

Being the Family of God Part 2 – Paternity Testing

1. Joke about children:
 - a. You spend the first two years of your children's life teaching them to walk and talk. Then you spend the next sixteen telling them to sit down and shut up.
 - b. Grandchildren are God's reward for not killing your own children.
 - c. Mothers of teens now know why some animals eat their young.
 - d. Children seldom misquote you. In fact, they usually repeat word for word what you shouldn't have said.
 - e. The main purpose of holding children's parties is to remind yourself that there are children more awful than your own.
 - f. We childproofed our homes, but they are still getting in.
 - g. Be nice to your kids. They will choose your nursing home one day.
 - h. *I sometimes think that one of the reasons God lets us have children is so that we can see what we put Him through as His children.*

2. Transition and Review
 - a. For the next few weeks we are going to be looking at what it means to be the Family of God.
 - b. Last week, we heard about the baggage that we all carry from being children of the flesh, children of the devil and children of this world.
 - i. Our own earthly fathers, some good and some not so good, haven't really done a great job to demonstrate our heavenly Father's love and character to us.
 - ii. I think that Jesus was aware of this, and in spite of it, urged us to call God our "Father."
 - iii. This might be because we are to come to God with the attitude of "little children."
 - iv. It also might be because throughout our journey as Christians, we will discover just how incredible God, our Father's love is compared to our earthly fathers.
 - c. Last week we came to grips with our identity.
 - i. We dealt with the lie that many of us believe that you are what you do and learned the truth that what we do comes from who we are.
 - ii. We came to realize that God has given each person who has trusted in Him a brand new identity...that is, His child.
 - d. Discovering what it means to be the Family of God first requires us to discover what it means to be a "child of God."
 - i. Obviously, in God's family, God is the head, the Father...but who are we? We are His children.
 - ii. How did we get to be His children?
 1. We learned it was through trusting our lives to Jesus Christ.
 - iii. We learned that we were "slaves" before we became children of God...we were undeserving of the title "children of God." And yet, God chose to love us and give us value.
 - iv. We also learned that as children of God we no longer have to feel or act like slaves. I
 - v. In fact, part of this sermon series will be geared to helping you and I see the wonderful privileges that come with being God's children.

3. Ro 8:14-17 *"For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" 16 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him".*
 - a. I want you to notice what this passage does not say:
 - i. "As many as go to church, these are the sons of God."

- ii. "As many as read their Bibles, these are the sons of God."
 - iii. "As many as take communion, these are the sons of God."
 - iv. According to this text, **the test for son-ship not what a person does, but is whether or not a person is led by the Spirit of God.**
 - v. ***The paternity test for being a child of God is evidenced in the Spirit of God within us.***
- b. To be led by the Spirit you must first possess the Spirit of God.**
- i. Or better said, **He must possess (own) you.**
 - ii. In other words, to become a child of God and to have the indwelling Spirit of God, you must surrender the control of your life by trusting it to Jesus Christ.
 - iii. The title to your life must have Jesus Christ as the owner.
 - 1. Just as a car or home has a title of ownership, the ownership of your life must have changed.
 - 2. When that occurs, the Holy Spirit takes up residence in our inner being and testifies that belong to Him!
- c. So how are we led by the Holy Spirit?**
- i. We are led by the Spirit of God, like a student is led by his teacher or like a traveler on a journey is led by a guide.
 - ii. We get direction, guidance, leadership, advice, comfort from the Spirit of God.
 - iii. We are led by the still small voice inside our hearts that says, "go here", "do this," "speak this."
 - iv. Spirit relies on persuasion rather than force.
 - v. In fact, Paul goes to some pains to avoid misunderstanding on this very point, assuring us that the Spirit's leadership does not involve a new bondage that is no improvement over the old in which fear ruled the life (probably a fear of the consequences of sin and a fear of death,).
- d. The passage does not say, 'As many as are driven by the Spirit of God.'**
- i. The devil is a driver, and when he enters either into men or into hogs he drives them. Remember how the whole herd of pigs ran violently down a steep place into the sea?
 - ii. The Holy Spirit leads, but does not drive. He directs but does not coerce. You never have so much freedom of choice as when you are led by the Spirit of God.
 - iii. The Holy Spirit is a gentleman and that is why the bible says that we can 'grieve' the Holy Spirit. We do so by *refusing* or *resisting* His leadership.
 - 1. But resisting or refusing His leading does not disqualify us as children of God. It only makes us "disobedient" children of God.
- e. Where does the Holy Spirit lead us?**
- i. He leads us to do what the Father is doing, not unlike what Jesus said when he told His disciples, "I only do what I see the Father doing."
 - ii. He leads us in the Father's will.
- f. Are you a child of God? Is the Holy Spirit directing and speaking into your life and unleashing His power in your life? If this all sounds strange or foreign to you, it is likely that you are not a child of God but rather a religious person.**
4. *v15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"*
- a. Living as a child of God means an intimate, joyful relationship with God, not like the bondage and fear demonstrated by the law.
 - b. A child of God can have a relationship with God so close that they may cry out, Abba, Father! (Daddy!)
 - i. Abba was the address of a small child to his father.
 - ii. Christ used the exact same words during his agony in the garden. (Mark 14:36)

