

# **Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Salvation, Session 15, Adoption, Part 2, and Sanctification, Part 1, Historical Reconnaissance**

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This is Dr. Robert Peterson in his teaching on Salvation. This is session 15, Adoption, Part 2, and Sanctification, Part 1, Historical Reconnaissance.

We continue our lectures on Salvation with the particular aspect of the application of Salvation known as Adoption.

We have talked about our need for it, slavery to sin and self, the source of Adoption, God's love, the basis of Christ's person through the eternal son of God, we become spiritual sons or daughters of God. He was a son of God by nature. We become spiritual sons or daughters of God by grace through faith, and now Adoption means, and I should say again, perhaps, the picture of the Atonement that corresponds with Adoption biblically, right there in Galatians 4, 1 to 7, is Redemption. Adoption means faith.

Like Justification, Adoption is by grace through faith in Christ. Adoption is all of grace, for as slaves of sin and self, we could never redeem ourselves. Psalm 49:7 through 9, is clear, quote, truly no man can ransom another or give to God the price of his life, for the ransom of their life, is costly and can never suffice, that he should live on forever and never see the pit, close quote.

That is why, that's Psalm 49:7 to 9, that is why Paul finds Redemption only in Christ, quote, Ephesians 1:7, in him we have Redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, Ephesians 1:7. In fact, Paul expresses our final Adoption as Redemption, Romans 8:23. My notes are wrong. We ourselves, who have the Spirit as the first fruits, we also groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for Adoption, the Redemption of our bodies, Romans 3, Romans 8:23.

Redemption in Christ is appropriated by faith, as Paul testifies. Galatians 3:26 says, through faith you are all sons of God in Christ Jesus, Galatians 3:26. And although some think John only speaks of regeneration, not Adoption, as indeed John 1:13 declares, verse 12 of 1 John 1 seems to speak of Adoption by faith in Christ.

But to all who did receive Christ, he gave them the right to become, to be children of God, to those who believe in his name. Further, the Spirit enables us to believe, resulting in Adoption. The Spirit gives the gift of faith.

1 Corinthians 12, around 3, no one can say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. And here the Spirit enables us to believe unto Adoption. Paul says in Romans 8:15, you received the Spirit of Adoption by whom we cry out, Abba, Father, Romans 8:15.

Abba is an Aramaic word children use to address a dear father, much like Daddy or Papa. Justification, and it does not mean Dada, it's not baby talk. It's the word of a child toward a father who is respected and who is loved.

Justification and Adoption are both pictures of salvation taken from the courtroom. Justification is in the criminal division. Adoption is in the family court.

Both are by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. Justification is God's declaring believers righteous by imputing Christ's righteousness to them, while Adoption is the Father's welcoming believers into his family as his loved children. Romans 8:15, you receive the Spirit of Adoption by whom we cry out, Abba, Father.

That is, the Spirit enables us to call God Father in truth. Around the world this day, millions of people will pray the Our Father, the Lord's Prayer, Our Father who is in heaven, and so forth. And many of them don't know the Lord.

So, Romans 8:15 is not saying it is impossible to vocalize the words Our Father without being saved. No, the meaning is it is impossible to vocalize those words and mean them and know God as Father apart from the Holy Spirit. That is why Romans 8 calls him the Spirit of Adoption.

Think of it. God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The names of the first two persons of the Trinity are so conducive to the doctrine of Adoption.

God is the Father. God is the Son. The name Holy Spirit, I speak reverently, does not give us the warm fuzzies.

So, what does God do? He modifies the name of the third person of the Godhead in order to better communicate the doctrine of adoption to us. He is the Spirit of Adoption, Romans 8:15. He is the Spirit of His Son.

His refers back to the Father, Galatians 4:6. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of His Son. That is, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Father's Son. The whole Trinity is, in that phrase, the Spirit of His Son.

So, God modifies the name of the third person of the Trinity in order to minister to us His love in Adoption. Adoption and union with Christ. If you've been paying careful attention, you can anticipate this one.

Like every other aspect of the application of salvation, Adoption occurs in union with Christ. Quote, Galatians 3:26, Through faith you are all sons of God in Christ Jesus. In Christ Jesus here speaks of union with Christ.

Paul thus teaches that faith is the means by which the believing Galatians are adopted and that adoption takes place in union with Christ. Union with Christ is the big circle of adoption, justification, sanctification, conversion, and every other blessing in Christ, which is in Christ Jesus. They're within that bigger circle.

