

CS8. Sonship and the Adoption

1. Adoption and Inheritance

Key Passage: Romans 8:14-25

- Rom.8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons (Greek: huios) of God.
Rom 8:15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but **you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."**
Rom 8:16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children (Greek: teknon) of God,
Rom 8:17 and if children (Greek: teknon), then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.
Rom 8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.
Rom 8:19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.
Rom 8:20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope;
Rom 8:21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the **glorious liberty of the children (Greek: teknon) of God.**
Rom 8:22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.
Rom 8:23 Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, **eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.**
Rom 8:24 For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?
Rom 8:25 But if we **hope** for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.

2. Confusion over the Meaning of "Adoption"

- When people read the word Adoption they immediately think of a Western style adoption
- When parents adopt a child in the twenty-first century, they usually do it because they can't have children, they want to help a child whose birth parents can't raise them, or they want to rescue a child from abuse.
- Modern-day adoption involves parents taking a baby or young child into their home, loving them as if they were their natural children, and giving them a much better life

3. Greco-Roman Adoption

- Greek or Roman adoption consisted of a son—**usually an adult, not a child**—being adopted in order to be an heir who would preserve a family line from extinction.
- Many families in the Greco-Roman world ran the risk of extinction due to short life expectancies.
- The legal strategy of Adoption was used too put an adult son into place to take care of the inheritance and the surviving family
- If a man was growing older and he didn't have an adequate heir to receive his inheritance and extend his family line, the husband and wife would adopt an adult son who would receive the inheritance when the father died.
- Under normal conditions, whenever a father died, his estate passed directly to his son.
- No will was necessary, for it was illegal for the father to give his property to anyone but his son.
- The heir was legally responsible for the continued care of all surviving family members, including providing dowries for unmarried daughters.
- Effectively, the son stepped directly into the shoes of the deceased father, assuming all of the father's responsibilities and using his inheritance to take care of the family.

4. Adoption and Inheritance

- When Paul talked about our adoption as sons in Romans 8:12-25, he is talking to Romans who understood the concept of Greco-Roman adoption.
- He did not need to explain the connection between Adoption and Inheritance to them
- He did not need to explain that only mature adult males were set into place as a Son in order to inherit and to keep the family from extinction
- *Rom 8:17 and if children (Gk: teknon), then heirs – heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.*

5. The True Meaning of Adoption

(i). Civil Adoption

- In a civil adoption the adopted child does not bear any of the biological characteristics of the adoptive parents
- A civil adoption can give someone the legal position and status of a son but could not give the child the nature and DNA of the Father

(ii). The New Birth

- We are children of God because we are born of God and are God's children by nature

Joh 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:

Joh 1:13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

- We are therefore born again by the Spirit of God, are His Children by new birth and share in His nature
- *Rom 8:15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but **you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."***

(iii). Bible Adoption

- The word "Adoption" does not refer to the Western practice of Adoption, as we are already children of God by faith in Jesus Christ
- "Adoption"....Greek. Huiothesia....a compound word
- Huios..... a fully mature son
- Tithemi.....to place, to appoint, to designate, to establish, to set forth
- Adoption is the word " Huiothesia"....Son Placement and has to do with inheritance and refers to the standing or position of a mature son who possesses the rights and privileges of inheritance
- We are born again into the family of God by the new birth, but this does not make us mature Sons.
- A child of God cannot become a son of God qualified for Adoption and Inheritance without there being a growth to maturity
- The Holy Spirit is our Tutor and Guardian, appointed by Father to be responsible for our personal maturity process

(iv). Adoption: New Status and Position

- The final phase of adoption, where the mature son was placed as the legal heir of the inheritance, gave the son a new status and position in the family, but it didn't make him more loved or cherished than when he was a child.
- Son placement into an inheritance wasn't about how a father felt about his son. • **Instead, it was an endorsement that a child had become of age, had grown into a mature man, and had the necessary character to oversee the father's household affairs.**
- This is like our son placement into Christ's inheritance. This doesn't make God love us more. Instead, it means we're given a new status, the full rights of sonship, and are deemed ready to share in the full inheritance with the eternal Son.

