SUPERnatural: This is Why You’re Adopted Memory Verse: Romans 8:14

April 21st, 2024 Scripture Reading: Ephesians 1:3-6; 11; 14

SLIDE 1: Title

We began this series last week by making an argument for the idea that we are not only Christians, but indeed, we are, maybe even more so, Holy Spritians. It’s a made-up term, but I find it to be useful in describing the nature of who we are. We talked about the fact that the Holy Spirit is fully God and had chosen to take up residence within us. God no longer resides in a temple located halfway around the world…God is no longer present with us in the form of a singular man…No, now God has made his dwelling within our hearts. Last week, in our memory verse, 1 Corinthians 3:16 told us, “your body is a temple.”

 So I think we can rightly be called Holy Spiritans…we’ll see if it catches on. But today we are going to dig into another aspect of what it means for us to be filled with the Holy Spirit. What are the effects of this miraculous reality?

 In our house, one of the common refrains you will hear out of the mouths of our children is this, “I was just joking…” These are the magic words that you say after you hurl an insult or speak out of line or let something slip you were not supposed to. “I was just joking…” Apparently our house is full of comedians. “I was just joking” is the verbal equivalent of brushing things under the rug. I don’t want to go into all the things that are said between siblings that prompt this hilarious conclusion but I do want to mention one particular line that sticks out in my mind. When someone is being annoying or doing something unwelcome, some of our children have gotten in to the habit of delivering this line, “This is why you’re adopted.”

**SLIDE 2: This is why you’re adopted.**

Then when mom or dad overhears, suddenly the whole adoption thing is just a joke…it’s funny how no one laughs though.

 There are of course many things wrong with this statement. It is an attempt to dismiss the person, to make them feel that they do not belong, that they are somehow different. I am not as annoying as you, so therefore you must be adopted. It is a comment meant to ostracize. But it is a strange sort of judgment on the genetic makeup of a person when you never know what line of genius or talent they come from. Never mind the fact that those who have been adopted have been specifically chosen- those naturally born into the family….well, you get what you get.

 As parents, we try to crack down on the kids trying to hurt each other’s feelings, but as Holy Spiritans, I think from now on, when we hear such a comment, we will shout “Amen!” Because the Spirit that lives within us is none other than the Spirit of Adoption.

**SLIDE 4: Because the Spirit that lives within us is none other than the Spirit of Adoption.**

READ Romans 8:14-17.

**SLIDE 5: Romans 8:14-17**

 So let’s break some of this down: Paul mentions a spirit of slavery that lead you back into fear. This is what it means to be born od the world. See, in this world, the most important thing is to fit in, to be considered normal. If you stray too far from the middle, then people will start to look at you funny, they may judge you a certain way. And we are scared of that judgement. If we pursue Christ, if we are led by God’s Spirit, our lives are going to look weird. We are not going to say and do the things our neighbors say and do. We are not going to watch the same things or read the same books. We are not going to handle money in the same way, or prioritize the same things. If we are led by the Spirit, we will trend toward being set-apart…different. And we might get called out for it. We might be deemed foolish, fanatical, bigoted, narrow-minded… Essentially, the world’s response to us very well could be that of a dismissive sibling, “This is why you’re adopted.” And our response? “Amen! Amen, yes! It’s true! I have been adopted!”

 But sometimes the notion of being adopted, of not being a part of this world, of being different, stirs up fear within us. Sometimes, oftentimes maybe, we just want to fit in…we just want to go along to get along and be seen a normal. I think, according to Paul, this is the Spirit of slavery leading us back to fear, the fear of being different, the fear of standing out.

 Our passage from Romans is clear: Through the power of the Holy Spitrit, we are adopted as God’s children, so much so that we cry out “Oh Great God, almighty…Holy, Omnipotent Creator…Oh Grand Sustainer and Immaculate Being…no…We cry “Abba!” Which means daddy. It’s the exact same cry a child makes when their father comes home from work and runs to greet him with a hug…Daddy. The Great and Powerful Holy God of all the Universe has become our daddy through this miracle of adoption.