Adoption is a subset of union with Christ. A majority of scholars and translations take the phrase in Christ Jesus independently and not as the object of faith. Moo agrees and explains, quote; taken independently, these two phrases summarize two key elements of Paul's teaching in Galatians and, indeed, of his theology as a whole.

Our relationship with God is established by our union with Christ Jesus, and that union, in turn, is secured by our faith. Through faith, you are all sons of God in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:26.

Adoptions and blessings are manifold. I'll summarize five of them. There are at least five wonderful blessings of the Father's adopting us into his family.

First, we belong to our heavenly father and are a part of his family. Galatians 4:4 and 5. God sent his son to redeem those under the law so that we might receive adoption as sons. Galatians 4:4 and 5. God is our Father, and we are his sons or daughters.

God meets our deep need to belong by placing us as adult children in his family. We know God and are known by him. All other believers are our brothers and sisters in Christ.

I have spoken at a number of retreats on the topic of adoption, having written a book for PNR publishing called *Adopted by God*. And to my surprise, I found out that the two other pastors or professors teaching at this retreat had been drawn to the doctrine of adoption for the same reason I was—a real lack in our relationships with our earthly fathers.

Furthermore, in a retreat for men only, I was blessed as I gave the same simple teachings on adoption that I'm giving now, perhaps in a different format, but the same teachings from Romans 8 and Galatians 4, the two key places on adoption. Galatians 4:1 to 7. Romans 8, like 14 to 19, right in there. And God blessed.

And in a time of sharing around tables afterward, men were weeping, grown men, probably only because it was in the presence of their brothers and without their wives there, weeping as they felt the loss of their earthly father's love, the lack, and just weeping for joy at the being overwhelmed with the goodness and grace of their

heavenly father's love, which did not totally replace that lack of love from an earthly father, but sure did something wonderful for them in their hearts. It was a great blessing to be God's instrument and to watch God work. God meets our deep need to belong by placing us as adult children in his family.

He is our father. We are his children. We know him.

He knows us. All other believers are our brothers and sisters in Christ. Second, God gives us the spirit of sonship, which enables us to call him father in truth.

Paul writes, as I just read a minute ago, Romans 8:15, for you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear. Instead, you receive the spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, Abba, Father, the Holy Spirit. The spirit of adoption draws us to save faith in the Redeemer, Jesus, so that we can enter God's family. The spirit also plays a second role.

For a quote, in verse Romans 8:16, the Spirit himself testifies together with our spirit that we are God's children. Romans 8:16, mysteriously, the spirit himself testifies together with our human spirit that we are God's children. Mysteriously, the spirit assures us within that God is our father and we are his own.

He replaces our fear with freedom. God's most important means to assure his children is the promises of his word. But we rejoice that the hope of those promises, quote, will not disappoint us because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Close quote, Romans 5:5. As always, assurance is based on three things, God's word external to us, the Holy Spirit's ministry within us, and God working in our lives, both within and without us, if you will. The latter two of those are subjective, biblical, wonderful, and true, but they are not as important as the first one. It is God's promise of salvation, in this case of adoption, that on which we must base our assurance because, at times, we can't feel the Holy Spirit within, and at times, our lives don't encourage us but discourage us.

And through all of it, his word stands firm that all who believe in Christ are the children of a living God. Third, another blessing of adoption, by God's grace and spirit, we resemble our Father in heaven. I call this the principle of family resemblance.

We are no longer, we no longer belong to our father the devil and we no longer want to carry out his desires, compare John 8:44. Instead, we belong to God, our Father. We love him, and we want to please him, Romans 8:14.

For all those led by God's spirit are God's sons, Romans 8:14. Although the Bible teaches divine guidance, not in this verse. This does not speak of divine guidance, which is the biblical truth.

Rather, it speaks of believers following the spirit's leadership in holiness and love. That is, all those led by God's spirit are God's sons. We're led by God's spirit as privates are led by their sergeant in the army.

We follow God's spirit. We obey God's spirit. And in that way, we bear a family resemblance to our father in heaven.

We follow the spirit's leadership in holiness and love. By God's enabling grace, we do so and thereby resemble our father in heaven. Perfectly in this life? Never.

Truly in this life? Yes, by God's grace and his spirit. Fourth, God disciplines us, his children. Our father loves us and corrects us.

The writer to the Hebrews shares tough love with Christians enduring persecution for their faith. Romans 12, Hebrews 12:7, and then 9 and 10. The Lord disciplines the one he loves and punishes every child he receives; every son he receives endures suffering as discipline.

