

Current Affairs # 10 – Adoption

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I want to continue from the last broadcast in which we hoped to speak about eternal realities that do not fade away, and I want to talk to you about the spirit of adoption. To set this one up, I want to pose a question. For many people the question is: Why has the church, particularly the evangelical church, embedded itself into politics? Why has it become an extension, in the United States, of a political party? The answer is that it does not trust God. In fact, I would go further and I would say, by and large it does not understand the Scriptures. It cites Bible verses as “principles,” and it has done so and it continues now to do so with a quickening pace, to cite Bible verses for social action for what it wants to do. In that sense, it is really no different from quoting Shakespeare or Milton, or quoting some current or past philosopher. It has become unconnected from the meaning of Scripture, from the truth. It has very much become part of that thing today that is referred to as the post-truth era.

What is true about the post-truth era is that no one feels compelled to tell the whole truth. Everyone feels that it is their right to tell a partial truth, if it advances their particular agendas. Society has adopted that principle, but it has been a long and clear development in church circles, where on one side, leaders of the more established church groups—the historic churches—kept things hidden. It is a way to commit a fraud upon people. When you keep things hidden that, if known, would require you to change, then it is the same as a lie, and the motivation is that you want to maintain the status quo. The problem with that, of course, is that it thinks that God does not know the difference between a lie and what is true. In fact, I would go further than that and I would say, there is no fear of God in that. There is no accountability beyond the order of the system itself. So finally, in that particular framework, society itself has brought judgment on the church. Society has, by the use of law, compelled a certain obedience, but now it is to criminal statutes. That is because the actors within that framework, the framework of that church culture, refused consistently—not occasionally; not once in a while; not a few bad apples, but a whole rotten barrel—because they refused to deal in the truth. So, well before society adopted the thing called the post-truth era, the church was its most prolific practitioner of alternative truths.

Over my years and experience in talking to pastors and church leaders, I have heard a variety of responses to things that I was saying based on the Scripture, responses I would get from these

leaders. Some would just simply come out and say, “I know what you are saying is true, but how would I feed my family? Because if I said what you say, the institution would kick me out.” Others would just argue with me that it was not so, but when shown the silliness of their perspective with scratching just a little bit deeper than the surface of their arguments, a sophomore could see that they were holding on to interpretations of Scripture that, essentially, you could have learned in Sunday school as an adolescent. By and large the understanding of most church leaders in the evangelical world has not changed since their Sunday school days. They actually think that these are the timeless, eternal truths. How would you rate someone’s ability to function in a complex society, whose mental framework and whose body of knowledge has not changed since the eighth grade? Would you entrust them with the complexities of an economic system or with the complexities of governance in the political realm with advancing societal functions? You would not. You would not think to.

I will give you an example, today, of how the church has failed to grow up—a particular fashion which it has failed to grow up in a basic understanding. Now when that has happened, the mature thoughts put forth in the Scriptures are never part of their lexicon of thought or ideas. They simply choose not to know. A child is always concerned about his or her survival. A child does not see his or her place in society. A child does not understand his or her responsibilities to the greater whole. So many of those who constitute the leadership of the evangelical world have been in a state of arrested development, scripturally. They simply do not know what the Bible is talking about, and so they have nothing to hold onto except the ebb and flow of the fortunes of a nation. Therefore, they have decided to throw their lot in with the political currents and the parties of politics that more or less assure them of some levels of stability in an increasingly changing world. I think the Bible would refer to that as going down to Egypt to buy chariots and horses (cf. Isaiah 31:1), rather than growing up to become more and more aware of who God is and, therefore, our identity *in Him*.

I want to show you something here that illustrates this principle. I want to take this reading from the book of Ephesians 1:5, and I want to speak about the word “adoption.” That word in the Greek is the word, *huiiothesia* (Strong’s Greek 5206); it is a word for adoption. Now, if you take a domestic understanding of the word “adoption”—meaning, you do not know what the word means

but you infer its meaning from the present order of things—you would understand adoption to be something like a family taking in child who did not have parents, whose parents are either dead or judged to be unqualified to raise these children. Through a legal process, the family could take these children in, give them a home, give them a family, give them a name, and take them in as part of the family. If you have this idea of adoption, you really have not even begun to scratch the surface of what the Scriptures mean with the word “adoption.” Because, here is a conundrum: Are you born again, or are you adopted? The Scriptures use both terms to define our relationship to God.

In John 3:3, Jesus Himself said, *“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”* And in John 3:5, *“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.* The word for “born” there is a reference to being issued from the womb. In Hebrews 2:11, the writer says, *“For both the One who sanctifies [Christ] and those who are sanctified [that would be us] are of the same family. That is why Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers.”* The word for “brothers” there is the word, *adelphos* (Strong’s Greek 80), and it means to be of the same womb. In the story of John 3:5, Jesus was speaking to a very learned man, a member of the Sanhedrin council whose name was Nicodemus. When Jesus said a man must be born again, Nicodemus understood birth in the ordinary way and he said: *“How can someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!”* So, what was his understanding of the word that Jesus was using? Issuing from the womb, the concept of *adelphos*: coming from the womb. The word “born” means to be issued from the womb, but adoption is quite something else.

The question becomes: Are we born again, and therefore become the children of God—the sons of God; or, are we adopted? Whenever someone attempts to put you in this kind of odd place by citing two sets of Scripture indicating two different things on the same subject, and apparently in conflict, you should never choose between the two. Even if you do not know what the answer is, it is always, both. So are we born again, or are we adopted? The answer is, yes. We are born again, and we are adopted. Well, how is that? What is that about? What does it mean, because they are not the same thing?

