified by faith in Christ alone, we have peace with God. This peace is the reconciliation we are speaking of.

Here’s the point: A relationship that has been torn by sin can have forgiveness and not have reconciliation. That means you are no longer offended by the sin; you have forgiven the sin, but you are also no longer friends with the sinner. Your relationship moves from friend to acquaintance. You don’t get angry when you think of or see this person, but you also don’t get excited to see them, and you no longer seek them out for time together. How sad would it be if that’s where we were left in our relationship with God?

What if God had forgiven us but still had no relationship with us- no reconciliation? It would be as bad as if He had not forgiven us at all. There are times in this life where human relationships due to our fallen flesh end up in this situation. However, if we have this with God, we are no better off than when we were condemned because eternal life WITH GOD is the prize. Anything short of reconciliation to God misses the true blessing we need. The process of salvation cannot be completed until we are reconciled to God. Let me explain:

If you could have heaven, streets of gold, no more sin or pain or suffering, no death or illness, no debt or labor... If you could have all of this, but God were not present, would you take it? If so, I would argue you have not been given a new heart. Heaven is not about ***what*** we get when we enter it, but ***Who*** we get when we enter it. Heaven is not heaven without God. I will not be satisfied until my eyes behold my Savior. David said it well in:

**Psalm 27: One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquirein his temple.**

God is the point! Would David have been satisfied if He could have everything except God? No, he said the one thing he asked for was to be in the presence of his LORD, to gaze upon His beauty and to know Him more and more completely.

Do you see why this reconciliation part is so important? We have not just been forgiven of debt and justified or released from prison to the debt we owed. We have also been reconciled to the one we were indebted to—the prize Himself. We now have that which a reborn heart desires above all things, relationship with our Lord! This relationship is so much greater than we could ever imagine though.

Think of this in the context of a court case: We the defendants stand on trial guilty of offense against a perfect God. The accuser calls out our sin and our offense; the Judge must declare us guilty unless we have an answer for the sins we have committed. Jesus stands in our seat; we are found in Him to be not guilty. So not only has God placed the guilt of our sin on His Son so that in Him we can be justified, but after we have been freed from our guilt and are in Christ, the Judge who sacrificed His Son for us also invites us to join Him in relationship after the court case is over. Then God does the unthinkable...

Not only has God paid our debt, justified us and set us free from the debt, reconciled us back to a right relationship with Him, but He has taken this relationship to a most intimate level. We are adopted; we have been made His children.

***P: 4 Adoption***

I will end tonight on this catechism question, so I am only going to give you the definition now:

**Adoption: The gracious act of God in which He makes a believer one of His children, giving the privileges of sonship.**

All of these steps lead us to our hearts’ desire of:

***P: 5 Eternal life with Jesus***

God has done all of this completely, and we believers have been promised by the One who cannot err that we will have eternal life with Jesus.

**1 John 5:11 And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.**

**Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

This life is so temporary; for those of you who are young, just ask those who are older. Our time here is short. We are not promised tomorrow or even that we will get to the end of this lesson. The longer you live, the clearer this becomes. However, in Christ we have eternal life. Not just an eternal existence, but life with Him! This is unbelievable; this is the God of all things saving sinful man to eternal life with the very One with whom we desire to be with the most! Now none of this was done by you, so you cannot lose it; that’s why our next point is so amazing.

***P: 6 Sealed by the Holy Spirit***

**Ephesians 1:13-14 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.**

**2 Corinthians 1:22 and [God] has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.**

God has sealed the believer, the elect, with the Holy Spirit. We have God Himself sealing these truths so that nothing and no one, not even yourself, can change this. If you ever walk away from faith in Jesus, it is not evidence that you have a supreme will; it is also not evidence that God failed. It is, however, evidence that you were never sealed to begin with. The faith claimed was not saving faith; it was superficial faith.

God the Holy Spirit is our guarantee that God has saved us. God puts His Spirit in each regenerated person. This is simply amazing!

Praise God, believer, praise Him for these things, and rejoice in the glorious grace of our sweet Lord! Be in awe, the Creator, Owner, and Ruler of all things has paid your debt, justified you to freedom, reconciled you to relationship with Him, adopted you to make you His child and heir of all that He owns and created, and sealed you with Himself so that this will most definitely come to pass; it cannot fail. Remember this in seasons of doubt: **GOD CANNOT FAIL**!

With that summary in mind, let’s dive into question 90.

**Q90. What is justification?**

Justification is the legal declaration in which God declares a believer not guilty based on the believer being credited Jesus Christ’s perfect righteousness.

When you are on trial before the Lord of all creation, what will give you the ability to stand and be declared just?

