Title: The Doctrine of Sonship

Text: Various

Date Preached: 11/11/18 (MBC PM)

**Introduction**[[1]](#footnote-1)

Tonight, I would like to something a little bit different because it is orphan care Sunday. I’d like to give us an overview of the biblical doctrine of sonship and adoption. As we will see, sonship is an important biblical theme that impacts our salvation in multiple places, it’s a theme that is seen across the biblical narrative, and it is a theme that impacts us every day. It is a very practical doctrine.

Tonight I will be looking at lots of different texts. I will be examining the doctrine from the perspective church history, I’ll be examining it from the biblical and theological angles, and I will look at the doctrine from a practical perspective. So, before I begin, let me pray for us.

PRAYER

**History of the doctrine of Sonship.**

I’ve studied the doctrine of sonship in pretty good detail and have been surprised to find how neglected the doctrine has been throughout history. In fact, the doctrine of sonship was almost entirely neglected until the protestant reformation. John Calvin was one of the first theologians to make much of the doctrine at all. Sonship and adoption were a foundational element of Calvin’s interpretive framework.

But even after Calvin we see the tendency for theologians to neglect sonship and adoption. For example, Francis Turretin, the great Genevan reformer, collapsed adoption underneath the doctrine of justification. Many others in the reformed tradition have this. Louis Berkhof does this, just treating adoption as almost a side-effect of justification. Charles Hodge, the great Princeton theologian of the 1800s that wrote 3 volumes of systematic theology, mentions adoption only once in over 2000 pages he wrote on theology.

Of honorable mention is the work of James P. Boyce, founding president of Southern Seminary. He does a good job analyzing the biblical teaching on the issue, and is helpfully critical of other theologians on the doctrine. But he was certainly in the minority within the realm of reformed theology.

Thankfully, this general trend within theology of neglecting the doctrines adoption and sonship does seem to be waning. JI Packer says in his wonderful book *Knowing God*, that, “Were I asked to focus the New Testament message in three words, my proposal would be *adoption through propitiation*, and I do not expect ever to meet a richer or more pregnant summary of the gospel than that.”[[2]](#footnote-2) Adoption through propitiation.

There has, thankfully, been a growing interest in the doctrine of sonship or adoption in the past 30 years, largely due to the influence of JI Packer and Sinclair Ferguson. Much of what I have to say tonight is built upon their work.

So, let’s dig into the bible and see this glorious doctrine.

**Biblical Analysis**

I want us to see tonight that Sonship is a key concept within the scope of redemption. God has chosen to utilize the idea of sonship through adoption as a key way to demonstrate and illustrate his lavish love and grace poured out upon his chosen ones. Sonship is a key theme both textually, and in terms of biblical -theology.

