

## Sons and Daughters of God Ephesians 1:5, 6

### Introduction

C.S. Lewis once gave this striking picture of the church in the world:

**"Enemy occupied territory - that is what the world is. Christianity is the story of how the rightful king has landed, you might say landed in disguise, and is calling us all to take part in a great campaign of sabotage." [Mere Christianity]**

Of course what Lewis meant by that is – the world as it stands in the current time period – is a world in rebellion against God.

Satan is called the god of this world / this age by the Apostle Paul

When Jesus came on the scene – He began in a sense – a subversive movement – the gospel of the kingdom of God - - - a movement in which God rescues / delivers sinners thru the cross of Calvary / proclamation of the message of redemption thru the blood of Christ

This movement has been taking shape over the course of church history – for some 2000 years

Jesus Himself made the prediction when much of the known world was under Roman paganism / Greek mythology

**Matt. 16:18 - 'I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it.'**

I.e. – this is something that is going to happen.

It is part of the eternal plan of God.

William Carey is oftentimes recognized as the father of modern missions. He labored to take the gospel to India in the early 1800s

4 years after he came to India – he was confronted by a Brahman [Hindu religious leader]. Carey had preached a message on Acts 14:16 / 17:30 – that said that God formerly allowed all men everywhere to go their own way, but now He commands all men everywhere to repent.

**Acts 14:16, 17 - 'In the generations gone by He permitted all the nations to go their own ways; and yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons.'**

**Acts 17:30 - 'Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent.'**

The Brahman responded, 'Indeed I think God ought to repent for not sending the gospel sooner to us.'

What do you say to that?

Carey knew his theology

His response: 'To this I replied, suppose a kingdom had been long overrun by the enemies of its true king, and He though possessed of sufficient power to conquer them, should yet allow them to prevail, and establish themselves as much as they could desire. Would not the valor and wisdom of that king be far more evident in overcoming them in this state, than it would have been if He had opposed them at first, and prevented their entering the country?'

'Thus by the diffusion of gospel light, the wisdom, power, and grace of God will be more evident in overcoming such deep rooted idolatries, and in destroying all that darkness and vice which have so universally prevailed in this country, than they would have been if all had not been permitted to walk in their own ways for so many ages past.' [The Pleasures of God, p. 64]

i.e. – God's glory is shown by His bringing deliverance to people - - - who are living in darkness – sometimes where cultures have developed over hundreds [even thousands] of years – enmeshed in deep-rooted [and self-chosen] patterns of idolatry and sin - - - and God comes in His grace and makes them into a people holy and blameless before Him

That is essentially what the church is

Carey: This simply magnifies His grace / and His power / wisdom

Paul's letter to the Ephesians gives us the grand sweep of the biblical storyline

God is in the process of making a people who can stand before Him holy and without blame – washed clean from their sins / delivered from their bondage to iniquity

His attention upon them began before the foundation of the world

This attention now manifests itself in something called adoption

## I. Adoption - v. 5

Paul is in the process of listing a number of the blessings which God has poured out upon His people – the church

He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places – v. 3

The blessing we come to now is that of adoption

In salvation – the Christian becomes an adopted child brought into the family of God – given all the rights and privileges of full sonship

### I John 3:1-3

Our adoption is a grand expression of God's love for us

‘See how great a love . . .’

God loved us while we were yet sinners – sent His Son to die for our sins

Before – we were of a different family – sons of disobedience / children of wrath

### Eph. 2:1-3

But now – if you are a Christian – you are a child of God

John 1:12 - 'as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.'

This is something God is doing [He has a program] - by His will He brings us into His family

He wanted us to be part of His family

J. I. Packer: '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. For everything that Christ taught, everything that makes the New Testament new, and better than the Old, everything that is distinctively Christian as opposed to merely Jewish, is summed up in the knowledge of the Fatherhood of God. "Father" is the Christian name for God.'

The fact that we – sinful / rebellious creatures - - - can be made new / forgiven - - - reconciled to God thru the cross of Calvary - - - and then brought into God's family is an astounding truth

There are a number of Christian truths that are related to this principle of adoption

Because of adoption - we have a new family / new rights / new privileges / new responsibilities

In adoption – we gain a family likeness [partakers of the divine nature]

II Peter 1:3, 4 - 'seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us . . . For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature.'

When earthly parents adopt – they can share many things with their adopted children – [earthly possessions / family relations / vacations / heirlooms] but they can't share genetic likeness

God does – His aim is to make us look like Jesus

Part of God's nature is holiness

He gives us of the Holy Spirit to dwell within – [to convict of sin / to guide / etc.]

We also find

\*\*\* Sonship involves discipline – or training

Heb. 12:5-11

Part of being in God's family is this element of discipline

God wants us to share in His holiness now

Discipline refers to the training and education of a child

Earthly fathers discipline their children – to teach them right and wrong / good behavior / obedience / etc.

