

Take-Home Three

Grace and the Covenant Family

Abide

The Eucharist, Grace, and Staying in Christ

What We Found

Ask most Christians how someone is saved and you get courtroom words: guilt, verdict, acquittal. All of that is genuinely in Scripture. But it is not the only register, and it is not the controlling one. Again and again Paul reaches for a household: adoption, sons, Abba, heirs, fellow heirs.

And St. John will not let it stay a title. He says we should be called children of God, and then adds three words that decide the whole question: and so we are.

We also traced one covenant promise from Genesis to Revelation, in wordings that vary but keep one shape: I will be your God and you shall be my people. Genesis 17:7 gives the first half of it, Exodus 6:7, Jeremiah 31:33 and Ezekiel 36:28 give both halves, and Revelation 21:3 announces the fulfilment as God dwelling with his people. A contract leaves both parties who they were. This makes a family.

Voices of the Church

Voice of the Church

St. Athanasius

On the Incarnation, ch. 54 (summary)

He became man so that we might be made god; he showed himself in a body so that we might know the unseen Father; he bore our death so that we might inherit incorruption. Read him carefully: not god by nature, which he alone is, but by grace and by participation. We are not changed into God in essence. We are given a share in the life that is his by nature, and so are made sons in the Son.

Voice of the Church

St. Augustine

Letter 194, to Sixtus (summary)

When God rewards our merits he is crowning his own gifts, because whatever good we do is itself the effect of grace working in us.

Voice of the Church

St. Leo the Great

On the dignity of the Christian, quoted at CCC 1691 (summary)

Recognise your dignity: having been made sharers in the divine nature, do not return by base conduct to your former condition. The argument for holiness is consistency with an identity already given.

Ready Response

“Adoption is only a change of status. Nothing actually happens to the person.” Ask them to read 1 John 3:1 to the end of the sentence. John says we should be called children of God, and then he refuses to leave it as a title: and so we are. A status can be conferred at a distance. The Spirit who teaches us to say Abba is given, not merely declared.

“If you are already a son, why do anything?” Because that is what being a son is. And Romans 8:17 puts the condition in the same sentence as the inheritance: fellow heirs, provided we suffer with him.

“Partakers of the divine nature sounds like Mormonism.” A fair worry. The Church does not teach that we become gods by nature. The phrase is 2 Peter 1:4, and it means sharing God’s life by grace. The difference is between sharing a fire’s heat and being the fire.

Live It This Week

- Pray the Our Father slowly once a day, stopping after the first two words.
- Read Romans 8 in one sitting and mark every family word.
- Do one thing this week that a member of the household would do and a defendant would not.
- Keep praying for your person by name.

Memory Verse

“See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.”
1 John 3:1

Before Next Session

Read: Romans 3:21-28. Read it twice, slowly, and do not resolve anything. Next week we take it at full strength.

Catechism: CCC 1996-2005. If you read only one, read 1989.