1. Sonship is a key theme textually.
   1. Think about the major passages in the new testament that deal with our salvation, passages like Ephesians 1, Romans 8, Galatians 3-4, Hebrews 2. Each one of these have sonship as a key theme.
   2. In Ephesians 1 we are told that God “predestined us[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+1&version=ESV#fen-ESV-29195b)] for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ”
   3. In Romans 8 we are told that all who are led by the spirit are “Sons of God,” AND that we have not a spirit of fear but a spirit of adoption that bears testimony with our spirit that we are sons of God.
   4. In Galatians 3 & 4 we are told that God “sent forth his son born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.”
   5. And in Hebrews 2 we are told that it is fitting that God, “for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of our salvation perfect through suffering.” One of the goals of God’s redemptive activity in Christ was to bring many sons to glory.
   6. Sonship is a key textual theme in many key passages related to our salvation.
2. But Sonship is also a key theme in terms of Biblical-theology, that is, in terms of the scope of redemptive history, the grand narrative of the whole bible.
   1. Sonship is the focus of creation.
      1. There exists a debate within the history of theology about whether or not Adam was a Son of God by creation, or whether he would become a Son of God after a successful period of obedience. I don’t want to get into that debate. Rather, I think that the text indicates that Adam was a son AND that he was to be a son.
      2. I say that Adam was a son because Luke 3:38 in the genealogy of Jesus clearly labels him as a son of God.
      3. But Adam was also to be a son, he was to act as a son. That’s part of what is assumed in the language of image. In Genesis 1:26 and later 5:2-3 we see that Adam and his sons were made in the image of God, and part of being made in the image of God is acting like God. God had placed little images, little vice-regents, little rulers on earth to bear his image and spread his glory.
      4. Sonship was built into the very fabric of creation.
   2. Sonship is also the pattern of redemption.
      1. When God’s people were enslaved to the Egyptians, God calls Moses and charges him to deliver a message, recorded for us in Exodus chapter 4:
      2. “You shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the Lord, Israel is my firstborn son, and I say to you ‘Let my people Go that he may serve me,’ If you refuse to let him go, behold, I will kill your firstborn son.’”
      3. Israel is chosen by God to be his very son, a chosen nation to have his inheritance. That’s why throughout the Old Testament we see language about God as the Father of Israel his son. In Jeremiah 31:9 God says that “I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first born.” We see God discipline Israel as a son. God takes those that can’t help themselves and adopts them and makes them his own and brings them under his loving care and guidance.
      4. Sonship is the pattern of redemption.
   3. Sonship is not only the focus of creation and the pattern of redemption, but Sonship is also the purpose of restoration. The purpose of restoration.
      1. Romans 8:29 explains to us that “Those whom [God] foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.” Why were we predestined? Why are we made more and more into the image of Christ? One reason is so that Christ might be the older brother of many many siblings. That he might be the first born of many brothers.
      2. This is why the author of Hebrews can speak in terms of brothers and the household of God in Hebrews 10. Christ has once and for all made a sacrifice that purifies and provides forgiveness for the entire house of God.
      3. Sonship is the purpose of restoration.
   4. In God’s wisdom, he has chosen Sonship as a key theme in terms of biblical theology, and is demonstrated in various ways across the grand drama of redemption.

Thus far we’ve seen that Sonship is major biblical doctrine textually and within the scope of biblical theology, the grand narrative of the whole bible. Now let’s look at some practical implications of the doctrine of sonship.

