

**1. We're continuing to look at who we are in Christ.**

- A. We've seen how we are linked to his obedience and to his death.

**2. This week we are going to look at the wonderful thought of being a child of God**

- A. Because, I am in Christ, I am God's child. *The doctrine of Sonship.*
- B. This subject like all the others in this series, is so important for our victory, joy, and worship.
- C. I view all the theology/doctrine we've been studying – Justification – propitiation – Christ's shed blood  
As kindling that ignites in our heart – causing us to worship
- 1). That's why you want more in the study than something that makes you laugh – entertained  
You want truth that sticks – that changes you  
That causes you to see the majesty of God and Christ – that drives you to your knees in worship

**3. Today we stoke the flames of our heart with the kindling of "Sonship."**

**J.I. Packer – Knowing God on how important this doctrine is:** "You sum up the whole of New Testament teaching in a single phrase, if you speak of it as a revelation of the Fatherhood of the holy Creator. In the same way, you sum up the whole of New Testament religion if you describe it as the knowledge of God as one's holy Father.

"If you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God's child, and having God as his Father. If this is not the thought that prompts and controls his worship and prayers and his whole outlook on life, it means that he does not understand Christianity very well at all."

He also added this thought: "What is a Christian? The question can be answered in many ways, but the richest answer I know is that *a Christians is one who has God as Father*"

- A. I think the Apostle John would share Packer's excitement.

**1 John 3:1 (NIV)** How great is the love the Father has *lavished* on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! **(So great they used 2 exclamation points)**

- 1). Amen! That truth needs a few exclamation points.

**Thought:** This is a truth that should amaze every believer. I am a child of God! He is my Father!

- A. But, if that is true, why do so many Christians seem so unmoved by this?

**4. Why this truth doesn't amaze us like it should – two reasons**

**First: We allow the tyranny of the urgent to dominate us.**

- A. Rather than spending time dwelling on the deep truths of our faith, we end up concentrating only on the mundane things of life.
- 1). We go to work, pay bills, take care of a sick child or spouse.
- 2). When we finally get a moment, we think "I'm done! I'm tired! TV time!"

**Point:** Our life never gets deeper than the temporal plane.

- A. Rich truths of Christianity are never lingered over, to burst into flame to ignite our hearts.
- B. These truths are meant to affect us, but that will take some intentional living. Planning
- 1). Must decide priorities – what is too important to neglect – what must be given enough time
- a). This also means some things you enjoy doing – you'll have to cut back
- C. For the Christian – God must be first – that is the only way to Christian joy and victory
- 1). Anything placed above him is an idol – social media – TV – computer game...
- 2). Anything keeping you from him is an enemy to your soul
- D. We don't coast into intimacy with God – we coast away from Him and our source of joy
- 1). Closeness to God and joy are a fruit of intentional living

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**Second. These truths don't thrill us because we never hear the bad news about who we were.**

- A. The modern church is so concerned about being popular and looking cool.
    - 1). Do whatever it takes to bring the people in and keep them in.  
But, don't mention anything negative. Why? Because they might not come back.
  - B. We live in a church age where so few ever feel the gravity of who they were before salvation.
    - 1). The gospel that is proclaimed is so man centered – God saved you because you are precious
      - a). It's almost as if we are the hero – the gospel centers around us
      - b). I've heard the gospel proclaimed in ways that man is doing God a favor
  - C. The grace saturated, Christ exalting good news is reduced down to a needy God desperately reaching out to valuable men and women.
- Thought:** Because of that addiction to only the positive, we never hear the bad news of who we were.
- A. Why is that important? If I don't see who I was I will not be amazed by what I've become.
    - 1). I won't be amazed at the grace of God in my life that has saved a wretch like me.
  - B. This new – comfortable message steals that amazement, gratitude, and adoration God deserves
- Transition:** So who were we when God rescued us? Why is that rescue so amazing?
- A. Starting with John 8 we are going to take a journey into our dark past.

## II. WHO WE WERE BEFORE GOD RESCUED US

### First: We Were All Born into The Wrong Family – Turn to John 8:39

#### 1. Here Jesus is in another confrontation with the Jewish leaders.

- A. Jesus says something to them that is shocking

**Jn 8:39–47 (ESV)** They (religious leaders) answered him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus said to them, *“If you were Abraham’s children, you would be doing the works Abraham did,”* <sup>(40)</sup> but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. <sup>(41)</sup> *You are doing the works your father did.”* They said to him, “We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father—even God.” (cruel remark – Hey Jesus we’re not like you – where your mother had to hide out because she wasn’t married – we KNOW who are Father is – God) <sup>(42)</sup> Jesus said to them, *“If God were your Father, you would love me,* for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. <sup>(43)</sup> Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. <sup>(44)</sup> *you are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires.* He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. <sup>(45)</sup> But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. <sup>(46)</sup> Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? <sup>(47)</sup> *Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God.”*

- A. In this exchange, the Pharisees are claiming God is their father.
  - 1). Jesus rejects that and constructs a powerful case against them.
  - 2). He argues, because a child has the same nature as their father, there must be a family likeness.
    - a). In other words, a child will always imitate their father to some extent.
- B. On the basis of that evidence being missing - he can say  
“I know your Father is not God, because you don’t act anything like him. He sent me and he loves me, you won’t receive me and you hate me.”

