

Adoption (Esther 2:15-18 & Galatians 3:23-4:7)

19-Jan-20

G'Day Church family

There are **Bibles** in front of you - and an **outline** if you want to take **notes**

Let me **pray** before we begin...

Intro

So, throughout the month of January - we're doing a series on "**SHUN**" words in the Bible - that's words in the Bible that end in "TION" - SHUN

[PowerPoint 1-SHUN]

In **January 2019** - we looked at:

Revelation, Substitution, Salvation, Redemption

Now in **January 2020** we'll be looking at a few more **SHUN** words:

Propitiation, Justification (last week), Adoption and Resurrection

Intro/Physical Adoption

A true story to begin with...

- On 10th **January 1930** - an **Irish baby boy** called **Patrick** was **born** in **Wexford**
- His **mother** was **Bridget** - his **father unknown?**
- In those days - that was a **big scandal**
- Having a **child out of wedlock** was frowned upon
- So, after a few weeks
- The young baby **Patrick** was **taken** from his mother and **brought** to **Dublin**
- Eventually baby **Patrick** was **taken in** by a kind lady called **Theresa** who already had 5 children of her own

- Her husband, **Charlie**, was in **bed**, having just come off **night shift**
- Theresa **put** baby **Patrick** in **bed** with **Charlie** and said - "*we have a new baby boy Charlie*" - to which Charlie replied "*I don't care what you do Theresa, as long as I get some sleep*"
- And so, baby **Patrick** was **raised as though** he was **Charlie** and **Theresa's son** - and treated just like the **other 5 children** in the family...
- Which brings us to our **SHUN** word today - **Adoption**

[PowerPoint 2-Adoption Definition]

- Definition: **the action of legally taking another's child and bringing it up as one's own**

Giving children up for **adoption** can be a **loving alternative** for parents who may, for various reasons, be unable to care for their own child. It can also be an **answer to prayer** for many couples who have **not been able to have children of their own**. Adoption is also, for some, a way to **increase** their **impact** as parents by **expanding** their **family** with children who are not their own, **biologically**.

Adoption is **spoken of favourably** throughout **Scripture**. For example, **Moses** was **adopted** into the **Pharaoh** of **Egypt's royal family**.

And in our **OT reading** today, from the book of **Esther**, a **beautiful girl** named **Esther**, was **adopted** by her **cousin, Mordecai**, after her **parents' death**, and **Mordecai cared for, advised** her and **protected** her, as though she was his **own**

daughter, and Esther became a queen, and God used her to deliver the Jewish people from the harsh treatment they received in Persia.

Just because a child is adopted, doesn't mean - God - cannot use that child to achieve great things...

Spiritual Adoption (Galatians 3:23-4:5)

But as well as physical adoption, there is another type of adoption in the Bible, spiritual adoption - that's where our NT reading comes in

[PowerPoint 3-Heading]

Please turn to Galatians 3:23-4:5

Here the Apostle Paul explains what it was like BEFORE faith in Jesus was possible - that's in verses 23 to 25

[PowerPoint 3a-Before]

He says in v23, before Jesus came, people were like in protective custody under God's Law - that's God's rules. What he means by this - is that God's Law protects people - because:

- God's Law shows God's heart - what He expects, and how just and fair and loving He is
- God's Law shows the best way to live
- And God's Law shows what is right and what is wrong

Also, v24, God's Law prepares people for Jesus. The whole purpose of God's Law is to show people their need for Jesus as their Saviour. The way Jesus

presented the Law to people - in His day - was to **show people they couldn't fulfil the Law** - they **couldn't keep** the rules; and they **needed** to look outside the Law **keeping** - to find a **righteousness from someone greater** than the **religious leaders** of the time - and to find righteousness in Him

In v25 - Paul says **once people** have come into a **relationship of faith in Jesus**, they **no longer have to live under their guardian**, which was God's Law. If we see **God's Law as a tutor or guardian** looking after a child; when the child grows up, they don't forget the discipline and lessons they gained under the tutor, but they also **don't live** under that tutor anymore. That's a picture of our relationship with God's Law. We learn from it; we remember the lessons from it; but we don't live **under** the law. **Martin Luther** puts it this way *"The example of a schoolmaster is a striking example, schoolmasters (like the Law) are indispensable; but show me a pupil who loves their schoolmaster"*

[PowerPoint 3a-After]

Then the Apostle **Paul explains what it's like AFTER** people put their **faith in Jesus** - in verses 26 to 27.