**Practical Implications of the doctrine of Sonship**

1. Marks of Sonship
   1. If you were subjected to an introduction to psychology class in college, like I was, you will likely remember the seeming endless debate about nature verses nurture. About nature verses environment.
   2. The New Testament emphasizes both of these aspects as it relates to our sonship: nature and environment.
   3. The two authors of the new testament that speak most about sonship both emphasize those two different aspects of our sonship: our new nature as sons of God and our new environment in the household of God. John speaks more of our new nature as regenerated, or born-again sons of God; Paul speaks more of our new legal status as adopted sons in God’s household. Let’s look at the marks of sonship, particularly as they are expressed within the Johannine and Pauline bodies of literature.
   4. Please turn with me to 1 John. 1 John. In the writings of John we see the marks of sonship that arise from life in our new nature.
      1. First, look at 1 John 5, and we’ll see that Sonship is characterized by a changed relationship to Christ.
         1. We see this in 1 John 5:13- “Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God.”
         2. Do you see the connection there between believing and being born of God? They go together: the mind and the new birth. Theologians might say that regeneration has a noetic effect upon us, which is another way of saying that when you are born again your mind is changed.
         3. You can read John chapter 3 and see that connection as well. Regeneration is taught within the context of faith in Jesus Christ. The two go together.
         4. You believe that Jesus is the Christ, he is the chosen son of God, he is the messiah, the anointed one, the one sent by the father. When you are made a son of God you also believe, rather than remain a child of the world that disbelieves.
         5. Sonship is characterized by a changed relationship to Christ.
      2. In John we see, second, that Sonship is characterized by a changed relationship to Sin. Flip over to chapter 3 of 1 John.
         1. 1 John 3:6 emphasizes that “No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him.”
         2. Likewise, verse 9: “No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God’s seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God.”
         3. Being born of God means being born of a new nature, a nature that necessarily produces a radical cleavage of sin patterns from the sinner. The believer will of course continue to sin, but will not like it, will hate it, will be revolted by it, will not wallow in it, will battle against it, and will do all of that in a way that is fundamentally distinct from his previous relationship to sin.
         4. The old nature reveled in sin, wallowed in it, enjoyed it, but the new nature, a nature born of the spirit not of the flesh, will not enjoy those sins, and will in fact begin to act in a manner consistent with our origin.
         5. Our divine heredity will come into play. Those born of God will by nature begin to act like God. God’s sons are characterized by a changed relationship to sin.
      3. Third, In the writings of John we see that Sonship is characterized by a changed relationship to the church.
         1. Look at chapter 4 of 1 John.
         2. 4:7 reads, “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.”
         3. Love for one another is grounded in our common new birth. God has made us to be born again, and because of that shared new life and new nature we ought to love on another.
         4. Furthermore, John makes clear that this love is to be practical, not merely verbal.
            1. 1 John 2:10, 3:4, and 3:17-18 all speak to this. John tells us that “if anyone has the world’s goods sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.” Our new nature as God’s son means that our love must evidence itself in deeds, not mere talk.
            2. Furthermore, chapter 4 verses 11-12 show us that love for the brothers is a mark of maturing in our new birth: “If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.” Maturing Christians will see a growing love for their siblings in the household of God, which is evidence of God’s love being perfected in us.
            3. John takes this so seriously that he uses some harsh language in verse 20: “If anyone says ‘I love God’ and hates his brother, he is a liar, for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.” Love for the brothers is a necessary and natural part of our sonship from God.
            4. When we are made sons of God we have a fundamental change in our relationship to the church, to our fellow sons of God, which results in physical, tangible demonstrations of love to our new family members in the household of God. Sonship changes our relationship with the church.
      4. Fourth, we see that Sonship is changed by a changed relationship to the world.
         1. Look at 1 John 5:4. John says that “Everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—faith.”
         2. John 16:33 tells us that Christ has overcome the world, and it is through our faith, through our new birth, that we become sons of God, and therefore also become victors, conquerors, overcomers of the world, because of our older brother, who is the firstborn of many conquerors.
      5. So we’ve seen the marks of sonship in the writings of John: a changed relationship to Christ, to sin, to the church, and to the world. So now let’s look at the marks of sonship in Paul.
   5. Paul is the only author in the New Testament to use the language of adoption to speak of our sonship. He emphasizes the legal and relational aspects of our sonship, as opposed to John who emphasized the natural aspects of our sonship. Turn with me to Ephesians 5. Ephesians chapter 5.
      1. The First mark of our Sonship in the writings of Paul is that we walk in the light. We are now children of God, therefore a mark of a child of God is that we will walk in the light.
         1. In Ephesians 5:8 Paul reminds us that “at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as Children of light, he says, for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true.” We were children in darkness, but now we are children of light, and we ought to walk as such.
         2. Similarly, 1 Thess. 5:5 explains that “We are all children of light, children of the day”, and not children of darkness, and therefore we should walk consistent with our new status.
         3. Our new status as adopted sons of God has removed us from the darkness of this world and brought us into the light. Everything that belonged to the orphan has been taken by the father, and everything that is the father’s has been given to the son.
         4. Our debts, our liabilities, our weaknesses, our old allegiances, our old bondage and slavery, all of it is gone, taken on by the father. And all the rights and privileges of the father are passed on to us. The position, the status, the rank, the inheritance, the future, the blessings, everything of the father has been given to us.
