

We have been lovingly adopted by God, by his grace which we praise

- Big Idea: We have been lovingly adopted by God, by his grace which we praise
- Structure:
 - Lovingly Adopted
 - Into God
 - Because of his Will
 - To Praise His Grace

INTRO

- A few years ago, I found myself playing bass guitar for a production of the musical 'Annie'
- It's the story of an orphan girl who tries to find her parents but {spoiler alert} ends up being adopted by a millionaire father.
- It seems like a dream adoption. From being poorly treated in an orphanage to being the adopted daughter of a rich, kind, man.
- However, today, we will see and explore an adoption that is so much greater and better than this one.
- Specifically, we will see how we, as followers of Jesus, have been adopted by the living, creator God, to be sons and daughters of him.
- So, here's where we are headed today.
- We have been:
 - Lovingly Adopted
 - Into God
 - Because of his Will
 - To Praise His Grace

- But first let me recap what we saw last week.
 - We saw that we have been chosen by God before the foundations of creation.
 - And we explored the implications of this fact.
 - We saw how amazing it was that God chose anyone
 - We saw how there is no conflict between God choosing us and us repenting
 - But we ultimately saw, how we were chosen not based on anything that we had done to impress God...but because of his amazing grace
 - Therefore, our response here on earth is to live our lives in praise to him.
- So with all of this in mind, we come to vv5-6 (and a bit of V4, which is just a quirk from translations...Paul's original letter to the Ephesians didn't have these chapters and numbers!)
- While choosing us, "In love, he predestined us to be adopted as his sons"
- Our first point:
 - "Lovingly adopted"

LOVINGLY ADOPTED

- Now when we talk about the doctrines of election and predestination, it's easy to have a cold view of God.

We have been lovingly adopted by God, by his grace which we praise

- That is, that God was just mechanically choosing who he wants and not choosing who he doesn't want.
 - In fact that's one of the criticisms that people have about these doctrines!
- However, these verses make it clear, that this isn't what God is like.
- So, let's see, how did he predestine us?
- End of V4.... "In Love!"
- That's how God chose us and that's why he chose us.
- It all comes from God's love for us
- Now, our human experience of love is so 'other' from God's love that we can only imagine a glimpse of the amazing love of God.
 - For example, we love someone because there's something we like about them. OR because there's something 'lovable' about them.
 - However, God's love is unconditional.
 - He doesn't love us because there's anything 'lovable' about us but because he is the ultimate lover!
- So, it's out of this unconditional, unchanging, amazing love that he predestined us.
 - Now, the term 'predestination' means that God has determined the destination or fate of someone, for them.
 - Just think of what we explored last week.
- In and out of his Love, God PREDESTINED us, or CHOSE us, for the purposes of adoption.
- That is, he chose us to be adopted. Lovingly Adopted.
 - **1 John 1:3** See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.
- He chose us to be his children...to be part of his family.
- We as Christians are sons and daughters of God!
- Now, the notion of God choosing people to be his sons or daughters isn't new!
- Israel was often referred to as a 'son' of God.
- In the book of Exodus when the author was describing how Moses was told to go back to Egypt to confront Pharaoh
- 'On the screen:
 - **Exod 4:22** Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD, Israel is my firstborn son, **23** and I say to you, "Let my son go that he may serve me."
- Also, in the prophet Hosea when talking about Israel:
 - **Hos 11:1** When Israel was my child, I loved Him; And out of Egypt I called my Son
- Israel was adopted as God's children and brought out of Egypt because of his love for them.
 - And as we saw last week, it wasn't because they were amazing or a strong nation!
- Likewise, we have been adopted as His Sons and Daughters because of his love.
- Now, because we have been adopted, that means that we must have belonged to someone or something else before being adopted.

