

Essentials of Christianity (pt 26)
9/5/2010

Introduction _____

Good morning to everyone! I pray the Lord blesses us with a very fruitful day. We have a lot to experience together today. Having our hearts touched by the praise music, let's now look at some practical direction from the Word of God.

In our study on the **essentials of Christianity**, we are currently looking at the subject of **soteriology: the doctrine of salvation**.

Here are the primary aspects of this subject; here are the one's we're going to try and cover today.

Adoption

To begin, we're going to talk about the believers **adoption**.
Turn to Romans 8:14-17: read

^{NAU} Romans 8:14 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

¹⁵ For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"

¹⁶ The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,

¹⁷ and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

In regeneration God gives us new spiritual life within. In justification God gives us right legal standing before him. But in **adoption** God makes us members of his family.

How appropriate that we ended with the song we did.

Adoption is a doctrine that accompanies or parallels our justification. It is also a legal act, just as adoption is for us at the human level, whereby believers are made legally adopted children of their Creator God.

As children, believers have the privileges that go with this position but, of course, they also bear the responsibilities that go with this position. We bear the name of God. An adopted child takes on the name of the adopting parents, bears that name and enters into that home with all of the blessings and the inheritance and all the rest that goes with that. So the privileges and responsibilities are both attached to our adoption.¹

Clearly among the privileges that we have as being the adopted children of God are that we are heirs of God, fellow heirs with Christ. We have been given the gift of the Spirit by which we are able to cry out, "Abba Father." We recognize that God is our Father; we are truly his children and the Spirit enables us to embrace that and express it.

Look at Ephesians 1:5-6; Gal 4:6-7: read

^{NAU} Ephesians 1:5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,

⁶ to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

^{NAU} Galatians 4:6 Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"

¹ Ware

⁷ *Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.*

One last thing on this:

Although the New Testament says that we are now God's children (1 John 3:2), we should also note that there is another sense in which our adoption is still future because we will not receive the full benefits and privileges of adoption until Christ returns and we have new resurrection bodies.

Look at Romans 8:22-23: read

^{NAU} *Romans 8:22 For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.*

²³ *And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.*

Here Paul sees the receiving of new resurrection bodies as the fulfillment of our privileges of adoption, so much so that he can refer to it as our "adoption as sons."²

A sense of belonging is at the heart of the concept of adoption. Think of the words of our Lord in **John 17:19-26--turn to: read.**

^{NAU} *John 17:19 "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.*

²⁰ *"I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word;*

²¹ *that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.*

² Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Zondervan Publishing, 1994).

²² *"The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one;*

²³ *I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.*

²⁴ *"Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.*

²⁵ *"O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me;*

²⁶ *and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."*

Propitiation

Next let's talk about **propitiation**. Let's turn to **1John 4:10: read.**

^{NAU} *1 John 4:10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

What does propitiation mean? It's an extremely important concept, and one that is foundational in our study of salvation.

Propitiation is the appeasement or turning away of God's wrath against sinners by means of an atoning sacrifice.

^{NAU} *Romans 3:25 (Jesus) whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;*

Here, Christ is said to be a propitiation. The Greek term (ἰλασ터리ον) can be translated as **mercy seat (Heb 9:5)**.

The LXX uses the same word for mercy seat. The mercy seat was the lid on the ark of the covenant and was sprinkled with the blood of atonement--and was there called the “place of propitiation,” because when blood was applied God’s wrath was turned away.³

Thus, propitiation makes its primary impression on God, not man. His wrath needs to be appeased. His holiness is vindicated and satisfied by the death of Christ.⁴

Forgiveness

This leads us to the next topic--**Forgiveness**. A word that is used frequently, a concept that is often practiced flippantly, but the biblical nature of forgiveness is nothing short of radical.

Forgiveness as it relates to salvation, is one of the constituent parts of justification.

Forgiveness is the legal act of God whereby He removes the charges that were held against the sinner because proper satisfaction or atonement for those sins has been made.

I like the definition from Eastons BD.

In pardoning sin, God absolves the sinner from the condemnation of the Law, and that on account of the work of Christ, i.e., He removes the guilt of sin, or the sinners actual liability to eternal wrath on account of it. The sinner is, by this act of grace, forever freed from the guilt and penalty of his sins. This is the peculiar prerogative of God.⁵

³ Alan Cairns, *Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Ambassador Emerald Intl., 2002).

⁴ Paul P Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* (Moody, Chicago, 1989).

⁵ M. G. M.A. Easton, D.D., *Easton Bible Dictionary, Third Edition, 1897 ASCII Edition* (Ellis Enterprises, Inc. Public Domain, 1988).

Look at Psalm 130:3-4: read

^{NAU} Psalm 130:3 If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?

⁴ But there is forgiveness with You, That You may be feared.

Turn to Ephesians 1:7-8: read

^{NAU} Ephesians 1:7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace

⁸ which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight

Having said all this is, it's important to know that forgiveness **IS** conditional. Certain conditions must be met before forgiveness can be granted. A person **must** turn to God for forgiveness, and then forgiveness is granted to a person when the merits of Christ are applied to their lives.

Did anyone here ever ask God to forgive you for something before you became a Christian? I did!

I remember feeling guilty about something that caused me to become superstitious about what the consequence of bad karma may bring. I prayed for forgiveness.

Was forgiveness granted to me from God at that time? No! It most definitely was not. God can only forgive a sinner; can only pardon a sinner, based on the merits of Jesus Christ.

Common grace may have shown to me.

We're not going to get into the subject of forgiveness between people today, because that's beyond the scope of our study. But just to illustrate the nature of forgiveness, remember Jesus even said,

^{NAU} Mark 11:25 "Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you your transgressions.

²⁶ "But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your transgressions."

