

*Redemption
Accomplished
and Applied*

by John Murray

Fourteenth Lecture

Presented by Dr. Richard Spencer

Review

- Here is Murray's order of the events in the application of redemption:
 1. Effectual calling
 2. Regeneration
 3. Faith and Repentance
 4. Justification
 5. Adoption
 6. Sanctification
 7. Perseverance
 8. Union with Christ
 9. Glorification

What is Adoption?

- Murray writes:

Justification means our acceptance with God as righteous and the bestowal of the title to everlasting life. Regeneration is the renewing of our hearts after the image of God. But these blessings in themselves, however precious they are, do not indicate what is conferred by the act of adoption. By adoption the redeemed become sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty; they are introduced into and given the privileges of God's family.

RA&A, pg 132

What is Adoption?

- Webster says:

To take by choice into a relationship; specifically: to take voluntarily (a child of other parents) as one's own child

- The Westminster Shorter Catechism says:

Q. 34. What is adoption?

A. Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges, of the sons of God.

But, Be Careful

- We must guard against two errors:
 - We are not God's children in the same sense that Jesus Christ is; we do not share in divinity, he is the eternal, only begotten Son of God (Jn 3:16)
 - We are God's children in a special way; not just in the sense of being part of his creation

We Are Not Equal with Christ

- We make a serious error if we equate our status as adopted children with that of Jesus
- He is the unique, eternal Son of God and has a unique relationship to the Father

Jesus said [to Mary], “Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”

John 20:17

– Jesus never prayed to “our Father” with others

We Are Not Just Part of Creation

- People often speak of “the universal brotherhood of man” or of God as the “Father of all”
- But, we greatly miss the significance, love, and condescension displayed by the act of adoption, and we miss or undervalue the privileges conferred, if we mistakenly think of God as the Father of all people; God could have redeemed us without adopting us!

Not Everyone is a Child of God

- There are a very few Scriptural passages that refer to God as the Father of all men; e.g., Paul said to the people in Athens

‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’ Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by man's design and skill.

Acts 17:28-29

- Paul was quoting Greek poets here and was speaking of “offspring” in terms of creation

Not Everyone is a Child of God

we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live!

Hebrews 12:9

- The author is again speaking of God as “Father” in a limited sense; he is the creator
- Murray notes

Since all three persons of the Godhead were the agents of creation we cannot restrict this Fatherhood to the first person of the Trinity

He is Father of the Redeemed

- Murray notes,

To substitute the message of God's universal fatherhood for that which is constituted by redemption and adoption is to annul the gospel; it means the degradation of this highest and richest of relationships to the level of that relationship which all men sustain to God by creation. In a word, it is to deprive the gospel of its redemptive meaning. And it encourages men in the delusion that our creaturehood is the guarantee of our adoption into God's family.

RA&A, pp 135-136

The Apex of Grace and Privilege

- Murray summarizes,

The term “Father” as applied to God and the title “son of God” as applied to men are all but uniformly in Scripture reserved for that particular relationship that is constituted by redemption and adoption.

RA&A, pg 135

- Murray says of adoption,

This is surely the apex of grace and privilege. We would not dare to conceive of such grace far less to claim it apart from God’s own revelation and assurance.

RA&A, pg 134

What Does the Bible Say?

to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

John 1:12-13

- Faith unites us to Christ and, as a result, we are given the right to become children of God
- Murray comments on the negative statements made in verse 13 “*children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will*”

Becoming Children of God

The implication is that in the whole realm of nature there is no element, impulse, instinct, desire, volition or purpose, and no combination or collusion of these, that will meet the demands correlative with the bestowment of authority to become children of God

The Collected Writings of John Murray, Vol. 2, pg 192

- Our being made God's children is the result of our union with Christ by grace through faith, which follows new birth, which is a miracle!
- Galatians says God's children are redeemed ...

What Does the Bible Say?

But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.

Galatians 4:4-5

- We are redeemed so that “*we might receive the full rights of sons.*”
- Our being sons is true both legally (by adoption) and in nature (by regeneration)
- John’s first epistle speaks of our being sons more from the perspective of new birth ...

