

You are sons and daughters of the living God!

This morning I have been asked to explore the concept that we are sons or daughters of God. It is the first in a series on God's Community. Today's topic is called 'Son's of God'.

In the next weeks you will be thinking about 'Forgiveness', then 'Giving to each other', 'being an Encourager' and 'making disciples'.

But we start answering the question: **'Who are we?'**

The answer is 'we are sons or daughters of the living God!' Now that claim cost Jesus his life and we believe such a claim could be madness. So we are dependant on the teaching of Jesus to understand what we mean by such a claim.

I want us to grasp three things about being a son or daughter of God. We are called to

- 1. Enjoy being a Child of God**
- 2. Live out being a Child of God**
- 3. Look forward to being a Child of God**

Simple question to start us off! **How do you become a Son or daughter?**

We are born into a family. Or we are adopted into a family.

The Bible refers to us as becoming Sons and Daughters of God using both concepts.

John writes in **John 1:12-13**

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But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

In **John 3:3** Jesus tells Nicodemus , *"I tell you the truth, no-one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."* He then goes on to explain how you can be born again.

John 3:5 "I tell you the truth, no-one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. ⁶Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.

If we are to enter the kingdom of God, we have to be born of the Holy Spirit of God. God does all the work, we have to believe and receive. As John goes on to say:

John 3:16 *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

It is all God's work. If we are Christians what we all did at some all other in our lives is repent and believe and receive the Good News. And then we discover we are born of the Spirit.

But we can also become a Son or Daughter by adoption. Which brings us to one of the two passages of scripture we are concentrating on this morning **Romans 8:14-17 page 1134-1135 in the church bibles.**

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Paul in his letter to the Romans says this:

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs— heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

So, some conclusions from this.

First, becoming a Christian is more than agreeing with some basic ideas and attending church. It is about a **fundamental change brought about by the Holy Spirit in your life.** When I became a Christian I asked Jesus to be saviour, I was eight at the time. But what I didn't realise was that God had been at work in me through a Sunday School Teacher, encouraging me to respond to the work of re-creation he was doing in my life. When we respond to the love of God in Christ Jesus in repentance and faith so much happens! Our sins are forgiven, We are born in spirit. We have a future in heaven, we have the presence of the Holy Spirit. in addition you are a Son or daughter of the Living God. The difference of being a Son and heir compared with a slave is why Paul says:

For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons.

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This may not mean a lot to us but was deeply significant in the times it was written. A normal Roman household was a busy place with a mix of family members, slaves and, maybe servants. A slave was a slave. No pay, no pension. No prospects unless someone buys your freedom. Just occasionally a slave is adopted to be heir. Otherwise you do what your told and if you don't you are punished, with no prospect of freedom. But the Son has status, is free from the humdrum of servitude, and with the expectation of inheriting.

When you came to Christ you became a son, not a slave. You are accepted into the family. You are entitled to a place prepared for you in heaven by Jesus. You HAVE eternal life. Do you believe it? Do you live it?

Listen to Romans 8: 38-39

³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Listen to Jesus on the subject:

Jesus put it another way in John 10:28 we read

²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one

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can snatch them out of my Father's hand. ³⁰ *I and the
Father are one."*

Secondly , **as a Son, you have a relationship with
God.** What does that mean? Going back to Romans
8: 14

*you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by
whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"*

Being a Son or daughter of God means we have a
relationship with God. The question becomes 'What
sort of relationship?'

When you are adopted into a family you become one
of the family, The father of the family becomes your
Dad. So it is in the family of God, When Jesus taught
his disciples to pray he said begin with 'Our Father'
The greek text of the New testament uses 'Pater'
from which we get 'paternal'. But the Hebrew word
for Father is 'Ab' אב and the Aramaic 'Aba' אבא. Jesus
probably taught in Aramaic so Our Father would
have been 'Abba'. The simple point is this: Jesus is
telling us that God is not a distant angry capricious
god in far away heaven, but a close loving, caring
consistent faithful and true Father to all his children.
The purpose of you becoming a Christian is for you
and God to have the same sort of relationship with
God as Jesus did!

If I am to succeed this morning in anything it is to
remind you that as an adopted Son or daughter of the
living God you have a close loving, caring,

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consistent, faithful and true Father. Call him 'Abba,
Father' and reflect on what that means.

