

Pastor David Anglada' Message Outline
"Adopted as Children of God"
Grace Lutheran Church and School
Malverne, New York
www.glcas.org
Romans 8:1-11
7th Sunday after Pentecost
Sunday, July 19, 2020

Romans 8:12-25

¹²So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—¹³for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. ¹⁵For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" ¹⁶it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our Spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him. ¹⁸I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. ¹⁹For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; ²⁰for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹that its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²²We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; ²³and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.¹



Prayer for Illumination:

Harvest God, as we listen to your Word, by your Holy Spirit, lead our hearts in the way everlasting. Amen.²

Good morning, today I would like to share some thoughts on being adopted by into the family of God. What is adoption? Adoption is the action of legally taking another's child and bringing it up as one's own. Also, one can say that being adopted is when an adult permanently takes over parental responsibility for a child and, at the same time, the rights, and obligations of the child's parent.

One of my childhood friends was Billy Ayala, who was a classmate in the sixth grade, Billy was adopted, however, he did not publicize to the world that he was a taken in by the Butler family. However, Billy would always say, "I love my parents they are nice to me; they love me a whole a lot, they are kind to me plus they always take care of me." Many of us knew that Billy's biological mother had died of a heroin overdose. She was addicted to heroin. We all knew that Billy was adopted even though he rarely spoke about it.

An excellent example of adoption comes to us from the Hebrew scriptures. Moses, the great Hebrew leader, was adopted. Moses was taken in by an Egyptian princess named Bithiah, the daughter of the Pharaoh himself.

Bithiah was a young widow and had no children. Moses was raised as her child. Moreover, he was reared in the royal courts as a prince of the Egyptians.

Moses' biological mother, Jochebed, secretly hid him in a basket and placed the basket in the Nile river when the Pharaoh ordered all newborn Hebrew boys to be killed to reduce the population of the Israelites. Fear overcomes Pharaoh, he feared that the Hebrews will overcome his kingdom in the future. Fear causes us to take irrational actions.³ Actions that have server repercussions.

The reason why I share with you these two short stories is to acknowledge three essential elements of most adoption.

The first is that adopted parents love their adoptees.

Secondly, adopted parents do not have to choose their adoptees; children are adopted because the adoptee's have a caring as well as a compassionate heart. Adoptee's are chosen out of love; it is a matter of the heart.

Thirdly, adopting parents are protective of their adoptees as if they are his or her, biological children.

Adoption stems from a loving heart.

In our 2nd reading today, St. Paul writes to the followers of Jesus or to the house churches in Romans that met separately from one another, whose members were both Jews and Gentile, and who came from different backgrounds, as well as social economic realities.

But most important that they were obligated to each other as sisters and brothers in Christ. They were no longer bound to follow a social hierarchy system; they were one in Christ Jesus regardless of their ethnic background and economic status.

To further stress the relationship of being sisters and brothers in Christ, St. Paul uses the image of adoption, a legal practice in Roman society of designating someone who is not one's physical offspring to be one's heir.

Paul informs the Romans that they are all children of God that God has adopted them. Paul is declaring that they were taken in by God to be "God's beloved children." Furthermore, that they now belong to God's eternal covenant just like Abraham in the Hebrew Scriptures.

Equally important, that they have a universal Creator who values all that has been created, coupled with that humans are of sacred worth. You are children of God, adopted by God. God chose you because, God loves you.

We are adopted by God to be God's beloved children, not because we are good or deserve to be taken in by God. Since, we have been taken in by God, we belong to God today and tomorrow.

Please, observe that when the Apostle Paul says that we are children of God, the masculine language is not being used, such as sons of God. Paul uses the word children, which is not gender specific.⁴

WE ALL CHILDREN OF GOD, Greek or Jewish, Male, or Female, Black, Brown, White, and Yellow! We are all family; we are all children of the same heavenly Father. Since we are children of God, we can boldly say Abba, Father!

Abba Father is an indicator of our adoption by God. God is our heavenly parent. Abba is from the Aramaic and is still a term used by Hebrew children to address their Father.

Over and above that Jesus used the expression when he prayed to his heavenly Father. This term is an informal intimacy and respect spoken by children to their Father. The equivalent expression in our language is Daddy or Papa. Calling God Daddy indicates that we have an intimate relationship with God.⁵

Paul makes it clear that women, as well as men, are heirs with Christ, thus breaking down one of the traditional hierarchical barriers between people in Roman society and opening the way to think of how other barriers are also overcome in Christ.

Luther taught us that adoption reminds us of God's grace.⁶ None of us is a child of God by nature—simply because we are humans—or because of what we have done. Instead, we become children of God only by God's gracious action to accept us as such.

Our adoption and inheritance are based on Christ's work and is lived out in the Spirit; this is Luther's understanding. In other words, we are adopted children of God because of Christ Jesus.

St. Paul goes on by saying you are children of God; you have the Holy Spirit within you. You are now led by Spirit, not the flesh, by the way, the word flesh means a destructive spirit in us that causes us not to obey the Spirit of God within us. Since we have the Spirit of God inside of us, we enthusiastically and ecstatically worship God.

My good sisters and brothers today, we are reminded that we are children of God.

We call upon God by saying Abba, Father; we have direct access to God. We do not need a middle person to lift our prayers before God. We have a relationship with God.

Since we are children of God, we know we can face all the challenge's life can throw at us because God is watching over us, we are God's daughter and sons.

Since we are Children of God, we are no longer in bondage to sin. We live with liberation and freedom from the captive power of sin or anything that can enslave us.

We are children of God. Therefore, we learn to trust in God that regardless of whatever happens in life, God is with us. Yes, life is difficult and tough, we were never promised a rose garden, or an eternal utopia. Sisters and brothers, we will face illness, headaches, and moments when we feel that living makes no sense.

What you and I were promised was that God will always be present for us, God will always accompany us. God will never abandon us. Like a good parent that is present for their beloved children.

Furthermore, we are patient; it is natural for children to trust their parents, even though parents sometimes fail to keep their promises. God, our heavenly parent, will never give us unfulfilled promises.

God will honor all promises given to us. It may take more time than we expect; however, God will be faithful to all promise given to us.

Beloved in the Lord, we have been adopted by God to be his children; we belong to the family of God. Therefore, we are loved, blessed as well as favored by a loving God.

So, stop worrying so much and enjoy each moment that God has given you. Live with a spirit of gratitude and thanksgiving for this present time we have received from God.

Response to The Word:

Let us pray; we are children of God. We are children of hope. We are welcomed in God's family. God is for us. Amen.⁷

Thank you for joining us this morning, we hope you will join us Sunday, morning at 10am for our community virtual gathering via ZOOM, to log on, please visit our website at:

www.glcas.org again that is www.glcas.org

Remember, God loves you and cares about you. Thank you for joining us.

Endnotes

¹ New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

² ² Kimberly, Bracken and Long Ed. Feasting on the Word-Liturgies for Year A, Volume 2, Trinity Sunday Through Reign of Christ (Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, 2014), 78.

³ Adam Hamilton, Moses-In the Footsteps of the Reluctant Prophet (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 2017, 34-36.

⁴ Sarah Heaner Lancaster, Romans-BELIEF A Theological Commentary on the Bible (Louisville, WJK, 2015), 140-141.

⁵ Life Application Bible Commentary (Illinois, Tyndale House Publisher, Inc. 1992), 153.

⁶ Martin Luther, Commentary on Romans translated by J. Theodore Mueller (Grand Rapids, Kregel Publication, 1976), 121.

⁷ Prayer by Pastor A. David Anglada, Grace Lutheran Church, Malverne, New York, July 2020.