God is dealing with you as sons. Furthermore, we had human fathers discipline us, and we respected them. Shouldn't we submit even more to the father of spirits and live? For they, earthly fathers, disciplined us for a short time based on what seemed good to them.

But he does it for our benefit so that we can share his holiness. Hebrews 12:7 and 9 and 10. The fifth blessing of adoption.

There are more. I've just chosen five which, in my estimation, are among the most important ones. We have an inheritance.

Like other aspects of our salvation, adoption is both already and not yet. 1 John 3:2. Dear friends, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet been revealed. We know that when he appears, we shall be like him because we will see him as he is.

1 John 3:2. Paul teaches that adoption is both a present and a future reality. Galatians 4:7. You are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then God has made you an heir. Galatians 4:7. We are now sons or daughters, and we are also heirs of a future inheritance.

Because we are God's sons, we are also heirs. I'm quoting, heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ. If indeed we suffer with him, we may all be glorified with him.

Romans 8:17. In fact, we long for our final adoption. Quote: We ourselves have the spirit as the first fruits, and we also groan within ourselves eagerly waiting for the adoption and redemption of our bodies.

The next aspect of the application of salvation that we'll study is sanctification. After a brief biblical summary, we'll do a historical reconnaissance looking at Lutheran, Wesleyan, Keswick, Pentecostal, and Reformed views of the Christian life. Then, we'll consider, after evaluating the views, systematic formulations of sanctification.

Sanctification and the Trinity. Sanctification in union with Christ. Sanctification in our role.

And then we'll move on to another topic even after that. Sanctification, biblical summary. God is holy in his transcendence and in his character.

He is unstained or undefiled by any sin or defect. He is separate and distinct from anything in the created world. Sanctification, as the Bible teaches, refers to something being consecrated or devoted to God.

Something being separated from or distinct from common use. Believers in Jesus Christ are initially sanctified or holy in God's eyes. They are saints by virtue of Christ's work on the cross.

At the same time, believers are called upon to grow and progress in their holiness as believers. There's a process by which we are conformed more and more to the image of Jesus Christ. This process will reach its consummation and goal on the last day when believers are perfected in holiness and transformed so they are blameless and without fault before God.

Historical reconnaissance of sanctification, which really takes us to various evangelical views of the Christian life. This is not apologetics defending the faith before the world and enemies of the faith. This is polemics dealing with various views of the Christian life.

And so, I'm going to end up criticizing Christians and their views. I do so with this word beforehand. I give the right hand of fellowship to all true believers in Christ.

And as a matter of fact, all five of these views contain truths. And yet some of them have emphases with which I respectfully disagree. I will share and summarize their views from their writings, interact with them, take good grain, and discard the husk.

I hope you understand my attitudes are not to malign but to edify. Historical reconnaissance. I remember the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society in 1987 devoted to Christian spirituality.

I was startled to listen as evangelicals from various traditions and others as well shared their views on the Christian life. Although they could have emphasized what they had in common with other evangelicals in keeping with conference expectations, they emphasized their distinctive. The result was five very different views of the Christian life.

I remember sitting there thinking, if some poor person came, walked off of the street into this meeting, I say a new believer, a new impressionable believer, it wouldn't be healthy because there was such an exaggeration of emphases and attacking of the other views that it was a shock to my system as a person who taught Christian theology for 20 years at that point. To avoid the same result, before I describe various views of the Christian life, I will share what they have in common. Each of the five views below is held by evangelicals who believe in the inerrancy of Holy Scripture, the Trinity, the reality of sin, the incarnation, death, resurrection, and the second coming of Christ, salvation by grace through faith in Christ, and much more.

Nevertheless, the views differ below in emphases. I will summarize sanctification from five viewpoints. Lutheran, Wesleyan, Keswick, Pentecostal, and Reformed.

I'm going to point listeners and viewers to a couple of books. Five views on sanctification. Zondervan.

Christian spirituality, five views on sanctification. InterVarsity, 1989. Kelly Kapik, editor.

Sanctification, explorations in theology and practice. InterVarsity, 2014. Lutheran.

The Lutheran view of the Christian life is built around the primacy of justification. Its relation to sanctification, the law-gospel dialectic, and Luther's dictum that a Christian is simul justus et peccator. One more time.

The Lutheran view of the Christian life is built around the fact that justification has to be always in the first place for them. The relation of justification to sanctification, the Lutheran law-gospel contrast dialectic, and Luther's dictum that a Christian is always at the same time righteous and a sinner. Simul justus et peccator.

