

# Session 4

## We Are Reborn and Adopted In Christ

**Key Question:** How are we Reborn and Adopted in Christ?

**Core Truth:** We have been spiritually reborn according to the Father's will in Christ by means of the Holy Spirit. This **New Birth** means that we have a new identity (as part of God's family), a new inheritance, and a new destiny. This new birth is also described in terms of being **adopted** by Father-God. In both cases, we are now beloved children of Father-God.

**To Remember:** "By His will He gave us birth through the message of truth, that we would be a kind of firstfruits of all he created." [James 1:18]

**Objective:** The reality of Father-God's love for us and choosing of us is displayed in His giving us New Spiritual Birth as well as being Adopted into His eternal family. Father is now pleased to call us His children and our "older brother" Jesus is not ashamed to call us His brothers and sisters. We need these truths to saturate our thinking, shape our desires and comfort our hearts and minds. Until we are convinced how much Father-God loves us, we can make little progress in our growth in Christ.

## WORDwork / Day 1

How Does This Work in Life? and How Does This Work in My Life?

### 4.1 **We Have Been Reborn to a Living Hope.**

**1 Peter 1:3-9** 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5 who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 This brings you great joy, although you may have to suffer for a short time in various trials.

7 Such trials show the proven character of your faith, which is much more valuable than gold - gold that is tested by fire, even though it is passing away—and will bring praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. 8 You have not seen him, but you love him. You do not see him now but you believe in him, and so you rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, 9 because you are attaining the goal of your faith—the salvation of your souls.

? 13 Notice in this passage, just as in Ephesians 1, God is to be blessed. What has God done for us in verse 3? On what basis does He do this?

? 14 What does all of this lead to in verse 4? Where is this inheritance now? What does this say about the quality of the inheritance?

? 15 How can we be certain that we will receive this inheritance in verse 5?

? 16 Explain verses 6 and 7 in your own words. What is the purpose of the “trials” and “suffering” that we face?

? 17 According to verse 7, how valuable is our faith?

? 18 In verses 8 and 9 what causes our joy and rejoicing?

? 19 What do you think Peter means in verse 9 where he says, “you are attaining the goal of your faith – the salvation of your souls.”

#### 4.1.1 **Reborn According to God's Great Mercy**

In this passage, we see that on the basis of God's mercy, He has caused us to be born again! Just as in the Ephesians passage that we have exploring, God treats us according to the riches and blessing of His Grace. Here His grace is revealed as His mercy—He has not treated us as we have deserved, but has been merciful and kind to us.

#### 4.1.2 **Reborn to a Living Hope**

Notice also that this rebirth gives us access to a “living hope through the resurrec-

tion of Jesus.” When we think of Jesus’ works for us, we most often think of the Cross and we should. *But we must also remember that the resurrection of the Jesus is just as important.* Because He has defeated death, He forever lives to save and sustain us. We have hope in Him and this hope is a *living hope*. It is an ongoing, life sustaining hope that God will complete His saving work in us and make sure that we reach our eternal destination.

#### 4.1.3 **Reborn to a New Inheritance**

This spiritual rebirth also means that a *new inheritance* has come to us as Father-God’s children. This inheritance is *imperishable* (does not grow old and does not wear away with time), *undefiled* (untouched by the corruption of this fallen world) and *unfading* (is eternally glorious and beautiful). This full inheritance is kept in Heaven for us and is far above anything that we can even imagine now.

Earlier, we considered verse 5 where Peter talks about God protecting us by His power through faith. As we are going to hear later in this week’s session, our experience of complete, perfect salvation will not occur until we are in the presence of Christ. Until that time, Father-God is protecting us so that we arrive at this final destination. Until that time, we experience trials which reveal the real value of our faith.

#### 4.1.4 **Our Faith is being Refined**

As we move forward in our journey, we will face suffering and hardships—trials. Remember, the world does not “know” us because it did not know our Master and it also hates us because it hated Him (1 John 3:1, 13). However, now with our new origin and destiny these trials *prove* the character of faith. They are also used by our Heavenly Father to build up our faith.

When suffering and trials come, they simply reveal the character of our faith. They help us to see that there is no other hope than to cling to our Creator, Savior and King in the midst of this fallen and corrupt world. *Our trials push us to see that there is no greater joy and blessing than being completely included in Father-God’s glorious and eternal family and fellowship in Christ through His Spirit.* The conviction of our faith, empowered by God, is the very thing that enables us to persevere to the end, to see Christ and be revealed with Him in glory (see also Colossians 3:1-3).

