

Raised To Life

A Father's Love
Romans 8:12-17
Pastor Dwayne Smith

I. We are FAMILY.

- a. This is the language that God uses to describe and explain our relationship.
 - i. Our relationship with God: He is our FATHER.
 1. Old Testament – referred to God as “Father,” “Children of God” - Deuteronomy 14:1, “Father of creation” - Malachi 2:10, “Father of Israel.” - Jeremiah 31:9
 2. New Testament – Jesus taught us to refer to God as “Father.”
 - a. “Father” is not just one way, it is “the” way to refer to God.
 - b. “Father is a term of intimacy -- “Daddy.”¹
 - ii. Our relationships with others: brothers and sisters, our siblings.
- b. When family is working together, there is nothing like it.
 - i. A healthy family provides covering over every area of our life physically, emotionally, financially, relationally, spiritually...
 - ii. FAMILY is a witness to God’s love (John 13:35).
 - iii. This is why it is important to gather as the family.
 - iv. Even in persecution, the family gathers and thrives: “underground church.”
- c. PROBLEM: When family is broken, there nothing more hurtful.
 - i. REJECTION compromises our health, our decision making, our relationships, how we treat others, our ability to accept help...
 - ii. “The brain development of infants (as well as their social, emotional and cognitive development) depends on a loving bond or attachment relationship with a primary caregiver, usually a parent.”
 - iii. “...parental inconsistency and a lack of love can lead to long-term mental health problems as well as to reduced overall potential and happiness.”²

II. To FIX our brokenness, God ADOPTS us.

- a. Adoption is a key work in the Gospel.
 - i. **RESCUE:** We were fatherless, and God became our Father (Psalm 68:5-6).
 - ii. **CHOSEN:** Adoption is more than rescue. It means we are CHOSEN.
 - iii. Adoption in Paul’s Culture: “In the Roman world of the first century AD an adopted son was a son deliberately chosen by his adoptive father to perpetuate his name and inherit his estate; he was no whit [sc. not in the

¹ Baker’s Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology.

² <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5330336/>

smallest degree] inferior in status to a son born in the ordinary course of nature, and might well enjoy the father's affection more fully and reproduce the father's character more worthily."³

- b. Adoption RESTORES our identity – our identity is with God.
 - i. When we become God's child, we become God's heir (Romans 8:17).
 - ii. An heir is someone who is like the Father and receives ALL the Father has.

III. Adoption brings FREEDOM empowered by the Holy Spirit

- a. God has not given us "a spirit of slavery (bondage)," He has given us "the spirit of adoption" (verse 15).
 - i. Previously, we approached God as slaves.
 - ii. The common form of slavery in Paul's time was debt repayment. There was a debt hanging over us.
 - iii. We were at the mercy of the one to whom we owed money.
- b. Now, we approach God as our Father.
 - i. He has paid our debt through Jesus.
 - ii. Released us from the "sinful nature" that keeps placing us back into debt.
- c. This is all empowered by the Holy Spirit.
 - i. "...through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature," verse 13.
 - ii. "His Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children," verse 16.
- d. POWER with RESPONSIBILITY: The Spirit gives power, but we retain the responsibility to ACT.

Reflection Questions:

- How am I relating to God? Is God a "Father" in my life?
- Am I behaving as "His child?"
- How is my "family"—is it healthy, or is there brokenness that needs attention?
- Is my life empowered by the Holy Spirit?
- What is God speaking to me today? How will I respond?

WAYS TO RESPOND			
			
COMMUNION	PRAY	JOURNAL	PRAYER WALLS
Visit stations to partake of the bread and cup.	Pray with your neighbor or one of our prayer teams.	Write out a prayer or journal a reflection.	Write prayer requests on the prayer walls.

³ F. F. Bruce, p. 157; cf. Barclay, pp. 106f.