

# **Amazing Grace: Mystery Solved!**

**St. Luke's Lutheran Church; Oakfield, WI**

**Sermon**

**July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

**Ephesians 1:3-14**

Verse 9: "And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to His good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ."

**Introduction:** Grace, mercy and peace belong to us because of our adoption into the family of God by His Word and Spirit in the waters of Baptism. My wife tells the story that when she was a young child she got into a fight with her cousin. During the fight she blurted out, "well that's because you are adopted!" Her cousin hadn't been told yet. His parents through adoption were afraid to tell him. The cat was out of the bag – the mystery out. Today we all gather here because we have all been adopted – adopted into God's family. The secret is out – the mystery solved – we are adopted. Is it bad news? Should we be ashamed? Or afraid of our adoption? Far from it! Let us all rejoice and give thanks today for our adoption into God's family as we remember the mystery solved – Why was I adopted into God's family? What do I get as an adopted child? How can I be certain I am an adopted child of God?

## **Part 1 – Why was I adopted into God's family?**

Today there is much talk about being pro-choice, or pro-life. A friend of ours from San Antonio adopted a son from a family member that was unwilling and unable to care for her baby. The mother and father were both drug addicts and didn't want a child. When it comes to starting a family sometimes we don't even really make a choice – it just happens. Some people talk about having children by accident even. On earth with sin permeating all aspects of life, a woman can become pregnant with an unwanted child. But, in step's my neighbor. She wanted to adopt the baby. She wanted to care for him as her own. She chose him as her son. What a wonderful choice! Her choice had nothing to do with the baby and its abilities or genes or performance.

Throughout the book of Ephesians the Apostle Paul reminds us of the very reason why we have been adopted into God's family. It is the simple phrase "In Christ" "In Him". The Lord made a choice to adopt us into His family. He paid the price whatever it would be to bring us under his love and protection. Why did He pay the price? Why did He go through all that sacrifice and work to make us His family members? He did it In Christ. Have you heard the phrase "frame of mind"? My children know that if they want something from their mother or me that they better catch us in the right frame of mind. After a good meal in the evening on the back porch, we are usually in a good frame of mind. We are satisfied and happy, relaxing with our family. Paul tells us that God chose us to be adopted into His family "In Christ". That He was thinking about Christ and was happy and satisfied and loving toward Christ, when He chose us. In a very small way you might say that Jesus Christ made God in the right frame of mind to choose us. Just think if God was "in our sins" frame of mind when He was deciding to adopt us? Why would He want a complaining, self-centered, liar as His family member? When God chose us before time began He was in Christ –thinking about Christ's perfect life of obedience to His commands and his innocent sacrifice for the world of sinners. The mystery solved – you are chosen and wanted as a child of God because God was in the right frame of mind, thinking about Jesus Christ.

## **Part 2 - What do I receive as an adopted child of God?**

With every family there are advantages and disadvantages. Some families have lots of resources and give their children every possible experience under the sun. Other families have great genes and pass on abilities and intellect. Then there are those families that seem closer than others. They listen and care about each other's burdens and problems.

AS an adopted child of God the advantages are too many for us to count today in an hour let alone 20 minutes. Let's pick just a couple – first In Him we have the redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.

My friend adopted her son saving him from a life in a family addicted to drugs that did not want him. But more importantly she saved him from a life without the forgiveness of sins. This may be near impossible for most of you but try to imagine what your life would be like without knowing you are forgiven. Life is not so rosy of a place when every accident, every sickness, every death is a punishment from an angry judge. What a tremendous gift we have as adopted children of God in the forgiveness of sins from our heavenly Father. He always loves us and always chooses to care for us. That leads us to the second great advantage we have as adopted children in the family of God. Being a Goelzer is great and I'm sure many of you are proud to be members of your own family. But as great as your family is – no one in your family can take care of all your problems even turning your disasters into blessings. Even if you are a made man – no amount of family connections can control the universe on your behalf. Yet as an adopted child of God you have the ultimate family connection. The Lord Almighty controls everything for His family. He works out everything in conformity to His gracious plan and purpose to save you.

### **Part 3 - How can I be certain I am adopted into God's family and will enjoy all those privileges?**

My friend from San Antonio celebrates with her son his adoption every year on "Gotcha Day". Never heard of Gotcha day? It's the day she got him as her own, his adoption as her son. It is a great way for them both to celebrate her choice to love him and care for him as her own son. There is never a doubt between them that she wanted him as her son – he was always wanted. You and I and Addison have Gotcha Days. We have a day when God signed sealed and delivered on His promise to adopt us into His family and give to us all the privileges of a child of God –our baptisms.

God sent His Holy Spirit to create faith in our hearts to trust His Words and His love. The very fact that we believe He lived, died and rose again for us is a sign that He has chosen us as His family member. For God tells us that no one can say Jesus is Lord except through the Holy Spirit. Faith comes from the hearing the gospel. That great gospel message is the assurance that God wants us in His family has chosen us into His family and is making good on all His promises even granting us the eternal inheritance.

The mystery is solved – you are adopted, chosen, predestined, redeemed, forgiven, waiting for an inheritance and loved every day in every situation! Live up to the name you've been given on your Gotcha Day – as a forgiven child of God – a Christian!