



“Dear Children, See! We are Children of God!”

1 John 3:1

Sunday | January 28th, 2018 | Pastor Patrick Bowler

CONSULT THE SCRIPTURES

1 John 3:1
John 1:1-13, 3:1-16
Galatians 3:24-4:7

(See also Rom. 8:12-29, Matt. 7:7-11, John 14:1-3, 18)

CONSULT THE SCHOLARS

[Russell Moore] “Whenever I told people I was working on a book on adoption, they’d often say something along the lines of, ‘Great. So, is the book about the doctrine of adoption or, you know, real adoption?’ That’s a hard question to answer because you can’t talk about the one without talking about the other..

Adoption is, on the one hand, gospel. In this, adoption tells us who we are as children of the Father. Adoption as gospel tells us about our identity, our inheritance, and our mission as sons of God. Adoption is also defined as mission. In this, adoption tells us our purpose in this age as the people of Christ. Missional adoption spurs us to join Christ in advocating for the helpless and abandoned.

As soon as you peer into the truth of the one aspect, you fall headlong into the truth of the other, and vice versa. That’s because it’s the way the gospel is. Jesus reconciles us to God and to each other. As we love God, we love our neighbor; as we love our neighbor, we love our God.. Without the theological aspect, the emphasis on adoption too easily is seen as mere charity. Without the missional aspect, the doctrine of adoption too easily is seen as a mere metaphor.

But adoption is contested, both in cosmic and missional aspects. The Scriptures tell us there are unseen beings in the air around us who would rather we not think about what it means to be who we are in Christ. These rulers of this age would rather we ignore both the eternal reality and the earthly icon of it. They would rather we find our

identity, our inheritance, and our mission according to what we can see and verify as ours—according to what the Bible calls ‘the flesh’—rather than according to the veiled rhythms of the Spirit of life. That’s why adoption isn’t charity—it’s war.”¹

DISCUSS

1. Read 1 John 3:1. John pauses again to make sure that amidst all the heavy exhortation in his letter, we do not miss the good news! Read this passage several times aloud together (maybe out of different translations) reflecting on what it says? What stands out? Is this difficult for you to believe? Why or why not?
2. (*Referring back at Genesis 1-3*) Pastor Patrick mentioned that Adam and Eve had everything they needed in the Garden: (1) A place to stay, (2) plenty of food, (3) love and companionship, (4) a good Father, (5) house rules. How did the fall (Gen. 3) affect these things?
3. Patrick quoted Russell Moore saying, “*The whole universe is now an orphanage.*”² What does the author mean?
4. (*Gal. 4:7, Rom. 8:14-16*) The term “Abba Father” is a personal, intimate title for a father (*a cultural equivalent would be “Daddy”*). God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts with this cry (*Gal. 4:7*); how does that make you *feel*? Do you struggle with that idea at all? Why or why not?
5. What immediate applications can be made in light of this text?

¹Russell Moore, *Adopted For Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2009), p. 17, 18.

²*Ibid.* p. 45