A pardon may be granted to the one who is in need of being pardoned. We're quick to say, "God freely pardon's."

But the pardon can only be called a "free" pardon because someone (namely, Jesus) met the conditions that were required.

^{NAU} 1 John 2:12 I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name's sake.

Turn to 1John 1: 9-10: read

^{NAU} 1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

As ambassadors of Jesus, the power of binding and loosing; which means forbidding and allowing, was granted to the church. That implies the power to forgive in the name of Jesus.

This includes the proclamation of the gospel and the conditions upon which men might enter into relationship with God.

We are limited by certain principles which are the basis of the kingdom message we proclaim, but within these principles the voice of the Christian community is supreme.⁶

Jesus said,

^{NAU} John 20:23 "If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained."

Delegated authority to tell people their sins are forgiven.
Forgiveness is our gateway into the presence of God.

^{NAU} Psalm 32:1 How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered!

² How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit!

Repentance

During my sojourning as a Christian--22 yrs now; I've heard much discussion and debate about the role that repentance plays in the process of salvation.

A number of years ago, Pastor John McArthur wrote a book called "The Gospel According To Jesus."

Part of what was presented in the book was the idea that receiving Christ as Lord was as necessary a component of the gospel as receiving Christ as Savior.

⁶ James Orr, M.A., *THE INTERNATIONAL STANDARD BIBLE ENCYCLOPEDIA* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1939).

Much controversy was stirred up, over this so-called “Lordship salvation” issue. The amount of criticism that was generated over the book was ridiculous.

Repentance and the Lordship of Christ are definitely cut from the same cloth. To answer the question about whether repentance and the acceptance of Jesus’ lordship are essential components of the gospel and thus central in the message of salvation, the answer is an unequivocal YES!

What is repentance? Why is it such an integral part of the salvation experience.

In its simplest form repentance means *a change of mind*.

In the theological and ethical sense it's a fundamental and thorough change in the hearts of men from sin and toward God. Although faith alone is the condition for salvation, repentance is bound up with faith and inseparable from it, since without some measure of faith no one can truly repent, and repentance never attains to its deepest character till the sinner realizes through saving faith how great is the grace of God against whom he has sinned. On the other hand, there can be no saving faith without true repentance.

Repentance contains as essential elements:

- (1) a genuine sorrow toward God on account of sin;
- (2) an inward repugnance to sin necessarily followed by the actual forsaking of it;
- (3) humble self-surrender to the will and service of God.

Repentance, it should be observed, has different stages of development.

- (1) In its lowest and most imperfect form it may arise from fear of the consequences or penalty of sin. If it goes no farther than this it is simply remorse and must end in despair.

(2) It deepens in character with the recognition of the baseness of sin itself. But here again it is merely a burden of soul from which man may seek to free himself in vain till he recognizes the great hope before him in the gospel.

(3) It becomes more complete and powerful in those who have experienced the saving grace of God and thus realize more fully the enormity of sin and the depths of the divine compassion that has been operative in their salvation.

Repentance is the gift of God. It is so because God has given His word with its revelations concerning sin and salvation; and also the Holy Spirit to impress the truth and awaken the consciences of men and lead them to repentance.

^{NAU} Romans 2:4 Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

^{NAU} Acts 2:37 Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?"

³⁸ Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

³⁹ "For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself."

Turn to 2Timothy 2:24-26: read

^{NAU} 2 Timothy 2:24 The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged,

²⁵ with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth,

²⁶ and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

Repentance is granted by God.

NAU Acts 5:31 "He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

NAU Acts 11:18 When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, "Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life."

As faith without works is dead, so too, professed salvation without repentance is dead.

One last quote on this:

Grudem:

It is important to realize that mere sorrow for one's actions, or even deep remorse over one's actions, does not constitute genuine repentance unless it is accompanied by a sincere decision to forsake sin that is being committed against God.

Paul preached about "repentance to God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21). He says that he rejoiced over the Corinthians, "not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting.... For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret, but worldly grief produces death" (2 Cor 7:9-10).

A worldly sort of grief may involve great sorrow for one's actions and probably also fear of punishment but no genuine renouncing of sin or commitment to forsake it in one's life.

Heb 12:17 tells us that Esau wept over the consequences of his actions but did not truly repent. Moreover, as 2 Cor 7:9-10 indicates, even true godly grief is just one factor that leads to genuine repentance, but such grief is not itself the sincere decision of the heart in the presence of God that makes genuine repentance.

Scripture puts repentance and faith together as different aspects of the one act of coming to Christ for salvation. It is not that a person first turns from sin and next trusts in Christ, or first trusts in Christ and then turns from sin, but rather that both occur at the same time. When we turn to Christ for salvation from our sins, we are simultaneously turning away from the sins that we are asking Christ to save us from. If that were not true our turning to Christ for salvation from sin could hardly be a genuine turning to him or trusting in him.

This should be the statement being made by those being baptized today. This is what water baptism is signifying.

Believers Security

All of this culminates to give us a reason to have complete confidence in our salvation-- the **believers security**.

It is very important that, when one has come to believe, he has a real and abiding assurance of having received eternal life.

Many are filled with uncertainty as to their standing before God. They think they are saved, yet lack the positive foundation of assurance.

Others are afraid to be too positive on the subject; fearing perhaps to presume on the grace of God. As a result, their Christian life is apologetic, and lacks the reality of true fellowship with God through Jesus Christ.

Surely God wants us to know we are saved. Certainly one of the chief reasons behind God's eternal plan of salvation is the re-establishment of fellowship between Himself and man.

The foundation of this fellowship is **assurance**.

How can a person have fellowship with someone when they have no confidence or understanding regarding their relationship with God?

It is imperative that we know we are saved. Everything else in the Christian life depends on this assurance.