6.The Three Stages of Adoption

- Greco-Roman adoption can be summarized into three phases:

(i) Placement into the family

- If the father didn't have an heir, he would bring a mature son into the family from the outside.

- In our case we are born into God's family by new birth

(ii). Preparation for the Inheritance

- The designated heir, whether natural-born or from the outside, would be placed under a child trainer who would groom him for heirship through intense training.
- Paul refers to this common cultural practice
- *Gal 4:1 Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all,*
Gal 4:2 but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father.
- A child (teknon) is only a potential heir but not necessarily a real heir, for a child in his position and status is in actual fact no different from the standing of a slave:-
- Without submitting to this training the child could not mature and qualify for inheritance
- Our Heavenly Father has entrusted the work of preparing and maturing us for sonship in the hands of the Holy Spirit.
- **Holy Spirit is "Spirit of Adoption", our personal tutor or guardian who prepares each of us for adoption.**
- The moment we are placed into His care, He works relentlessly to conform us to the pattern Son of God, taking us through various stages of growth, education, discipline, and character development.
- *"He is able to make all things work together for our good"* (Rom.8: 28-29) in this formation process
- The Holy Spirit trains us in the ways, purposes, and nature of our heavenly Father in order to prepare us for the throne.
- He forms the meekness, humility, and sacrificial love of Christ in us, so that we can handle our eternal inheritance without squandering it with selfish irresponsible behavior.
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(iii). Placement into the Inheritance

- When the father decide that the designated heir was fully trained and prepared, he would place him as the legal heir of the inheritance, giving him the full rights of sonship...ie. The Adoption!
- The decision and timing of The Adoption depended on the Father deeming him ready
- **Adoption is the placing of a mature, responsible, and well-trained son as the legal heir of the family inheritance.**
- **Paul used Roman Adoption to convey how believers must mature into sons in order to inherit**
- The exclusive rights of inheritance that belong to the firstborn son include
 - A position of Authority in the Family (Gen 25:23)
 - Being set apart as a priest in the family (Ex 13:12) and
 - Receiving the Double portion of the father's estate (Deut 21:17)

7. The Difference between a Child (teknon) and a Son (huios)

- The Bible is careful in using different words distinguish between a “child” & “Son”

(i). **Teknon**: refers to a child who has been born into a family, carries the family name but is yet immature. Teknon is used to show **identity**

- *Rom 8:16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are **children (teknon) of God**,*

- A teknon child is legally an heir, but he must submit to the maturity process until the time appointed by his father

(ii). **Huios**: refers to a fully grown mature child. It denotes dignity, honour, maturity Huios is used to show **Maturity**

A mature Son is one who has surrendered to the leading and training of the Holy

Spirit

*Rom.8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are **sons (Huios) of God**.* He has submitted to Father's process of maturity and learned obedience and wisdom

Teknon and Huios are used to refer to two different states

Teknon gives prominence to the **fact of birth**

Teknon describes how we become children of God at new birth by receiving the

indwelling Holy

Spirit. We have become a new creation

Huios emphasizes the dignity, character, maturity, honor and rank of a

person A New Testament writer could refer to a son or daughter using either the word

teknon or huios

If a writer wanted to distinguish a mature person from an immature one he would

always use the

word huios

NB. Paul used huios to describe the mature sons of God and to distinguish every

born-again believer from those who are led by the Spirit.

Huios describes that a Teknon of God has matured into a Christlike mature Son, by being led by the Holy Spirit through His training and maturing process

Clearly, Paul was making a distinction between mature, Spirit-led believers and immature, carnal believers.

Rom.8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons (Greek: huios) of God.

(iv) Summary: Huios and Teknon

Teknon describes how we become God's children at new birth by receiving the indwelling Spirit and a new spirit with the exact nature of Jesus Christ.

