

Devotions – May 31 – June 6, 2020

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We Are Adopted

Sunday, May 31, 2020

Text: Galatians 4:7

And you never again have to wonder who your father is – you’ve been adopted by God and are therefore an “heir of God through Christ”.

I announce that I am going to bed by saying to my husband, “Read to me, Jimmy!” He responds by either reading a devotional or excerpts from his grandmother’s journal. A recent devotional included the verse above, to which I responded with childlike glee, “That means we’re on the A-List!” While the A-Listers most referenced in the news are actors and actresses at the top of their field – a movie star with a strong track record of box office successes – an “A-List Celebrity” is *any* person with an admired or desirable social status. It can be a fickle list, off which people can easily fall. While you and I may not be on the who’s who list of invitees to grand galas and posh soirees, we are on **The** A-List! All of us, each of us, *adopted* by the Creator of the Universe, permanently, just as we are! Know whose you are!

Let us Pray: *Oh, Creator, Adopter, Father,*

Thanks so much for creating us and guaranteeing that we will always be yours because Christ took the blame for anything and everything that could possibly harm our relationship with you, that would ever dare to distance us in any way. Thank you that we don’t have to be outstanding in our field, that marked by the cross of Christ and sealed by the Holy Spirit, we are permanently on your A-List, all because of Christ paying the price and you being the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Holy Spirit, thank you for helping me embrace my unique and special place on God’s A-List, his list of his adopted kids. Amen and Amen.



Monday, June 1, 2020

Text: Ephesians 1:5

How blessed is God! And what a blessing he is! He’s the Father of our Master, Jesus Christ, and takes us to the high places of blessing in him. Long before he laid down earth’s

foundations, he had us in mind, had settled on us as the focus of his love, to be made whole and holy by his love. Long, long ago he decided to adopt us into his family through Jesus Christ. (What pleasure he took in planning this!) He wanted us to enter into the celebration of his lavish gift-giving by the hand of his beloved Son.

A coworker and his wife who have two birth children, adopted his drug-addicted brother's two children. While these parents love all four kiddos unconditionally, the adoption was not full of delight. The adopted children have drug-related behavioral and learning challenges that can be overwhelming and borderline dangerous. Understandably this adoptive dad had anger about brother's and his wife's irresponsibility and child neglect – an anger that has healed some. The State just approached these adoptive parents and asked if they would want four more children of this brother. With a heavy heart this couple declined; eight kids would be too many.

Today's verse states that God took pleasure in planning our adoption! Yesterday's devotion mentioned an A-List. Some of us may say, "Oh, I'm on the A-List alright. But it's where 'A' stands for ANGRY or ABUSED." The good news is, that through Christ we are not insufficient; we are not damaged. We are not like an adopted dog from the pound that can be returned if the adopter changes his mind if the pup proves to be too difficult. God never sees us as undesirable, in the way, unlovable, or undeserving.

Let us Pray: *Oh, my Heavenly Forever Father, That is so cool that even before you created the earth, you took pleasure in planning to adopt each of us! Thank you for making us totally, undeniably adoptable through Jesus Christ's obedience to your will. Holy Spirit, thank you for helping us to really know that God wants us and likes having us around! Help us to share this wonderful truth with our adoptive brothers and sisters, especially those who may think they didn't make the cut or got kicked out of the family. In Jesus' name, Amen.*



Tuesday, June 2, 2020

Text: Galatians 4:7

You can tell for sure that you are now fully adopted as his own children because God sent the Spirit of his Son into our lives crying out, "Papa! Father!" Doesn't that privilege of intimate conversation with God make it plain that you are not a slave, but a child? And if you are a child, you're also an heir, with complete access to the inheritance.

My friend, John, shared recently that when his father died, John's brother called with the news that their father's will included the words, "My son, John, is dead to me and therefore no part of

this will.” That spun this disowned, outcast son into a downward spiral of severe substance abuse, an intervention, three months in a detox center, and a return to destructive choices and behavior. He recollected that part of the surprise and dismay was that he was the only one of the three offspring to have a job, a marriage and children and had figured that counted for something with his father. Despite John’s financial wealth, he became blessing-bankrupt; he sorely needed and still longs for the dear and important father-blessing.

You may have noticed that today’s Bible verse is the same one in the devotional two days ago, though from a different translation today. I bring it up again because the Greek word for adoption to sonship is a legal term referring to the *full legal* standing of an adopted male heir in Roman culture. And with that comes the Father’s full blessing. Each of us yearns for the Father’s blessing – some, like John, more than others.

Let us Pray: *Papa! Father!*

Thank you that you are Father to the fatherless, not from a distance, not in name only, but intimately and to the fullest extent! Thank you, Jesus, that I am yours and you are mine. Holy Spirit, I appreciate that you help me to receive my full birthright, and to magnify God by sharing my Father-blessing with my brothers and sisters, helping them to receive their full sonship and daughtership. In Jesus’ name, Amen.



Wednesday, June 3, 2020

Text: Romans 9:4

...the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption to sonship; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises.

An organization in Amarillo, Texas helps people with unplanned pregnancies to bring them to full term and to either raise the child or consent to the child being adopted. The organization also provides counsel to people who have aborted their babies and are dealing with great unrest in their hearts, sometimes decades later. The counseling includes the option for the mother and/or father to have a funeral for the aborted baby. If the mother has a feeling that her baby was a girl or a boy, the funeral service recognizes that. What a comfort to a mother to know that the only Perfect Parent adopted her baby, a baby who is in the holy care of God himself. Counselors take the acknowledgement of the infant experiencing eternal life one step further. They suggest to the parents that upon arrival in heaven, each parent will be greeted eagerly and joyfully by their child, without condemnation or judgement. That is peace that passes understanding.

