

“Chosen to Be In God’s Family!”

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You and I are called God’s own. He sees us as His special children. We are adopted and brought into His family through the waters of Baptism. As it says in Isaiah 43:1, *“But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.”*

Max said it this way about adoption, *“To accept God’s grace is to accept God’s offer to be adopted into His family.”* God’s planned for us to be part of His family even before the beginning of time! Listen to Ephesians 1:5, *“He predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will.”*

God calls you His own, and wants you to see Him as your Father. Your identity isn’t found in the things or accomplishments you’ve had, it’s found in being adopted as God’s own. God fills you with His Holy Spirit and the gift of redemption through the death and resurrection of Jesus, and you’re no longer the same. You’re not a slave to sin, death, and the devil, anymore, you’re free! You can have a very close relationship with God and have the freedom and confidence to approach Him and talk with Him! You can turn to Him anytime telling Him about your struggles, asking Him for His guidance and help.

But this adoption is more than an adoption for you alone, it’s for all! Listen to how Max explains it, *“The adoption is horizontal as well as vertical. You are included in the forever family. Dividing walls of hostility are broken down, and community is created on the basis of a common Father. Instant family worldwide!”*

That’s what makes this place so special! When I ask you to stand and greet each other, you’re greeting brothers and sisters in the faith! Your excitement and genuineness shines through and people notice it and want to be a part!

Open to Galatians 4. Jesus showed His Father’s love and grace as He willingly came to earth to suffer and die for us. Look at verses 4-7, *“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.”*

As God’s children, we’re heirs! That’s means we inherit all the gifts God wishes to give us.

We inherit not only life here now, but God’s close presence holding us and guiding us. This presence is eternal and God wants us to be with Him forever! Listen to 1 Peter 1:3-4, *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.”*

This inheritance is eternal! It’s a certain thing! It’s real! Open to John 10. Christian writer, Lewis Smedes said it this way, *“Grace is the gift of feeling sure that our future, even our dying, is going to turn out more splendidly than we dare imagine!”*

Look at Jesus’ words in verses 27-30, *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.”*

This adoption, this blessing of God's grace, defines who we are. The world looks for people who are just like them and shies away from those who aren't. Unfortunately, we seem to be quite judgmental as a people. We get uncomfortable when someone's not like us, so we stay away from them.

Open to Romans 5. But God sees each one of us as special! Do we all have the same talents and abilities? No! Do we all have the same possessions? No! This might be important to the world, but it's not to God! He sees each one of us as having great value!

Look at verses 6-8, *"For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*

Max said it this way, *"If God loves you, you must be worth loving. If He wants you in His Kingdom, then you must be worth having. God's grace requires you to change your attitude about yourself and take sides with God against your feelings of rejection."*

So, do you trust God's verdict about you? Do you trust that you're worth loving? Have you accepted the fact that God in His grace adopted you as His own? Listen to Max's close to the chapter, *"To live as God's child is to know, at this very instant, that you are loved by your Maker not because you try to please Him and succeed, or fail to please Him and apologize, but because He wants to be your Father. Nothing more. All your efforts to win His affection are unnecessary. All your fears of losing His affection are needless. You can no more make Him want you than you can convince Him to abandon you. The adoption is irreversible. You have a place at His table."*

Today, come to the table as His daughters and sons, and celebrate the gifts of grace He gives in His body and blood with your brothers and sisters. You're all part of the family!