

Adoption (Rora 2003)

by Ron Bailey

The sermon explores the profound implications of spiritual adoption, emphasizing our identity as children of God and the responsibilities that come with it.

Duration: 59:04

Scripture: Genesis 17:1, Matthew 6:33, Galatians 3:9, Hebrews 4:12

Topics: "Adoption"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the concept of the double portion as a way to identify the supreme heir in ancient times. He explains that in Old Testament times, the inheritance of a father would be divided among his sons, with the eldest receiving a double portion. The speaker shares a personal example of having three sons and how the inheritance would have been divided. He then transitions to discussing the preaching of the word of God and shares a humorous anecdote about a preacher trying to keep his audience awake. The sermon concludes with a reference to the letter to the Galatians, where Paul discusses the purpose of the law and its role in relation to the promise made to the seed.

Transcript

We'll have just a word of prayer. Lord Jesus, we love Thee, and we come, Lord, with open hearts, and want to listen to Your voice beyond all the words, even beyond the sacred page we seek Thee. Speak to us, Lord.

Fulfill the Father's promise that here, in this place of propitiation, You will meet with us, and speak with us, and equip us, Lord, to serve You aright. Amen. Well, good morning.

I hope you're warm enough. I've had another message from HQ, as to say Humpty Quarters, and I'm still busy decoding it. But the essence of it is that the main strength of opposition had more to do with Humpty's shape than his literary and communication skills.

You can laugh, I've got to go home tonight. I want to thank again the trustees just for the opportunity of having all this time together. It's such a wonderful privilege for a teacher to have a little session like this, where you can take your time and go from one thing to another, and build on it.

And I'm very, very grateful for the opportunity. And some of you will probably hear some of our voices in your sleep, I would think. You've heard so much of us.

I was down here in Rora earlier on in the year, at the conference that Rora, with its determination not to be conformed to the world, persisted in calling Whitson. And we had a conference, and I recall this story of a man who on a hot summer's Sunday afternoon went into a church building where they were preaching. And he came in under a preacher who had a reputation for going on a little bit.

And he didn't know this, of course, and he went down and he sat on the front pew and gently slipped into a sweet, refreshing sleep. And the preacher saw this and it really provoked him. He was determined that no one would sleep while he was preaching.

So he began to kind of get louder and louder, and more and more shrill. And other than an occasional twitch from the man on the front row, it hardly seemed to have any effect at all as he got louder and louder. Suddenly, the force of his voice dislodged a lump of plaster from the roof, which fell and buried this man on the front seat.

And in triumph, the preacher shouted, and so will God smite all sluggards who sleep. And there was an electrifying silence in the church. And then from under all this rubble, they heard a voice which said, smite me again, Lord, I can still hear him.

Praise God. We've been looking at a topic, an overall title, is Having Begun in the Spirit. And we're not talking about an academic exercise.

We're not talking about logical deductions drawn from proof texts. We're trying to see what the living reality of the work of the Spirit accomplishes in the lives of men and women. And so far, we've looked at repentance, which I said was a change of direction, and justification, which is a change in legal status, and regeneration, which is a change in nature.

And now, finally, we come to adoption, which is a change in our relationship. Just to wind up finally again from yesterday, we were talking about the way in which Adam, as the federal head of our race, did something which opened our race to an invasion from an alien spirit. And something has passed into the human race that the Bible calls the sin and the death.

And it has spread through to every member of that race. It's spread not just downwards through the generations, it actually spreads sideways into Eve as well, so that she bore the consequences of Adam's sin. And our human race bears the consequences still.

And one of the amazing things that our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, writes to us is this. I was quoting Peter there, if you didn't recognize it. This is Romans chapter 5. And having spoken about Adam and the way in which Adam's spiritual heredity is passed down and touches every member of the human race, Paul then writes this.

This is chapter 5 and verse 14. And then it uses this little phrase, who is the figure of him that was to come. And we have this extraordinary fact that even in Adam's sin and the way in which it's operating, we have captured something that God wants us to learn from on another plane altogether.

He says that Adam is actually a figure of the one who was to come. Maybe you recall that when Paul writes to the Corinthians in chapter 15, he refers to the second man and recalls him the last Adam. And Jesus, in his work of regeneration in the hearts of men and women, accomplishes the same kind of thing that Adam did.

Many years ago, I was trying to find some easy way of explaining what the word regeneration meant. And I just thought, well, I wonder if there's anything in the dictionary which will give me some idea. And I know that the Greek word for regeneration is palingenesis.

