

**THE BIG IDEA: The Father's heart has always been adoption.**The Take-Off

Story of the man who spent everything on a ticket to cross the Atlantic

- Took 2-3 weeks to cross
- Cost everything he had
- Ate cheese and crackers that he brought with him
- Toward end of the trip he found out the ticket included meals
- He was missing out on what had already been paid for

I'm not 100% sure that story is 100% true, but it is a great way to get us thinking about the passage of Scripture that

God has for us this morning as we kickoff our third Encounter and another season of ministry in our church

Turn with me to [Galatians 4:1-7 \(NIV\)](#)

A couple weeks ago, the Holy Spirit really highlighted this passage to me

The first thing He said to me was that **freedom was never the goal; adoption was.**

I'll explain more about what that means, but in order to understand the passage, we need to know why there is so much language in here about slaves and children and heirs.

Today's Big Idea explains why: **the Father's heart has always been adoption.**

**1. Adoption is a family affair**

- I learned early in my life that **adoption is a family affair**
- My mom and dad brought a new sister into our lives when I was in elementary school and I remember the joy and tension that came as a result
- Sissy wasn't adopted in a vacuum - she was brought into a family by a family
- I was reminded of that this week as I listened to another family talk about their experience adopting another member
- What we find here is that adoption requires relationship - it takes relationship to make relationship
- Did you catch that all 3 members of the Trinity are mentioned here?
- The Father sent the Son (v. 4) and sent the Spirit (v. 6)
- Think of it like this: the Father selects us, the Son saves us, and the Spirit sets us.
- If you're more into rhyming things, the Father knows us, the Son chose us, and the Spirit grows us.
- Either way you want to say it, the Trinity basically functions as an adoption agency.
- The Son and Spirit are busy with adoption because the Father's heart has always been adoption.
- Can you imagine the mess it would have been if my parents had adopted without first preparing a family that had the same desire?
- It's a family affair all the way from heaven to here.

**2. Adoption changes our identity**

- That brings us to the next thing that I sensed as I marinated on this passage
- It sounds a little different, but the Father's plan was never freedom; it was always adoption.
- His goal wasn't that we would no longer be slaves, but that we from now on be sons
- Adoption changes our identity** from slaves to sons (and daughters)
- The word used for adoption means "to be placed in the family as an adult son"
- What that means is that my identity has changed, and identity is about our position
- We are in the family with access to everything the Father has given His children
  - Ephesians 1:3 / we have every spiritual blessing
  - Ephesians 2:19 / we're ALL equal citizens in Christ
- I said that the goal wasn't freedom, but adoption
- Look at verse 4 - Jesus was sent to set us free, but it didn't stop there
- If it had, we'd be forgiven orphans
- But the Spirit was sent so that by Him we could call out "Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15)
- Here at the start of Encounter, it's important to remember that the goal of encountering the power and presence of the Holy Spirit isn't to see people set free, but to see them set in family (Psalm 68:6)

### 3. Adoption challenges our maturity

- a. If we're honest, this is when adoption can get tough, because not only does it change our identity, but it also **challenges our maturity**
- b. If identity was about position, then maturity is about process
- c. Positionally, we've got it all
- d. Practically, we've got to learn how to handle it all
- e. In verses 1-3, Paul basically says that we were heirs to it all but couldn't be trusted with it all
- f. We needed someone to rule over us - and that was the Law
- g. But Jesus - and the Spirit - changed all of that
- h. Now we need to mature into our new identity
- i. Identity is about who we are; maturity is about what we do (and how we carry ourselves while doing it!)
- j. It's why people set up trust funds (which would be better named mistrust funds because the minor can't be trusted with all the wealth!)
- k. So God grows us so He can entrust us with what He's already provided for us
- l. You can see this growth process in Eph. 4:11-16
- m. God doesn't want millionaire babies; He wants mature heirs

#### The Landing

Now, that presents a "good news - bad news" scenario, doesn't it

We have a new identity, but our maturity level may not match it

Why is the Holy Spirit so important in the adoption process? Because He fills the gap between who we are and what we do.

He doesn't drive us like the Law did - like religion does: "You're a Christian now, so ACT LIKE IT!"

No, that's a slavery mindset.

The maturity mindset hears the Spirit say, "Now that you have all this, let's get you ready to steward it like a son!"

The Father's heart has always been adoption, and my prayer for all of us is that as we encounter the Spirit over the

next 4 days, we'd have a revelation of just how powerful it is that we're no longer slaves

God doesn't want forgiven orphans.

He wants a forgiven family.

Let's pray.