



ASTONISHED!

Part 3: Adopted by God (John 1:1-13)
Sermon Q & A: 720.815.5717 (text only)

The ultimate gift of the Gospel is a restored relationship of love and security with the God and Father of Jesus Christ.

I. The Gift: Adopted by God as Father

A. God's Identity

The God of the Gospel is ultimately known as the "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 1:3; Ephesians 1:3; 1 Peter 1:3). The Gospel is a Father movement that addresses our deepest need and desire.

"For in the truest sense, the fall into sin was a fall out of relationship. It was the fall out of our secure place of belonging with God and into self-absorbed isolation and inner emptiness." Sandra Wilson, "Into Abba's Arms"

"The deepest search in life, it seemed to me, the thing that in one way or another was central to all living was our search to find a father, not merely the lost father of our youth, but the image of a strength and wisdom external to our need and superior to our hunger, to which the belief and power of our own life can be united." Thomas Wolfe

B. Our Doubts About God

Q – Is this such a good thing? What about our experiences with our earthly fathers ... hard-driving perfectionist, never pleased (leaving us feeling like slaves) or emotionally or physically absent (leaving us feeling like orphans)?

We all need our image of God healed by Jesus and the Holy Spirit – what does Jesus know about God that we don't? See Psalm 103.

"...a father means somebody who is able to regulate the life of his children from a center outside themselves, to pull them towards wholeness, to accustom them to obedience and so offer them security." Thomas Smail, "The Forgotten Father"

II. The Condition of the Offer (v. 12-13)

"Receive" (paralambano) = welcoming/accepting = to "receive" Jesus is to welcome him for who he really is (our Savior and Lord). We cannot receive him as our Savior, but reject him as our Lord.

“Believing in his name” (pisteou) = John actually uses the present tense of this verb which signifies ongoing activity that one does. The verb carries with it much more than mere mental assent to some facts. If one truly believes, they act on their belief. Here John uses the verb to communicate that one has thrown themselves upon the Lord in self-abandoning faith and trust.

The object of our belief is not a system, tradition or organization, but Jesus. In Jewish thinking, one's name stood for their whole personality. To speak of the “name of the Lord” was to speak of all that “God” means (Psalm 5:11, 20:1). To believe in “the name of Jesus” is to believe that he is who he says he is (God's Only Son), and that he can do what he says he can do (save sinners/offer God's life and truth).

One is not born into the Father's family by their own effort. One is “born again” by the Holy Spirit (John 3:1). It is a gift of God (Paul: by grace through faith, not by works...).

III. Experiencing the Father's Love (John 14:23; Romans 8:14-17; Galatians 4:6-7)

“It is the work of the Holy Spirit to cry Abba, Father at precisely these deep places of our hearts and spirits, there to begin to transform us and set us free, and bit by bit bring us out of the neglect or tyranny of the fatherhood we remember, into the sure love and liberating obedience of the God and Father of Jesus.” Thomas Smail, *“The Forgotten Father”*

Praying God's Word to experience the Gospel (John 14:23; Ephesians 1:17-23, 3:14-19).

IV. Waiting in Hope (Psalm 130:5)

“You are the son [daughter] of a kind, strong, and engaged Father, a Father wise enough to guide you in the Way, generous enough to provide for your journey, offering to walk with you every step. This is perhaps the hardest thing for us to believe – really believe, down deep in our hearts, so that it changes us forever, changes the way we approach each day.” John Eldredge, *“Fathered by God”*, p.27.

Recommended resources:

- *“Into Abba's Arms”* by Sandra Wilson
- *“Fathered by God”* by John Eldredge
- *“Stone by Stone – Tear Down the Wall Between God's Heart and Yours”* by Jasona Brown (available at Greenwood Community Church)