So, I thought, well, I'll have a look at the dictionary and just see what it has to say. And I came across one or two interesting words like palindrome, you know, which is a word which is the same backwards and forwards. And that's my astonishment.

I actually found in my Oxford concise dictionary the Greek word palingenesis, which is used in a particular way by atheistic evolutionists, and I'm not going to go into that. But it was interesting when you looked at the definition, because according to their definition, the word regeneration means an exact reproduction of ancestral characteristics. And I was on my chair shouting and cheering.

That's exactly what I mean by regeneration. I don't mean something added to or something begun. I mean an exact reproduction of ancestral characteristics.

I mean the life that was poured out is the life that is received. I mean the life and the kind of seed that fell into the ground and died is exactly the same kind of life which is reproduced in those who are under that new head. All men in the whole world, no matter how old or young, are either in Adam or in Christ.

And those two statements are mutually exclusive. You are in Christ or you are in Adam. And there's no man's land in between.

Now, those are strong statements to begin with. But I told you I believe in Christian perfection. I believe in instant sanctification.

In fact, I don't believe it's possible to have progressive sanctification. I'll explain it to you, shall I? Some years ago, about 12 years or so, I suppose, I was in Ireland visiting the Murphys in Limerick and I was entertained by them, and I do mean entertained. It was a wonderful time.

I remember sitting at the meal table on one occasion and they had a daughter who at that time was about nine years of age. We were talking and her mum had gone out to get the second course or something like that, and I just said to the daughter, I said, your mum's a good cook, isn't she? And she said, yes, but I don't like her salmonella pudding. Fortunately, I'd never tasted the salmonella pudding.

But I can remember on one occasion we were sitting there and John at that time, I think, was working as an electrician and he was out on a job, so he wasn't around when the evening meal was served, but they were expecting him about half an hour. And the meal that was served, if I remember rightly, was a shepherd's pie and they brought it onto the table and it was hot and steaming and wonderful smells and tastes. You could just imagine it.

And the first thing that Brida did was she took kind of a cake slice thing and she cut out a big section of this shepherd's pie and she put it on a plate and she put another plate on the top of it and said to her daughter, put it in the oven, that's for your dad. And I said, do you know that that is a perfect definition of sanctification? That is exactly what the word means. It means to cut something out, a section from something and set it apart exclusively for an entirely different purpose.

That is what sanctification means. Now, if you understand what it means, you'll understand that there cannot possibly be such thing as progressive sanctification. Let me give you a different illustration to make

the point.

I think still when Jewish marriages take place, they use a form of words which has in it something like and I sanctify you to myself by the law of Moses or something like that they say. So, in a Jewish wedding service, they have this sense of the two people being sanctified to each other. What it means, of course, is that from that point in time they will belong exclusively to one another.

Now, I don't want to be offensive, but you imagine what would happen if someone would say, well, let's start off on the basis of 10% and then see if we can add to it as we go on. I mean, it would be obscene, wouldn't it? How can you cut something out of the whole and set it apart exclusively for God and then say it's progressive? What the trouble we're having, of course, is that it's back to the gospel according to Humpty Dumpty. We're using the wrong words.

What we should be talking about is progressive glorification. There are certain things that are progressive and you've got a little list of them in the Bible. For example, it speaks about faith being progressive.

We go from faith to faith. It talks about grace being progressive. You go from grace to grace.

It talks about glory being progressive. You go from glory to glory. But you don't go from sanctification to sanctification because sanctification is 100%, otherwise it isn't sanctification.

The exact reproduction of ancestral characteristics. But that's regeneration. Our topic now for this morning is adoption.

If you go to Romans chapter... Well, we'll go to chapter 8. I'm not avoiding chapter 6 and 7. Chapters 6 and 7 are really two wonderful illustrations of the truth that you'll find in chapter 5. And in fact, if you want to do it, not now, but if at some point you read straight from the end of chapter 5 into the beginning of chapter 8 and miss out just for a moment or two chapters 6 and 7, you will see how wonderfully the argument flows through. Chapter 6 and chapter 7 are a huge parenthesis of illustrations where Paul is making a particular point from two different angles. But this is what it says in chapter 8. Chapter 8, of course, is the chapter of the Spirit.

The Spirit is conspicuous by His absence in chapter 7. You can draw your own conclusions from that. Here's chapter 8. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus freed me.

That's aorist tense. Freed me. It means it's done, finished.

Freed me from the law of sin and death. And then he goes on to say several things, but if you come down to verse 11, it says this. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also make alive your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in you.

Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh to live after the flesh, for if you live after the flesh, you shall die. But if you through the Spirit put to death the deeds of the body, you shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God.

For you have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

We are going to talk about adoption.

And I want to remind you again that we are doing something which is in essence artificial. We are taking Bible truths and we are separating them out so that we can consider them, but you must put all these things back together again. If you force me, you might say, well, do you believe that regeneration and this adoption are perfectly synchronized? Well, there may be a split second between them because in one sense the Spirit of adoption is confirming what has been accomplished, but it's only a moment, it's only a split second.

But for the purposes of what we are doing now, I want to identify it separately so that we can see some of the wonders of what God is telling us here. Verse 14, it says, As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. Now, please forgive me for putting it this way around, but this verse should not be read backwards.

You should not read it so that it says, Those who are the sons of God are led by the Spirit of God. That is not what the verse says. What the verse says is those who are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

In other words, if someone is being led as a continual process of life by the Spirit of God, that is evidence that that person is a child of God. This is saying nothing at all about our rights and our privileges and what we may expect from God. It's simply stating a matter of fact.

Those who are led by the Spirit of God, they are the children of God. And then it goes on to say this, You have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father. And if you are using different versions of the Bible, you may have a different word for adoption.

The Greek word for adoption has right at the beginning of it, the word son. So, different translators have tried to capture that idea and your Bible version may speak of sonship or the placing of a son or something like that. But it's unfortunate now that we actually have the word adoption.

Because the word adoption brings to our mind immediately the kind of adoption that we are familiar with in everyday life, usually in the UK. Here's a little bit of irrelevant information for you. Adoption only came on to the UK statute books in 1928.

So, before that there was no adoption even in the UK. Before that there were guardians and wards of court and that kind of stuff. The reason I'm saying this is for a very simple reason.

Whenever we think of adoption, almost inevitably, we think of babies. We think of orphans. We think of the security and the welfare of this vulnerable creature.

And that was really why the adoption laws were brought into the UK. They were brought in on the heels of the First World War when there were numbers of illegitimate babies and orphans and they were trying to kind of tidy things up. But when the Bible speaks of adoption, it doesn't have babies in mind at all.

It doesn't have orphans in mind at all. Do you remember from your history, if you read some bits of history, that Julius Caesar, before he died, adopted his nephew. His nephew was a man that we know now as Augustus.

He adopted him. Now, when he adopted Augustus, Augustus was a full-grown man. And the reason he adopted him was not for Augustus' welfare, but for the continuation of Julius Caesar's will.

This is why adoption took place in ancient times. The main focus of attention was not the welfare of the person who was being adopted. The main focus of attention was the continuation of the purposes of the will of the direction of the person who was doing the adopting.

Maybe that's a strange idea to you. But that's the truth of it. And we have in the Bible several ideas which give this sense of the son carrying on the will of the father.

It's a great company, father and son. In Reading we have a removal form called father and daughters. It's an interesting title.

But in Bible terms, it's son. It always has to be son. Last night I was listening to Les speaking and it's been a tremendous thrill to share the preaching of the Word of God with the different brothers here for this week.

It's a little bit nerve-wracking at times because they begin to speak and you think, oh that's good. And then you think, oh just a minute, they're going to say everything I want to say. He didn't say quite everything I want to say.

But you know this whole picture of the double portion? As well as everything else that Les said last night, the double portion was a way in ancient times that God identified, that a man identified his supreme heir. The one who was going to be responsible for carrying on the will of the father into the next generation. So that for example, if I had been living in Old Testament times, we had a family of seven children.

So we had three boys and four daughters. And if I had died in Old Testament times and my estate had been divided up according to Old Testament usage, what would have happened was this. You count the number of sons and it's three.

So then you see what my inheritance is and you divide it into three plus one. So that makes four. Then to the youngest son you give one portion.

To the next son you give one portion. And to the eldest son you give a double portion. And four sisters and his mother to look after.

Because the double portion was not to make the eldest son rich. It was to equip him to carry out his father's will for those who are now his responsibility. And that's part of the idea of adoption.

Now if it makes you feel good to think of God cuddling you as a little baby, an orphan, that's a good picture too. That's Ezekiel's picture. That's fine.

But when the Bible uses the word adoption, that's not what it has in mind. It has in mind the idea of full mature sons who have gone through all the trials and tribulations and fatal illnesses of youth and are now able to be trusted with the responsibility of carrying on the father's will into the next generation. Amazing, isn't it? In fact, when someone was adopted into a family in Roman times, they really did become part of that family.