#### 4.1.5 **Christ is our Goal**

Finally, Peter brings all of this to a point: Even though we have not seen Christ, we love Him. We do not yet see Him, but we believe, trust in Him. Because of our faith and hope we can rejoice now, in the present, because we know for certain that we will reach our final eternally glorious destiny – complete, made perfect in His presence! Then we will experience the full salvation of our souls. All of this will come to us because we have been reborn, welcomed into God’s eternal family.

## WORDwork / Day 2

What Do We See and Hear? and What Does It Mean?

### 4.2 You Are Adopted into God's Family

**Romans 8:15** For you did not receive the spirit of slavery leading again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry, "Abba, Father."

**Galatians 4:4-7** But when the appropriate time had come, God sent out his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, *so that we may be adopted as sons with full rights.* 6 And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, who calls "Abba! - Father!" 7 So you are no longer a slave but a son, and if you are a son, then you are also an heir through God.

? 20 How is the Spirit described in Romans 8:15? How does the Spirit lead us to address God?

? 21 How is the Spirit described in the Galatians passage above? What is common in both of these passages?

We have all heard Jesus referred to as God's "only begotten son" as in John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, He have is only begotten Son..." What does that phrase "only begotten" mean? Some used to think that it meant God's "only born" Son. Although that is in line with the meaning of the term, it is not quite accurate. The term that is used here is better translated, God's "one unique Son" or "one-of-a-kind -Son." It still points to the fact that Jesus is God's only literal human son, which highlights the fact that there is no one else like him. We have already heard how we have to be "born again" spiritually to enter God's family. Now we want to consider another way to think about what Father-God has done for us: He has *adopted* us.

As we heard earlier, God predestined us to this adoption as His children (Ephesians 1:5). Whereas Jesus and Peter speak about our "new spiritual birth," Paul chooses to express these same ideas in terms of our *adoption*. The reason for this is probably because the idea of a new birth would have been a more powerful and provocative idea for a mainly Jewish audiences, whereas the idea of adoption would have been more meaningful to Paul's largely Gentile audiences.

Paul is probably drawing his analogy from the Roman Laws concerning adoption that existed in his day. In these times, the father had absolute rights and absolutely authority over all aspects of the Roman family. When a man wished to adopt another son, two steps were taken. First, the son to be adopted would have to be released from the authority of his natural father. Second, the son to be adopted would be placed under the authority of the new father and granted the position of a "natural son" so that the father could then pass on his rights, authority, and inheritance to the new son. In this way, the family could be sustained and maintained from generation to generation.

So how does this help us understand our position before God? This means that we who were once "sons of disobedience" and "children of wrath" (Ephesians 2:2-3)

have been freed from the cruel tyranny of our old “father”—Satan (see John 8:38, 44; Ephesians 2:2)—and have been placed under the authority of our gracious and merciful Heavenly Father. We are now part of God’s family and He predestined us for this—He determined this for us, before He created the world!!!

By being adopted into God’s family, we gain a new position and a new inheritance. Our “old father” the Devil only sought to terrorize and ultimately destroy us. Our inheritance with him was only *death* and *eternal condemnation*. Now, we have been adopted into God’s family with Jesus as our “older brother” (Hebrews 2:11-15) who gives us a share in His glorious and eternal inheritance! In Christ, we have been adopted into God’s family as sons with full rights! This means that we have a claim on the family inheritance and all the blessings that go along with being part of the family.

Women should remember that you are included in this as “sons” as well. Paul always calls us “sons” whether we are male or female because in the first century, only male sons received inheritances. In Christ, we are all “sons” sharing in the inheritance and women are likewise “fellow heirs of the grace of life” (1 Peter 3:7).

#### 4.3 **The Father Chose You!**

What makes this blessing of “adoption” so meaningful? Natural parents differ in many ways from adoptive parents. Natural parents don’t really know anything about their children before they are born. They may know whether they are having a boy or a girl, but the baby’s personality will not be known until later. *Adoptive parents however can know everything before deciding whether to accept or reject a child as their own.* Adoptive parents choose from full knowledge. What is so meaningful about that truth?

When Father-God adopted you into His family, it was His deliberate voluntary choice and was made with total knowledge about you: your past, present and future! He knew exactly what He was getting! You should experience tremendous joy knowing He voluntarily chose you for His own family. He knew all about your past, your present, and your future and still said “yes.” Nothing that ever shocks you about yourself has ever shocked God! It is so wonderful to be adopted. Adoption means you were chosen and accepted while still “in Adam” with all your sins and imperfections. Your being adopted by God proves His unconditional acceptance of you “in Christ.” Being adopted should give you direction and purpose for the rest of your journey.