         5. There is no reason to go back to the darkness, no reason to leave the household of light and wander back down the dark paths of sin. God’s adopted children ought to have the mark of sonship that they walk in the light.
      2. A second mark of sonship that we see in Paul: since we are sons of the father, we should be imitators of the father.
         1. Ephesians 5 speaks directly to this. Look at Ephesians 5:1 “therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved Children.” We are children of God, and it is in our nature for us to imitate our father, just as our children naturally imitate us. We’re filled with his very spirit, and ought to walk in the same manner as he walks, imitating his every move.
         2. One of the more terrifying revelations of becoming a father has been to see how strikingly my children imitate me. And they do this naturally; often times they don’t even think about it. They may not even consciously choose to do something my way because they think it is the best way, they just do it. It’s in the air that they breathe, its in their environment, so they do it.
         3. We are encouraged by Paul to breathe in the very environment that God makes around us- “Do this as beloved Children.” You’re in a new household, your part of the household of God. Act like your father, behave like your family.
         4. A mark of our sonship in the writings of Paul is that we should be imitators of God.
   6. Before we move from the marks of sonship to the privileges of sonship, I want to first discuss the practical benefits of this doctrine of sonship. What are the practical benefits of these marks of sonship? What are the repercussions of the consciousness that we are sons of God.
      1. The knowledge that we are sons of God produces a profound sense of security.
         1. We see this in natural sonship. Those you people that do not know who their father is have a profound sense of insecurity. They wrestle with insecurity, sometimes for their whole lives.
         2. But we have profound security because of the doctrine of sonship. We know that we have been adopted by the faithful father, that the adoption is final, and that nothing can change the legal transaction or the change of nature. We are sons of God by verdict and by new birth. We are secure as sons of the father and as younger brothers to Christ, the firstborn among many brethren.
      2. The knowledge that we are sons of God also produces a sense of direction.
         1. Christ said, “Did you not know that I must be about my father’s business?”
         2. We can make the same claim: I must be about my father’s business. We see the father in the face of Christ, and when we see the father in his business, we can follow him in his trade. This is true in a global sense: God is about the business of his own Glory, and our chief end is to glorify him and enjoy him forever. But this is also true in a moral sense: we see him in his business of righteousness and holiness, so we follow him in the same family business, the trade of righteousness and holiness.
      3. Third, the knowledge that we are sons of God not only produces security and direction, it also produces a moral fiber in our lives.
         1. The knowledge of our sonship produces courage and steadfastness that can be found nowhere else.
         2. To contradict our new nature, to sin, is in one sense the hardest thing in the world for us to do. How could I sin against my perfect father? We hate it, we feel the gravity of it. We want to battle against it, deep down in our very spirit. We can be steadfast and courageous in our battle for holiness because we know that we are sons of God, born of the very spirit of God, and forever members of the household of God.
      4. The knowledge of our sonship provides a sense of security, provides direction for our lives, and produces moral fiber as we battle for holiness.
2. Now, let’s move on to see the Privileges of Sonship.
   1. Privilege of God’s fatherly care
      1. The Father has made us part of his very own household, and he has promised to take care of us.
      2. And the privilege of the father’s care for us is our remedy for anxiety. We can be courageous instead of anxious because of our sonship.
         1. We know that if the God of the universe is our father, what could happen to us outside of his control? Nothing. What could we possibly lack that we genuinely need? Nothing. What protection do we need that is not available to us? None.
         2. Jesus tells us to look at the lilies of the field, how beautiful they are, and yet they are gone in a moment. If he cares for those lilies, which are here today and gone tomorrow, how much more will he care for his very own sons and daughters?
         3. God knows the very number of hairs on your head; you need not worry that he is ignorant of your needs, or impotent to tend to them. We can have courage, rather than anxiety, in this life because of the privilege of God’s fatherly care.
   2. Second Privilege: the privilege of access to the father.
      1. When Adam sinned, he lost access to the very father with whom he had walked side by side in the garden. He was then shut out, separated because of his sin, alienated from God and his holiness. That separation was highlighted by the law in the Old Testament, the separation of the holy of holies in the temple, God was separated from the people of God by the curtain.
      2. But our sonship now means that we have access to the father. Ephesians 2 makes clear that we who were once far off have been brought near. We have access to the father again. We have a relationship, once severed by Adam and his sin, now restored to us, giving us access once again to our heavenly father.
      3. Indeed, it is because of this sonship, because of this access that Jesus could teach us to pray not “the father who is in heaven, but “Our Father who is in heaven.”
      4. Our sonship is our possession, and the access to our father is real, direct, legal, relational, and unbreakable. Access to the father is a second privilege of our sonship.
   3. Third Privilege: Privilege of knowledge of Jesus Christ as our big brother and kinsman redeemer
      1. This is not the only aspect of Jesus’s work, but his role as our big brother and kinsman redeemer is a significant one.
      2. We have, because of our sonship of the father, knowledge of Christ, and particularly, knowledge of him as our kinsman redeemer. This position is language that is loaded with significance from the Old Testament.
      3. In the OT, when someone was without a protector, without a provider, like if a woman’s husband died and she had no sons, she would be without a provider. So someone from the family would step up and provide for her a future. He would be called a kinsman redeemer. He would effectively purchase this woman from poverty, from bondage, from a life of scavenging or pan-handling for food and survival.
      4. Christ has become our kinsman redeemer for us. He has come in, purchased us from slavery and bondage, redeemed us from the poverty of our previous life of sin and death, and given us the inheritance of his household. We’ve been made not only redeemed ones, but we have been made Sons, co-heirs with Christ, fully and legally promised the inheritance of Christ himself. That is the privilege of our sonship. We have knowledge of Christ, not only as our elder brother, but as our kinsman redeemer.