Francis Pieper's standard Christian dogmatics asserts that quote, in Lutheran theology, the article of justification is the central chief article by which the Christian

doctrine and the Christian church stand and fall. It is the apex of all Christian teaching. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, four volumes, volume 2, 512 to 513.

In these words, Luther's tradition remains true to its founder, who wrote concerning justification. Quote, if this article stands, the church stands. If this article collapses, the church collapses.

Martin Luther, *What Luther Says*, an anthology, three volumes, volume 2, 7, page 704, note 5. Justification holds such an important place in Lutheran dogmatics that critics sometimes claim it has no place for sanctification. This is not true, though Lutheranism is very protective of the primacy of justification. As we shall see, Pieper affirms two principles that summarize the connection, the relation between justification and sanctification.

One, there's an inseparable connection between justification or faith and sanctification. Where there is justification, there is, in every case, also sanctification. Two, but in this indivisible connection, the cart must not be placed before the horse.

That is, sanctification must not be placed before justification, but must be left in its proper place as the consequence and effect of justification. Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, page 7. If you think that indicates that this business is rather foundational to the rest of his dogmatics being on page 7, you're right. The key to Lutheran exegesis of both testaments is the dialectic between law and gospel.

In his discovery of the gospel, Luther prized the law-gospel distinction. He found in it the way to make sense of all scripture in the light of Paul's message of justification by grace through faith in Christ. Law stands for not only the Ten Commandments but all of Scripture's demands, obligations, threats, warnings, and judgments.

The law's demands are impossible for sinners to fulfill. Romans 3.10. Romans 6.23. Even, quote, all our righteous acts are like a polluted garment. Isaiah 64.6. Humans and all their thoughts and actions are tainted by sin, and sin condemns them before a holy God.

This is the main function of the law, according to Lutheran teaching. I mentioned as an aside, Luther, Calvin acknowledges this condemnatory use of the law, but he points to the original context of the Ten Commandments. I'm the Lord your God who redeemed you out of Egyptian bondage, and later on, in the midst of the early commandment, he shows loving-kindness to those who love me and keeps my commandments.

Calvin says the chief and principal use of the law is as a guide for the Christian life. Luther was nervous that if one said that, one was bringing in law through the back



door and somehow threatening free justification. The gospel, however, does not make demands but forgives our sins through Jesus' crucifixion.

The gospel even gives faith to poor sinners that they might be saved. Jesus was our substitute in all he said and did, especially in his death, resurrection, and subsequent victory. And all that is gospel.

God delivers to us what Jesus did for us through the church, sacraments, and the preaching of the word. The law convicts us of our inability and draws us to Christ, who saves us in the gospel, God's power to salvation, Romans 1:16. The law-gospel distinction teaches us that the Christian life is not mainly about keeping rules but about receiving God's forgiveness.

Every day, the law condemns us, and Christ forgives us. This is the grand message of the Bible and, therefore, the grand message of the church upon which the Christian life is based. Any other message diminishes the sinfulness of sin and makes hypocrites or leads to a merit theology that fills its adherents with false pride.

Luther famously defined a Christian as one who is *simul justus et peccator*, at the same time just in Christ and a sinner in him or herself. A believer is Christ; a believer in Christ is at one and the same time is *simul* righteous justus in God's sight through free justification, but always also in all ways a sinner peccator in himself. Lutheran theologian David Scare, who spoke at that conference in that ETS meeting, shivered my timbers when following somebody who taught that by reliance upon the Holy Spirit and the enabling grace of God, God intended us to make progress in the Christian life.

I quote professional Lutheran theologian David Scare, there is no progress in the Christian life. We are always and only *simul justus et peccator*. Wow.

That same brother and he is a brother in Christ and a very intelligent professor who has written many books, underscores the importance of the word *simul* at same time in Luther's dictum for the Christian life. Luther's concept, I'm quoting, I'm quoting at length here, David Scare's article, *Sanctification in Lutheran Theology in the Concordia Theological Quarterly*, 1985, pages 181 to 195. Quote, Luther's concept of *simul justus et peccator* is fundamental for a Lutheran understanding, not only of justification, but also of sanctification.

Before God, the person is totally justified, and the same person is in himself and sees himself as a sinner. What is important in this understanding is the Latin word *simul* at the same time and not in a sequential sense, as if one followed the other in point of time. In Lutheran theology, justification describes the believer's relationship with God.

Sanctification describes the same reality as justification but describes the justified Christian's relationship to the world and society. Justification and sanctification are not two separate realities but the same reality viewed from the different perspectives of God and man. From the perspective of God, the reality of the Christian is totally passive and non-contributory as it receives Christ only.