Huios, on the other hand, often describes how the teknon of God mature into Christ-like sons by the Holy Spirit applying the cross in their self-life and by forming Christ's nature in their heart and soul.

A **teknon** is one who is born of God; a **huios** is one who is instructed by God. A teknon has God's nature; a huios has God's character.

8. Jesus the Pattern Son had to Mature

- Jesus submitted Himself daily to the maturity training process of the Holy Spirit
- Heb 5:8 though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. Heb 5:9 And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,

(i). At the age of 12 in the temple Jesus placed Himself under tutors to prepare Him for Sonship

- *Luk 2:51 Then He (The Child...Teknon) went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart.*
Luk 2:52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

(ii). At the Age of 30 Jesus submitted Himself to the ministry of John the Baptist

- *Mat 3:17 And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."*

(iii). At the age of 30 submitted Himself to the Holy Spirit to be released into ministry

- *Luk 4:1 Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being tempted forty days of the devil*

(iv). After His Resurrection...Jesus is declared to be The Son of God

- *Rom 1:4 and declared to be the Son (huios) of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.*

9. Without Training and We Cannot Qualify for inheritance

What is an Heir?

- An heir is a person who inherits or is entitled by law or by the terms of a will to inherit the estate of another.
- *Rom 8:17 and if children (Greek: teknon), then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. Rom 8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*
- As teknon children we are legal heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ

(ii). Inheritance is Conditional

- Possession of our inheritance is conditional“if we suffer with Him”
- “Suffer”.....to experience the same pain as another
- According to Romans 8: 17, to qualify as the heirs of God and joint heirs with

Christ, we must suffer with Christ (following after Christ as our example of

maturity into sonship)

- The suffering that is referred to is the painful experiences that Jesus endured

submitting to be led by the Spirit and obedient to His Father, His experience of “child training”

- *Heb 5:8 though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.*

- These sufferings are nothing compared to the glory to be revealed in us sharing in the power and glory of His resurrection at His return

(iii). We must “Put away Childish Things”

- *1Co 13:10 But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part*

will be done away.

1Co 13:11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

- To respond heartily to God’s call to sonship and to attain maturity of life, we must first be willing to put away all childish things.

- This means we must put away all our childish thinking, childish speaking, and childish behaviours and grow up spiritually

(iv). If we Resist Training we Disqualify Ourselves from Adoption and inheritance

- We must choose to submit to the Holy Spirit who is working to transform us from an immature selfish child into a mature Christ-like son
- *Heb 12:7 If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?*
Heb 12:8 But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.
- “Chastening”...Greek...*peideia*....training and education of a child...including instruction, correction, discipline
- “Endure”Greek...*hupomene*... to patiently bear under, bear bravely, persevere
- Without chastening we are not sons (*huios*), we are illegitimate and without inheritance

10. Our Adoption and Inheritance is a Future Hope

(i). Creation is Awaiting the Adoption

- *Rom 8:19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.*
Rom 8:20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope;
- “Earnest expectation” means there is an intense anticipation and watching for this to happen
- “Eagerly awaits” Means to fully expect and wait patiently for this to happen
- The whole of creation is in an intense expectation awaiting the fulfillment of God’s eternal purpose, the manifestation or revealing of what has been hidden and concealed...the fully matured Sons of God receiving the Adoption and being placed into authority and resurrection glory.
- “Revealing”manifestation, disclosure, to lift the veil off something concealed so it is fully visible
- Adoption is a proclamation to all creation, to all mankind, and to the principalities and powers of the air that they have to reckon with sons of God.
- Coming into sonship means that there is now an authority in expressing the rule of God which was not ours before but is now available to us because we have now come into sonship.
- Adoption is the Father investing His Authority in sons who have come to full stature and who have embraced Father’s character and embrace His rule and purposes
- They are entrusted with Authority and Power to change the nations
- When we come to Adoption and Full Sonship we also come to Kingship, the place of ruling and reigning over creation with Jesus (Ps.2:6-7)
- *Rev 3:21 To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.*

