

Meet Your Psychiatrist: He Sets You Free

by Warren Wiersbe

The spirit of adoption gives us liberty and freedom from the bondage of sin and fear, allowing us to enjoy our status as adult sons of God.

Duration: 37:26

Scripture: Luke 15:11-24, Romans 8:15, Romans 8:21, Galatians 4:4-5, Ephesians 1:7, Colossians 2:9-10

Topics: "Spiritual Freedom", "Adoption In Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher uses the analogy of a billionaire and his son to explain the concept of adoption in the Christian faith. He explains that as long as the son is a child, he is no different from a servant and cannot access his father's wealth. Similarly, before accepting Christ, humans are in bondage to the law and unable to fully experience the freedom and blessings of God. However, through the spirit of adoption, believers are redeemed from the penalty and power of sin, and one day their bodies will also be redeemed from the presence of sin. The preacher encourages listeners to persevere in their faith and not give up, despite the suffering and corruption in the world.

Transcript

The one word that you hear no matter where you go these days, either in this country or overseas, is the word freedom. We have subjugated nations that are crying out for freedom, and we've seen the birth of more new nations in the past ten years than in the previous one hundred years. And of course races are crying out for freedom, and classes are crying out for freedom.

And there's a great deal of agitation these days for freedom. I don't doubt that there are nations that need freedom desperately. While we meet here tonight singing and praying and studying the word, some of our brethren are in prison.

Some of our brothers and sisters in Christ are behind various kinds of political curtains and don't have the kind of liberty that we have. Let's never forget that. I don't doubt that races and classes need freedom, but the greatest need is for personal freedom.

I don't care what kind of legislation you may pass, you will never liberate a person from the real bondage apart from Jesus Christ. That sounds like rather prosaic preaching, but it's true. We become so accustomed to the agitation around us, we forget that the greatest bondage is within us, and there are people here tonight who are in bondage.

And for this reason, I want to talk with you about the spirit of adoption. We've been looking at the names of the Holy Spirit, and we've been trying to find out what they mean to us personally. I think one of the most misunderstood titles of the Holy Spirit is this one, the spirit of adoption.

You see, God made us to be free. God never made us to be slaves. The reason people are slaves to passion and pride and things and pleasure is simply because of sin.

God never made man to be in bondage. God made man to be free. And he made man's freedom to come from God.

It's wonderful that we have the political freedom that we have. Next year we'll be celebrating the bicentennial of our American liberty. When you walk into the archives and you see those great documents, it stops your heart just a little bit, and a tear comes to your eye, and you give thanks to God for the liberty that you have.

God made us to have liberty. But the liberty that he made us to have is not license. God did not give us any kind of liberty that leads to anarchy.

God gave us liberty to be what he wants us to be and to fulfill the purposes he has for us. And the people that I meet who are doing their own thing, doing what they want to do, come whatever the Bible says, are really the ones who are in bondage. The ones who really are free are the ones who are living in the will of God.

So let's think tonight about the spirit of adoption. Adoption has to do with the liberty that we have in Christ, and the Holy Spirit of God is the one who gives us this liberty. Now, we're looking at two passages of Scripture to discover the different kinds of bondage from which we are set free.

The Holy Spirit of adoption helps to set us free from three different kinds of bondage. Turn with me to Romans chapter 8, and we're beginning in verse 14. Romans 8.14 Notice now verse 15, contrast two spirits.

The spirit of bondage again to fear, and the spirit of adoption. Now, the spirit of bondage again to fear describes the unsaved person. Paul is saying to these people that he's writing to, when you were saved, you didn't receive a spirit of bondage.

You received a spirit of adoption. When you were saved, you did not receive a spirit that made you afraid. You received a spirit that said, Abba, Father.

There's a direct contrast here between the spirit of adoption and the spirit of bondage again to fear. You see, that little phrase, the spirit of bondage, is a description of the experience of the unsaved person when he is under conviction. He's not talking about the bondage of the law.