From the perspective of the world, the same reality never ceases in its activity and tirelessly performs all good works. John Wesley, 1703-1791, not only achieved great success as an evangelist and organizer of discipleship groups but also left his mark as a Christian theologian. His theology was eclectic and combined elements from the Greek fathers, spiritual writers of the Middle Ages, pietists, reformers, and Puritans.

As we might expect, therefore, his view of sanctification was also not monochrome. Wesley basically taught a reformation doctrine of justification, whereby God declares righteous all who trust Jesus as their substitute. Those who respond positively to universal, prevenient grace believe in Christ and are born again.

Sanctification begins at conversion and is progressive, the result of God's sanctifying grace. To these views, Wesley added his doctrine of believer's maturity, which is known as Christian perfection, entire sanctification, holiness, or second blessing. Christian perfection, entire sanctification, holiness, or second blessing.

Wesley thus taught that sanctification was both progressive, beginning at conversion, and instantaneous in Christian perfection. Sanctification included the use of spiritual methods, for which he and his colleagues earned the nickname Methodists in derision, while students at Oxford. He was influenced by Thomas a Kempis, whose book *The Imitation of Christ* became a devotional classic.

It still is. Wesley found that the use of methodical self-discipline was necessary because of inbred sin, his words, but was insufficient for victory over sin in the Christian life. Wesley had heard of Christian perfection before he experienced justification by grace through faith in Christ.

He had learned of it in the writings of Thomas a Kempis, Bishop Jeremy Taylor, and Wesley's contemporary William Law. Jesus had summarized its goal in the two greatest commandments: love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, love your neighbor as yourself, Matthew 22, verses 37-39. Wesley also found it in the Greek fathers, especially Clement of Alexandria, and in medieval spiritual writers.

After his rigorous discipline at Oxford and Georgia failed to bring Christian maturity, his ministry in Georgia, Wesley's conversion renewed his expectation of attaining it, but again he failed to attain Christian perfection. He thereby concluded for a time that entire sanctification must be achieved only at death. Nevertheless, he pressed

on, seeking Christian perfection, and believed that God could bring him to such a wholehearted dedication to God as is summed up in the name of that doctrine.

Entire sanctification doesn't mean sinlessness, all right? It means wholehearted dedication to God that one doesn't commit, I'll just say, major sins. I'll let him distinguish things for us. As Wesley wrote in *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, in the works of John Wesley, volume 11, pages 366-466, 100 pages, Wesley did not conceive of this as sinlessness, but of not willfully sinning against God because of overwhelming love for him.

That's good, that's right. In this context, when interpreting 1 John 3:9, whoever is born of God doth not commit sin, King James Version, which he used, Wesley defines sin as a voluntary transgression of a known law. He does acknowledge involuntary transgressions, that we must confess our whole lives, and is grateful that Christ died for all our transgressions, both voluntary and involuntary.

Christian perfection, however, concerns voluntary transgressions. Believers will be free from involuntary transgressions only when Christ returns. In *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, Wesley emphasizes that the grace of God is sufficient to save and wholly sanctify this life.

When pressed to offer a short definition of Christian perfection, he explains it consists of, quote, pure love reigning alone in the heart and life. This is the whole of scriptural perfection, close quote. Many Christians attain sanctification after conversion, but not all.

Once believers attain it, they cease to rebel against God and his commands but joyfully obey him, who fills their hearts with love for him. For Wesley's long-term creative theological contribution, Thomas Noble wrote, quote, we should look for it perhaps in the doctrine of the Christian life, close quote. This doctrine contains many elements, one of the most famous of which is the Wesleyan doctrine of entire sanctification, which I have been attempting to describe.

Wesley influenced his theological heirs in many ways, including bequeathing to them his doctrine of Christian perfection. In one regard, however, the majority broke with him, whereas Wesley combined progressive sanctification with instantaneous entire sanctification. I'm quoting now Kenneth Grider from *A Wesleyan holiness theology*, page 38.

Adam Clark, younger contemporary of Wesley, viewed the matter differently than Wesley did. He writes, and I'm quoting within the quote, in no part of the scriptures are we directed to seek holiness gradually. We are to come to God as well for an instantaneous and complete purification from all sin as for an instantaneous pardon.

Neither the gradual pardon nor the serial purification exists in the Bible, close quote. Kenneth Grider correctly notes, quote, on this issue of gradual sanctification, the holiness movement understood Clark's view to be scriptural instead of Wesley's. We will continue with our summary of the various Christian views of sanctification in the Christian life in our next lecture.

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