In the memory verse from James at the beginning of this session, we hear that our Heavenly Father has given us a new birth so that we could be a kind of “first-fruits” of all that He created. As God’s beloved children, we now serve as a *model* for what the Creator desires for all His creation. As beloved children, we give those around us a “taste” of what it means to find security, fulfillment and significance in our Father who chooses and calls, our older Brother Jesus who sacrifices Himself for us, and the Spirit who indwells us to empower us.

## WORDwork / Day 3

How Does this All Fit Together? and What are the Key Truths?

### 4.4 What Is the Process of Salvation?

#### 4.4.1 There are Three Aspects of Salvation

In the 1 Peter passage that we read at the first of the week, we heard him talk about our “*salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*” We also heard Paul talk about “attaining the goal of your faith—the *salvation of your souls.*” Both of these statements make it sound like our salvation is not complete and that it will not be complete until some future date. First of all, we need to understand that this is true: we will not be perfect until we see Jesus face to face and being completely conformed to His likeness is the end-goal of our salvation. What we need to understand is that although our salvation is not yet completed, *it is nevertheless secured.* In order to understand this we need to see this from three different perspectives or aspects. Take a look at the following chart:

#### Salvation in the PAST

God works in Christ through the Holy Spirit to provide the basis for our ***justification*** (being declared to be in right relation with Him) and **reconciliation** (being placed in a peaceful and fruitful relationship with Him)

“I have been saved!”

#### Salvation in the PRESENT

God works in Christ through the Holy Spirit to transform us step by step, degree to degree into the image of Christ in the process of ***sanctification.*** This process will not be finished until we see Christ face to face.

“I am being saved!”

#### Salvation in the FUTURE

God works in Christ through the Holy Spirit to completely conform us to the image of Christ in ***glorification.*** We inherit our full inheritance and we are made perfect (body, soul and spirit) as Christ is perfect.

“I will be saved!”

In faith, we look back to see what Christ has done for us to make the means of our salvation complete and finished. In hope, we look forward to see that our complete and full salvation will not be experientially complete until we are fully conformed to Christ’s image. *But this future reality is made certain because of the faithfulness of God and the finished work of Christ.* So now in the present, as we journey toward our eternal destination we can be certain and secure in God’s work in us because He will finish what he has started.

We can say, “I am saved!!!” with confidence because of God’s faithfulness. But we can also say, “I am being saved,” and “I will be saved completely” because there are still aspects of Christ’s finished work that need to be applied to us experientially. We are still looking forward to the complete experience of salvation—completely and perfectly free from sin, corruption and death—as a future event, as the “salvation that is ready to be revealed.” However, we are now confident that God’s faithful-

ness will not fail and He will complete the work that He has begun and is working in us now. Consider these truths:

**Philippians 1:6** For I am sure of this very thing, that the one who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

**1 Thessalonians 5:23-24** Now may the God of peace himself make you completely holy and may your spirit and soul and body **be kept entirely blameless** at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. *24 He who calls you is trustworthy, and he will in fact do this.*

**1 Peter 5:10-11** And, after you have suffered for a little while, *the God of all grace who called you to his eternal glory in Christ will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.* 11 To him belongs the power forever. Amen.

This process of salvation that you are now experiencing was not *initiated* by you, it is not *sustained* by you nor will it be *completed* by you. The work of salvation belongs to God to God alone. Our Father does call for us to cooperate in the work that He is doing in us, to us and through us, but in the end *He has the responsibility to complete what He started in us.* This should be a great encouragement to you. No good father expects his children to raise themselves and your Heavenly Father does not expect us to perfect ourselves. We now belong to Him and He will complete what He has begun.

#### 4.4.2 **The Gospel is the “Imperishable Seed” that saves us.**

**1 Peter 1:23-25\*** You have been born anew, not from perishable but from imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.

1:24 For all flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of the grass; the grass withers and the flower falls off, 1:25 but the word of the Lord endures forever. **And this is the word, the Good News proclaimed to you.**

It is important for you to see how all that we have been talking about is related to God’s Word to us in the Message of the Gospel. Notice in this passage Peter reminds us that our salvation, our new birth was caused by the “living and enduring Word of God.” At the end he says this word is the Good News (The Gospel) that was proclaimed to you. The Gospel called for us to “obey the truth”—to get our lives in line with reality. In *Discovering the Way* we heard that the Gospel is the message that begins, sustains and completes our salvation (see 1 Corinthians 15:1-3). It is important to remember that our salvation is based on what God the Father has done for us in Christ through the Spirit. The Gospel proclaims this to us and is the “imperishable seed” that has been planted in us that will grow and produce the fruit in our lives that our Father desires! God’s work in our lives will not fail!