We have been lovingly adopted by God, by his grace which we praise

- Before being adopted as God's children we were...2:1-2...dead..following Satan, the ruler of this world.. We would be children of death.
- But now we have been adopted by God for life! To be alive!
- And since we have been adopted, we have a:
 - New, loving Father,
 - New huge Family
 - New living Identity
 - We have New Brothers and Sisters.
- Rom 8:16-17a:
 - **Rom 8:16** The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, **17** and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ,
- We are fellow sons and daughters with Christ himself!
 - Now in Roman culture (in which Paul is writing), adoption wasn't an unusual thing.
 - It was often the case that when a high-profile husband and wife couldn't conceive, they would adopt a child.
 - And any adopted child would have to receive the same privileges and share in the same social status as the family.
- Now, Since we are adopted into God's family, we experience the same love and fatherhood as the Son...as Jesus! The creator and king over all creation!
 - We do! You and me!
- In V3 we read, praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ
- And now we can say, Praise be to the God and Father of US who loves us!
- And we share in the identity of being a Son or Daughter of God
 - *Now it's less so these days, but some time ago, you were defined by your family.*
 - *You received your identity from your Family*
 - *Even So, because I'm a Calder, people know that I'm a minister's son, came from Sydney, not really that sporty but watch a lot of cricket and I drink a lot of coffee...and so on, and so on!*
- And it's similar here but instead of being children of earthly parents, we are children of the one, true, living God!
- That's where we receive our identity!
- So, Because we are children of God, as Christians,
 - We obey the Father
 - We listen to our Father
 - We talk to our Father
 - We love like our Father
 - We trust our Father
 - We love our Christian brothers and sisters
 - We suffer, we mourn, we rejoice, we give thanks with our brothers and sisters!
 - We represent the family!
- Now, this isn't to say that because we are adopted, our life here on earth is going to be breezy. We won't experience the fullness of this until Christ comes again.
- BUT here on earth, we should be finding our identity in being children of God!

We have been lovingly adopted by God, by his grace which we praise

- BECAUSE we have been lovingly adopted by God.
- Which brings us to our second point this morning
 - Lovingly Adopted
 - Into God

INTO GOD

- Now if you're thinking that the phrase doesn't make sense, you're right but hopefully, it will make sense soon.
- Let me read V5 again.
 - "In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons [and daughters] through Jesus Christ"
- Last week, we were told to be on the lookout for phrases like in or through Christ. And here is one again!
- Just in case we have forgotten, our adoption only comes to us because of Jesus and our union with him...
- It is only because of Jesus that we can call God "Father"!
- Remove Jesus from our doctrines, and we have nothing.

- BUT we are adopted through Jesus, **INTO or FOR** the father,
 - Now, unfortunately, you won't find that phrase if you're using the bibles in the pews because the translators didn't translate it that way.
 - That's not to say that the translation is wrong, it's just that the Greek is a little more nuanced than the English
- So literally, the text says, "He has predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ INTO or FOR the Father."
- The nuance is, is that when we are adopted, it is for the purpose of God and we are drawn into our Father.
- An illustration might help us here
 - *When I was younger, let's say five or six or a similar age, I remember going swimming at a family's friends pool on a hot Sydney day.*
 - *At the deep end of this pool, the wall was quite high, making jumping off said wall both fun and scary.*
 - *I had been jumping from the sides until a moment when I was feeling particularly brave and decided to jump off the higher wall, right into the middle of the pool.*
 - *When I did, I was searching for a wall to cling onto but since it was so high, I couldn't find one! So, I started panicking!*
 - *Emily, my sister, ran and got Dad, and Dad jumped in to the pool and collected me from the middle of the pool and drew me **into** him.*
 - *I was safe **in** my father's arms. No more panicking, just a small whimper from the shock of it all.*
- Because of our adoption by our heavenly Father, we are drawn **INTO** him. We are drawn **INTO** his arms and we are safe. We are safe from sin and death.
- And **nothing** can take that away
- Nothing can take our adoption away

We have been lovingly adopted by God, by his grace which we praise

- Nothing can take our heavenly citizenship away
- BECAUSE we are God's Children adopted by him; drawn into him; safe in him.

