

# WEEKLY SERMON

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## Adopted for life

A young person I know well was adopted some years ago. It has been a joy to see her grow from a somewhat anxious toddler to a personable and outgoing teenager. She is part of a new family, where she is loved and treasured.

Adoption is one of the pictures that the Bible gives us to understand the life-changing work that God does in our lives when we come to Christ.

One of today's lectionary readings speaks the language of adoption in a way that underlines that our Christian life starts not with our performance or morality but with the astonishing and undeserved love of God.

*1 John 3:1* puts it very simply: 'See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!'

This love is so unlike any other love that we have experienced in our lives that John speaks of it as something that is amazingly new and different.

The kind of love we generally experience comes with a price tag. Human love says, 'I love you because of your looks' or 'I love you because of your intelligence'.

Love comes with conditions: 'I'll love you if...'

But what makes the Father's love so breathtaking is that it is **unconditional**. Through His love He takes the initiative to make us His children: it's love that is given lavishly and freely for people who do not deserve it.

God's love is given lavishly to people who are by nature his enemies. And not only does his love guarantee our forgiveness, but it also brings us into fellowship with God himself – so that we can be called his children.

To those who received him, John explains in his gospel, he gave the right to be called children of God. (*John 1:12*).

Our new status as children of God includes a glorious future (*1 John 3:2*). Our lives are now hidden in Christ. But on the day when Christ appears, the transformation begun in us at conversion will be finally complete, and we will be like Christ.

This destiny is yours if you are a child of God.

Remind yourself today and every day until Christ comes: 'I am a child of God, God is my Father, heaven is my home and every day is a step closer'.

HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

**Rev Canon Andrew Raynes, Vicar of Blackburn Christ Church**