Often they were already in a family. They have this unique way in Roman history where officially only one man in a Roman family, an extended family, would have full legal status in the law. And that man then, all

his family would really be his and under his absolute rule and authority.

All his children, all the people who spread out for him, they would all be his. There was only the one man. It's a kind of a system that is, and I don't mean to be offensive when I say this, it's a kind of a system that is still reflected now in the papacy and the mafia.

It's a pattern where El Papa, the father, is the head of the family. And the family must obey the will of the father. And ultimate loyalty is to the family and to the father's will.

And that is the prime morality. So whether that is murder or deceit or anything else, that is not the prime sin. The prime sin would be to disobey the will of the father and to break the bonds with the family.

Now that's Roman. That's the Roman picture. What happened in these days was you'd have somebody, maybe someone like Augustus whose parents were still alive, if I remember rightly, and Julius Caesar wants Augustus to be his successor.

He wants him to be his heir. So he adopts Augustus Caesar so that when Julius is no longer around, Augustus can carry on the same policy, the same direction, so that he can do what he was supposed to do. One of the famous emperors, Hadrian, the man who built the wall, not personally, I don't suppose, but the man who had the wall built, and he used to say that adopted sons are far better than natural sons.

He said with natural sons you never know what you're getting. But with an adopted son, you know exactly what you're getting. So this is the picture.

An adopted son was someone who was being moved into position to bear responsibility. Yes, he would become part of the new family. He would be part of the family line.

He would actually be fitted into the family tree. He would have all the joys, the privileges, and he would have all the responsibilities of the family too. That would be part of the pattern.

And here Paul says, we've not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but we've received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. I'm saying all this, of course, because Paul was writing to Romans. It's good to remember who a letter is written to when you read it.

It helps you understand it. You wouldn't understand any of my letters from Humpty Dumpty. But to my understanding, well, ish.

It's important to know who wrote it and who it was written to. Paul writes to the Romans and you know in chapter 7 he says, I speak to those who know law. And we won't stray into chapter 7 or we shall be here for a long, long time.

So it's adoption. It's this pattern of life. The Romans had a sort of a private notion of adoption, but then there was a public declaration of it.

And the public declaration was very similar to something else the Romans did. When a young Roman boy was about 12 or 14, he was publicly acknowledged to be his father's son. They were taken to the forum, sort of a town all in the middle of the market, and publicly the father would say, this is my son.

And from that time there were dramatic changes in the young man's life. There were outward changes that you could see. He lost the mini toga and ended up with the maxi toga from that point in time.

Up until that point in time, he had been, listen to this, we shall come back to it. Up until that time, he had been under guardians and tutors. Up until that time.

Up until that time, there were people who were specially employed to make sure that he didn't go astray. Roman boys have their own personal moral policemen. As often a Greek as the case might be, he wasn't a teacher, he wasn't intended to teach.

He was actually intended to keep this young man out of trouble. In fact, there are kind of pictures of this particular person, these guardians, paidagogos the word is, taking their charges to school and they have them by the ear, or they have a little whip in their hands, just to make sure that they are not distracted by the things that little boys are always distracted by. To make sure that they came to the teacher.

Let me read you a little bit from the letter to the Galatians. See, it's Paul here speaking specifically from a Jewish background. If you read these passages of scriptures carefully, sometimes it's good to read them out loud and slowly and then you might just notice changes with your ear that you haven't noticed with your eyes.

When Paul is talking here, chapter 3, and he's talking about the law, in verse 9 he says, we asked this question one of the days earlier, Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions until the seed should come to whom the promise was made. And it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.

Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid. For if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture has concluded all under sin.

That the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law. Can you hear this? This is a man from a Jewish background.

Before faith came, we were under the law. He's not speaking as a Gentile. He's speaking with someone with a Jewish background.

Before the law came, before faith came, we were under the law. Shut up. Closed in.

Up to the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our, personal pronoun again, the law was our child conductor to bring us to Christ. Did you know that was what the purpose of the law was? It was to take these Jewish children by the ear and make sure they came into the presence of the one who would teach them.

That's what its purpose was. To make sure they didn't go astray. To hem them in.

Have you ever seen the way that they hem in sheep and cattle when they're trying to get them from one place and they narrow them right down into a single file? That was the purpose of the law. To narrow them right in, to bring them right down so that there was only one possible way in which they could go and it would have brought them straight to the feet of Christ. That was the purpose of the law.