You and I both know it cannot be what we have done. If you took every good thought, action, and deed and placed them on one side of a scale, then took every evil thought, action, and deed and placed them on the other side of the scale, which way would the scale lean? Would it prove you to be just and fair? Would the scale be even? What if you placed one- just one- bad thought or deed? Would it cause the scale to lean towards all the good things you have done? Not according to Scripture. This is not how God will judge humanity. Good deeds don’t cancel out bad deeds.

**James 2:10 For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.**

Since God is both just and the justifier as Romans 3:26 says, if we are guilty of breaking one part of the law, then we are guilty of breaking all of it and due punishment from God. He is just; He must have justice. Since this is the case, He sent His Son to die and pay the penalty for the elect breaking of His law so that He could declare us justified on Christ’s basis. We are not justified because of something we have done. God does not say, “Since you decided to trust in my Son, I declare you justified.” This would base God’s justification on what we did. Rather God says, “Since you are my chosen, my Son paid your debt and I credit His righteousness to you when I cause your new birth and give you saving faith, and I, the just judge, declare you to be justified in Him.

Think about this: A judge who declares a guilty person “just” is considered a corrupt judge. If someone hurt your family or worse, and the evidence against them was so overwhelming that there was zero doubt they were guilty of the crime, how would you feel if the judge let them go? You would declare the judge to be unjust, would you not? Of course you would! In fact, God’s word says the same thing in Proverbs:

**Proverbs 17:15 He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous are both alike an abomination to the Lord.**

So what do we do? We are the guilty murderer on trial. We have committed cosmic treason against the Holy God. We are guilty, and so we have two options: Either we serve the penalty we deserve, or somehow we become justified.

Now looking at this verse, it actually seems completely impossible. No one can stand in our place, because that would cause God to condemn the righteous, and we the wicked cannot be justified, because both of these are an abomination to the Lord. So what happened? How did this get worked out?

God made Christ to be sin so that He could punish the sin that we who are in Christ have committed. Jesus was credited our record on the cross. Since God the Father made God the Son to be sin, He was not punishing a righteous man but one who has been made sin. We see this in 2 Corinthians:

**2 Corinthians 5:21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.**

You see for our sake God took the righteous, sinless Christ and made Him to be sin- meaning God credited our sin to Him. This is how God pours out His wrath on Jesus, who Himself was sinless. God had Jesus represent His elect, and His elect were full of sin. He therefore, as our representative, bore our sins so we could bear His righteousness. So that in Him we become the righteousness of God. As real as it is that the saved elect are given Jesus’s righteous record, so it was that Jesus was given our sin record.

Now God did not arbitrarily justify the unrighteous person; rather, in Christ our sin was atoned for, and His perfection is imputed to us, so we are counted righteous. God counts you righteous because He imputes Jesus’s righteousness to you. So long as Jesus is righteous (same yesterday, today, and forever), then we can be most assured that God sees us through His Son’s righteousness and counts us righteous. This is our justification. We get to leave the courthouse innocent because our Savior took our death penalty and God the Father imputes His righteousness to us. The saved elect are not *just* “not guilty in Christ” forever, we are also “counted righteous in Christ” forever! A proper, whole, biblical consideration of salvation justification makes both sides of that clear: forever “not guilty in Christ” AND “counted righteous in Christ”. See our answer again, see both these critical points: Justification is the legal declaration in which God declares a believer not guilty *based on the believer being credited Jesus Christ’s perfect righteousness.*

All this is dependent upon Jesus. That is why we must be “in” Jesus. In Him, through faith alone in Him alone, we are counted righteous and not guilty; we are justified.

Our next two verses say this clearly:

**Philippians 3:9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith**

**Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

You see, faith, the very faith God gave to us, is the thing through which we are justified. Now this grace goes beyond our wildest imagination.

The Father makes us His children.

**Q91. What is adoption?**

Adoption is the gracious act of God in which He makes a believer one of His children, giving the privileges of sonship.

**1689 Chapter 12 – Adoption**

**1. God has granted that all those who are justified would receive the grace of adoption, in and for the sake of his only Son Jesus Christ. By this they are counted among the children of God and enjoy the freedom and privileges of that relationship. (FOLLOW CLOSELY, THIS IS SO GOOD!) *They inherit his name, receive the spirit of adoption, have access to the throne of grace with boldness, and are enabled to cry “Abba, Father!” They are given compassion, protected, provided for, and chastened by him as a father. Yet they are never cast off but are sealed for the day of redemption and inherit the promises as heirs of everlasting salvation.***

Our historic confession says it so well. We are given the amazing blessing of being made sons and daughters of God. God our Father, now in the most perfect way as only God can, gives us compassion, protection, provision, and correction. We are never cast off but are instead sealed and brought into God’s family eternally and we inherit the promises God made for His elect heirs of everlasting salvation!

