

**Preaching Christ....  
...by the power of the Holy Spirit  
...and the authority of the Word of God**

**Date:** 08 January 2023  
**Services:** *Across the diocese*  
**Series:** Every Spiritual blessing  
**Passage:** Ephesians 1:4c-6  
**Title:** Adopted  
**Outline:**

1. Lovingly Adopted
2. Into God
3. Because of his Will
4. To Praise His Grace

For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love <sup>5</sup> he <sup>[b]</sup> predestined us for adoption to sonship <sup>[c]</sup> through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— <sup>6</sup> to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

**INTRO**

- I quite enjoy staged musical productions... and some time ago I enjoyed a really fantastic (though amateur) production of Annie
- It's the story of an orphan girl who tries to find her parents but {spoiler alert} ends up being adopted by a millionaire father.
- It seems like a dream adoption. From being poorly treated in an orphanage to being the adopted daughter of a rich, kind, man.
- It was surprising and uplifting...
- However, today, we will see and explore an adoption that is so much greater and better than this one.
- Specifically, we will see how we, as followers of Jesus, have been adopted by the living, creator God, to be his sons and daughters.
- So, here's where we are headed today.
- We have been:
  - Lovingly adopted
  - Into God
  - Because of his will
  - To Praise His grace
- But first let me recap what we saw last week.
  - We saw that we have been chosen by God before the foundations of creation.

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- And we explored the implications of this fact.
- We saw how amazing it was that God chose anyone
- We saw how there is no conflict between God calling the shots and choosing us – and yet - we being called upon to repent and believe the gospel – for us to take responsibility for our actions and decisions. ////
- But we ultimately saw, how we were chosen not based on anything that we had done to impress God...but because of his amazing grace
- Therefore, our response here on earth is to praise to – both by our lips and in our lives.
- So with all of this in mind, we come to vv4-6
- While choosing us, “In love, he predestined for adoption to sonship”
- Our first point:
  - “Lovingly adopted”

**LOVINGLY ADOPTED**

- Now when we talk about the doctrines of election and predestination, it’s easy to have a cold view of God.
- That is, that God was just mechanically choosing who he wants and not choosing who he doesn’t what.
  - In fact that’s one of the criticisms that people have about these doctrines!
- However, these verses make it clear, that this isn’t what God is like.
- So, let’s see, how did he predestin us?
- End of V4....“In Love!”
- That’s **how** God chose us and **why** he chose us.
- It all comes from God’s **love** for us
- Now, our human experience of love is so ‘other’ from God’s love that we can only have a glimpse of the amazing love of God.
  - For example, we love someone because there’s something we like about them. OR because there’s something ‘lovable’ about them.
  - However, God’s love is unconditional.
  - He doesn’t love us because there’s anything ‘lovable’ about us but because he is the ultimate lover!
- So, it’s out of this unconditional, unchanging, amazing love that he predestined us.
  - Now, the term ‘predestination’ means that God has pre-determined the destination or fate of someone in advance

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- Just think of what we explored last week.
- In love, God PREDESTINED us, or CHOSE us, for the purposes of adoption.
  - Look with me at V5
  - “In love he predestined us to be adopted for sonship through Jesus Christ”
- That is, he chose us to be adopted. Lovingly adopted.
- He chose us to be his children...to be part of his family.
- as Christians, we are sons and daughters of God! ///
- Once we were following Satan – ruler of this world... but now – we’ve been plucked from our destiny of death – and adopted by God for life! ...to be alive!
- And since we have been adopted, we have a:
  - New, loving Father,
  - New huge family
  - New living identity
  - We are brothers and sisters in Christ – we are the body of Christ!
- Now in Roman culture (in which Paul is writing), adoption wasn’t an unusual thing.
- It was often the case that when a high-profile husband and wife couldn’t conceive, they would adopt a child.
- And any adopted child would have to receive the same privileges and share in the same social status as the family.
- Now, having been made **God’s** by adoption and grace, **WE** experience the same love and relationship to our Heavenly Father as did Jesus! We have made heirs with Christ!
  - *it’s less so these days, but some time ago, you were defined by your family.*
  - *You received your identity from your family name*
  - *I’m a Calder – and that means that I have certain family traits... as do now my children...*
  - *We have a name, a reputation...*
- but... our supreme identity – is that we are children of the one, true, living God! This is what defines us – makes us!
- Because we are children of God, as Christians,
  - We obey the Father
  - We listen to our Father
  - We talk to our Father
  - We love like our Father

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- We trust our Father
- We love our Christian brothers and sisters
- We suffer, we mourn, we rejoice, we give thanks with our brothers and sisters!
- We represent the family of Christ when we go out into the world
- As we live as God's children, we should be finding our identity in being children of God! - in that close relationship with God
- That's who we are!
- Which brings us to our second point this morning
  - Lovingly Adopted
  - Into God

**INTO GOD**

- Have a look with me at v5
  - "In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ"
- so our adoption only comes to us through Jesus and our union with him...
- It is only because of Jesus that we can call God "Father"!
  