The law, he says, verse 24, was our child conductor to bring us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. But faith having come, we, we Jews, who are now Christians, we are no longer under a child conductor. And then notice what happens here in verse 26.

For ye, did you notice that switch? He's been speaking about we, we, we. And then suddenly, almost without any warning, he suddenly says, you. He's making a point to these Christians in the Galatian churches.

You know the story, I guess, behind this, that Paul had visited these different locations and seen people come to Christ and had seen the churches built up. And then he heard to his horror that people had followed in his tracks, telling these new converts that although it was okay to begin your Christian experience, your relationship with God by faith, if you wanted to maintain it, if you wanted to grow up and really become mature, then you were going to have to keep the law. And he was horrified.

Several things happened, one of which was this letter to the Galatians, which he writes. And what he's saying now to these Galatians who predominantly do not have a Jewish background, he speaks of himself, he says, the law was our child conductor. We were under the law.

The law shut us in until faith came. Do you remember we sang, I think, yesterday morning in part, The Living Faith. And it's why I've chosen to call the title of this series Having Begun in the Spirit.

And here Paul speaks about faith coming. In 1748, on the 24th of May, and round about 8 o'clock at night, a young clergyman made his way to a meeting. His name was John Wesley.

Earlier on that year, he had returned from Georgia. A broken, disappointed man. He had gone out as a young clergyman, convinced that he could change the colonists and convert the natives and discovered that he himself needed to be converted.

He met up with a group of people who had a living faith in God and he was greatly challenged by them. He came back to the UK and from about the march of that year, he became intellectually convinced of the truth of justification by faith and of the reality that he saw of experienced faith and life in the Scriptures. But from March to May, he laboured with the conviction that it was right, but that he wasn't into it.

He didn't have, as he said, faith. He knew it was right. He knew it was true, but he hadn't received the gift of faith.

For him, faith had not come. And in his journal, he tells us that he went along to this meeting and he's very precise about it, as Wesley always was. That's why they called them the Methodists because they were so methodical.

He was from a background where as a young undergraduate at university, he and others had formed a club where they had tried to order their lives by a fierce legalism and which their mockers called the Holy Club. People always confuse legalism and holiness. They always think that people who keep lots of laws are going to be holy.

And that's one of the things that Paul wants to make it very plain is not the case. What happened as a result of these people is that they just became more and more aware of their own inadequacy. And at this particular time, the 24th of May, 1748, someone was reading, would you believe, the preface, Luther's preface, to Luther's commentary on the Book of Romans.

Can you imagine a more kind of vigorous sermon? I can just imagine Keith Kelly doing that in one of his missions. But the amazing thing is that as John Wesley heard it, you'll know this language, he said, my heart was strangely warmed. And I felt I did believe.

Even I. Faith had come. Faith had come. He had been intellectually converted.

He had been, if you like, an evangelical for three months. But he didn't know the Lord. Faith had to come.

And if you want to do some studying, I would suggest that you keep digging and digging and go from one level to another. What I would recommend that you do is buy, queue up at Derrick's Bookstore and buy all the works of John Wesley and trace your way through to May, 1748 and see what happened in the weeks before and see what Wesley means by faith. He does not mean believism.

He does not mean mental assent. He means total dependence as a gift of God. There's a wonderful story.

This is a true story told about a Frenchman, Blondin. Blondel. Brilliant acrobat and tightrope walker who about a century and a half ago stretched a tightrope across Niagara Falls from America to Canada and then gathered an enormous crowd with these amazing exploits where he was going backwards and forwards and he did extraordinary things.

He took the tyres off a bicycle and rode across. He actually took a small spirit stove and fried an omelette in the middle. He took his manager across on one occasion.

On another occasion, he went across with a wheelbarrow full with two sacks of potatoes. It really was extraordinary. And on one occasion when he'd taken these potatoes across in his wheelbarrow, he addressed the crowd and he said, Do you believe I could carry a man across in the wheelbarrow? And they said, Yes! And he said, Can I have a volunteer? And there was dead silence.

Oh, they all gave mental assent but no one was willing to put their lives into his hands. It's possible to be evangelical, to give mental assent to all the truths of the Bible, but faith is putting yourself in someone else's hands. It's total commitment.

It's all your eggs in one basket. It's absolute reliance upon Jesus Christ. And John Wesley, having heard Luther's preface to Romans, and you should read that as well and see what Luther thought about faith.

And you'll see that Luther is talking about a faith that smites the old man and puts the new man in its place. It's a very full definition of faith. Not like the ones that you're likely to get in other places.