#### 2. The shocking truth – the unbeliever has the wrong spiritual father

**Jn 8:44 (ESV)** You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires...

- A. You have the wrong spiritual father! How does he know that?
  - 1). They are acting like him. With him there is a family likeness.
    - a). The devil hates Jesus and they hate him.  
The devil is a liar and they are liars.  
The devil is a murderer and they want to kill him.

- B. Then he adds, if God were your Father, you'd listen to what he says.

**Jn 8:47 (ESV)** Whoever is of God hears the words of God. *The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God."*

**Jesus says two chapters later: Jn 10:27 (ESV)** My sheep *hear* my voice, and I know them, and they *follow* me.

- 1). If a person doesn't care what God says – and has no desire to follow him  
They lack evidence of being saved – regardless off hand raised, prayer prayed, aisle walked
- 2). In Jesus mind their spiritual condition is simple to diagnose
  - a). You don't listen to God –don't obey God – don't act like him = You don't know him

**Summary:** So, we were all born into the wrong family.

- A. Our spiritual father was God's greatest enemy.
- B. Our brothers and sisters hated God and his ways.

**Transition:** This leads us to the next point.

## Second: We Were All Born with The Wrong Nature

### 1. We were born with a nature that makes us an enemy of God.

**Ro 5:10 (ESV)** For if while we were *enemies* we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son...

- A. As enemies, we wanted nothing to do with God. We weren't interested in him or his ways.
  - 1). That wasn't just a passive indifference. Scripture says we were hostile - aggressive
  - 2). Remember that? I couldn't care less about God, until God got a little too close.
    - a). When I felt that sting of conscience, or wondered about my eternity.
    - b). When that thought I might be wrong with God entered into my mind. I became hostile.
      - 1a). I aggressively erected defenses to keep that divine invasion at bay.  
I told myself all those lies I clung to, that convinced me there couldn't be a God.
      - 2a). I rose up to protect my freedom and the sin I loved

**I was simply living this verse out: Ro 8:7 (ESV)** For the mind that is set on the flesh is *hostile to God*, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.

- A. There is that family likeness again. The devil is an enemy of God and is hostile towards him.
  - 1). Those who belong to him will act in the same way.

**Transition:** What do we have so far? Born into the wrong family with the wrong nature.

## Third: We Lived a Life of Continuous Sin (Turn to Eph. 2:1-3)

**Who we were: Eph 2:1–3 (ESV)** And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>(2)</sup> in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— <sup>(3)</sup> among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

### 1. That is the lifestyle of one with the *wrong spiritual father* – they follow him

**That is the lifestyle of one with the *wrong nature* – they live to gratify the flesh**

- A. Therefore the Scripture tells us the unbeliever is continuously storing up more and more wrath.  
**Ro 2:5 (ESV)** But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are *storing up wrath for yourself* on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.
- B. Controlled by a sinful nature – you continuously sin – breaking God's law
  - 1). Therefore - every day you're alive, you're in deeper trouble.
  - 2). Today there is more sin on the book than yesterday. Tomorrow there will be more than today.
  - 3). Every sinful word, deed, attitude will be recorded and all of it must be judged.
    - a). Not one sin will be overlooked on that day you stand before your holy judge.

**Transition:** Born into wrong family, with wrong nature, that caused us to sin continuously. One more.

#### Fourth: We Were All Waiting for That Day of Judgment on Death Row

**Turn:** Ga 3:22–23 (ESV) But the Scripture *imprisoned everything under sin*, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. <sup>(23)</sup> Now before faith came, *we were held captive under the law, imprisoned* until the coming faith would be revealed.

##### 1. The picture is of the guilty law breaker being held as a prisoner on death row

- A. They have broken God's law – are already sentenced

**Jn 3:18 (ESV)** Whoever believes in him is not condemned, *but whoever does not believe is condemned already*, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

- 1). They are just waiting their execution

**Ro 6:23 (ESV)** For the wages of sin is *death...*

**Question:** When we say “death” in this sense, what do we mean? What is the guilty sinner waiting for?

- A. Talking about that *“second death”* Jesus spoke of in Revelation 21.