At the end of this week’s sessions, there is a chart that gives an overview of the whole process of salvation. *We will use it as a point of reference from here on.*

## WORDwork / Day 4

How Does This Work in Life? and How Does This Work in My Life?

### 4.5 **Spiritual New Birth changes our destiny.**

**John 3:1-6** 3:3 Jesus [said to Nicodemus], “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born *again* (from above) he cannot *see* the kingdom of God.” 3:4 Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?”

3:5 Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of *water* and the *Spirit*, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

As you already know, you were born physically and spiritually “dead in Adam.” Yet Father-God has made you alive by giving you spiritual rebirth in Christ. This means that we have a new starting or reference point for life; we have a new ORIGIN. Since our origin has changed, the meaning and purpose of our life has also changed.

The necessity of this new birth is highlighted in Jesus’ dialogue with Nicodemus. Jesus states plainly that if a person is not born *again/from above* (this is an intentional word play on the preposition; Jesus mean “from above,” Nicodemus hears “again”) then that person cannot even “see” the Kingdom of God. In our Lostness and Deadness we needed God’s life giving work to give us both new life and new light.

Jesus goes on to explain that *physical birth* (born of water, of the flesh) is not enough to get a person into His Kingdom. In this context, Jesus is in effect saying, “Your natural family lineage has no bearing on whether you will see and enter my Kingdom.” What is important is that a person be “born of the Spirit” or “from above.”

This week we have considered how we have been born again and adopted in Christ. This means we have a new family—God’s Eternal family, all those who are also “in Christ.” We also now have a new “older brother”—our Lord Jesus. Consider this:

**Hebrews 2:11** For indeed he who makes holy (Jesus) and those being made holy (us) all have the same origin (God the Father), and so **he** (Jesus) **is not ashamed to call them (us) brothers and sisters...**

We call Jesus Master, Savior, Lord, Teacher, Redeemer, King; but have you ever considered that is He is also your brother! He is not ashamed to call us His brothers and sisters! What an awesome truth.

### 4.6 **Our Eternal Inheritance is not Just “Stuff.”**

We have also considered the reality that we also have a new destiny and inheritance because of our new spiritual birth and adoption. As Peter says, “it is imperishable, undefiled and unfading, kept in Heaven for us.” We should not think of this inheritance as “stuff” or “wealth” like gold or silver or streets paved with gold or any of the

things that this World considers to be “treasure.” This inheritance is the unbroken joy and fellowship that we will have in eternity with the Father, Son and Spirit and with one another as we are bound together in mutual love, engaged in God’s fruitful and fulfilling activity free from the corruption caused by sin in this present World. Take a look at what Paul says about his:

**1Thessalonians 2:19-20** For who is our hope or joy or crown to boast of before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not of course you? 2:20 For you are our glory and joy!

When Paul writes to the saints and Thessalonica, men and women who heard the Gospel from Him and had been granted “new birth” through his ministry, he values them as his family. In fact he says that they are his “hope, joy and crown of pride” before Jesus when He returns. Paul understood that real treasure is measured in our deep relationships and fellowship with others. As we are going to consider in a later lesson, Jesus will receive an eternal inheritance too and that inheritance will be us!!!

Paul also describes our inheritance as an inheritance of “light”:

**Colossians 1:12** I give thanks to... the Father who has qualified you to share in the saints’ inheritance in the light.

In the Scriptures, light is a product of God’s glory. Paul may here be referring to the fact that we will participate in God’s glory—the essence of His luminous beauty and magnificence. In other places, he talks of us sharing in Jesus on glory:

**2Thessalonians 2:13-14** ... God chose you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. 2:14 He called you to this salvation through our gospel, ***so that you may possess the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.***

This inheritance and sharing in God’s light and glory is not earned or produced as a result of our own self efforts, but simply come to us because we have a relationship with God the Father in Christ through faith. In fact, all of the blessings that we are discussing in this study come to us as “inheritances” or “birthrights.” *This means that they became available to us at the very moment of our spiritual new birth.* However, just because they are available does not mean that we are enjoying them or appropriating their benefits in our daily life. The sad fact is that many people who spend their whole lives in “church” are never made aware of the many blessings and benefits that have been made available to them in Christ.