He's talking about what I hope you went through before you came to trust Christ as your Savior. Now, at this point, we're going to get in just a little bit of difficulty, not because what I say is difficult to say, but it's difficult to take. We have today a very easy way of getting saved.

And yet when you read the scriptures, you discover that when the Holy Spirit of God works on the heart of the unsaved person, there is a thing called conviction. There is even a thing called fear. Now, I don't doubt that everybody's emotional makeup is different, just as everybody's mental and spiritual makeup is

different.

There are some people who are extremely sensitive emotionally. Some people are not quite that way. They're rather stoical, rather cold.

Paul is not talking about something emotional. Paul is talking about an inward experience of conviction that comes to the person when he realizes how he stands before God. When Peter preached at Pentecost and told them that they had crucified their Messiah, but he had been raised from the dead and now he was alive up in heaven, they cried out and said, men and brethren, what shall we do? They didn't say, well, that's an interesting speech and I may think about that.

There was a spirit of conviction. When the earthquake came in Philippi and that jailer was about to commit suicide and Paul said, do thyself no harm, we're all here, a spirit of conviction hit this man. He came in trembling and he said, sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.

Now, I'm not saying that in order to get saved you have to work up a frenzy. I'm not saying you have to pray up an emotional state. All I'm saying is this.

In the word of God, there can be no conversion without conviction. In the word of God, a person has to know he's a sinner before he wants a Savior. And I think that some of our approaches to evangelism today are not really evangelism, they're salesmanship.

We've got to be very careful. When a person realizes he needs Jesus, he's a lost sinner. He doesn't have to die to be lost.

He's lost right now. And then he has turned away from the only Savior. And if he refuses the Lord Jesus Christ, it means hell.

And when people realize this, and the Holy Spirit of God brings to bear the word of God on their hearts, there comes that sense of conviction. Now, we used to see more of this. I don't think we see so much of it anymore.

Once again, I'm not saying you classify people and demand a certain response. You can counterfeit a response. I am saying that there needs to be a proper fear of God and a sense of bondage to sin.

Now, when the person realizes he's lost and he needs to be saved, then he puts his faith in Jesus Christ. The same Savior whose righteousness convicts him also changes him. And so he says, I'm a lost sinner.

I'm in bondage. I'm afraid. I don't want to go on living without Christ, and I surely can't die without Christ.

And he puts his faith in Jesus Christ. Then that Holy Spirit of conviction becomes the Holy Spirit of adoption. Now, a beautiful thing takes place, and this is what it is.

When you trust Jesus Christ as your Savior, the Holy Spirit immediately, immediately comes into your life. You don't have to roll on the floor. You don't have to climb the wall.

When you trust Jesus Christ as your Savior, the Holy Spirit immediately comes into your life, and he witnesses. Now, he's been convicting, but now he witnesses to your spirit down inside and says you are a child of God. He says Abba, which is the Aramaic word Papa.

Now, if I stood in this pulpit next Sunday morning and I was going to give the pastoral prayer and I said, Oh, heavenly Papa, you would shake a little bit and say our pastor is getting a little bit indelicate in the pulpit. He's getting a little bit too familiar with God, and perhaps rightly so. But in my heart, when I was saved, the Holy Spirit said Abba, Papa, Father.

Dr. Culbertson said this to me a number of years ago, and I've really never forgotten it. He said, have you ever noticed that after you lead someone to Jesus Christ, then you say to them, why don't you thank the Lord now for what he's done for you? I often do this. You lead someone to the Lord, you say, now pray and ask the Lord to save you.

And they come and they say, Lord, come into my heart and save me. And the Lord does, and you show them from the Word. You say, now why don't you thank him? They'll bow their head and almost invariably the next word will not be God or Lord.

It'll be Father. I have seen this so many times. Father.

Why? Because the Holy Spirit of adoption has come in. Now at this point, we better explain what adoption is. I've used the word and I've not explained it.

You don't get into God's family by adoption. You get into God's family by regeneration. Re- again, generation, birth, born again.