Anyway, I just want to make this point. There was a point in the personal experience of John Wesley when faith came. And there must be a time in your experience too when faith comes.

It's not just a question of you forcing yourself to believe it and giving nodding assent to all the truths. But faith comes, and it becomes a discovery as it was for Wesley. And he says, I felt I did believe.

Even I. You know that little hymn we sing, I do believe, I will believe. I love the order of it. It's almost as though I do believe comes as a surprising discovery.

I do. I do. And I will.

God has given me something. I do, and I'm going to use it. That's the connection between the gift of God and our personal responsibility in exercising faith.

God gives it, and you must use it. God does something that you can say, I do, and then you must say, I will. That's the pattern of it.

Well, Paul says here, before faith came, he says, we were under the law. We were under these child conductors who hedged us in and hemmed us about and only allowed us to go in one direction. But then he says in verse 26, but you are all, and this is a little tragedy here in the A.V. because in Tyndale's version it says, you are sons.

It's not talking about children. That's actually quite a different Bible picture. He's talking about sons.

You, he says to these Gentiles, who have never had a Jewish childhood under the law, who have never been hemmed in by this custodian, he says, you are sons. And then he begins to open this thing out and he says outrageous things. Paul says quite a few outrageous things from a Jewish background in Galatians.

One of the things that he says is this, is that the entire Jewish experience, the whole old covenant from Sinai up to the death of Christ upon the cross was a period of childhood. Great men, but a period of childhood. It was a time when they were under laws and rules and regulations.

But then he says this, let me read you going on into chapter 4. He says here, I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, differs nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all. He's going to make a point now that Jewish people in a sense, the people from the old covenant, were children and they needed to come to a point of maturity to enter into their full inheritance. When he speaks about the Gentiles, he won't call them children, he'll call them slaves.

But he says they too come to this same sonship. So from childhood they come to sonship and from slavery they come to sonship. And the whole point that Paul wants to make in the letter to the Galatians is that baby Christians do not need to go through a period under law.

They do not have to go and be under a child conductor. God has another way for them. I'll read it.

Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, differs nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all, but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we... Remember who he is and who he's thinking about when he says we. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world.

But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law that we, remember who we is, that we might receive adoption of sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your heart, crying, Abba, Father. Can you see the point he's making here? The Jewish people, that's to say, the people under that old covenant were like children and like a good father.

Don't ever confuse what's happening in Galatians. Some people think that Galatians is a contrast between grace and law. It's not.

It's not. Law is actually a gift of grace. When God gave the law, it was part of His grace, part of His love.

There's a wonderful phrase almost at the end of Deuteronomy where it says, from His right hand there went forth a fiery law. Yea, He loved the people. That's why He gave them a fiery law.

Because He loved them. Because it was grace. The contrast in Galatians is not between grace and law.

The contrast in Galatians is between faith and works. In other words, it's between how men may respond to God's expectations. Do I respond to God's expectations by achieving them? By keeping these standards? By slowly accumulating enough credit, enough merit to be accepted with God? Or am I accepted with God simply on the basis of what Jesus Christ accomplished upon the cross? That's the whole theme here of Galatians.

So, He says, it was to redeem us who were under the law that we might receive the adoption of sons and because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts crying, Abba, Father. I don't keep any of the laws. I don't keep any of the Ten Commandments.

I often say that in a hot meeting like this. It kind of tends to wake people up. In the New Testament, they don't keep the laws.

They fulfill them. They don't have a list of things that they are working their way down. They have a Spirit who is in them who is fulfilling all the righteous requirements of the law.

I remember hearing a story of a man, a bachelor, who had lived on his own for a fair time and had fairly strict ways of doing things and then he took a housekeeper into his employment, a young woman in her early twenties and the first day she arrived at the house, there were lists everywhere in the house. All over the house, there were notices, lists of how to light the fire and how to clean out the ashes and how to cook the potatoes and all these things were everywhere around the house and he said, this is the way I want things done in my house and this young woman put up with all this and she kept all the laws and he was fairly satisfied and then something happened that he never expected. He fell in love with her and they married and when they came back from the wedding service, they discovered that all the lists had gone.

They'd all gone. Now, do you think all the lists had gone because she wasn't going to prepare the fire in the proper way or because she wasn't going to prepare the potatoes in the wrong way? What had been an external commandment was now an inward desire. Now, she would do all those things, not because there were a list, but because of what the Methodists again used to call the expulsive power of a new affection.

She'd want to please him. Of course she would. Of course she would.