You are secure.

You are loved.

Thirdly, **you have his Spirit living in you** to encourage and teach you to love him as a true child of God should. A child can talk to their Father. When do you talk to your Father in Heaven?

Do you get a once a week call through on Zoom as we do with Tim and Sarah. No it is so much better than that This Father is available 24/7. When do you talk to Him? We teach you to have a quiet time, once a day, but that is not an end in itself, it is just a point of stopping and waiting on God. There should be other times of day when you pray. When you read the news and it disturbs you, when you see beauty and enjoy it. A good meal, do you thank your heavenly father for it or just the cook? What about that phone call you had, did you pray over it?

Remember God is your Father.

You are secure.

You are loved.

Secondly **you have a secure future**. You are an heir. That means you are going to receive everything that God has. The difference is that God does not have to die for you to inherit, Jesus is the one who died so that you could inherit. And he promised that a

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because of his death you inherit a special place in
heaven just for you.

Thirdly, **The Holy Spirit is described as the
advance deposit on your inheritance.** Ephesians 1:
13-14 says

*¹³ And you also were included in Christ when you
heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.
Having 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.*

You have heaven living in you!

And you are going to need it because being a Son or
daughter of God has its challenges.

*The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that
we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—
heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided
we suffer with him in order that we may also be
glorified with him.*

This is a sober reminder that Children of God suffer
the just as Jesus did. He expressed God's love and
care and he was hated for it. The charge that led to
his death was 'Are you the Son of God?' You say
that to most people on this earth and they will tell you
are mad or dangerous. And if you are dangerous you
will be persecuted. That is the way of the world.
But there is more!

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Lets read **1Peter 2:9-10 page 1218** in the church Bibles

⁹ *But you are a chosen people,
a royal priesthood,
a holy nation,
a people belonging to God, that you may declare the
praises of him who called you out of darkness into his
wonderful light.*

¹⁰ *Once you were not a people, but now you are the
people of God;
once you had not received mercy, but now you have
received mercy.*

That's 6 things that you are because you are saved through grace by faith.

The first three

⁹ *But you are a chosen people,
a royal priesthood,
a holy nation,*

They all identify you as the children of God.

Children are chosen either by conception or by adoption and **you are chosen.**

you are a royal priesthood, That places you in the key position as representatives of God in a fallen world. You are heaven's ambassador to Ruislip or Eastcote or wherever you live and work. You are here as local prayer warrior and witness to the love of God in Christ Jesus.

You are a holy nation, one way you witness to the truth of your sonship is in your love for other Christians.

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In John 13:34-35, Jesus said:

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

We must live together in fellowship with Jesus and with each other. We are to be set apart – which is what the word ‘holy’ means from the rest of the world even while living with non-believers and working among them. We, if are in Christ, will be different.

The fourth is an explanation of the first three.

a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

The fifth and sixth

¹⁰ ***Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God;***

once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

These refer back to the story and prophecy of Hosea who acted out his prophecy. His wife had three children out of wedlock God told him to call them ‘Jezreel’, Lo-Ruhamah ‘not received mercy’ and Lo-Ammi ‘not my people’. Then God told Hosea to win back his wife, He actually bought her out of slavery. In Hosea 2:1 we read *“Say of your brothers, ‘My people,’ and of your sisters, ‘My loved one.’* and in Hosea 2:23 we read

I will show my love to the one I called ‘Not my loved one.’

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I will say to those called 'Not my people,' 'You are my people';
and they will say, 'You are my God.'"

We all have sinned but been bought back by Jesus death of the cross. We who were enemies have been adopted a Sons and daughters. We who were without hope have received mercy.

Today I want you to walk humbly but tall, because you are a Son or daughter of the living God. Not because you have earned the right but because Jesus offered it to you freely. **Enjoy** the fact that you are a son or daughter of the living God. **Live** as one who responds to your loving Father by reflecting his character in all that you do. Let the Holy Spirit guide you into living out the heir that you are. **Look forward** to the certain fact that you have a place in heaven prepared for you, with your Father for ever. Go for it! Talk to your father, Let the Holy Spirit sustain you in the coming week.

If you have turned from your sin and believed the Good News of Jesus, you are a Son or Daughter of God and as Sons or daughters of God we are called to

- 1. Enjoy being a Child of God**
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