 Verse 16 Paul makes reference to the proof of this adoption. The proof is not some signed legal document that is filed away somewhere, the proof is within us, in our spirit. We consent to the arrangement; we agree to the terms. The CEB read that “the Holy Spirit agrees with our spirit.” The NASB translation puts it as, “The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God.” And I wanted to take a look at the Greek word that these translations are based on. Because it is very interesting as we take a look at how this adoption is finalized. Paul does use the word *summartureo.* The root of the word, the noun form is *martus* which we know as martyr. It means a witness or one who testifies. Paul combines this word with *sun* which means “with” so we can see *summartureo*  literally means to testify with,

**SLIDE 6: *summartureo*  literally means to testify with**

and if our sprit is testifying to the same thing as the Holy Spirit, if we are telling the same story, then our spirit and the Holy Spirit are in agreement. So both translations give two different angles of the same truth. This testifying that happens between the spirits is an agreement. There is no coercion here. We are dealing with the Spirit of adoption, not the spirit of kidnapping.

**SLIDE 7: We are dealing with the Spirit of adoption, not the spirit of kidnapping.**

It is a free offer that we are able to decline or endorse. As the Holy Sprit moves into our hearts and minds, as He seeks to dwell with us, when we are in agreement, we are not trying to fight him off, rather we welcome him in. We open ourselves up to his presence, not as an intrusion, but as an invitation. “Come Holy Spirit! Fill me, make me a fully-fledged child of God. I want to be a part of your family, I want more of you in my life…I am in agreement.”

 Finally, Paul makes clear some of the implications of this adoption. As children of God, it follows then that we are co-heirs with Christ.

**SLIDE 8: As children of God we are co-heirs with Christ.**

We are in a position to receive the same privileges that belong to Christ by virtue of being the Son of God. God is Lord over all the universe, the cosmos are in his hand and, by being officially adopted, we have been given access to all of it! All that the Father has belongs to us as our inheritance.

I trust you are familiar with the musical Annie. It’s the story of an orphaned girl who is selected to spend Christmas with a millionaire Oliver Warbucks. The eleven year old, who only knows loneliness and squalor is suddenly ushered into the lap of luxury. Annie is so overwhelmed by her change in fortune and her magnificent surroundings that she has to sing a song about it called, “I Think I’m Gonna Like it Here.” Virtually everything is changed in her life…all her former fears and worries are gone. Eventually the staunch and gruff Oliver Warbucks softens to Annie and he decides that we would like to officially adopt Annie as his own. He would become Daddy Warbucks and she would become heiress to his entire estate. It’s a sweet, feel good story, but I do want to highlight one particular scene known as the locket scene. After Oliver Warbucks officially adopts Annie, he presents her with a brand new, expensive locket to replace the old broken won she wore. But Annie’s reaction is not what Daddy Warbucks had in mind. Take a look: VIDEO CLIP

**SLIDE 9**

Annie is holding out hope that she might be able to find her real parents. As she refuses the new necklace she declares, “I just gotta find them.” She is taken with this curiosity about the unknown, this desire to know her origins. But as she is preoccupied with the past, her spirit in the present is not in agreement. She’s hanging on her former life. How often do we find ourselves in that position. We are surrounded by the provision of God’s goodness, we have experienced his kindness toward us, he has said that we belong to him, and we have agreed, yet we want to hang on to our old life. And sometimes we find ourselves refusing the things God has for us. We are thankful for all he has done for us…it’s more than we deserve, more than we could have imagined…yet sometimes we reply, “Thanks but no thanks…I’m still holding out hope that things will work our in this old life.”

Daddy Warbucks looks Annie straight in the eyes and says, “I’ll help you.” You want to find your parents, then I will do everything in my power to help you. It is a sweet gesture when it comes to the story in the film. It’s a sweet thing to say to a little girl, but it will never be God’s response to us. He did not redeem us and adopt us so that we could pine after the former things.