In the New Testament, Christians do not keep the laws. They fulfill them. And that's why at times we Christians have to understand that God, by His Spirit, by this public acknowledgement, this is God saying, this is mine.

Just like the Roman head of a family would say, this son is mine. This person is mine. I publicly acknowledge that this person is mine.

From now on, he's part of my family. He's under my will. He's part of my house.

He's almost my other self. If I'm not here, he is the man you listen to. He carries my responsibility.

He carries my authority. And when the Spirit of God comes into a man or woman's life, it's the same essence. It's God putting His seal on it.

That was one of the little phrases we had earlier on in the conference, wasn't it? The seal of the Spirit. That's God putting His print on it. I always say that the first name in my Bible is actually mine because I wrote it there.

Because that's my way of saying this is mine. And God has written on us His new name. He has sealed us with His Spirit.

God has put a stamp on it which says this is mine. And He does it publicly. And Paul says it's the Spirit of adoption.

This is God saying this is mine. And if you'll excuse me for reverting back to what I said previously, this is not God saying this is 10% mine and we're working on an installment plan. This is God saying this is mine.

This is 100% mine. Don't you dare touch it. This is mine.

It's the Spirit of adoption. It's God saying from now on this is mine, absolutely mine. Do you remember? Let me illustrate this.

In the life of the Lord Jesus, we've got just little liftings of the curtain every now and again when we see His growing years. And one of the key times is recorded in the Gospel according to Luke where you see Jesus at the temple. Got up when He was about 12 years of age.

It wasn't His bar mitzvah. They didn't have bar mitzvah until about 500 years after that. It was just Him going up to the temple.

And while He was there, He began to ask these questions and give answers to the leading scribes and experts who were there. And you know the story. And you know the distress of Mary and Joseph because they discovered on their return journey that He was missing.

And so they go back and they find Him and they begin to remonstrate with Him and they begin to say, Why have you done this? Your father and I have sought you sorrowing. And Jesus said, Why? Did you not understand that I must be about my father's business? And then it says an extraordinary thing. It says, He then went down with them to Nazareth and He submitted Himself to them.

He's 12 years old. He understands more of the purposes of God than they do. He understands more of the significance of the Old Testament than any of their scribes and experts.

He has a relationship with God which is like nothing they'd ever dreamed of. And yet at 12 years of age, He goes back to Nazareth and He submits Himself to Mary and to Joseph. That is the pattern.

And then when He's 30 years of age, He is publicly presented to the nation as a result of John Baptist's baptism. John says, This is why I'm here so that He might be manifest. That's really the main purpose of what I'm doing.

And when Jesus was baptized and He came out of the water, you have this account where heaven is opened and the Spirit of God in the form of a dove descends upon Him, settles upon Him and then you hear this voice from heaven which says, This is mine. This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. And I want to tell you something if you've never noticed before.

From that point in time that Jesus never again did what His mother told Him. I'm not preaching rebellion. I want to make the point from that time He was under His Father's will.

From that time He lived His life. I've been playing a recorder with a line in it which says, From now on I live and breathe for an audience of one. That's Him.

For the rest of His life upon earth, He lives and breathes for an audience of one. I only do those things that please Him. The things that I speak to you, they're the things that He's given to me.

The things that I do are the things I've seen my Father doing. I always do those things that please Him. He lives His life.

Well, let me just, we've just got time maybe to dip into it. Where shall we go? Let's go to Matthew. I think it will serve us.

Here's Matthew chapter 3. And I'll read from verse 16. And Jesus when He was baptized went up straightway out of the water and lo the heavens were opened unto Him and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon Him. And lo a voice from heaven saying, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit. Didn't I tell you that those who were led of the Spirit were the sons of God? Didn't Paul tell us that? Can you see that up until this point in one sense He has been led by His parents. He's been born of a woman.

He's been born under the law. He's lived under it until the time of His full manhood. And now He stands in the public arena and God said, This is mine and from this moment on He will be led by the Spirit.

How about you? From the time that God sealed you with His Spirit, gave you life from above. Have you been trying to keep rules and laws and regulations? And the most vicious list of all is the one that we evangelicals produce. Maybe there's one more vicious than that.

That's the one that the fellowships produce. A whole list of memories. It's one of the persistent dangers of a holiness movement that it degenerates into legalism.

