

“Debtors to Grace”:
The High Privilege & Responsibility of Spiritual Adoption
Orphan Sunday 2022
Sermon Notes

- **Justification is by faith alone, but the faith that justifies is *never* alone - for grace always ushers us from the courtroom to the family room**

**In the Spirit, we are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in the family of God, therefore we...*

1. Pursue the mortification of sin (vv.12-13)

2. Prayerfully seek our Father's guidance (vv.14-15)

3. Enjoy assurance of salvation (vv.16-17)

MEFC Community Group Study Guide

For the Week of November 13th - 19th

Getting Started

1. When was the last time you verbally communicated the message of the gospel to a person who doesn't know the Lord? If you have a story, please share it with the group.

Digging Deeper

2. If everyone in our church shared the gospel with unbelievers as often as you do, how would that go for us? Would we be encouraged or discouraged if your faithfulness in verbalizing the good news of Jesus were the gold standard for our local fellowship? How come?

Open your Bible to 1 Corinthians 15:1-5...

3. One of the best places in the New Testament to turn for a brief summary of the gospel message is 1 Corinthians 15:1-5. Based on Paul's summary here, what would you say are the essential truths of a faithful gospel presentation? Before you get to vv.3-5 (the content of the gospel), take some time to dwell deeply in vv.1-2. Identify and discuss seven realities associated with the gospel in those first two verses of chapter 15. What impact ought these particular truths make on how we proclaim the good news?
4. One of the most important ways that we can tell the truth to those considering the claims of Christ is to be certain that we communicate the cost of following Jesus. In what specific ways does Luke 14:25-35 paint a portrait of both the *incredible* and *increasing* costs of being a disciple of Christ? Why does the New Testament tend to speak so often of the cost of discipleship? Why do we tend to speak so seldom of the cost of discipleship?
5. It's increasingly fashionable today to hate on the concept of "tone" as it relates to the proclamation of the truth. Many believers often speak of those who pay attention to the way the Christian message is proclaimed as the "tone police".¹ They claim it's more the *matter* of the truth that's important, not the *manner* in which it's spoken. Whatever we might call it, the New Testament does in fact have a rather developed practical theology of not just *what* message we preach, but *how* we preach it. Consider Colossians 4:4, 6; 1 Peter 3:15; and Ephesians 6:19-20. There are five different aspects of "tone" in these five verses. Can you spot them? How well do you reflect the apostolic standard here? Where would you say you need the most work?
6. In Colossians 4:6, Paul has the expectation that believers ought to "know how to answer each person" in the context of our evangelistic conversations with unbelievers. This is a good reminder that no two people on your 'List of 5' are exactly alike. Along the continuum from *hostile* to *peaceable* toward spiritual conversations, where would you place each of the people on your list? What are you learning these days about each of these folks? In what ways are

¹ Ironically, "tone policing" actually has a rather technical usage in the broader culture having to do with ideas closely aligned with critical theory: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tone_policing.

they similar to one another? In what ways are they different?

7. Another big issue in coming to “know how to answer each person” (Colossians 4:6; see also 1 Peter 3:15), is being prepared to answer questions that unbelievers have about what we believe. Some of the most common perennial objections to the Christian faith include questions about the existence of God, the reliability of the Bible, the exclusivity of Christ, and the problem of evil and suffering. How prepared are you to answer these sorts of questions? Take some time as a group to respond to each of these objections together. What ought you to do if a person ever asks you a question that you find yourself unable to answer?
8. As you close your time in prayer, be sure to pray for those individuals on your ‘List of 5’ by name. Share any outreach updates, encouragements, or concerns - praying specifically for one another’s verbal witness with those on your ‘List of 5’. Think through the passages in our study above, allowing those texts to form and frame your prayers.