In **traditional Jewish thinking** (which was carried into Christianity by Jewish Christians), a **person's standing before God** was **measured by their obedience to God's Law**. To be truly close to God - and considered children of God - a person had to **follow the letter of God's Law** - just like the Scribes and Pharisees insisted (Matt 23). But here, the Apostle **Paul says** people can be **children of God** in a **completely different way, through their faith in Jesus.**

This gives people a **new identity**. As **children of God** - they have a **special relationship with God** as a loving and caring Father. It is a place of **closeness**, a place of **affection**; and a place of **special care and attention**.

And it is **achieved by faith in Jesus** - **not just by faith in His death** on the cross for our sins to be forgiven - **not just by faith in His resurrection** so we can have eternal life; but **faith and trust in Him for all of our lives** - and putting Him as **number one in our lives**.

V27 - Paul uses the **illustration of baptism** to show what it means to have faith in Jesus. He **doesn't say** people are **baptized into water** - but **baptized into Jesus Christ**. Just as in water baptism - a **person is immersed in water** - when we put our faith in Jesus - **our lives are immersed in Jesus**.

Sometimes, **people can be content** with just "**dipping a bit**" into Jesus. **God wants us to be fully immersed in Jesus, not sprinkled or just a part of us dipped in Him**. **When a person is in the water, we don't see much of them** - we mostly **see the water**. When we live as being **baptized in Jesus Christ**, we **shouldn't see much of "us" anymore** - we **should mostly see Jesus**.

Paul also uses **another illustration** in v27 - to have faith in Jesus is to **clothe ourselves in Jesus**. How we **dress** has an **impact** on how we **appear to others**. And sometimes we **dress appropriately for the occasion**. Our **appropriate clothing** as a **Christian**, having faith in Jesus, is to **put on Jesus' clothes** - **not physically but spiritually**. **People will see that we belong to Jesus by looking at our lives**; our lives should be **adorned with Jesus**; so **people know we are Jesus**

people. This is **not** play acting - like a child playing "dress-up" - being clothed like Jesus should be our spiritual reality.

Once we are **children of God** - Paul goes onto say - there is an **equality** - in verses 28 and 29.

One of the **problems** for the Greek church in **Galatia**, that Paul is writing to - was that some Galatian Christians still wanted to observe a **dividing line between Jews and Greeks**. Paul's saying - with **faith in Jesus** - that **dividing line is done away with**. When we are in Jesus - there's **no Jew nor Greek - no Aussie nor Pom** - and so on. In fact - v28 - Paul says there are no dividing lines **when our identity is in Jesus - no difference** between a **slave** and a **free** person, or between **male** and **female** - we're all one in **Christ Jesus**

In fact, there's **no dividing lines** - like - church **denominations**, **race**, **nations**, **political parties**, **rich**, **poor**. **Jesus died on the cross - to erase these dividing lines**.

This **doesn't mean there aren't differences** - an employee still has to do what their boss says - **but in their standing before God, in Jesus, they are equal** - and there are **no barriers to them fellowshiping** together.

Paul reinforces this new identity in Jesus - in v29 - by saying that when **God promised Abraham** that He would establish an **everlasting covenant** (Gen 17:19) with **one of Abraham's offspring**, which is **Jesus** - because we as Christians belong to Jesus, we are **spiritual descendants of Abraham**, and **we inherit** that **promise of God too**. And we inherit that promise - not by our own work - but by **what Jesus has done** - and by **having faith** in what He has done.

All this helps us to answer the most basic of all human questions: **Who am I?**

And we can say as **John Stott** says: *"In Christ Jesus, I am a son or daughter of God. In Christ Jesus I am united to all of the redeemed (saved) people of God, past, present and future. In Christ, I discover my identity. In Christ I find my feet. In Christ I come home"*

As we hit **chapter 4** - Paul gives **one more illustration** - in case the Galatians and us - haven't got it.

In v1 to v3 - he paints the **picture of a property estate** - where there is a **child** who **will** inherit the whole estate - when they're old enough. But until the child is old enough to receive the inheritance - **guardians and trustees** - control the child. During this waiting period, Paul says, the **child is no different to the workers working on the estate** - even though one day the child will own the estate.