**SLIDE 10: God did not adopt us so that we could pine after the former things.**

 This was one of the main troubles that dogged the Israelites after they were freed from Egyptian slavery. They were grateful for freedom, yet life in the wilderness was not what they expected and they continually gave in to a desire to return to their captures; to return to their old way of life. The gospel of Luke records this telling interaction. READ Luke 9:61-62.

**SLIDE 11: Luke 9:61-62**

How often are we like this person? We say, “Jesus I want to follow you. Fill me with your Holy Spirit! I am in agreement, I’m all in. But first…” And we begin to lay out reasons why we are not quite ready to live into this adoption. Jesus is pretty clear here. We might say he even comes off as a little harsh. “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for God’s kingdom.” Don’t look back!

**SLIDE 12: Don’t look back!**

You have been adopted! Your life is now in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit! There is nothing for you back there. Our longing for this world, our longing to go back to the orphanage, to return to Egypt is the outworking of a spirit of fear. It is trying to pull us back, to repudiate and refuse this wonderful adoption that we have received. And so we stand against that fear, we fix our eyes ahead, we don’t look back.

But Paul is not quite done with us here. We have this amazingly good news that we are indeed children of God, we are indeed co-heirs with Christ and so have access to all that entails, but Paul is not about to let us live in some fabricated utopia. He is going to bring us down to reality. So hear this church: We are not adopted as a means to escape the struggles of the orphanage…we are actually sent to the orphanage.

**SLIDE 13: We are not adopted as a means to escape the struggles of the orphanage…we are actually sent to the orphanage.**

Our life in the here and now is not about being pampered in our Father’s mansion…it’s about living out our adoption as his children in the brokenness and poverty of the orphanage. Paul says, “We are God’s heirs and fellow heors with Christ, if we really suffer with him so that we can also be glorified with him.”

Jesus Christ is glorified, but he got there through suffering. Jesus Christ rose victoriously from the dead, but he got there by way of crucifixion. Do we presume that our journey will be any different? The Holy Spirit, this Spirit of Adoption, points us to the way of Jesus, this same Jesus who said “Don’t put your hand to the plow and look back.” This same Jesus who said, “Whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.” This same Jesus who said, “Take up your cross and follow me.”

 As Annie is awed by the magnificence of the Warbucks mansion, she is surrounded buy a whole host of maids and butlers, cooks and nannies. She is told she will never have to lift a finger, that they were all there to serve her and she would never have to do another chore. There is something tragic about this scene, even a bit Satanic, because it speaks to that selfish dream that we try to quietly harbor in our hearts. We want to be served, we want to be pampered, we want the world to revolve around me for once! But this is not what our Abba has in store for us. He wants us to be like Christ. he wants us to respond in obedience to him, to love him. Jesus said, “The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve.”

 Suffering is part of the deal. It is part of what our spirit agreeS to. We know it won’t be easy, but we also know to Whom we belong. We have a great hope of what lies in store for us beyond the years of this life. Author and biblical commentator Eugene Boring puts it well, “The path to the kingdom goes through, not around, the woes of history.” We are on that path, so do not lose sight of the end. The kingdom will come in it’s fullness, so hang on to that plow and push forward.

**SLIDE 14: hang on to that plow and push forward.**

We can trust the Holy Spirit of adoption to see us through and to make sure we arrive safely home.

 We are here to serve others to the glory of God. We bend over backwards for the sake of others. We lay down our lives in service to the God who has saved us. We live differently from the culture around us. We spend our money differently, we speak differently, we make decisions that don’t make sense. We live in faith. We march to the beat of a different drum. We are Holy Spiritans and so, we are weird. Some might find us annoying. Some might want to distance themselves a bit, some might turn to us with a snide look in their eye and say, “This is why you’re adopted!” And we can respond “Amen! God has chosen me! Amen!”