

## THE PROOF AND PRIVILEGES OF BEING A CHILD OF GOD

Happy Father's Day once again to all you fathers! I'm going to start out this morning with a question: "Have you ever thought you knew the words of a song, but later found out you didn't have them right?"

My guess is that that has happened to pretty much all of us. So—just to see if I'm the only one who had them wrong in **this particular** song—you tell me what the next word is: "In my own little corner, in my own little...." What's the next word? I always thought it was "**world**"—but it is actually "**chair!**"

*"In my own little corner, in my own little chair, I can be whatever I want to be."*

That song was written back in 1957 by Oscar Hammerstein II; the music was written by Richard Rodgers (not to be confused with the former Green Bay Packers Richard Rodgers). I'm sure "Rodgers and Hammerstein" rings a bell to the "over-50" crowd. And maybe you know that this song was sung by Cinderella! But what you may not know is that this song is making a come-back—so much so that there is a push for it to **become our new "National Anthem."**

I'm **being facetious**, of course, but is anyone else bothered by this new "movement"—for lack of a better word—that says, "In my own little corner, in my own little chair, I can be whatever I want to be—and **you have to agree that's what I am**—and call me that—even if it's **not true**?!"

As a student in **some area school districts**, young people can **self-identify** as a cat...or dog...or even a turtle—and you have to "pretend" along with them. Litter pans and special food have to be provided by the school. Who knows; maybe they're even putting **fire hydrants** in the bathrooms now, too!

But I do know this—if you don't **play along with them** and **affirm them in their lies**, you are "bullying" them! How sad! You are **considered evil** if you speak the truth to them! I heard one mom passionately say at a Necedah School Board meeting something to the effect that "You are setting these young people up for failure by pretending along with them! They'll never get a job pretending to be a dog or a cat!"

I must admit, though, that some people have had some fun with the absurdity of all this. I had a friend I worked with in Madison one day ask me, "Hey, Meinke, do you think the Madison police would arrest a monkey?" 'Why do you ask,' I replied. "Because I want to self-identify as a monkey and jump up and down on the hoods of cars in a large parking lot!"

Here's another one that I thought was quite clever. Get in an argument with someone and tell them **they have to agree with you** because you self-identify as the **smartest person** in the world!

In spite of how sad—and/or absurd—some of the things I just mentioned are, **nothing is as bad** as self-identifying as a child of God—when you **really aren't** a child of God!

--You can self-identify as a dog or a cat for a while, but my guess is that you'd **snap out of it** if your parents start putting "roadkill" on your plate for supper!

--You can make a conscious choice to ignore your God-given private parts and pretend to be something you aren't, but later choose to tell yourself the truth and give your dress and high heels to a biological woman!

--But...if you self-identify **as a child of God** when you really aren't, there are **eternal** consequences. You can't change your mind and choose differently **once you die and meet God**—your fate will be sealed! You will hear from the lips of Jesus Himself: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire..." (**Mt 25:41**).

I don't believe I'm going out on a limb to suggest that Satan is behind the "self-identify" movement because it is based on believing lies—and Satan is the father of lies! Satan doesn't just **lie for the sake of lying**, though—he has goals for your life! Let me say that again—Satan has a goal **for your life!**

--If you really **aren't a child of God**, Satan wants you to **self-identify as a** child of God anyway!

--And if you **truly are a child of God**, Satan wants you to **doubt that you really are!**

So this morning—rather than preach a message about how us fathers can become better fathers—I want to focus on **God being our Father**. Please take your Bibles and turn to Galatians 4 and follow along as I read vs 1-7. We are going to be focusing primarily on verses 6-7 and this thought:

*The Proof and Privileges of Being a Child of God*

Look again at verse 4-5.

First, let's consider... **1. The possibility of becoming a son**

We see that in the end of vs 5 "that we **might receive** the adoption of sons."

Much could be said about verses 4 and 5, but the main point is this: God sent His Son Jesus—to come to earth in the form of man—to pay the penalty for our sins—so that we could become His children!

--It is a **historical fact** that Jesus came

--And it is a **theological truth** that He came to **redeem us**. To redeem means to **purchase our freedom** from the penalty of our sin. **How** did Jesus do that? **Rev 1:5b** "Unto Him that loved us, and **washed us from our sins in His own blood,**"

--But even though it is a **historical fact** that Jesus came—and even though it is a **truth declared by God** that Jesus died to save us from our sin—**most people do not go to heaven!** Jesus Himself said so in **Mt 7:13-14** "Enter ye in at the strait [narrow] gate: for **wide is the gate**, and **broad is the way**, that leadeth to **destruction**, and **many there be which go in** thereat: <sup>14</sup> Because strait [narrow] is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and **few there be** that find it."

You can't interpret this any other way than this: More people **are hell-bound** than heaven-bound! So **how can that be? If it** is a historical fact that Jesus came to earth and died—and it is declared by God that Jesus died in our place to **rescue us from hell**—why are more people hell-bound than heaven-bound?