- iii. Gal. 4:6 “*Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"*” THE SPIRIT CRIES OUT...NOT JUST US!
- c. Does that make you feel uncomfortable, calling God “Daddy?” Does that feel to intimate? Does it feel too personal or too familiar?
 - i. If you are like most Christians, your answer is probably yes. We have been brainwashed to see God as the Big Guy in the sky, the Holy God who is busy with the important stuff of the world, the Distant One who will only hear us when we have the right words and formulas to say to Him.
 - ii. Yes, God is holy...and unapproachable, awesome and fearful. Yet He chose to call us His children!
 - iii. *If your father is a physician. If someone is to go to visit him, they will have to sign their name and wait in a waiting room, then wait in another waiting room, then get undressed in an examination room and wait some more until he comes to see them. But if you are his son, you go to your dad’s office and just walk right in, and see him immediately. Why? Because he’s your dad! You don’t need an appointment and you don’t call him Dr. so and so. You call him daddy!*
 - iv. No other world religion knows God as daddy! Only in Christ can you claim that.
 - v. God desires you to know Him that way and to have such an intimate relationship that you can call Him that.
 - 1. It is absurd to try to call Him Daddy if you have rejected Him and His Son. It would be only another formula for trying to get something you want.
 - vi. To have the intimacy with Father God, you must develop that intimacy daily, growing in love as God’s child with your Father who has adopted you.
 - 1. The Holy Spirit, whom you have received, does not produce an anxious state of mind, such as those experience who are under the law or living by their works, but he produces the feelings of affection, reverence, and confidence and enables us, out of the fullness of our hearts, to call God our Father.
- d. Last week I shared how Roman’s had many slaves and occasionally, a citizen would adopt a slave to be his son so that he could have an heir.
 - i. Under Roman adoption, the life and standing of the adopted child changed completely. The adopted son lost all rights in his old family and gained all new rights in his new family; the old life of the adopted son was completely wiped out, with all debts being canceled, with nothing from his past counting against him any more.
 - ii. When we give our lives to Jesus the same thing happens. We belong to a new Father! We are a child of the king.
- e. We “Cry out”
 - i. We don't whisper "Daddy" as if we were hesitant to speak so affectionately. Instead, we cry it out!
 - ii. Children that cannot speak vent their desires by crying.
 - iii. Before we learn how to pray our spirit cries out!
 - iv. Calvin said, “*Crying (out) is a sign of certainty and unwavering confidence.*”
 - v. I think about sitting before His feet here on Sunday morning, worshipping, and knowing He delights in our praise just like any of us as a father delights in our children enjoying our company.
- f. Our crying out “daddy” doesn’t “Lead to fear again”: that was where we came from...performance based living! Fear based living!
- g. Our heavenly Father “has not given us a spirit of timidity [or, fear], but of power and love and discipline” (2Ti1:7).
- h. John assures us that “there is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love” (1Jn4:18).