As we gather as God’s family in Christ, we should constantly remind one another of the rich inheritance that we have in Him and in one another. The only “things” that we will take with us into eternity are relationships that we have “in Christ” with others. This is our joy now and our rich inheritance then.



Has this week’s discussions changed the way you think about yourself and your relationship with God and your other brothers and sisters in Christ? If so, how?

# S A L V A T I O N

ETERNITY		PAST (Historical)		PRESENT		FUTURE	
God works in the past to bring us to salvation.		"I have been saved!"		God is working in the present ... "I am being saved!"		God will complete His work! "I will be saved!"	
<b>Chosen</b> "In Christ" before foundation of the world						<b>Glorified</b>	
<b>Sanctified</b> I have been set apart to God for God. (“Positionally” Perfected)		<b>Justified</b> "Potential" justification for all by Christ's Redemption		<b>Declared Righteous</b> - in right relationship with God (Justified) by Grace through Faith ( <i>saved</i> from present wrath)		I will be made Perfect! (Experientially Perfected)	
<b>Predetermined</b> to ADOPTION as God's Child		<b>Born</b> * Dead in Sin "in Adam" * Fallen from God's Glory		<b>Spiritually Reborn</b> "from above" by the Holy Spirit (ADOPTED into God's Family "In Christ") CALLED		<b>TRANSFORMED</b> according to the pattern of Christ's perfection Restored to full Glory	
		The Dominion of Darkness		Transferred to the Kingdom of the Beloved Son >		Will Reign with Christ	
		<b>REDEEMED:</b> Price is paid While we were dead.		<b>WASHED &gt; SEALED &gt; EMPOWERED &gt;</b>		<b>REDEEMED:</b> Inheritance Received	
Eph 1:3-6; Rom 8: 28-30; Gal 1:15		Eph 1-2; Rom 3:23-26; 5:1-6; 6:1-14; 8; Col 1:13; Heb 10:10-14				Eph 1:14, 4:13; Rom 5:9; 1 Jn 3:2; 2 Tim 2:12; Phil 1:6	

For by grace you are saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so that no one can boast.

# Session 5

## We Are Justified and Redeemed In Christ

**Key Question:** What does it mean to be justified and redeemed?

**Core Truth:** Jesus has done all that is necessary for us to be set in right relationship with God through his faithfulness and sacrifice. We trust in Christ, that His blood has set us free from the guilt and debt of our sins, we are declared to be right with God.

**To Remember:** “For we all have sinned and fall far short of the glory of God. But we are justified (declared righteous) freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” [Romans 3:23-24]

**Objective:** In all that God has freely given to us in Christ, we must always keep in mind what Jesus did for and what it cost Him to set us right with God. The price that God has paid for us is the blood of His one unique Son. As we think on this, our hearts and minds should be captivated by God’s love for us and the grace that we have received in Jesus Christ. Because of what Jesus has done for us and because we are trusting Him, Father-God declares that we are in the right, and in right relationship with Him.

## WORDwork / Day 1

What Do We See and Hear? and What Does It Mean?

### 5.1 **You are Justified in Christ.**

**Romans 3:19-25\*** 19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world may be held accountable to God. 20 For no one is **declared righteous** before him by the works of the law, for through the law comes the knowledge of sin.

21 But now an apart-from-the-law-righteousness of God (which is attested by the law and the prophets) has been disclosed—22 namely, the righteousness of God through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. 24 But they are justified (declared righteous) freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. 25 God publicly displayed Him as a propitiation *accessible through faith in His blood* ...

- ? 22 Can you explain verse 20 in your own words?
- ? 23 What has now been disclosed or revealed according to verse 21?
- ? 24 How does God now disclose or display His righteousness? In whose faithfulness?
- ? 25 What is true of everyone according to the end of verse 22 and the beginning of verse 23? What is possible for us according to verse 24?

#### 5.1.1 **What does it mean to be justified?**

To justify someone is to *declare* that person to be *righteous*. So in order to understand justification, we need to understand what righteousness is. For now, let's think about righteousness this way: *doing* 1) *the right thing*, 2) *in the right way*, 3) *at the right time*, 4) *with the right motives*.

This passage from Romans is both about God's "right way of doing things" and how that affects us. It is easy to understand that both who God is and what He does is always *righteous*—He always does the right thing, in the right way, at the right time, with the right motives and this is why He is true, good and glorious. We too were created with the capacity to act *righteously*, but we have fallen far short of that standard (God's glory). The Good News is that although we have all sinned and fall far short of the standard of God's glory (His holy beauty), we are justified—declared to be in the right with Him, *in right relationship*—because Jesus has done for us what we cannot do for ourselves. For this reason we trust Him and Him alone.