   4. Fourth privilege: Privilege of discipline within the family
      1. Here I’m thinking about Hebrews 12: God disciplines those whom he loves. He does not let us wander down the path of destruction, but loves us enough to provide fatherly correction and training. He doesn’t correct us as a slave; we don’t get reprimanded and chastised like a bondservant. He lovingly guides us, redirects us, trains us, and if necessary, rebukes and chastises us because he is our loving father that wants us to be holy like he is holy, for our own good and for his glory.
      2. We have the privilege of loving discipline within the family.
   5. Fifth privilege: Privilege of the reception of the Holy Spirit, the spirit of Adoption
      1. In Romans 8 we read of this glorious good news about our adoption, our being made sons of God through the merit of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit:
      2. **14**For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons[[f](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8&version=ESV#fen-ESV-28115f)] of God. **15**For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” **16**The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, **17**and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ,
      3. We have the privilege of the Spirit of adoption that testifies with our spirit that we are truly sons of God.
      4. Because of our sonship, we have the privileges of the father’s care, we have access to the father, we have Christ as our older brother and kinsman redeemer, the privilege of loving discipline, and the privilege of the spirit of adoption.
3. Source of Sonship
   1. You’d think that this is where I would begin this message, but I wanted to end here, because this is where the nectar of this doctrine really derives its sweetness.
   2. The short answer is that the Source of our sonship is God himself, in particularly, God the Father. Our sonship has its root is in the love of God the father.
   3. Much of Roman adoption, which is the legal term that Paul used, was done out of the profit or the convenience of the adopter. It was somehow in the best interest of the adopter to come and adopt the orphan. It was legal, but it was not spiritual or emotion, and it wasn’t necessarily relational.
   4. But God’s adoption was not so.
   5. 1 John 3:1 says to us, “See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.”
   6. God’s adoption was not out of profit, not out of convenience, in fact quite the opposite. It was entirely out of Grace and love, and it was at great cost. It was the love of the Father that motivated him to make us his sons. We no inherent value, no profit to add to his fortune, no convenience to add to his lifestyle. Instead we were the beneficiaries of his love.
   7. This verse, “See what kind of love the father has for us”, literally, “what size of love, or what manner of love the father has for us.” This verse out to be the echo that reverberates throughout our lives and throughout our ministries.
   8. Do you see the logic that undergirds the verse?
   9. People might naturally reason this way: “If God is your father, then you must be God’s Son.” But that’s not what is underneath this verse. No. John’s logic is “If you are God’s son, then God has lavished his love upon you, to make you his son, and his deepest desire for you is that you should believe that he loves you as a father loves his son.” That’s what John is telling us. If you are God’s son, it is because God loves you immensely: “See what kind, what size of love the father has for us.”
   10. This is the truth, the love of the father, that I wanted to end with tonight because it was the first thing really attacked in the garden. When the serpent was questioning, “did God really say?” he was really getting Adam to question the character of the Father. Don’t you see that the father is keeping something from you? Don’t you see that the father wants to withhold from you something good, something you deserve? Don’t you see that the father really doesn’t love you, because if he did, he would have let you have this fruit which looks so good and is desirable to eat. But he didn’t, so he must not love you. God does not love you is a fundamental lie of the serpent, and it is a fundamental lie that we struggle with our whole lives.
   11. This is the same lie that was in the teaching of the Pharisees too. Turn with me to Luke 15.
   12. Look at Luke 15. This is a well-known story, so I’ll start in verse 21 when the prodigal son begins to come to his senses and see his sin:
   13. **17**“But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! **18**I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. **19**I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.”’[He is saying: I have sinned against you, I reject you and merely wanted your money, and therefore have forfeited my right to be your son. Let me please be just a slave, a servant] **20**And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. **21**And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+15&version=ESV#fen-ESV-25601c)] **22**But the father said to his servants,[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+15&version=ESV#fen-ESV-25602d)] ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. **23**And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. **24**For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to celebrate.
   14. We struggle often in our lives to really believe that God loves us like this father. We know that we have sinned, we feel the weight of our frivolous lives of sin, and we want to come back and merely be servants in the household of God. But our father won’t have that. He comes back like the father in this story, who has tears of joy and thankfulness streaming down his cheek, so thankful that his son has returned home.
   15. But notice also the older brother’s reaction, which is especially striking when laid beside the prodigal’s response.
   16. The older brother responds in verse 29, and I like the NIV’s translation the best, “‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders.” I’ve been slaving for you for years. That’s the heart of the unconverted man, a man who has only had a natural birth, but that has not been reborn into a son of God.
   17. The younger brother was prepared to become a slave of the father, to become miserable like the older brother is, but the father responded, “Son, I love you, I want to, I welcome you, I weep over you.”
   18. Let’s put this older brother’s response next to the verse we read earlier from 1 John 3:1.
       1. The older brother says, “look, All these years I’ve been slaving for you.”
       2. 1 John 3:1: “Look at the amazing love the father has bestowed on us.”
   19. That’s the difference between a child of God and a natural man. The child of God marvels at the lavish love that the father has shown him. The natural man, the child of the world, sees only his efforts, and can’t see past them to the loving God that offers him genuine sonship.

