

Title: ADOPTED, GALATIANS 4:1 – 7
(Chatham, NJ; 12/31/17, AM) [Pt – Topical]

Theme: Because God has adopted us to be his children and heirs, we can live with assurance and confidence.

Purpose: To convince us that our adoption means we are heirs with an inheritance.

Introduction:

1. The recent winner of Dancing with the Stars told his story about being adopted and being excited to be a part of a loving family.
2. Also a Josh Grobin special, which highlighted the adoption of foster children, demonstrated just how grateful adopted children can be when they are loved.
3. In the eyes of God we have attained the same status: adopted children who are loved and are heirs with a glorious inheritance.

The Adoption Process Began with the Incarnation

- A. Jesus, born of woman, Gal. 4:4
 1. The story of Christmas is the story of Christ's humanity
 2. Hebrews 2 provides insights into why Jesus became a human: he suffered like we do, he destroyed the power of death by dying, and he is better able to help us in our human weaknesses.
 3. That he was fully human as well as fully God constitutes one of the profound mysteries of our faith, but it is also what makes the incarnation so appealing to us
 4. Paul doesn't usually make much of Christ's humanity
 5. But here his purpose is to point to our adoption
- B. Just the right time
 1. Paul says this event occurred "when the fullness of time had come," 4a
 2. God planned this to happen when it did
 3. If we carry the adoption motif further, we can say that God had filed the paperwork, paid the necessary fees, and received official approval for the adoptions
 4. The first two chapters of Matthew also demonstrate God's timing: four times Joseph receives instructions through dreams to protect Jesus
 5. God's timing is always spot on, and the time to redeem and adopt humanity has come with the birth of His Son.

Adopted Sons and Heirs

- A. The slavery of the Law and idols
 1. "Born under the law" to free those under the guardianship of the law
 2. But also to free those enslaved to idols, 4:8-9
 3. This is a significant change in status
 4. Beyond freedom from slavery to the status of sons
 5. The Spirit of the Son has been sent into our hearts, "Abba, Father"
- B. More than that, an heir, 7
 1. Heirs receive an inheritance
 2. They are favored over hired hands and slaves
 3. Ephesians 1:16 refers to the riches of Christ's inheritance in the saints
 4. And the Spirit is the guarantee of that inheritance, Eph. 1:14.
 5. We won't have to quarrel over any inheritance, Luke 12
 6. I suspect there will be plenty for each of us

What This Means for You

- A. Your relationship to God now
 - 1. Not a legal one
 - 2. But a filial one
 - 3. Breaking the chains of the Law has given you freedom
- B. Assurance and confidence of his love
 - 1. Foster and adopted children gain a family
 - 2. Like them, we can be confident that God loves us
- C. An endearing relationship
 - 1. Perhaps it is difficult to see this when we only picture God on the mountain giving the Law to Moses: unapproachable, awe-inspiring, fearful
 - 2. But because Jesus was “born of a woman,” we gain a new perspective
 - 3. He ate with us, he walked our streets, and he suffered with us
 - 4. Jesus called the disciples “friends”
 - 5. Here we are called sons, a whole new level of relationship
- D. An inheritance
 - 1. How can I even describe this?
 - 2. How can I quantify it?
 - 3. Perhaps the best I can exhort is to say, “don’t waste it for the sake of worldly pleasures which are fleeting”
 - 4. We can have treasures in heaven where moth and rust won’t destroy.

Conclusions:

- 1. Take your status as a child of God seriously.
- 2. It is an honor with all the privileges that a Father can bestow on his children.
- 3. Perhaps the best of all is that he will always love you.
- 4. Come for the adoption: believe, repent, confess, and be baptized – all who do such are descendants of Abraham and thus “heirs according to the promise,” Gal. 3:29.