#### 5.1.2 **Father-God Reveals His Right Way of Doing Things.**

So what does this passage tell us about God's right way of doing things? First of all, God's right way has now been *revealed apart from the Law*. In other words, what God

has revealed about *his righteousness* is not based in law or law-keeping. This is good news for us because we can't keep the Law perfectly! This "new revelation" of His right way of doing things is supported, confirmed by the Law and the Prophets (the Hebrew Scriptures), but it is something that has been clearly revealed in Jesus.

So what has God revealed about this new right way of doing things? In this present age, *God's righteousness is revealed in the way He declares sinners who place their ultimate trust in Jesus to be in right relationship with Him (justification) based on the work of Jesus.*

### 5.1.3 **We are declared to be righteous freely by God's grace.**

God now declares that we are in right relationship with Him not because we have caused this or earned it but because He desired to do so freely as a gift for us! The word "freely" here is used in other contexts of the New Testament to speak of 1) *a gift* (John 4:10, Acts 2:38), 2) *doing something "free of charge" or "without payment"* (John 15:25, 2 Corinthians 11:7, 2 Thessalonians 3:8) and 3) *something that is done without a cause* (John 15:25). *We do not deserve what God has done for us in Christ and we cannot pay for it, all we can do is receive it!* This is the very definition of Grace.

### 5.1.4 **We are declared to be righteous on the basis of what Jesus has done (redemption).**

Even though this relationship with God did not "cost" us anything, we cannot forget that it cost Jesus a high price - His life, His blood. He was faithful and poured out his blood for us (redemption). The basis for our being set right with God is not what we have done, but what Christ has done for us. We will talk more about redemption tomorrow.

### 5.1.5 **We are declared to be righteous through our faith.**

In the last verse of this passage, we get a very difficult line: "*God publicly displayed Him as a propitiation accessible through faith in His blood...*" There has been endless debate over how to translate this line and also what this means. Basically we believe Paul is telling us that Father-God has displayed Christ publicly (on the Cross) as a propitiatory sacrifice, a sacrifice that assuages His wrath (we will deal with this in a future lesson). This word can also mean "mercy seat," the covering of the Ark of the Covenant where the blood of Atonement was poured out. Paul wants us to see Jesus' death on the Cross as the place where the perfect sacrifice was made and also the place where we find mercy and grace and forgiveness and cleansing.

He then tells us how we get "access" to all of these blessings: *through faith in the blood of Jesus.* We will talk more about his blood this week. For now simply take note that all of the salvation and life-sustaining blessings that we receive from the Father come to us freely, but at the cost of Jesus' blood!



In this passage there is a reference to the "faithfulness/faith of Jesus Christ." In the appendices there is a discussion of this important but controversial topic. We would encourage you to read about this if you have never seen it before.

## WORDwork / Day 2

What Do We See and Hear? and What Does It Mean?

### 5.2 **We Are Redeemed By Jesus' Blood.**

**Ephesians 1:7** In Him (in Christ) we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, 8 which He lavished upon us ...

? 26 In verse 7, what do we have in Christ? Could you define redemption in your own words? Through what means does this redemption come to us?

? 27 What is this blessing linked with in the same verse? Why does God "lavish" this rich blessing upon us?

#### 5.2.1 **What does Redemption mean?**

Yesterday we heard that we have been "justified through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." In our Ephesians passage we hear that we have redemption through Christ's blood, which is the forgiveness of our sins. Justification, redemption, forgiveness are all interrelated ideas. The central truth that binds them all together is the redemption that Christ provides through His blood, death.

The concept of redemption is very important in God's work of salvation. In its broadest sense, redemption is made up of two interrelated ideas 1) **paying a price** to claim something (or reclaim something that was lost) and 2) **setting something/someone free** by a payment. Look at a couple passages which illustrate these ideas:

1 / Redemption: Paying a price to gain ownership

**1 Corinthians 6:20** For you were bought at a price. Therefore glorify God with your body.

In this passage we see that we have been "bought with a price" which means that we have been "purchased" by God with Jesus' blood. How should we respond to this? We should glorify God with our bodies.

Now look at the other aspect of redemption, being set free:

2 / Redemption: Setting free

**Titus 2:14** He gave himself for us to set us free (*redeem us*) from every kind of lawlessness and to purify for himself a people who are truly his, who are eager to do good.