The only way to get into God's family is to be born. Now, adoption in our country means, here's a couple that wants a child. And so they call up the family service agency and say, we want a child.

They say, fine, we'll put your name on the list. Then when a child is available, they go down, they fall in love with it. Everybody loves a baby.

They sign the papers, they go to court, it's authorized, the child is theirs. That's not how you get into God's family. You're born into God's family.

But the instant you are born into God's family, and this excites me so much, you are adopted. Adoption in the Bible is not what we do here, it's what they did over there in Rome. In the Bible, the word adoption means placing as an adult son.

That's what it means. How do you get into God's family? You're born through faith in Jesus Christ. Two parents, the Word of God and the Spirit of God.

Jesus said you've got to be born of the Spirit. Peter said you've got to be born of the Word. And so when the sinner believes the Word and trusts the Savior, the Spirit of God takes the Word of God and regenerates him, gives him new life.

And the instant you're born into God's family, God adopts you. That means he takes you and places you as an adult son. Even though your state may be that of a spiritual baby, your standing is that of an adult son.

You see, we're facing an interesting problem these days in America. It's one of the most crucial problems we've ever faced. When is a person dead? And at the other end of the spectrum, when is a person alive and a real person before he's born? You've been noticing in the news lately about this doctor who was indicted for murder, for performing a routine abortion.

When does an embryo or a fetus become a person? That's an interesting question. And you know what we're discovering? We're discovering that unborn children have legal rights. Unborn children can collect Social Security.

Unborn children can inherit. Because when you're born into this world, not only are you born with life, but you're born with legal standing. You can't do anything you want to to a baby and get away with it.

This is true of God's children. When you're born into God's family, you're born with life. That's regeneration.

And you're born with legal standing. You have a standing before God. That's adoption.

You don't get into God's family by adoption. The instant you are born into God's family, He said, I'm going to treat you from now on like an adult son. To put it very simply, regeneration means entering the family.

Adoption means enjoying the family. Now, I may be wrong. We've had four babies come into our family.

I may be wrong, but I kind of get the impression babies don't enjoy being born. They are ejected from warmth and protection and a world all their own, where they're safe from so many of the things we have to face. And then suddenly they come out into this world and they're spanked and they begin to breathe and begin to live out in this world.

And they're hungry and nobody cares about it. And they're wet and all sorts of things. I should think if we could remember our first year of life, we'd have nightmares.

I believe this. And the baby smiles. It may not be a smile.

It may be gas on his stomach. You don't know. And I should think that a little baby--in fact, I'm convinced of this-- that a little baby, though it feels the love and the warmth of a family, those first several months are rather difficult, getting adjusted to this great big world that we're in.

That baby has a legal standing, but he can't enjoy the family. He has to wait and wait and wait and wait before he really enjoys the family. But it's not this way when you're saved.

If somebody tonight walked into town or hall, counseled with one of our counselors, gave his heart to Jesus Christ, the instant he was born into the family, he could begin enjoying the family because God would give him the standing of an adult. Now, you don't treat a baby like an adult. You can't.

Sometimes you have to treat adults like babies, but you don't treat a baby like an adult. You'd kill him. He couldn't take it.

But in God's family, though our state may be that of just being saved two weeks, our standing is the same. Now, you know what that means? That means that nobody in God's family is closer to God than anybody else when it comes to their privileges. You say, well, I've been saved six months, and she's been saved 20 years.

She doesn't have any more than you do. She's been at it longer. But you as an adult child in God's family, an adult son in God's family, can draw upon all of God's resources one second after you're born.

You don't have to wait. That's why Jesus died. Jesus wrote your name in the will, and then he died so that the will would go into effect.

Then he arose again and went to heaven that he might probate the will and make sure you get all you're supposed to get. That's adoption. Adoption is your standing in God's family as an adult, even though you may only have been saved a short time.

And he delivers us from the bondage of fear. Before you're saved, you ought to be afraid. I don't know how unsaved people walk down the streets in Chicago.