- Now, I know that there will be people here who might struggle with this image of the Fatherhood of God, because they didn't have a great relationship with their father or family.
- And I get that, I do
- But I want to reassure you, that any of our experiences of our fathers, whether good or bad, cannot even compare with the Fatherhood of God.
 - God's fatherly love is perfect
 - He is slow to anger
 - He is kind
 - He is faithful to his word
- And because he is faithful to his word, we can be assured that he will never leave us, he will never send us back to be children of death.
- Because we are his adopted children, safe with him.
- He is a loving Father, who draws us close into a perfect relationship with him.
- We have been:
 - Lovingly Adopted
 - Into God

BECAUSE OF HIS WILL

- And that brings us to our next point:
 - Because of his will
- So from the middle of V5:
 - We have been lovingly adopted "In accordance with his pleasure and will"
 - So if you build a model exactly to the instructions, you have made it, 'in accordance with' the instructions
- We have been adopted exactly to God's will which also his pleasure. And we can't skip over that!
- So in love he adopted us, but also with pleasure!
- The word here for pleasure refers to the joy that forms in your gut, that causes you to make decisions and actions
 - You may have bought Christmas presents because of the joy of giving over Christmas
 - You may have given a generous donation because of the pleasure in your heart
- Likewise, God has chosen us out of joy and pleasure!
- Did you know, that the magnificent, immortal, creator, God takes pleasure in adopting you?
 - So, God certainly wasn't cold and calculating when he adopted us, but joyful and loving.
- Because he is a loving God who delights in giving his children amazing gifts!
 - It's his will to do so,
 - It's by his will that we are adopted

We have been lovingly adopted by God, by his grace which we praise

- And it is to his pleasure to adopt everyday people like you and me to be his children
- So, we as Christians are God's special, chosen, adopted children who he loves, cares for so much and delights in adopting.
- So we have been:
 - Lovingly adopted
 - Into God
 - By his Will
- But Why? What should be the result from these things?
- Well our final point:
 - To Praise his Grace

TO PRAISE HIS GRACE

- Because of all of these blessings by God, our only response can be praise!
 - V6 (look with me)
 - We have been lovingly adopted, "To the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the Once he loves"
- Everything that we receive from God is a grace. That is, a free gift that we have done nothing to deserve.
- We do nothing to deserve God's Love
- We do nothing to deserve our adoption
- We do nothing to deserve his Fatherhood
- So all of these things come to us only by and through God's grace...His "**Glorious** Grace"
 - When something is glorious, it's amazing or spectacular.
 - We may have seen some 'glorious' cover drives over the summer watching the cricket
 - That is, the shot was a great shot!!
- God's grace here in V6 is described as glorious...and appropriately so!
 - The glory of God in the Old Testament is frequently described in metaphorical pictures...like a brilliant light and coming with trumpets and fanfare. Because no words can quite capture how glorious God is as it is so magnificent
 - Likewise nothing can really capture how glorious his grace is!
 - It's phenomenal, spectacular, fantastic, splendid, magnificent, mind-blowing and unimaginable.
- The fact that in love, God adopted us, when he knew that were going to be his enemies is almost too good to be true, but friends, it is good. And it is true.
- So the only response that we can have to this is to praise God and to worship him.
 - No, I'm not talking about coming to church on Sunday and singing a few songs, but I'm talking about praising him with our whole lives!
- I'm talking about being living sacrifices!
- About us all together, as God's children:
 - worshipping Him with our Time

We have been lovingly adopted by God, by his grace which we praise

- worshipping Him with our Energy
- worshipping Him with our Finances
- worshipping Him with our Talents
- worshipping Him with our Humility
- worshipping Him with our Love
- worshipping our heavenly Father with everything that we have because that is all we can do in response to his freely given, amazing, glorious grace.
- His grace which is given to us in and through the One he loves.
 - Through his one and only Son.
 - Who he sent, to take our place on the cross and to rise again, making a way for us to be God's children.
 - Making a way for us to call God, 'Father'

CONCLUSION

- Well, let's bring this all together.
- Brothers and Sisters, we have been lovingly adopted by God, by his grace that we praise.
 - Our adoption is so much better than any musical theatre story like 'Annie'
 - Our adoption is so much better than anything this world can offer
- Because we have been lovingly adopted from sin and death, to being children of God.
 - We have a new Identity and a new heavenly, loving Father
- We have a heavenly father who adopts us to be his, into himself
 - He rescued us, drew us close into himself, and nothing can separate us or take our adoption away.
- Because it pleases God to adopt us.
 - He is a good Father, who delights in giving good things to his children
- And so our only response is to give him the praise, honour and glory that he deserves.
 - We praise him not only with our lips but with our whole entire lives
- Because we have been lovingly adopted.
- Let's pray.