The idea present in Ephesians 1:7 focuses on this second nuance. The word used here speaks not only to the payment of the price, but more importantly **to the effect of the payment**: being reclaimed as God's own possession so that God can set us free!!! Through the payment of Christ's own blood, God the Father has purchased you for Himself!!! And as we have already seen, He has sealed you with the Holy Spirit to ensure that you arrive at your final eternal destination – at home with your

Heavenly Father (remember Ephesians 1:13-14).

Christ has paid His own life in order to reclaim us for the Father. The blood of Jesus is the price that our Heavenly Father paid to reclaim us as His children and to set us free from our slavery to sin, death and corruption that we were born into in Adam. Consider the following ways in which we have been set free in Christ:

1] We have been set free from **the burden and debt of our sins** (Ephesians 1:7, Colossians 1:1 *We will discuss this next week*)

2] We have been set free from **the tyranny of the Devil,**

**Hebrews 2:14-15** Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, he likewise shared in their humanity, so that through death he could destroy the one who holds the power of death (that is, the devil), 15 and set free those who were held in slavery all their lives by their fear of death.

3] We have been set free from **the burden of external law** as a means of maintaining our relationship with God.

**Galatians 5:1** For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not be subject again to the yoke of slavery.

**Romans 8:2** For the law of the life-giving Spirit in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.

The benefits of this redemption are made real to us right now, in the here and now. But our redemption will also be made complete in the resurrection. We have been spiritually set free, but God will also set our physical bodies free from their corruption and brokenness in the future:

**Romans 8:23** ... we also, who have the of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we eagerly await *our adoption, the redemption of our bodies.*

Notice that here Paul describes our completion/perfection in two ways: 1) it is the completion of our adoption process, which is 2) the redemption (the reclaiming) of our physical bodies. Although we *have been* adopted by God and redeemed through Jesus blood, these great blessings *will be* made perfectly complete in the future when we see Him face to face. Now, in the present, we only enjoy a taste these blessings!

Think about, meditate on this passage in light of all that we have discussed this week:

**Titus 3:3-7** For we too were once foolish, disobedient, misled, enslaved to various passions and desires, spending our lives in evil and envy, hateful and hating one another. 3:4 But “when the kindness of God our Savior and his love for mankind appeared, 3:5 *He saved us not by works of righteousness that we have done but on the basis of his mercy,* through the washing of the new birth and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, 3:6 whom he poured out on us in full measure through Jesus Christ our Savior. 3:7 And so, since we have been justified by his grace, we become heirs with the confident expectation of eternal life.”

## WORDwork / Day 3

How Does this All Fit Together? and What are the Key Truths?

### 5.3 **What is the Significance of Jesus Blood?**

#### 5.3.1 **Jesus blood is beyond value.**

In all of the passages that we are hearing, Jesus' blood plays an important role in the truth that is revealed. In order to understand all of this clearly, let's do a little background work.

The truths about blood and sacrifice has its roots in our Hebrew Scriptures (the Old Testament). In the Bible, blood is associated with life:

**Leviticus 17:11** ... now the life (soul) of the flesh is in the blood. So I myself have assigned it to you on the altar to make atonement (covering) for your lives, for the blood makes atonement (covering) by means of the life.

In this context the Lord is giving instruction about eating meat that still has blood in it. This is prohibited because the Lord set blood apart for its significance in the sacrifices for atonement, which is "covering" over the sins of the people so that God could live with them.

As you already know, the penalty for sin is death. So, in God's instruction and law, blood is a symbol that a death has taken place in order to deal with the debt and penalty of sin. We also know that purification from sins and the forgiveness of sins is related to this shedding of blood:

**Hebrews 9:22** Indeed according to the law almost everything was purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

The Scriptures teach us that God accepts blood as a means to:

1. **cleans** from the impurity of sins, and
2. **pay the penalty** required of sin (death) so that we can be forgiven.

The idea of the cleansing that is caused by blood is one that is foreign to us. In Leviticus, God instructs the priests to take some of the blood from the sacrifices and apply it to various items and places in the Tabernacle (the place where God dwells) and later in the Temple as atonement, as a covering. Now the word atonement comes from a Hebrew word which simply means "a covering." This atonement—a covering of blood—cleansed the place where God dwelt and thereby also covered over the sins of the people so that God could live with them in peace.