I'd be afraid, too. If I didn't know that I was going to heaven the instant I die, I'd be afraid to walk down the street. I'd be afraid to get in an elevated train or an automobile on the expressway.

I'd almost be afraid to put your head in the pillow at night. Unsaved people ought to be afraid. They ought to be in bondage to fear because they're in bondage to sin.

But when you trust Jesus Christ, the spirit of adoption comes in and says, Abba, Father. It's no longer Judge, it's Father. So he delivers us from the bondage to fear.

Now we turn to Galatians. Keep a marker in Romans 8 because we're going to come back there. There's a second kind of bondage from which we are delivered by the spirit of adoption.

Galatians 4. Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he, the heir, be Lord of all, but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so, we Jews, when we were children in the infancy of the nation, were in bondage under the elements of the world. But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem, that means to set free, purchase them, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

And because ye are sons, God has sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father, wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son. And if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. Now, this passage doesn't really need much explanation because it's very simple, very plain.

Here is a billionaire in the city of Chicago, and he has a son who is four or five years old. And one day that son is going to have all of his father's wealth. The billionaire has some servants in his home.

Paul is saying that that son, as long as he is a child, is no different from a servant. He can't draw on that wealth. He's just a kid.

They have to have tutors and governors and people to watch over him. He can't take care of himself. Now, when he gets to his maturity, then the lawyer will say, now, you've just inherited a \$40 million trust fund.

It's all yours. But he's got to wait until his maturity. Now, if this were true spiritually, we'd be in a mess.

If you were born into God's family and had to wait for 18 years before you could pray or draw upon the infinite resources of God, we'd never make it. So God settles this and says, I'm going to adopt you and make you an adult son. You can start drawing upon everything.

Now, Paul's been talking here about the law. In Galatians 3 and 4, he's explaining why God gave the law. He said God never gave the law to save anybody.

God gave the law to tell people they needed to be saved. The law was given as a schoolmaster, as a tutor, to bring us to Christ. The purpose of the Old Testament law wasn't to save anybody.

It was to prepare the way for Christ. When children are little children, they have to have law. When we had four little children running around our home, we had law.

Don't go near the stairway. We never touch the stove. You never play with the plugs in the wall.

But when children get older, you don't have to have that. The outside discipline becomes inside discipline, and they've grown up, and you can trust them. You can have them wash the dishes.

You're not afraid they're going to cut themselves with a knife. You can let them use the tools in the basement because they've grown up. Paul said when the nation was in its infancy, they had to have law to keep them under control.

But when the fullness of the time was come, Jesus came, and when he died on the cross, he redeemed us from the law. Nobody today is under that law. Now, the unsaved person is judged by that law, but the believer does not live under that law.

He lives by the spirit of adoption. Watch it. As a little baby or a child, you have to have rules and regulations.

This is why in schools and in churches, we have to have some rules and regulations because people are at different levels. It'd be wonderful if everybody in our Christian schools and everybody in our churches was at the same mature level, but they're not. And because they're not, some of them have to be under some rules.

And if you do it for one, you have to do it for all. So the mature ones just say, Well, I don't need that, but thank God I'm big enough to do it. And the younger ones say, Well, I wish I didn't have to obey this rule.

Now, Paul says, look, spiritually speaking, you're an adult son. You're not a servant, you're a son. He contrasts a servant under law with a son in the family.

Now, follow the contrast. A servant is not a member of the family. A son is.

And so when you come to God, you come as a member of the family, not an outsider. A servant does not have the same nature as his master. The servant might be Greek and the master be Roman.

The son has the same nature as the father. We have the Holy Spirit within. We say Abba, Father.

The servant obeys in fear. If he doesn't obey, he could even be killed. The son doesn't obey in fear.

He obeys in love. He has the Holy Spirit of adoption down inside. Who says Abba, Father.

I have used this illustration before. Permit me to use it again because it fits here. When Johnny is a little boy and his neighbor says to him, Hey, let's do this.

Johnny says, Oh no, I don't want to do that because my father may hurt me. When Johnny gets to be older and somebody says, Hey, let's do this. Johnny says, No, I'm not going to do that.