- 1). That judicial sentencing that casts us away from God into hell, for all of eternity.

**Re 21:8 (ESV)** But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, *their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”*

**Point:** That was you and I wasn't it? Imprisoned under that sentence of death and judgment.

- A. There was nothing we could do to erase that record of sin that was against us

- 1). We looked into a future that was horrifying beyond anything we could imagine

- B. But God who is rich in mercy has done something

## II. WHAT GOD DID: GOD TO THE RESCUE

### 1. God was willing to judge his son in our place

- A. Let's try to paint a picture of what that means *from your prison cell on death row*.

- 1). You're in your cell hopelessly lost. Convicted and condemned. Awaiting execution

- B. As you sit there, you notice a few men walking towards your cell. One of them is Jesus.

- 1). He's hand-cuffed and being led towards that room you know the electric chair is in.

- 2). You're confused “What could he have done to deserve this? If anyone is innocent it's him!”

- C. Then you notice he's carrying a list of offenses. No big thing, all men being executed do that

- 1). Then you realize those aren't his sins, they're yours. Every one is there – not one is missing

- a). All the unkind words, the envy, sexual immorality, hatred, prejudice, drunkenness

- D. You watch as they lead him into that room and strap him into the chair.

- 1). They read off the list of your sins.

- a). He is silent. No pleading his innocence!” *He is willing to die for you.*

- 2). They flip the switch and you watch in horror as the voltage, violently convulses his body.

- a). Then silence, no movement. They check his pulse. He is dead!

- E. They put the body on a gurney and roll him past your cell to be buried

**The warden turns to you and says:** “Did you know that was the Judge's Son? The same judge that convicted you? The judge asked his son to pay the debt you owed because of your sins. Did you know his son willingly came to die so that you could live?”

- F. You're shocked and ask, “What good works must I do to receive this? Name it. I'll do it”

- 1). The answer: “There is nothing you can do but accept it as a gift. If you'll trust in the work of the judge's son on your behalf, you will be forgiven”

- G. You cry out “Yes! I believe his death was sufficient to pay the debt I owe. I believe he died so I could be forgiven.”
- 1). At that moment, your prison cell swings open and you walk out a free man.
  - 2). As you do, you glance down into that room where that electric chair sits.
    - a). That chair you had so many nightmares about. But now there is no more fear.
    - b). That instrument of death that once seemed so ugly, now takes on a strange beauty, as you think of the love that was demonstrated there.
- H. But that’s not all. It gets even more amazing
- 1). The judge who sentenced you, then rescued you, has also adopted you.
  - 2). He loves you and wants to take care of you. – He wants you to be a part of his family

**Transition:** Let’s look at being a child of God. This is amazing truth.

### III. WHO WE ARE: CHILDREN OF GOD

#### 1. Why is it important we become a child of God. (Need to work this through)

- A. We’ve seen we’re born with a sinful nature inherited from our first father Adam.
- 1). Our nature is that part of us that directs our will, desires, choices, and actions.
  - 2). That fallen nature loves sin and hates the ways of God.
  - 2). It has no desire to be intimate with God, in fact it is hostile towards him.
- B. If we’re going to live with God forever, that nature has to be changed.
- 1). If it wasn’t Heaven would be filled with people who wanted nothing to do with God.
  - a). Those who still wanted to do their own thing. Who still loved sin and hated him.
- C. *So God must forgive us, so we can be with him in heaven.*  
*And, he must change us so we will want to be with him in heaven.*
- 1). That all happens when we become His children – when we are “Born again.”

**Question:** What does “Born again” really mean? It’s deeper than a saying to put on a bumper sticker

- A. It means that you have truly experienced a second birth – that you have been born AGAIN
- 1). Means you’re as much a child of God, born to him  
as you are a child of your parents, born to them.
- B. One of the most amazing aspects of this new birth is that our nature is changed
- 2 Pe 1:3–4 (ESV)** His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, <sup>(4)</sup> by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, *so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature.*

**Question:** What does Peter mean when he says we are partakers of the divine nature?

- A. We have seen when a sinner believes on Jesus Christ they are “born again” = born of God
- 1). Just as a physical baby shares the nature of their parent = *that sinful nature*
  - 2). The born again believer, shares the divine nature of their new father = *that divine nature*
    - a). That new nature that is alive to God, desires God, and wants to obey God.
- B. That is why Jesus said, if God is your Father, you will have a family likeness.
- 1). Because you have been given his nature – you will imitate him to some degree

**Point:** So to be fit for heaven we must become a child of God – we must be born from above

- A. So that we have that new nature that loves God and wants to be with Him
- B. That is what happens when we are saved – we truly do become God’s child

**1 John 3:1 (NIV)** How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! **(Two exclamations!! I guess)**

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**Transition:** Let's close with a few thoughts on how being a child of God affects us

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## IV. HOW THIS TRUTH AFFECTS US

### 1. I can live without anxiety because my Father provides for me

**Php 4:19 (ESV)** And my God will supply *every need* of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

A. The promise is all inclusive. Every need

B. He has assumed the responsibility of taking care of his children.

1). Therefore we should not live in such anxiety. Seek him first, fall in love with him and rest.

