

**Title:** We are the children of God in Christ

**Passage:** Galatians 3:26 - 4:3

“So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

“What I am saying is that as long as an heir is underage, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. The heir is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. So also, when we were underage, we were in slavery under the elemental spiritual forces of the world.”

## **Introduction**

- story of a man whose life changed when he was affirmed when a boy by someone else (though he didn't know his biological father): "I know you...your family...you bear resemblance as part of a great family...you are a son of God!"

## **Overview: Four Characteristics of "sons of Abraham"**

I. Sons of God in Christ

II. Clothes in Christ

III. One in Christ with the people of God

IV. Heirs of God's promise

### **I. Sons of God in Christ**

“So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith" (v. 26)

- context of audience: Christians in Galatia were treated as second-class citizens by the Judaizers.

- the reality of the importance of one's identity was key

#### Acts 17:27-28

that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, for

“‘In him we live and move and have our being’;

as even some of your own poets have said,

“‘For we are indeed his offspring.’”

- God exercises His care over all humans. (All created by God)

- God grants sonship to those given faith in Christ Jesus (but not all are God's child)

#### Ephesians 2:3

among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and *were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.*

#### John 8:44 (every unbeliever is a child of the devil)

You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

*Spiritual Adoption:* An act of God's free grace by which we are received into the family of God and receives all the rights as a child of God.

#### Matthew 6:9

Pray then like this: “*Our Father* in heaven, hallowed be your name.

- we are loved by God the Father and given rich blessings as a result

- compare: justification (analogy: a judge declares you legally right before God) vs. adoption (analogy: a judge steps down from the bench and brings you home as part of his family)

### **II. Clothes in Christ**

"for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." (v. 27)

- baptism is not salvific (it is not an act that saves oneself) but a powerful symbol that reflects the Gospel

#### Romans 6:1-4

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

*"clothed in Christ"* - 4 meanings (T. Keller):

A) our primary identity is in Christ

- our clothing tells others who we are

B) close association to Christ

- clothes are worn everywhere. So you reflect Christ whether at home, work, school, etc.

C) imitation of Christ

- one dresses up as another

- likewise we reflect Christ through our imitation of him wherever we go

D) our acceptability to God

- we are seen as His child. When God sees us, He sees His Son in us.

#### Colossians 3:3

For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

### **III. One in Christ with the people of God**

"There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (v. 28)

- all of God's sons and daughters are also in special relationship to one another  
- as we are all guilty under the Law, we are also all equal in Christ

#### *Three barriers among people*

- in ancient world, three things divided people: race, economic status, or gender (unfortunately, these have existed through history, both in society and in the church)

- these barriers can only be overcome through and in Christ. How? See passage:

A.) Race: "neither Jew nor Gentile"

- accept one another regardless of race

- put aside any ethnic, cultural or traditional superiority over others

- we all belong to Christ

B) Economic status: "neither slave nor free"

- accept one another regardless of appearance and status.

C) Gender: "nor is there male or female"

- all are gifted

- note: while all are gifted, there are still distinct roles (ex: men serve as servant leaders as a husband)

#### Ephesians 2:14-18

For he himself is our peace, *who has made us both one* and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might *reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross*, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him *we both have access in one Spirit to the Father*.

### **IV. Heirs of God's promise**

“If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise. What I am saying is that as long as an heir is underage, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. The heir is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. So also, when we were underage, we were in slavery under the elemental spiritual forces of the world.” (4:1-3)

- heirs of Abraham are those who belong to Jesus Christ by faith
- in ancient times, only men/sons were the "heirs" to an estate
- contrast: in Christ, we are all heirs (including women)

### **Application Thoughts:**

If wonder who you are:

*A) Apart from Christ, you are an enemy of God*

- but the Good News is that God wants you to be His child!

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- you can have a Heavenly Father who loves you completely, deeply, and always available.

- do not impose negative, human characteristics of your earthly father onto Your Heavenly Father

*B) In Christ, you are a child of God! Remember who you are!*

- you are clothed with the righteousness of Christ. He has given you the strength and power to live differently (to be salt/light of the world)

- pray, pray, and pray!

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

### **Also shared during service:**

**"My Utmost For His Highest" (Oswald Chambers) - "Yesterday"**

**Security from Yesterday.** "...God requires an account of what is past" ([Ecclesiastes 3:15](#)). At the end of the year we turn with eagerness to all that God has for the future, and yet anxiety is apt to arise when we remember our yesterdays. Our present enjoyment of God’s grace tends to be lessened by the memory of yesterday’s sins and blunders. But God is the God of our yesterdays, and He allows the memory of them to turn the past into a ministry of spiritual growth for our future. God reminds us of the past to protect us from a very shallow security in the present.

**Security for Tomorrow.** "...the Lord will go before you...." This is a gracious revelation— that God will send His forces out where we have failed to do so. He will keep watch so that we will not be tripped up again by the same failures, as would undoubtedly happen if He were not our “rear guard.” And God’s hand reaches back to the past, settling all the claims against our conscience.

**Security for Today.** “You shall not go out with haste....” As we go forth into the coming year, let it not be in the haste of impetuous, forgetful delight, nor with the quickness of impulsive thoughtlessness. But let us go out with the patient power of knowing that the God of Israel will go before us. Our yesterdays hold broken and irreversible things for us. It is true that we have

lost opportunities that will never return, but God can transform this destructive anxiety into a constructive thoughtfulness for the future. Let the past rest, but let it rest in the sweet embrace of Christ.

Leave the broken, irreversible past in His hands, and step out into the invincible future with Him

Source: <http://utmost.org/yesterday/>