**Why** the discrepancy? **Where** is the disconnect?

Because adoption needs to **be received!** We see that in the end of vs 5 "that we might **receive** the adoption of sons." How do you **receive** adoption? By receiving **God's Son!**

God sent His Son, Jesus—and Jesus died—but you need to **receive Jesus** for yourself!

**John 1:12** "But as many as **received Him** [Jesus], to them gave He [God] power [the right] **to become the sons of God**, even to them that believe on His [Jesus's] name:"

What happens when you **receive** Jesus? When you **receive** Jesus, you possess Him—you **have** Him! And when you **have Jesus**, you **have eternal life!**

**I John 5:12** "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

Pretty simple: **Receive Jesus** and you have eternal life—**right now**—and are heaven bound!

**Fail to receive** Jesus—either by **simply ignoring** Him or openly refusing Him—and you won't have life and are **hell-bound**. **John 5:40** gives what I believe are some of the saddest words Jesus ever spoke: "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."

So let me ask you: Has there been a time in your life when you came to Jesus in repentance and faith? Have you transferred your trust **from yourself**—and your good works—to Jesus and Jesus only?

--If you've done that, you've **been adopted**—and you are a son (or daughter) of God!

--If you've not done that, you are **not adopted**—and you are not a child of God!

Next, let's consider... **2. The present position of sonship**

Vs 6 "And because ye **are** sons..." Isn't that a wonderful thought?

Because **you are**—right now—sons!

Let that sink in! If you **have received Jesus**—and are trusting Him and Him only for the forgiveness of your sins—you are **right now** a child of God!

You are not on probation to **become** a son of God—you are a son of God **right now!** That is your **present position**. It is not **probationary** adoption—and it is not **temporary** adoption. It is a **present** and **permanent** adoption—and a present and permanent sonship.

**I John 3:2** "Beloved, **now** are we the sons of God,"

**II Cor 5:17** "Therefore if any man be **in Christ**, **he is** [currently, right now] a new creature [creation]:"

Now vs 7 "Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but **a son....**" Here it is again! Not a **future** son—a current, present, right-now—and forever—son!

But what does Paul mean when he says, "thou art no more a servant"? Aren't we supposed to serve God?

Of course, we are to serve God! Hebrews 12:28 “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, **whereby we may serve God acceptably** with reverence and godly fear.”

**Because** we are sons, we are to serve. But...we do not **serve to become a son**—and we do not serve to **remain** a son! If you think you have to **serve God to stay** in God’s family, you do not understand your present position as a son!

But **how do we know** we are a child of God? Paul goes on to give us... **3. The proof of sonship**

Notice again vs 6 “And because ye are sons, **God hath sent forth the Spirit** of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” God proves you are His son—He confirms that you belong to God and are His child—by giving you the Spirit of His Son. It doesn’t say He **might** do it; it says **He has—already!** “God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts!

**Who** is the Spirit of His Son? The Holy Spirit, right?

**When** did God send forth the Spirit of Jesus into your hearts? When you trusted Jesus as your Savior!

**What** did the Holy Spirit do in Jesus the Son?

--Jesus served God through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 10:38 “How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth **with the Holy Ghost** and with power: **who went about doing good**, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him.”

--Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit. Luke 4:1 “And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was **led by the Spirit** into the wilderness,”

--Jesus was raised from the dead by the Holy Spirit. Rom 8:11 “But if the Spirit of Him that **raised up Jesus from the dead** dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead **shall also quicken your mortal bodies** by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.”

**What** is the Holy Spirit **going to do in us** if we are God’s children?

The same things, right? Enable us to serve Him...and lead us...and someday raise us from the dead!

The Holy Spirit also **gives us both the desire and ability** to do that which pleases God.

Phil 2:13 “For it is **God which worketh in you** both to will and to do of His good pleasure.”

And the Holy Spirit **will also produce within us the fruit of the Spirit** as found in Gal 5:22-23 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, <sup>23</sup> Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”

On top of that, the Holy Spirit is the One—according to this verse—who **cries out from inside** of us these tender, precious words: Abba—meaning “Daddy” and Father! “Cry” here does not mean “weep;” it means “call out aloud or speak with a loud voice.” **Here** the Holy Spirit is the One who calls out; in Romans 8:15, **we are the ones** who call out “Abba, Father.” “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, **whereby we cry**, Abba, Father.”

**What’s the difference** between the **Holy Spirit** calling out—and **us** calling out? Not really any difference, other than this—we can’t truly call God our Father if we are not born again! And part of being born again is having the HS dwelling inside of us. And the HS is the one who assures our hearts that we belong to God. **Rom 8:16** “The Spirit itself [Himself] beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:”

So...let me ask: Is the Holy Spirit inside of you? Do you have a desire in your heart—in your inner most being—to please God? Do you love Him? Are you bothered when you sin against Him?