What happens is that what was lived almost effortlessly in a life of empowering with the Spirit, if that consciousness begins to ebb and is no longer so evident, people try to hold the standard and they hold the standard by producing great lists of how long your skirt must be or how much jewelry you can wear. It degenerates into legalism. This is why the Scripture says, Walk in the Spirit and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

Not the other way around. It doesn't say, Don't fulfill the lusts of the flesh and you will walk in the Spirit. It doesn't say, If you can keep this whole list of laws, you will then be a spiritual man.

It says, Walk in the Spirit and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Let me give you a little picture. This is from the story of Abraham.

This is Genesis chapter 17 and verse 1. That's the sound that preachers or teachers love more than any other you know. The sound of pages ruffling when they're preaching. That people are checking, making sure that these things be so.

It's lovely. Sorry, Genesis chapter 17. And when Abraham was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abraham and said unto him, I am the Almighty God.

Walk before me and be thou perfect. Another perfectionist. They get everywhere, don't they these people? Look how God addresses Himself to Abraham.

Remember, this is before the law and we are after it. And what God says to Abraham is this. First of all, God attracts Abraham's attention to God Himself.

And He says, I am the Almighty God. This word El Shaddai, Almighty, is a fascinating word. Shad in Hebrew is the breast.

And this isn't a God that's rippling with muscle when it speaks of God Almighty. It's a God who is absolutely full with all the necessary provision. If you think just in passing of the wonderful way that God has created human beings and the way that they're brought into the world so that at just the right place where the baby is receiving all it could possibly need in terms of nutriment, it's also in perfect place to have eye contact with its mum.

I understand the doctors tell me that's the focal length of the baby just about in between the breast and the mother's face. It's in the place of security where it's in the mother's arms. This isn't accident.

This is an amazing design of God. And God declares that He is El Shaddai. It means He is the God of absolute provision.

I remember I don't speak many languages. I'm not like Les. It's wonderful these folks who can speak all these languages.

I pick up obscure little bits and pieces. I remember being in a home in Tanzania and seeing a little plaque on the wall and it just had some words on it. And I've forgotten the word in Swahili for Jesus.

Is it Isa? Isa, will that do? Okay. Something like that. And it said on this plaque, Isa in Etosha.

And I said, what does that mean? And they said it means Jesus is enough. God is enough. He is El Shaddai.

He is all you could possibly need. And before He tells anything about the way He wants Abraham to live his life, He says to Abraham, Abraham, look at Me. I am the God of all provision.

I am the God of all nutrition. I am the God of all protection. I am the God into whose eyes you can look and see Me and hear Me.

I don't have to shout to you while you're lying there. I can just whisper to you. Sing over you the Father's song as Matt Redmond said.

I am the almighty God. Walk before Me. You will live your life trying to please everybody else.

You'll fall on your face every single time. God says, walk before Me and be perfect. In fact, that's the definition of perfection.

That's the definition of Christian perfection. Not somebody else's rules and regulations, but a man or a woman enabled by the Spirit to say, not my will, but Thy will be done. Walking in the Spirit, being led in the Spirit, experiencing the joys, the benefits, the blessings and the responsibilities of being a genuine son of God.

Is that what God is saying to us now? These aren't steps in the process. They're just elements in one glorious whole. Having begun in the Spirit.

Repentance. Choose you this day whom you will serve. Don't get tangled up about what your will is doing and whether it's strong or weak.

Just choose. Just you choose. Choose this day whom you will serve.

Justification by faith. A change in our legal status. God, Himsame, me, okay.

Regeneration. An exact reproduction of ancestral characteristics. Birth from above.

A mantle being endued with the character of Jesus Christ. The Greek word, Duramis, is not external power. It's not add-on power.

It is inherent power. It's power that comes from a thing because of its nature. And this wonderful assurance, this Word of God spoken into our heart.

This is my Son. And in the same instant that the Spirit says it, in an amazing feat of synchronization, there's something which rises from our hearts and says, Abba, Father. The Father says, Mine.

And something from our hearts rises and it says, Mine. Let's pray. Lord, will You make these living truths for each one of us.

Lord, will You for each one of us grant to us a genuine beginning that is in the Spirit. Will You open our understanding and open our whole being to receive the glorious fullness of all that You have accomplished for us and all that You impart to us in Your Spirit. And Lord, having caused all things to pass away and brought us into all things new, will You teach us how to walk just step by step, moment by moment, with our eyes in unimpeded eye contact with Thee to walk before Thee, dependent upon Your provision and to be perfect.

And we ask it, Lord, not because we want to polish our own shining whiteness, but because we want to be to the credit of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/1/SID1834.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ron-bailey/adoption-rora-2003/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net