I may hurt my father. That's the difference. A servant or a little child obeys in fear.

A son obeys in love. He wants to please the father's heart. A servant is in bondage.

He has no time of his own. He has no life of his own. The son is free.

The son doesn't have to punch a clock. He's free. The servant is poor.

Don't get the idea that these slaves back in this day made big wages. They didn't have any unions supporting them or anybody else. The servant was poor.

The son is rich. Now what Paul is saying is this. When you live under law, you make yourself a poor, fearful, bound servant.

When you move into grace, the spirit of adoption, you enter into richness and freedom and sonship. Alas, far too many Christians are living like servants instead of living like sons. Oh, it's tragic.

The bondage to law. There's a beautiful illustration of this in one of the parables of the Lord Jesus. Remember the prodigal son? The prodigal son ran away from home, left home, took all of his goods, wasted it.

Now he's ended up in poverty. He had no food. In bondage, being told what to do by a master.

In misery, perishing with hunger. And one day he says, you know, my father is rich. Here I sit in this pig pen watching the price of pork go down.

And my father is rich. In fact, the hired servants of my father are in better condition than I am. My father's rich.

I'm going to go home. I'm going to go home and become one of my father's servants. And so the boy goes home.

And you remember how the father saw him coming, ran out, threw his arms around him and kissed him. The boy said, Father, I'm not worthy to be a son. Make me a servant.

Father said, that's wrong. You can never be a servant because you're a son. Now let's give him the best robe and put it on him.

Let's put a ring in his finger and shoes in his feet and food in his stomach and some joy. Let's have a party. You see, so many times you and I come and say, oh God, I've made such a mess of things.

Make me one of your servants. God says, please don't talk like that. My son didn't die to make you a servant.

He died to make you a son. You're an adult son in my family. Now let me cleanse you and let me forgive you and let me feed you.

You can work for me as a loving son but not as a laboring servant. Don't you find you respond much more to love than you do to force? When you love somebody, you don't mind doing the dishes. When you love somebody, you don't mind washing the car.

You don't mind mowing the lawn. You don't mind carrying the burden. When you love somebody, if somebody says, do it, do it, do it, who are you to tell me what to do? You see how wise God is? God gives

us the spirit of adoption.

And the Holy Spirit says, you are not a baby. You're an adult son. Now draw upon your wealth.

You're not under law as a servant. You're not in bondage to law. You've been set free in love.

Now live like it. There's a third bondage that he delivers us from. He delivers us from the bondage of fear.

He delivers us from the bondage to law. Back to Romans chapter 8. He delivers us from the bondage of corruption. Verse 18, Romans 8, For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us, not just to us, but in us, for the earnest expectation of the creation waited for the manifestation of the sons of God.

All of creation is waiting for Jesus to come back. It's more than some Christians are doing. For the creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly.

The trees didn't disobey God. The flowers didn't disobey God. Men did.

Not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the, this next phrase is staggering, into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

And not only they, but ourselves also who have the firstfruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, that is, the redemption of our body. You know, it's such a beautiful thing. The Holy Spirit of God is the spirit of adoption.

When I was saved, he came and witnessed to my spirit that I'm a child of God. My spirit has been redeemed. It can't be any more redeemed than it is right now.

My spirit is redeemed. My soul is being redeemed. That's my mind and my heart and my will.

That's the process he talks about in Galatians chapter 4. As the Holy Spirit of God enables me to draw upon my resources in Christ, my soul is being redeemed. My body hasn't been redeemed yet. My, every Sunday and every Wednesday when I'm out visiting, I meet our people and say, Oh, Pastor, pray for me.

My back is giving me trouble again. My feet are giving me trouble again. These are very real things.

These are nothing to laugh about. And we feel it. He says here that the Holy Spirit of adoption keeps saying to us, Don't give up.

Don't quit. You're suffering. Don't quit.

You're suffering. Don't stop. Don't give up.