In the same way - **Paul describes our spiritual condition before faith in Jesus** - He says we were like the child in the estate - underage - we were under slavery of sin and controlled by the **"elemental spiritual forces of the world"**. What he means is we were under the influence of the **ABC of the universe** - the principle of "cause and effect" - some people call it karma, or **"you get what you deserve - when you are good you deserve to receive good - and when you are bad you deserve to receive bad"** - But Paul wants the Galatians and us - to realize that God goes beyond that worldly thinking - with His **grace** - **His undeserved love for us** - in sending Jesus whilst we were sinners - we actually get what we didn't deserve [forgiveness]

So, in v4 - **At the right time - God sent Jesus** - born of a woman (a virgin birth - not born of a man) - and Jesus came to **redeem us - to buy us back to God** - but it **cost Him His life**.

Now, it would be great for us to just be redeemed and bought out of our slavery to sin; but **God's grace goes further than that**.

See the end of v4 - **we are now adopted sons and daughters of God**
God elevates us to a place as His sons and daughters of Him by adoption.
 In a sense **every human being is a child of God** - but not every human being is a child of God in the sense of this close adoptive relationship that Paul's talking about here.

Paul has in mind the **Roman custom of adoption** where adopted children were given **absolutely equal privileges in the family and equal status as heirs**.

[PowerPoint 4-Heading]

Privileges of Adoption (Gal 4:6-7)

Which brings us to the **privileges of adoption** - and that's in verses 6 and 7.

[PowerPoint 4a-Father]

See v6 - **we receive the Spirit of God's Son** - Jesus - and we can call **God** - "Abba, Father" - just like Jesus does!

I **began by mentioning** the Irish baby boy, **Patrick**

Patrick was my Dad.

My Dad and I were so close - and he **died just as I became a Christian**

I felt a **great loss**

But I **heard God's Spirit** - that Spirit - Paul mentions in v6

And God's Spirit - in a **quiet inner voice spoke to me**

"Paul - you've lost your earthly Father - but you have a Heavenly Father with you always"

That's **spiritual adoption** - we gain a **Heavenly Father forever**

(pause)

[PowerPoint 4b-Slaves]

And the **privileges** - Paul says in v7 - of being adopted - are that:

- We are **no longer slaves to our sin** - but God's children
- An in the **Father's house** - children are **never slaves** - and slaves are **never children**. Jesus showed that in the **parable of the prodigal (lost) son** - where the lost **son wanted** to return to his father's house as a **slave** - but the **Father refused** and would **only receive him as His son**
- And as **God's children** we are **heirs** - and we have the same inheritance as **Jesus**

[PowerPoint 4c-Inherit]

What do we inherit?

See Romans 8:16-17

⁶ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

¹⁷ Now **if we are children, then we are heirs**—heirs of God and **co-heirs with Christ**, if indeed **we share in his sufferings** in order that we may **also share in his glory**.

So, we **share in Jesus' sufferings** - but praise God we also **share in His glory** too.

We may suffer in this life - but we have the glory of Heaven to look forward to.

[PowerPoint 4d-imperishable]

The **Apostle Peter** describes this **inheritance** in 1 Peter 3:15

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us **new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,** ⁴ and into **an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade.** This inheritance is **kept in heaven for you,** ⁵ who through faith are shielded by God's power **until the coming of the salvation** that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

This inheritance is imperishable, undefiled, and will never fade. It is also "reserved in heaven."

Conclusion

[PowerPoint 5-Heading]

In the meantime, **how does being an heir affect our everyday life?**

Jesus tells us in Matthew 6:19-21

¹⁹ "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

[PowerPoint 5a-focus]

So, what **Jesus** wants us to **focus on** is **lasting things - eternal things** - like **telling our family, our friends and our community** - **they can also be adopted children of God and inherit eternal life**, because of Jesus. Rather than concerning ourselves with worldly things which are temporary

Just one final thought to finish up then

[PowerPoint 5b-guaranteed]

As adopted children of God - **our inheritance is guaranteed** [not like guarantees in the shops - which often have loopholes or expire]

See Ephesians 1:13-14

¹³ And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the **promised Holy Spirit**, ¹⁴ **who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance** until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory

Let's pray...