**Mt 6:33 (ESV)** But *seek first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and *all these things* will be added to you.

C. God wants to provide for you. He has promised to do so

**Ro 8:32 (ESV)** He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

1). From greater to lesser – if he was willing to give his son – what won't he provide

D. Not only does God want to provide for you – he can provide for you.

1). My grandmother used to say, if I ever win the lottery, I will buy you a house.

a). She had the desire but no means. **BUT God has the desire and the means.**

**Ps 50:10 (ESV)** For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills.

**Thought:** Its exciting to walk with such a God. Who wants to provide and will in the most amazing ways.

Shortly after Dallas Seminary was founded in 1924, it came to the point of bankruptcy. All the creditors were going to foreclose at noon on a particular day. That morning, the founders of the school met in the president's office to pray that God would provide. In that prayer meeting was Harry Ironside. When it was his turn to pray, he prayed in his characteristically refreshing manner: "Lord, we know that the cattle on a thousand hills are thine. Please sell some of them and send us the money."

While they were praying, a tall Texan came into the business office and said, "I just sold two carloads of cattle in Fort Worth. I've been trying to make a business deal go through and it won't work, and I feel that God is compelling me to give this money to the Seminary. I don't know if you need it or not, but here's the check."

A secretary took the check and, knowing something of the financial seriousness of the hour, went to the door of the prayer meeting and timidly tapped. When she finally got a response, Dr. Lewis Chafer took the check out of her hand, and it was for the exact amount of the debt. When he looked at the signature, he recognized the name of the cattle rancher. Turning to Dr. Ironside, he said, "Harry, God sold the cattle."

### 2. I can live without fear because my Father protects me

**Mt 10:29–31 (ESV)** Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. <sup>(30)</sup> But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. <sup>(31)</sup> Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

A. I love this. God has my life in his hands. If a sparrow won't die apart from his will, how much more me?

1). God will protect me until it's time for me to go home. Until then, I believe I am indestructible.

**Psa 139:16 (NIV)** your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

**Job 14:5 (NLT)** You have decided the length of our lives. You know how many months we will live, and we are not given a minute longer.

2). God has the perfect day and the perfect way for me to go.

a). I can do all I can to safeguard my precious little life

1a). Never take a risk and it won't extend my time one second – that time is recorded

B. This frees me to live life fully.



- 1). Let him worry about all those pesky details like when and how I die – that’s his problem

### 3. I can live in victory over discouragement because my Father encourages me

**Ps 10:17 (NIV)** You hear, O LORD, the desire of the afflicted; *you encourage them*, and you listen to their cry,

- A. He is the lifter of our head. We get down then we recover. Why? He encourages us.
  - 1). He comes and gives us strength.
  - 2). We go prayer beat up emotionally and come out encouraged and comforted. Again and again.
- B. He has so many ways to encourage and comfort
  - 1). He whispers to our hearts in prayer. He opens up a passage that speaks to us.  
He sends a brother and sister with an encouraging word.
- C. Trust him for this. When you’re down – be honest  
“Father I need encouragement. You said you’re the God of all comfort. You said, you’re the lifter of our heads. I need this right now. Lift my head Lord.” Haven’t you found he will?

**Thought:** He’s put those scriptures there so we will go to him when we need comfort and encouragement

- A. Take advantage of what he wants to do – you have someone to talk to – to be honest with
  - 1). God loves being your Father – and loves taking care of you – there is no reluctance there

### 4. I can live with a sense of security because my Father disciplines me

**Heb 12:10 (ESV)** For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness.

- A. I have a sense of security – because God won’t let me wander off for good
  - 1). He will do what it takes to turn me around – he will make it as hard as necessary
  - 2). I remember I was so afraid of leaving him as a new believer  
I would pray – God do whatever it takes to turn me around if I wander off
    - a). That is exactly what he will do – what he did with David – and the prodigal son

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## IV. I WANT HIM TO BE MY FATHER: HOW?

### 1. By faith

**Jn 3:16 (ESV)** “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

- A. Are you willing to admit you’re a sinner – are you willing to turn from those sins and turn to Him
  - 1). Trusting in Him alone for your salvation
  - 2). Crying out to him to save you – He will and God will become your father