Because I'm the spirit of adoption. And one of these days, the adoption is going to be complete when my spirit, soul, and body will be completely redeemed. My spirit has been redeemed from the penalty of sin.

I'm no longer in the bondage to fear. My soul is being redeemed from the power of sin. I'm no longer in bondage to the law.

And one day, my body is going to be redeemed from the very presence of sin and will no longer be a part of the bondage of corruption. Now, do you want one word to characterize humanity today? It's the word corruption. All flesh is as grass.

Whatever man does just decays. You ever notice that? The heroes of yesterday are the forgotten people of today. Corruption.

We're feeling it. We see it. Peter talks about the corruption that's in the world through lust.

Now, these bodies of ours are in bondage to corruption. My body is dying. Your body is dying.

But one of these days, God's going to complete the adoption. That which began on May 12, 1945, when the Holy Spirit of Adoption came in and made me an adult son in God's family and said, now start drawing upon your wealth, what He began back in 1945, one of these days He's going to complete. The interesting thing is this.

Back in the Roman days, when a man adopted a son, there were two ceremonies, a private ceremony and a public ceremony. The private ceremony, he took the boy and went to the officials and signed the papers and paid the price and purchased him. The public ceremony was after that, sometime later when they announced it to everybody.

That's what God did. On May 12, 1945, I had a private ceremony. The Holy Spirit came down and said, on the spirit of adoption, you can now look up to God and say, Father.

But nobody knew that. I gave witness to the fact sometime later that God had saved me. But all of creation is waiting for you and me to get glorified bodies.

And one of these days when Jesus comes back, we're going to have the public manifestation of what the Lord's done for us. And the adoption will be complete and we'll have glorified bodies. Now, one word and we quit.

God doesn't say, you're saved. I'm going to put you down here and you work real hard to get up there. God doesn't say that.

You know what God says? You're saved. I'm going to put you up here. Now live like it.

That's the whole motive for Christian living in the Bible. God doesn't say, now you live right or I'll throw you out. No, can't do that.

Did you know that a Roman father, when he adopted a boy, could not put him out? He could put his own son out, but not an adopted one. You were in. God doesn't say, you be good or I'll throw you out.

God doesn't say, now work your way up here. God says, hey, you're in my family. I'm going to put you up here.

Now live up to it. When little Princess Victoria of England was studying her lessons one day, she saw the chart of all the kings and queens of England, saw her name on there. Up until then, she did not know she was slated to be the next queen of England.

And she said to her tutor, what is this? And they said, well, she said, you are one day going to be the queen of England. And she began to cry. And she straightened up and dried her tears and she looked at her tutor and she said, I will be good.

Now that's what it's all about. God says, you're adopted. You're not a little baby in a manger or a cradle.

You're an adult son. I'm treating you like an adult son. All the privileges, all the responsibilities, all the wealth.

You are already an heir. You don't have to grow into it. It's there.

Just start drawing upon it. He says, now, here's your high position. Live up to it.

And I hope each one of us will say, Father, I will be good. I will live up to the high position you've given me. This is the meaning of adoption.

It means that you are an heir of God. Right now. Just start drawing upon the riches of His grace and the riches of His glory and the riches of His mercy and the riches of His wisdom and all the wealth that you have in Jesus, for in Him is all the fullness of God and we draw from Him everything that we need.

Do you believe that? I think you do. Now, let's behave it. I will be good.

Let's pray. Gracious Father, we're thankful that our standing in Jesus Christ is one of wealth and liberty. Oh, how precious it is to know that we've been set free from the bondage of fear and the bondage of law and the bondage of corruption.

And one of these days, all of this is going to be seen. We look forward to that day when Jesus shall return and we shall experience the completion of our adoption. Now, help us to be led of the Holy Spirit.

Help us to walk in the Spirit that we might experience these adult privileges and live like mature people. I pray if there be any here who don't know our Savior, that they'll come tonight out of the bondage of fear and the bondage of sin into the glorious liberty that we have in Christ. For we pray it in Jesus' name, Amen.

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