**Galatians 3:26 for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.**

Faith is a big deal, isn’t it?! Faith is the avenue by which God ensures for believers all the blessings that come from being in Christ. By now, most of you have Ephesians 2:8-9 memorized, right? For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works so that no one can boast.

The faith in Christ Jesus, that saves us and secures all of these amazing promises by the power of the Holy Spirit, was given to us by God the Father who did this by grace. Unmerited favor. God planned this before the foundation of the world, so that His decisions were quite simply His to make. We were not even created when God decided to give His grace to the now believer. It was done so totally apart from us that it fits very well into this adoption blessing that we receive from our same God through grace by faith.

What I mean is this: The orphans waiting for a family to adopt them don’t exactly get to pick who does this adopting. We have a beautiful picture of this in several of the families that attend here at DC.

There are multiple children who have become part of our family, and none of them were the decision makers in this privilege. It was simply done because the parent wanted to love, bless, and raise a child.

The beauty of this gift is that the children, who had no say in what their biological parents did, would have been without parents to love raise and care for them. However, someone who was not obligated stepped in and cared for them. They stepped in at a great cost to themselves because they had a heart to raise, love, and care for the child.

This adoption by God as sons and daughters is the icing on the cake of salvation. We are not only reconciled to right relationship with God through His work, we are now made a most intimate part of His family through adoption as sons and daughters. This is stunning! God considers me, sees me, loves me as He loves the Son. I am now an heir to all that God has created. God, in a clear and unique way, displays His love for us through our adoption. Ephesians 1:4-5:

**Ephesians 1:4-5 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. *In love he predestined us for adoption as sons* through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will**

Our answer to question 91 begins with “Adoption is the gracious act of God.” What we see here in this Ephesians verse is that God did this in love. It was a gracious loving gift of God to ensure for His people the adoption as children through Christ. Christian, this means that before you existed, God loved you. In fact, what we learned in our study previously is there has never been a time that God has not loved you, the elect. Since God is unchanging, we know that He has always loved those He loves. He always was as He is; therefore, you- elect one- have always been loved by God. The blessing of this is that since this love for you had no beginning, it also cannot have an ending. You are loved, Christian, with a forever kind of love that is not based upon you or your effort. This is God’s love—it is not a love that is subjected to passions, but a love that is based upon God’s sovereign choice alone, having nothing to do with your assumed self-merit or effort. The beauty of this love is that it existed prior to you, so you cannot do something to lose it. It was never dependent upon you. As long as God exists, His love for you will exist.

On the days of temptation and struggle, this is such a comforting reminder to your heart! God loved you eternally not on the basis of what you would eventually do, “good” or bad, in this temporary life. He hasn’t stopped because of your failure; His love is dependent upon His own character and will-- not yours!

Since His character is never changing, His love is also never changing. No matter how your character is changing, if you are God’s, He will and always has loved you. His love will never fail, and this love is the love through which He chose to adopt to Himself a children from man through the work of His Son Jesus Christ. I couldn’t even write these words without my heart welling up. Do you see the gracious merciful love of our Lord to save us? To adopt us to make us His own. You and I are loved as the Father loves the Son because we are now sons and daughters.

Parents, we have such a faint glimpse of this. Before our children were born, we loved them. When I held my daughters in my arms, it felt like I had a piece of my heart living outside of my body. When they hurt, I hurt; when they’re sick, I’m sick. There is a connection-- a love-- that is simply unexplainable, and we are imperfect, corrupted by sin. Parents who have adopted children, this love is no different! Those children are yours, and this heart attaching affection is no different for them than for a child who was from your womb.

Even so, can you imagine how much greater the love of the unchanging Father is for us?

I say all of this to say if you and I who are broken understand a glimpse of this love, then we should realize that the perfect holy God has a love for us that’s beyond our comprehension. It is a love that’s displayed through God the Father placing His very own Son on the Cross to make you and me a son and daughter. Think about the kind of love God has for us. What kind of love is this?! 1st John says it this way:

**1 John 3:1-2 See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.**

This is the kind of love the Father has for us. It is the love that He displays to bring about the adoption of us His children. I simply don’t have the words for this. I can’t express through words what this is for me. I can praise my God and thank Him for His love, grace, and mercy. I can thank Him with my life lived out for Him. There is nothing He cannot ask of me; He has already given me everything as a son. My life is His; this is the best I can do to show my gratitude for His love. This is why we obey our Lord, Christians. This is why Jesus says, “If you love me, you’ll obey my commandments.” If you truly understand what God has done for you, then you’ll give up your life to obey Him. Here is the beauty of our sacrificed life: We gain everything by giving our lives up. As sons and daughters, we inherit the kingdom of God. We are not losing anything by giving up our lives now, we are actually gaining everything. This is beyond gracious. I truly can’t think of words for how kind our God is to us.