The Scriptures use words to define different stages of sonship. As the book of Romans, the eighth chapter, would tell us, when we are born again we cry out, “Father! Father!” (cf. Romans 8:15). That is the reference to how a child cries out. As a newborn, that is how you know it is a live birth. In fact, if it is the habit of the attending medical personnel, they will spank the child if the child is not crying out, to elicit this cry. So, it is a reference to an absolute newborn baby taking its first breath and crying out. That is the reference to being born. It relates to the term, *népios* (Strong’s Greek 3516), which is that of being an infant; it is still a reference to a son, but it is an infant son. The word, *huiiothesia* (Strong’s Greek 5206), which refers to adoption is a compound word.

- *hyiothesía* (from 5207 */hyiós*, "son" and 5087 */tithēmi*, "to place") – properly, *sonship* (legally made a son); *adoption*.

The first aspect of the compound is the term: *huio*, from the word *huios*, and that references a fully mature son. So much so, that when God spoke out of heaven at the baptism of Jesus in Matthew 3:17—“*And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”*”—when He said “This is My beloved Son,” He is not speaking of the same concept that prophetically referred to His birth that said, “*For unto us a **Child** is born*” (Isiah 9:6). A child is born to become the son who is given—“*For unto us a Child is born, unto us a **Son** is given*” (Isaiah 9:6). The “Son” is different from the “Child.” The word *huios* is different from the word *népios*, because they refer to completely different stages of growth regarding the same person. Now, that is not difficult to understand. We are all born as newborn infants, but as we grow up, we go through different stages of our growth; and as it relates to God, the different stages of our growth bring us into greater maturity for the purpose of handling the Lord’s business in greater and greater ways.

Most of you who are listening to this have probably never even heard of a distinction made in Scripture between the stages of sonship, as they regard a child and a fully mature son. Because for the most part, there is no theology in any of Christian theology that tells you: You need to grow up. That growing up is not some sort of fanciful notion. It is, in fact, what is required of you, because the purpose for your being created is to carry the representation of God in the earth. That is not some made up idea; that is central to your very being. If there is not even a thought about

your need to grow up, then the theology surrounding church and church ideas will never challenge you to grow up. In fact, it has no capacity to instruct you in the greater things of God. If you never grow up, what will you be as long as you live? You can only be a child, and a child can always be led by the child's emotions. The vast majority of the people today, in any form of Christian religion, are children. They may be very competent and able functionaries within society—they may be doctors, lawyers, engineers, business owners, etc. They understand that in these areas they have to keep pace with the information, and they have to adapt their practices to reflect the new advances within their fields. More than that, they need to simply understand what is going on in society so that they are properly informed. This is true in every other sphere of society except the church.

I was having a conversation recently with a professor at a Christian university who told me that he, on occasion, has sat in on discussions with people from the Bible faculty, and the discussions are pretty astonishing. They will admit that their ministerial students are very troubled people. But you know, that is not a news flash. That is not some new thing. The ministry has long attracted people who, in normal circumstances, would have a very difficult time functioning in the rest of society. We could go down that trail, but I have a limited time left. That their ministerial students were severely broken people. And, one of these persons commented that the church is like a prostitute catering to its primary supporters; but remarked in passing, albeit a prostitute, it is still their mother, because they have spent so much time and committed so many of their mental and social resources to something that they no longer even believe in. That is why they have to go down to Egypt. That is why they have to go to the political process. Because, they do not know God.

Huiotheisa is a reference to the mature son whom God selects out of His family to position as His heir. Which is to say, whatever God means to give to us beyond sustaining us, beyond getting us good jobs, which is mostly what Christians ask for—they ask for a good job; they ask for good health; they ask God to help them with ideas and information about how to raise children, better opportunities. It is always about just surviving. The culture of the orphan dominates the church and dominates the relationship between Christ and the people. But, God has an inheritance for us.

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The inheritance is this: We were put here to be clothed with an identity that is derived from God, so that we could live in that identity and people could see God when they see us.

Jesus put it this way, “If you have seen Me, you have seen My Father” (cf. John 14:9), because “My father and I are one” (cf. John 10:30). Before you could come to that place, like Jesus Himself—He was born and thirty years after His birth, in His baptism, God says to the earth, to the world that was listening to Him that day, “*This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!*” (Matthew 3:17). Jesus then, in return, said, “If you have seen Me, you have seen My Father” (cf. John 14:9). Why? Because, “I have come to show you the Father” (cf. John 14:7-11). Absent the theology of representing God in the earth, we are reduced to scrappers and grabbers trying to get something, enough hoarded so we could survive. The preponderance of theology, today, in any expression of Christian religion is the theology of survival. It is all about survival; it is nothing about representation. Yet, *huiiotheisa*—the mature son, is the one upon whose shoulders God places the mantle of representing God in the earth. If you never mature, if you never grow up, you can never represent God in the earth. It is that simple.

Now, are you born again? Absolutely. That is how you get into the family. Are you adopted? Yes. But that means to be positioned as a mature son to represent the Father. That is the meaning of the spirit of adoption: to be positioned to represent the Father. And He is the one who positions you. You must first be in the family before you could become the heir of the right to represent the Father. As long as you are a child, you cannot do that and you are reduced to merely surviving. Unfortunately, the culture of the church does nothing to remove you from that entrapment. I want to continue to bring you these truths from the Scripture, in the hope that in these difficult times, you find a solid place on which to stand.

I am Sam Soleyn. I will see you again. Bye-bye.