God does the same thing with His children – we can expect it

C.S. Lewis argues that this should affect how we view life in this world [provide perspective]

Ultimately – we are in training for holiness

C.S. Lewis: 'imagine a set of people all living in the same building. Half of them think it is a hotel, the other half think it is a prison. Those who think it a hotel might regard it as quite intolerable, and those who thought it was a prison might decide that it was really surprisingly comfortable.'

Lewis: 'if you think of this world as a place intended simply for our happiness, you find it quite intolerable; think of it as a place of training and correction and it's not so bad.'

Now – this life is neither a prison or a hotel – for the believer  
But – what is it?

One thing it is – it's a household – with God as our Father – and He is training us for holiness

God doesn't discipline unbelievers – He lets them reap the fruit of their sin – but He only disciplines those who are His children – [it is evidence of His love for us] - - - that we would share in this amazing thing called holiness

In adoption – we have an inheritance / place to go after we die

Jesus said, 'In My Father's house are many dwelling places – I go to prepare a place for you.'

The Father's house is our house [you have a key]

Richard Coekin: 'when we arrive in heaven, God will welcome us, and we can imagine Him saying something like this: "I am so glad to welcome you into my home at last - for I chose to save you for my Son before I made the world; I sent my Son to die for you on the cross; I arranged history to ensure your birth and steer your life; I brought someone to explain the gospel to you and opened your eyes to recognize Jesus as your Savior and Lord; I carried you when you were weak and held on to you when you tried to run away; and now finally, I can welcome you into my home.'"

Adoption – is one of the truly stunning privileges of believers

## II. The Praise of His Glory - v. 6

As we work our way thru this incredible statement of all the blessings that are ours in Christ – two biblical principles emerge:

- Jesus Christ is the ground of every good that comes to man
- The glory of God is the ultimate goal of all things

Every blessing that comes to us – that passes from God to man – ultimately comes to us thru Jesus Christ

If not for the cross of Calvary – we would have none of these things – no adoption / no redemption / no Holy Spirit / no Father's house

Jesus is the ground of every good that comes to man

The glory of God is the ultimate goal of all things

All of this will abound to the praise of the glory of His grace

God has taken rebel sinners who spurned His laws / defied His commands - - - and made them heirs / children of God / holy and blameless

The salvation of sinners reveals God to be a loving / saving / grace showing God

MLJ: 'Here we have the great motive behind redemption, the ultimate purpose in the mind and wisdom of God which has led to all the blessings resulting from this great purpose of salvation. The ultimate motive of it all is, "to the praise of the glory of His grace". It is all for the glory of God.'

We are here to glorify God

We find our purpose in honoring God  
Sin is refusing to glorify God

John Piper: 'The exceeding evil of sin is not the harm it does to us or to others (though that is great). The wickedness of sin is owing to the implicit disdain for God.' [Desiring God, p. 57]

That helps us understand our world and the necessity of salvation - - - why Jesus is building His church

All the sin / all the evil / all the murders / all the crimes / all the hatreds - - - these things show contempt for God [love the Lord your God / love your neighbor]

These things are how man shows that he really despises God – and refuses to worship Him

What should God do with such people?

There will be a day of judgment – but for now – in this age – there is the offer of salvation

God reaches out in compassion – He calls / He extends the offer of forgiveness thru the blood of the cross

He calls out to sinners, 'Why will you die O sinner – repent and believe in the Savior.'

He turns hearts from rebellion - - - and causes sinners to see that they were made for a far greater cause – that of the glory of God

God is not thwarted by evil – but permits it for a season - - - He allows that which He commands against - - - [He does not condone evil / He limits it / He blocks it / He subverts it]

ultimately magnifies His own grace and might by delivering people out of evil. There will come a day when evil will be vanquished for good

That's what this world is

It is a tale of two kingdoms / two kinds of sonship

One is temporary / destined to fail

The other is eternal / destined to triumph over all

There will come a day when God will say, 'My church is complete' – then comes the end – Christ returns / established His kingdom

### Conclusion

Peter Cameron Scott was born in Glasgow, Scotland in 1867. He founded the **African Inland Mission**. However, his efforts to take the gospel to Africa met with setback after setback. His brother John joined him in the mission, but within months – John fell victim to a fever and died.

Peter buried his brother and re-dedicated his life for the cause of proclaiming the gospel. But then – his own health went south – and required him to return to England

While in London – something happened that provided the inspiration he needed. He visited the tomb of David Livingstone in Westminster Abbey. As he knelt down to read the inscription – he read these words:

**'Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring.'** [John 10:16]

Peter – bolstered by this word of Scripture - - - was reminded of God's eternal program – and continued his service for the king

Jesus said He would build His church

He said He had other sheep [the Gentiles] – to bring into the fold

Perhaps He was speaking of you

**John 6:37 - 'All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.'**

Jesus said of His sheep: 'My sheep hear My voice and I know them and they follow Me.'

And He gives eternal life to them