This reality is clearly expressed through the Scriptures:

**Matthew 16: 24Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 25For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. 26For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?**

When we are born again, given faith, and justified, we will give up our lives to live for God. That’s why these verses say so clearly that if anyone loses his life for God’s sake, he will find it.

Remember we don’t give up our lives to be saved; we give up our lives because God has saved us already. When these things are true, it proves, it’s the evidence that God has saved you and adopted you as His child.

So what do we mean in our answer when we speak about the privileges of sonship?

**Romans 8:14-17 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.**

If you are a child of God, you are an heir; we are fellow heirs with Christ. Interestingly, the verse ends with this phrase “provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.” When people teach that God wants us to be successful, healthy, and wealthy, now (in healthy ways) they clearly haven’t read their Bible. True believers who give up their lives for their God will pick up their crosses daily, and there will be suffering. This joyful suffering leads us to glory with Jesus as sons and daughters; this is why Paul would say in 2 Cor.:

**2 Corinthians 4:17-17 For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, 18 as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.**

This eternal weight of glory beyond comparison is the glory of sonship and the privileges that come with it. We are called children of God, and so we are.

How many of you have seen the movie *Annie*? It doesn’t matter if you’ve seen the new one or the old one, the theme is the same. An orphan wins the lottery, so to speak, by being moved from a horrible life to adoption into the richest family possible. Why is this story so timeless? It’s our story. Only the stakes are far greater. We believers are removed from the horrible lives we deserve, and the eternal wrath we have earned, into the family of God who owns all things. The creator and sustainer of all things brings us into His family as heirs along with His Son. We are Annie, just on a whole other level.

We have been removed from orphans to adopted sons and daughters of the King. It is not about how wealthy we are or us inheriting all that God has. It is not about all the gifts or possessions; we will throw our crowns at His feet. It is about being made family with our Lord.

There’s a unique part about this, too: You were not just made a son or daughter of the King. You were brought into a family; I have brothers and sisters who are closer to me than my own flesh and blood. These are our blood-bought family. Look around you. Those here who have been saved by the King are brothers and sisters now, and the family that we have here changes the way we do life. Many of us have put our Lord above the idolatry of family, and it has cost us. In our culture, earthly family has become a huge idol. Have you ever heard the phrases “family first” or “blood runs thicker than water,” etc.?

So how does this change our lives?

Quite practically, we can stop running for temporary treasures that will fade and cost us our lives. We can start living in light of our eternal inheritance with our Lord.

For those of you who were abandoned by your parents, you can be healed. God has not abandoned you; instead, He did what your absent parents never did: He gave His life to make you His. Those nights we stayed up crying wondering why our fathers didn’t want to pick us up, those weekends of broken promises, the games they missed, the love we feel like we lost... This is all gone now; our heavenly Father who made us His has not missed a thing. He has not failed to fulfill His promises to us. Instead of living in the defeat of our parents’ failures, we are now healed to stop the progression of failed parents. We now have our example and our strength to be the parents we always wish we had.

For those of you who feel like you don’t have family, like you’re doing life on your own, look around you. You have a family; we blood-bought family fight hard to love each other well, to come along side each other when things are tough, to call our brothers and sisters to repentance when they are in sin. Please, if your brother loves you enough to confront you about something that is as dangerous as unrepentant sin, even if they don’t confront you well, at least as a brother or sister see the love of the person who’s willing to risk relationship and confrontation for your good. This adoption really does change everything about our lives.

I am going to read Hebrews 12, and I want you to listen to how our lives are different in light of being adopted as sons and see what the privileges are that are given us in this adoption:

**Hebrews 12:1-29 1Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.3Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. 4In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. 5And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. 6For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.”**

**7It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? 8If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.**

**9Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? 10For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. 11For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.**

**12Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, 13and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed. 14Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. 15See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; 16that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. 17For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.**

**18For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest 19and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them.**

**20For they could not endure the order that was given, “If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned.” 21Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I tremble with fear.” 22But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, 23and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, 24and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.**

**25See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven. 26At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.” 27This phrase, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. 28Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, 29for our God is a consuming fire.**

What do we receive when we are saved? *Among other blessings, we receive the forgiveness of all our sins, justification, reconciliation, adoption, and eternal life with Jesus, having now been sealed by the Holy Spirit.*

Praise God!

Please bow your heads and pray with me…