5. *16 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,*
- a. Have you ever had to testify in a trial before a court of law? You understand that your testimony is what is needed to provide evidence for something.
 - b. The evidence that we are children of God is from the Holy Spirit.
 - i. He ‘testifies’ – or bears witness to our spirit that we are children of God:
 - c. DEFINITION OF ASSURANCE: **The inward evidence of assurance is revealed by the Holy Spirit to our understanding and confirmed by our own conscience resulting in a confident knowledge that we are children of God.**
 - d. I often come into contact with Christians who have prayed to receive Christ as their Savior and Lord who after a few months wonder if they are Christians.
 - i. They don’t ‘feel’ good about themselves, or they don’t have that “high” they had when they first began to walk with God. They struggle with their eternal security and even the fact of their belonging to Christ at all.
 - ii. Let me say that you can *know that you know that you know* that you belong to Christ and nothing can reverse that!
 1. The only way you cannot belong to Christ is to REFUSE to surrender your life to Him.
 2. If you gave your heart to Jesus and trusted Him for your future and for your forgiveness, then the Holy Spirit will testify that you belong to Christ!
 3. John wrote in his gospel, “*These things have been written so that you may KNOW (not think, not hope) that you have eternal life.*”
 - iii. It is the testimony (on the witness stand of the eternal courts of heaven) that the Holy Spirit gives that proves we are children of God!
 - iv. **Down payment of our inheritance: A wealthy man called his faithful assistant into his office one day and said, “I’ve put your name in my will, and someday you’ll receive \$10,000. Since it may be a while before you get that legacy, I want to make you happy now by paying you the interest on that amount each year. Here is a check for \$600 as a starter.”** The surprised clerk was doubly grateful. The prospect of the inheritance was certainly good news, but the money he received in advance gave him complete assurance that someday the entire \$10,000 would be his.
 - v. This assurance is what the Holy Spirit does for us. He is the down payment of our future inheritance.
 - e. **We don’t walk by the Spirit to become Children of God...we walk by the Spirit because we ARE children of God!**
 - i. You cannot walk by the Spirit if you are not a child of God.
 1. You can do good stuff, you can be a nice person, you can even live sacrificially.
 2. But those things won’t make you a child of God. Only surrender will.
 3. Surrender will produce changes in our lives by the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit!
 - ii. There are also Christians whose heads are so foggy from spiritual attack that they begin to believe the lie that they are not God’s children after all.
 1. Even so, the witness of the Spirit is still there in what we call “conviction of sin.”
 2. The Holy Spirit testifies that you are a child of God because as long as you are a child of God, it will be hard for you to sin without feeling the grief that you cause the Holy Spirit.
 3. Why is this? Because the Holy Spirit has united God to our Spirit and we literally feel the crushed heart of God when we resist God.
 4. So the Spirit within us is continuously bearing witness that we are a child of God.
 5. Our relationship to sin will never be the same.
 - a. Before we were saved we chased after SIN.

- b. Now that we are saved SIN chases after us. And the Spirit within us will not let us be "comfortable" toward sin.
 - iii. *"testifies with our spirit..." Someone asked Melvin Trotter, who was a hopeless alcoholic before his conversion, "How do you know you are a Christian?" Trotter replied, "I was there when it happened!"*
- 6. *17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow (joint) heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him".*
 - a. Heirs: Because we are in Christ, we have the privilege of relating to the Father as Jesus does - therefore, we are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.
 - i. Being a child of God means having an inheritance.
 - ii. In Luke 18:18 the rich young ruler asked Jesus, what must I do to inherit? But the rich young ruler missed the point because **inheritance is not a matter of doing it is a matter of being - of being in the right family.**
 - iii. Luther: *"A son is an heir, not by virtue of high accomplishments, but by virtue of his birth. He is a mere recipient. His birth makes him an heir, not his labors."*
 - b. *If you were the child of Bill Gates, you could expect to inherit all of his wealth. It wouldn't matter if he adopted or if you were a natural child, in the eyes of the law, you would be his child and his heir. So too with God Himself.*
 - c. Heirs inherit something, and what do we inherit? Paul makes it clear: an heir of God through Christ. We inherit God Himself.
 - i. For some, this might seem like a paltry inheritance. But for those who are really in Christ, who really love God, to be an heir of God is the richest inheritance of all.
- 7. If you are a child of God...then
 - a. You have an inheritance.
 - b. You have assurance.
 - c. You have a Daddy! You are not illegitimate! You've got a Daddy who cares about you!
 - i. CB – had a baby out of wedlock. But he cares very deeply about his baby. It is his and he is going to prove it. What a love for a child! God proves that He loves us and that we belong to Him!
 - ii. God loves you enough!
- 8. The question you must ask, then, is are you sure, today, that you are a child of God?
 - a. *Sometime when you're in an airport, observe the difference between passengers who hold confirmed tickets and those who are on standby. The ones with confirmed tickets read newspapers, chat with their friends or sleep. The ones on standby hang around the ticket counter, pace and pace. The difference is caused by the confidence factor. If you knew that in fifteen minutes you would stand in judgment before the Holy God and learn your eternal destiny, what would your reaction be? Would you pace? Would you say to yourself, "I don't know what God's going to say--will it be 'Welcome home, child,' or will it be 'Depart from me; I never knew you'?"*
 - b. What is your answer? If you are unsure, I encourage you to surrender to Him now. Complete and total surrender. Jesus fill me and make me Your own! I will be happy to pray with you if you want to become His child and be led by His Spirit!