

November 3, 2024

Adopted Through Christ

When you write out your last will and testament, you designate the beneficiaries, those who will receive what you leave behind. These beneficiaries are sometimes called “heirs.” They might be your children, or they might be people outside of your family. It is not uncommon for people to leave their estate or a portion of it to their church. The church, in that case, is a beneficiary but not exactly an heir. The word *heir* connotes a certain familial relationship with the deceased. In September 2022, Queen Elizabeth II of England passed away, and her heir was her son Prince Charles, who became King Charles III. As her heir, he not only inherited the title of king, but the rights and responsibilities that come with it. He also received the Queen’s properties and assets.

In Romans 4:1-17, Paul describes how we have been brought into the inheritance of the children of Abraham. We have received this promise by God’s grace through our faith in God, not good deeds. But at the end of Romans 4, he adds that being adopted by God has brought us into a position of righteousness, which means living the way God wants us to live and being acceptable to God. Could we be acceptable to God based on good deeds? No! We have been adopted through faith. We have not just gotten our foot in the door, but we have been welcomed into God’s house. We have become the beneficiaries of righteousness even though we don’t deserve it.

The opportunity for us, then, is to claim our righteousness. We can praise God for accepting us just as we are, and we can see God’s ever-encompassing love for others as God adopts them and makes them righteous, too. Because we are sons and daughters, Paul said that God sent the Spirit into our hearts (Galatians 4:6). In the Spirit, our hearts cry out to the Father in a familiar language: “Abba, Father!” The point is that the adoption is not just legal, it is spiritual and relational, too.

We are not just beneficiaries. We are heirs. We are in a relationship with the Father, who remembers us in the will, so to speak. God is the source of the inheritance and the one who passes it down to us by the grace of Jesus Christ. God has given us a place in the Kingdom and adopted us as sons and daughters. We do not need to try to earn our inheritance. We will never deserve it. It is given to us by our loving Father, who is the source of all good and perfect gifts (James 1:17).

1. What does it mean for you to be an heir in God's kingdom?
2. How does your adoption challenge the way you think about your relationship with God and others?
3. You receive your inheritance not based on deeds but through grace. How does this affect the way you approach feelings of unworthiness or striving for acceptance in your spiritual life?