- BUT we are adopted through Jesus, **INTO or FOR** the Father,
- literally, the Greek text says, "He has predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ **TO HIMSELF.**"
- Now – that phrase – to smooth out translations – is not found in all versions today – but it is quite precious...
- Because what it says is that when we are adopted, it is for the purpose of our Father and that we are drawn into our Father.
- Because of our adoption by our heavenly Father, we are drawn **INTO** him. We are drawn **INTO** his arms and we are safe. We are safe from sin and death.
- And **nothing** can take that away
- **Nothing** can take our adoption away
- **Nothing** can take our heavenly citizenship away
- .... we are God's children adopted by him; drawn **into** him; **safe in him.**

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- Now, I know that there will be people here who might struggle with this image of the Fatherhood of God, because they didn't have a great relationship with their father or family.
- But I want to reassure you, that any of our experiences of our fathers, whether bad or good, cannot compare with the Fatherhood of God.
  - God's fatherly love is perfect
  - He is slow to anger
  - He is kind
  - He is faithful to his word
  - And because he is faithful to his word, we can be assured that he will never leave us, he will never send us back to be children of death
- He is a loving Father, who draws us close into a perfect, intimate relationship with him. ///
- SO - we have been:
  - Lovingly Adopted
  - Into God

**BECAUSE OF HIS WILL**

- Look with me at the middle of v5:
  - We have been lovingly adopted "In accordance with his pleasure and will"
  - if you build a model plane exactly to the instructions, you have made it, 'in accordance with' the instructions
- We have been adopted exactly to God's will which also his pleasure. And we can't skip over that!
- So in love he adopted us, but also with **pleasure!**
- The word here for pleasure refers to the joy that forms in your gut, that causes you to make decisions and actions
  - You may have bought Christmas presents because of the joy of giving over Christmas
  - You may have given a generous donation because of the pleasure in your heart
- Likewise, God has chosen us out of joy and pleasure!
- Did you know, that the magnificent, immortal, creator, God took pleasure in adopting you?
  - God wasn't cold and calculating when he adopted us, but joyful and loving.
- Because he is a loving God who delights in giving his children amazing gifts!
  - It's his will to do so,

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- It's by his will that we are adopted
- And it is to his pleasure to adopt people like you and me to be his children
- So we have been:
  - Lovingly adopted
  - Into God
  - By his Will
- And then our final point – we end where we ended last week
  - To Praise his Grace

**TO PRAISE HIS GRACE**

- Because of all of these blessings by God, our only response can be praise!
  - V6 (look with me)
  - We have been lovingly adopted, *“To the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the one he loves”*
- Everything that we receive from God is a grace. That is, a free gift that we have done nothing to deserve.
- We do nothing to deserve God's Love
- We do nothing to deserve our adoption
- We do nothing to deserve his Fatherhood
- So all of these things come to us only by and through God's grace...His **“Glorious Grace”**
  - When something is glorious, it's amazing or beautiful or spectacular.
- God's grace here in V6 is described as glorious...and appropriately so!
  - The glory of God in the Old Testament is frequently described in metaphorical pictures...
  - like a brilliant light and coming with trumpets and fanfare, because no words can quite capture how glorious God is as it is so magnificent
  - Likewise nothing can really capture how glorious his grace is!
  - It's phenomenal, spectacular, fantastic, splendid, magnificent, mind-blowing and unimaginable.

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- The fact that in love, God adopted us, - recall that it was while we were still sinners, Christ died for us - is almost too good to be true,
- but friends, it is good. And it is true.
- And the only response that we can have to this...is to praise God and to worship him.
  - That worship which is NOT just coming to church on Sunday, but praising him with our whole lives!
- That worship which is offering ourselves to God as living sacrifices!
- About us all together, as God's children:
  - worshipping Him with our time
  - worshipping Him with our energy
  - worshipping Him with our finances
  - worshipping Him with our talents
  - worshipping Him with our humility
  - worshipping Him with our love
  - worshipping our heavenly Father with everything that we have because that is all we can do... in response to his freely given, amazing, glorious grace.

**CONCLUSION**

- Well, let's bring this all together.
- Brothers and sisters, we have been lovingly adopted by God....
- .... lovingly adopted from sin and death, to be children of God.
  - We have a new identity and a new relationship with our heavenly, loving Father
- We have a heavenly Father who had adopted us to be his, and drawn us to himself
  - He rescued us, drew us close into himself, and nothing can now separate us or take our adoption away.
- and it gave God great pleasure to adopt us.
  - He is a good Father, who delights in giving good things to his children
- And so our only response is to give him the praise, honour and glory that he deserves.
  - .... not only with our lips but with our whole entire lives
- *In love <sup>5</sup> he<sup>[b]</sup> predestined us for adoption to sonship<sup>[d]</sup> through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— <sup>6</sup> to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.*