Before Christ however, the blood which was offered for this covering to deal with sins was *only* the blood of animals. These sacrifices were imperfect in that *they could not actually remove the sins of the people*, this animal blood could only "cover" the sins:

**Hebrews 10:4** For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

Now, in Christ, God has provided a much better sacrifice. The blood of Christ has not merely covered over our sins; *His sacrifice has completely removed our sins.* Jesus' blood has also cleansed and purified us from all sin. This application of Jesus' blood to us is not something that must happen over and over again like in the old priesthood of Israel. Instead, Jesus has accomplished an eternal redemption, once for all, He has offered one sacrifice that has made us perfect forever:

**Hebrews 10:14** For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are being made holy.

Later in this study, we are going to see how God has set you apart for His service as part of his new priesthood in Christ. In this passage, the idea of perfection speaks to the issue of being fully qualified to serve God as a priest. It doesn't mean that you have been made absolutely perfect (yet), but that by Christ's blood you have been cleansed and qualified for all that God has purposed for you. Peter says it this way:

**1Peter 1:18-19** You know that from your empty way of life inherited from your ancestors you were ransomed (redeemed)—not by perishable things like silver or gold, 1:19 but by precious blood like that of an unblemished and spotless lamb, namely Christ.

### 5.3.2 **Jesus' Blood is the basis for the New Covenant.**

**1Corinthians 11:25** In the same way, he (Jesus) also took the cup after supper, saying, "*This cup is the new covenant in my blood.* Do this, every time you drink it, in remembrance of me."

In the present age you and I are related to God by the New Covenant that has been established by the faithfulness of Jesus. This New Covenant is not like the covenant that God made with Israel through Moses at Mount Sinai (often called The Law). That covenant was instituted to protect God from the faithlessness of Israel and to keep Israel "bound up" until their Messiah should appear (see Galatians 3). This New Covenant is far superior to the old one:

**Hebrews 9:15** And so He (Jesus) is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the eternal inheritance he has promised, since he died to set them free from the violations committed under the first covenant.

Paul make the argument throughout his letter that the old covenant could only really condemn us because of our sin (take a look at Romans 3:19-20 again). Now this New Covenant based in Jesus' blood and righteousness sets us free from the burden and debt of our sins and also from the *power of sin itself*. We will explore this as we go along. For now, simply realize that the pouring out of Jesus blood has ***actually accomplished something for you.*** He as willing to pour out his blood to take us as his own and liberate us from all that hinders us from becoming gloriously free.

## WORDwork / Day 4

How Does This Work in Life? and How Does This Work in My Life?

### 5.4 **You Are Set Right through Faith.**

**Romans 4:4-5** Now to the one who works, his pay is not credited due to grace but due to obligation. 5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in the one who declares the ungodly righteous, his faith is credited as righteousness.

When someone works, the payment is not credited on the basis of *grace* (a free gift) but according to *obligation*—*it is what is owed*. If you work hard all week, at the end of the week your employer obligated to pay you; your wages would be earned, not given to you as a gift.

But God does not save us this way. He does not obligate us nor could we ever possibly obligate Him. Instead, we put an end to our work. This is what Paul says clearly: **“to the one who does not work, but believes.”** To accept the truth of the Gospel and the reality of our position in Christ completely, *we have to put an end to our working. We have to stop thinking that we are accepted by God because of what we do.*

The Gospel calls us to put an end to our trying to earn God’s favor by what we do. We believe that Father-God working in Christ through the Spirit *declares* us—*we who were by nature ungodly and unrighteous*—to now be righteous, in right relationship with Him, on the basis of His grace.

So when we *believed* the truth of the Gospel and *trusted* Christ alone as our Savior, God declared, “he/she has done the right thing, in the right way, at the right time, with the right motivation.” What an awesome reality! God our Father accepts us on the basis of faith, not our works.

Faith in Christ is the “right thing” because this is the right response to the truth that God has revealed. Faith is the “right way” because it focuses on Christ as our One and Only Savior. Faith exhibits the “right motives” because it require humility to say, “Father, I am sinful and worthy of your condemnation, but I know that you accept me because of Jesus.” Faith now is done at the “right time,” because we have to trust Christ before we see Him face to face. Because we are trusting Christ and the power of his blood to save, Father-God declares, “You Are Righteous!”

As we close consider the following questions:



Has this lesson helped you see things that you have not seen before about your relationship with God? If so, how?



Is there anything that you are doing habitually to try and earn God’s favor or more of God’s favor?



Are you completely convinced that your relationship with God is based in Christ’s work for you and not your work for God?



In what specific ways can you “stop working” and live continually by believing and trusting in what Father-God working in Christ through the Spirit has done, is doing and will do for you?