That offer of sonship remains for you tonight. If you have not become a child of God by faith in the son of God then I urge you tonight to hear the texts that were read to you tonight, see the love of the father who bids you to come home, and know that he stands willing to invite you back into his arms, into his household, and into his family forever.

For those of us who have come to be born of God, we have before us one of the highest privileges of a son of God: the Lord’s table. We have been brought not out of death, out of slavery outside of God’s house, but into full sonship, full access to the father, full access to his table, and seated next to our elder brother at the right hand of the father. We have the right to dine with the very creator of the universe, and to enjoy fellowship with him forever.

This table is reserve only for those that have been made part of the household of God. If you are like those we read about in Acts 2, who are devoted to the apostles teaching, and to fellowship, and to the breaking of bread and to prayers, if you are joined to a local church and are following him in obedience, then I invite you to come, partake. But if you have not joined a church, or are not in good standing, or have not become part of the household of God through faith, then I warn you to let these elements pass, and instead consider the invitation that has been extended to you tonight, and come to him for adoption as a son.

So as our servants come, let us reflect upon the lavish love of God the father that has been poured out for us in Christ, bringing us into the very household of God, and adopting us as the very sons of God.

**Bread**: the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, **24**and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for[[f](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+corinthians+11&version=ESV#fen-ESV-28608f)] you. Do this in remembrance of me.”[[g](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+corinthians+11&version=ESV#fen-ESV-28608g)]

**Cup**: **25**In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

1. Much of this is drawn directly from Sinclair Ferguson’s work on the subject: [The Reformed Doctrine of Sonship Part 1 & 2](http://feedingonchrist.com/sinclair-ferguson-william-still-and-eric-alexander-crieff-fellowship-lectures-1979-2007/); “The Reformed Doctrine of Sonship” *Some Pastors and Teachers* (Banner of Truth, Carlisle PA: 2017), 579­–590. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. J.I. Packer, [*Knowing God*](http://www.wtsbooks.com/product-exec/product_id/1857/nm/Knowing+God+(Paperback)/?utm_source=irishcalvinist&utm_medium=irishcalvinist) (Downers Grove, IL: 1993), 214. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)