Let us Pray: *God, we praise you for being the only perfect parent! We praise your outpouring of love to us directly from you, as well to us through others. Jesus! You! Because you lived here, you understand acceptance, Joseph adopting you as his own son, but also rejection, and even dying at the hands of others. And... you understand the we-can-barely-imagine life after death and its completeness! Thank you, Holy Spirit, for reminding us that nothing – not our choices or something that happened to us that wasn't our choice -- can separate any of your children from you. In Jesus' name, Amen.*



Thursday, June 4, 2020

Text: Romans 8:15

The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.”

I love flowers: growing them, arranging them, giving them, receiving them. Several years ago, my dear friend, Cindy, requested a flower arrangement. It was for a funeral. It was for her mother's funeral. But her mother was still breathing, living in another state, carrying on her life. Yet Cindy was having her mother's funeral to gain closure over the conclusion of much counseling: that this mother-daughter relationship had been unresponsive all of Cindy's life and showed no sign of a pulse. Recalling a couple of failure-to-thrive babies I had witnessed, I wondered if this was a failure-to-thrive mom. Though Cindy had a decent relationship with her father, her mother's rejection was crushing.

But Cindy knows this: God is her adoptive Father with a love so complete, so overflowing with unquestioned acceptance and approval, it fills *every* void to overflowing! She knows Jesus nurtures childlike wonder in her heart. Her motherly love and tenderness bubble over to her children and grandchildren as they did many years ago when she was a childcare worker. It was at a daycare center that trained her exceedingly well in how to both talk with and listen to children. Now, as a nurse, her specialty is compassion – part of God's outpouring into his adopted daughter!

Let us Pray: *Oh Daddy, Daddy, Daddy,*

When we feel abandoned, invisible, voiceless, and inadequate, you love us into the reality that we are valuable, appreciated, and are becoming who you created us to be! Thank you, Jesus, that because of what you did for us, we can be confident and secure in knowing that we are each a child of Jehovah Roi, the One Who Sees Me. Holy Spirit, we rest in you, as you fill us with authentic enjoyment in knowing our true identity. In Jesus' name, Amen.



Friday, June 5, 2020

Text: Romans 8:22-24

We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? --

Today I think of two young men who experienced great loss during their childhoods. One lost his birth mother in India, was adopted by missionaries there who both died in a car accident, was adopted by the missionaries' relatives in the U.S., and that mom died. He is very bright, studied at an Ivy League school and... struggles. The other young man – birth mother died, dad remarried and they had a daughter, the second mom died, dad remarried and they had two sons, then at a relatively young age dad died. This young man is also very bright, but dropped deeply into the illegal drug culture, surfacing every once in a great while. It's too much! A kid is not equipped for this magnitude of loss. Is there any hope for them? Yes, only one. Adoption. But hasn't that been the problem for these guys? Adoption after adoption? Loss after loss? Surely their hope has been dashed. And if this Holy adoption referenced in other devotions this week is so great, why didn't God spare them all these losses? I do not know. When, how can they catch a break and get some semblance of healing? I do not know. I do not understand it, I don't like it. But I do know that God has purpose for them or they would not still be here. Won't you pray for them? Today. When you can't sleep at night. When you are on hold on the phone. Pray.

Let us Pray: *Oh, Holy Father,*

Our hearts ache for the innocent who experience such unfathomable loss and pain. God, you said you would lift the brokenhearted. Right now, God, we lift Rajesh and Mr. Roberts up, up, up into your mighty care. God, thank you that you, the Creator of the Universe, can turn these hopeless messes into messages of hope. Thank you, Jesus, that one touch of your healing can boost these young gentlemen out of the mire and into the full sonship to which they are rightful heirs. Holy Spirit, even though we don't see a way, we are grateful that you are buoying these men who are so heavily burdened. You are giving them rest and a new, soulful vitality that will enable them to trust God as their forever Holy Father, hoping with a solid certainty for the unseen. In Jesus' name, Amen



Saturday, June 6, 2020

Text: John 14:18-20

I will not leave you orphaned. I'm coming back. In just a little while the world will no longer see me, but you're going to see me because I am alive and you're about to come alive. At that moment you will know absolutely that I'm in my Father, and you're in me, and I'm in you.

One day, standing in line at Target, I noticed a woman's tattoo. It was clearly a heart intertwined with a triangle. I commented that her tattoo was very pretty and asked her what it meant. I was so glad I asked! With a joyful warmth she explained that it is the symbol of adoption, and that both she and her sister have the same tattoo since they are each adopted. She went on to explain that each of the three sides of the triangle signifies the adoption triad: birth family, adoptive family, and adoptee. The heart symbolizes the love present in an open adoption relationship. I loved seeing her eagerness to share what, to her, was clearly a blessing. She knew it absolutely. Today's verse speaks of another love-rooted triad of which "...you can know absolutely..." And that is this: "...I'm in my Father, and you're in me, and I'm in you."

Let us Pray: *Oh, God, you are so good! What could have seemed like loss, rejection, and instability in this young lady's life was instead abundance, inclusion, and security that she shares with a loving confidence. Thank you that we can be confident that you do not reject or abandon us, plus you have plenty of room for us in your house! Jesus, thank you for your patience with us when we fear we might somehow lose contact with you. Holy Spirit, Spirit of Truth, we are so glad God provided another friend for us, and that you live in us, helping us to be God's hands and more. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