The Lord knoweth them that are His—and you should know whether or not you are His, too!

Next, let’s consider... **4. The privileges of sonship**

What are the privileges of being a son—or daughter—of God? Way too many to cover in one point of a sermon! Here are just a few:

--We know from Romans 8:38-39 that **nothing will separate us from the love** of the Father

--We know from Hebrews 13:5 that nothing will cause the Father **to leave us or forsake us**

--We know from Matthew 6 that the Father will **provide for our needs**

--And we know from vs 7 in this passage that we are an **heir of God!** What does that mean?

Way more than we can comprehend! How can we *truly imagine* an inheritance from the most *loving*... and most *wealthy*...and *wisest* Father in the universe?

Not only that, but Rom 8:17 says we are *joint-heirs with Christ*—meaning that *what Jesus inherits*, we will inherit too! 1 Peter 1:4 describes our inheritance like this: “To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,”

Our inheritance will not decay...it is untainted—meaning perfect—and it is eternal!

Lastly, I want to consider... **5. Some practical applications because of our sonship**

First, let’s think about... A. How we relate to one another within the family

1) Question: If God sent *His* Son—so that we could become *a son of His*—what is our relationship *to Jesus*?

He is our Brother, right? We often don’t think of it in those terms, but that is in reality the new relationship we have! Heb 2:11 states that Jesus is *not ashamed* to call us brethren.

But what about us? *Are we ashamed* to associate ourselves with Him?

2) Along the same lines, when we become a child of God, we also become the brother—or sister—of *other believers*. Do we care for our brothers and sisters in Christ as much as we do our flesh and blood siblings? We should—and sometimes even more so! 1 Cor 12:25 says, “...that the members should have the same care one for another.” How is your relationship with fellow believers?

Another area of application is this: B. How we represent the family name

I believe I can say with 100% certainty that *none of you* said to your children when they were growing up: “We don’t do that kind of thing because we are Meinke’s!”

How do I know *you* didn’t say that? Because *you aren’t* Meinke’s!

But there are some current Meinke’s here—and some former ones! And—to the best of my knowledge—I don’t recall ever saying to any of my children, “*We don’t do that* because we are Meinke’s!”

But I did—hopefully more than once—say this: “We shouldn’t do this thing or that thing *because we belong to God*. We are in His family—and we represent Him!”

What about us? How well do we represent our Father?

--In a *physical family*, you don’t *get to decide* if you represent the family name—you *represent* it whether you want to or not! Your choice is *how you represent* your father and family name—not *if you* do!

--The same is true for our *spiritual family*! If you are in the family of God, you *represent* the family of God—and God your Heavenly Father! I’m done preaching, now—and am going to meddlin’!

1) Is the way you *talk* a good reflection on the family of God? Believers can be very good at *swearing politely*!

What do I mean by that? Glad you asked! If I say, “What the ‘heck’”—I don’t like saying that even for illustration purposes—I really want to say, “What the h-e-double hockey sticks, right?”

Nothing wrong with saying “hell”—if you are talking about a place—but should we use the *slang word for hell* if we are not talking about hell? Warned you I was going to meddlin’!

2) Not only *how* we talk, but *what* we talk about! Young people—especially you *young men*—*what* do you talk about when it is just “you and the boys” and no adults are around? If Jesus was physically standing there, would you *talk about the same things*? Just because you can’t see God doesn’t mean He is not there!

3) One more. What about how *we dress*? Do we wear certain things to *purposely attract the attention* of the opposite sex? If so, how are we different from those who are not in God’s family?

And let’s not forget, ladies, that men are more “sight-driven” than you are! What you wear can affect how men think—either in a good way or a bad way!

I’m done meddlin’—for now—and almost done preaching for today! But I want to end where I started. Please don’t miss this! Do not think for a moment that what *you do gets* you into heaven! Don’t fall into the trap of believing that if you “self-identify” as a child of God...and are careful about how you talk—and how you dress—that that gets you into God’s family! *It doesn’t!* Self-identifying as something *you aren’t* does not make it so! You need to *have the Son*; you need to *have Jesus* as your Savior! Is He?

If not, why not receive Jesus **today?** What a memorable Father's Day would be yours if today God actually became your heavenly Father!

So what would God have us do in light of His Word this morning?

1. First, make sure you are a child of God! Don't put off asking Jesus to be your Savior if He is not your Savior right now. Though knowest not what a day may bring forth! My niece—and her husband—did not wake up Wednesday morning thinking there were going to get a phone call that Alex's father was dead!
2. Second—if you are indeed a child of God—dwell on the truth that right now you are a child of God. It is your present position—enjoy it and embrace it. Don't let Satan make you think you are on probation!
3. Lastly, honestly evaluate how you represent the family of God and your heavenly Father. God wants you to grow in holiness and humility—and He often times "steps on our toes" to do that!