(ii). Creation Groans with Birth Pains

- *Rom 8:22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.*
Rom 8:23 Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit (as teknon), even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption (as huioi), the redemption of our body.
- **The Adoption has not yet taken place ...it takes place at the redemption of our body which is First Resurrection when Jesus returns**
- Creation is groaning under the weight of sin, and curses, and injustice, longing and yearning for the Revelation of the sons of God, resurrected, adopted and placed into their full inheritance
- The earth shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption and experience glorious liberty Vs.21
- Together with Jesus, the Sons of God will release the earth from the cursing it has been under, restore creation, manifest God's glory, rule cities and nations, restore justice and peace and govern the nations of the earth
- **In anticipation of this historic event the earth groans and labors with birth pains. Jesus warned that in the End Times there would be great turmoil which He described as "Birthpains"**

Mat 24:6 And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

Mat 24:7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.

Mat 24:8 All these are the beginning of sorrows. ("Sorrows"pain of Child birth, birthing travail)

The "sorrows" that Jesus is talking about will be massive global events affecting all nations

(iii). The Adoption is our Great Hope.

- *Rom 8:24 For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?*
Rom 8:25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance
- "Hope" means a deep and joyful anticipation of good that is yet to come
- The Hope of our Adoption into full Sonship with all its rights and privileges is our great hope
- This hope motivates us to persevere and endure all manner of hardship, opposition and difficulty because of the prize ahead to be won
- Scripture states that we have received the spirit of adoption, that we have been predestined to be adopted, and that we were redeemed so that we might be adopted, but nowhere does it say that our adoption has already taken place.
- *Eph 1:5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself,*

according to the good pleasure of His will,

- Father's plan and destiny for us is the Adoption to full sonship, a plan that brings Him great pleasure

(iv). Our Adoption is Dependent upon whether we have allowed Christ to be Formed in Us

- In the first century Roman adoption, an mature adult and not a child was adopted Likewise our adoption will be contingent upon whether we have become Christlike in heart and character
Father will not share such a great inheritance of His Son with unprepared , immature, self-centred and irresponsible children

2Ti 2:12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us

Rev 21:7 He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son(huios)

Only the overcomers will be placed into a firstborn son status and will share in the fullness of Christ's inheritance in the ages to come.

Receiving the rights of the First Born son is contingent upon whether or not we have overcome, matured, and have become Christ-like in our heart and soul.

If we remain under His governmental hand, allowing Him to fully prepare us for placement into Christ's eternal inheritance, then, in the Father's own words, "[we] will be [His] son"—we will be His huios.

We will be the overcomers who "will inherit these things"

Becoming God's huios is when our adoption as sons is finalized—when we are given a firstborn son status and placed as a legal heir into Christ's eternal inheritance.

And the eternal rewards described in Revelation 2-3 is the inheritance reserved for the overcomers who are given the status of a firstborn son.

(v). Throughout the Bible there are glimpses (previews) of the Sons of God and their impact

- Joseph.....Ruled the nation of Egypt
- Moses.....Overthrew Egyptian rule and slavery
- The Judges.....Delivered the Israel from oppressors
- Samuel.....Delivered Israel, ruled Israel
- David.....Conquered all and gathered enormous wealth
- Solomon.....Built the temple, great wisdom, wealth and global influence
- Elijah.....Restored worship, great miracles
- ElishaGreater miracles
- Jesus.....The Pattern Son
- The Apostles..Turned the world upside down
- The Sons of God.....Restoring, rebuilding cities and nations with great power (Is 61)

11. For Personal Reflection and Application

- What has the Holy Spirit been speaking to me about during this session?
- What areas do I personally need to grow spiritually?
- How sensitive am I to the leading of Holy Spirit?
- How open am I to correction and instruction?
- What areas of my character do I need to develop?
- What action steps do I need to take?