What Does the Bible Say?

If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him. How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

1 John 2:29 - 3:1

- Martyn Lloyd-Jones commented on these verses ...

Martyn Lloyd-Jones

John is going on in this chapter to differentiate between the children of God and the children of the devil, and our Lord Himself did the same ... (John 8:44). So that this idea of the universal Fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man is not a Scriptural statement at all.

M. Lloyd-Jones, *Life in Christ – Studies in 1 John*, Vol. 3, pp 14-15

- There are only two “families” presented in the Bible: the children of the Devil, and the children of God (1 Jn 3:10, Jn 8:44); and there are only two eternal destinies (Matt 25:46)

What Does the Bible Say?

For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."

The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Romans 8:13-17

Who, Specifically, is Our Father?

- Murray writes,
The question arises: who is to be regarded as the Father of those who are adopted into God's family? Is it God viewed as the three persons of the trinity or is it specifically God the Father? RA&A, pg 137
- Murray answers that it is God the Father, specifically, who is our Father and he gives four arguments to support this contention ...

Four Arguments

1. The title “Father” is the distinguishing name of the first person of the Trinity
2. In John 20:17 Jesus says he will return to “*my Father and your Father, to my God and your God*”, which clearly designates the first person of the Trinity, while keeping Jesus’ relation to him distinct
3. Jesus frequently referred to “my Father who is in heaven” and spoke of “your Father who is in heaven”
4. There are many passages where “Father” clearly and distinctly refers to the first person of the Trinity, and the same terminology is used for the “Father” of believers – see RA&A, pp 138-139 for details

We Are God's Children NOW

- We are God's children now; it isn't that we will become his children some day

If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!

Luke 11:13

- Notice that God will act as our Father now, in this life, and give us the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit leads us in this life
- As our Father now, he is also displeased when we sin and will deal with us ...

Disciplined as Children

the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son. ... God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness.

Hebrews 12:6, 10

- Sin has consequences, not just eternally, but in this life; God's purpose for us is good
- God may allow those who aren't his children to avoid many consequences in this life, but they will pay for their sins eternally
- Grudem comments on our need for daily repentance as God's children ...

Daily Forgiveness

the prayer for forgiveness of sins each day is a prayer that God's fatherly relationship with us, which has been disrupted by sin that displeased him, be restored, and that he relate to us once again as a Father who delights in his children whom he loves. The prayer "Forgive us our sins," therefore, is one in which we are relating not to God as eternal judge of the universe, but to God as a Father.

Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, pg 740

Children Resemble Their Parents

- Children bear a resemblance to their earthly parents – not just physically, but in personality as well, and so it is with believers

And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory 2 Corinthians 3:18

- We “*are being transformed*”; in other words, it is happening now, in this life
- But it will only reach completion in the life to come ...

Children Resemble Their Parents

- Our resemblance will be much greater in the life to come:

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

1 John 3:2

- This is also true bodily,

we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Rom 8:23

Eternally Chosen Family

- It is important to remember that we were eternally chosen to be adopted

he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will

Eph 1:5

- And our adoptive family includes all of God's children throughout the ages

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name.

Eph 3:14-15

Martyn Lloyd-Jones' Summary

Let us never again think of the Christian as just someone who is trying to live a good life, trying to be a little bit better than somebody else, a person with a belief in doing certain things, going through certain forms and ceremonials and keeping certain regulations dictated by the church. Christians do all that, but before all that is this vital fact that they are children of God. They have been born again, born from above, born of the Spirit; they have received something of the very nature and life of God Himself. They are transformed people, they are a new creation, and they are thus absolutely, essentially different from those who have not experienced that. That is the very basic thing which the New Testament everywhere emphasizes concerning the Christian.

Application

- Do you properly enjoy, value and participate in the relationships created by this divine act?
 - First, with God the Father
you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” Romans 8:15
 - Second, with Jesus Christ
there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus 1 Tim 2:5
 - Third, with other Christians
We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. ... we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. 1 John 3:14, 16

To Prepare for Next Session

- You should read Chapter 7 of Part II (on Sanctification)