

Only Begotten Son

(Sermon Notes) By: Warren Zehrung 7/15/2017

We've all heard how Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. His message was resonating with the people – and the multitudes flocked to hear Him. When Jesus was teaching, what we call the beatitudes to His disciples He was showing the **right way to live** and what it would lead to...

Jesus explained the **result** of living a correct lifestyle. Matthew 5 has an example of one of Jesus' Christian Living sermons – after He began His public ministry. Jesus told of many ways we ought to behave in a Godly way:

He spoke of being **poor in spirit**; rather than being haughty and arrogant. Jesus probably gave a full sermon on each point. Matthew 5 is only an outline of His preaching.

He spoke of **mourning**, and being in need of comfort; rather than being hateful or vengeful.

Jesus spoke of being **meek**; rather than confrontational and boastful.

He spoke of our need to hunger and thirst after Godly **righteousness**;

Jesus taught Godly qualities of being **merciful** and of being **pure in heart**;

He warned that in this life they would be **persecuted** for righteousness' sake;

And Jesus followed up with the many **rewards** that would accompany, and be the results that would come from living Christian lives:

Jesus taught that for those who truly lived these Godly principles:

Theirs is the **Kingdom**; they shall be comforted; they shall inherit the earth; they shall be filled; they shall obtain mercy; they shall see God, and so forth.

Matthew 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the **Children of God**.

That is the first place recorded where Jesus uses the phrase, "Children of God."

At that point in Jesus' ministry no one understood yet that Jesus was truly the "**Son of God**," let alone that they/we could become "Children of God."

Even today, we almost read right over "Children of God" as being so much semantics or sentiments. People think "Children of God" is a platitude meaning simply that God created us.

Back in the 1950s there was a Sunday evening television program called "The Loretta Young Show." The Loretta Young Show's trademark was the dramatic entrance Miss Loretta Young made at the beginning of each episode. She would come sweeping on stage in a beautiful evening gown. Each show's finale would have Loretta Young issuing a brief homily.

I was just a teenager at the time but I'll always remember how she closed her show one time. She said, "Remember, you are a **child of God**." I had never heard that before – and it really struck me. That was long before I knew anything of the truth of God. If I had ever heard the term, child of God, - I certainly had never applied it to myself!

Being set apart from those in the world and becoming **children of God** is a great truth that too many do not consider. We should ask ourselves questions like:

When does a person become one of the children of God? The answer is, when one takes on the **name of God**. However, not everyone possesses the Father's name. How does one **take on** or receive the Father's name? No one learns that in Sunday-School. "You need the Father's Name." TV evangelists do not speak of having the Father's name.

Jesus spoke to those who overcome this world saying, "I will write upon him the **name of my God**." (Revelation 3:12) In the book of Revelation we read a remarkable prophecy about those who do have the **Father's name**.

Revelation 14:1 I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with Him a hundred forty and four thousand, having His **Father's name** written in their foreheads.

Who are these people with the **Father's name** written in their foreheads? The answer is found in verse four.

Revelation 14:4 ...These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.

So we see that everyone does **not** have the Father's name. When does a Christian receive the Father's name? Are we born with it? Do we take it on at the resurrection? How and when does a converted person acquire the Father's name? Here's the answer:

A Christian receives the Father's **name** at baptism. It is the same **name** that Jesus, the **Son of God**, possesses.

At baptism, a convert is baptized **into** the **name** of the Father, and of the Son... (Matthew 28:19)

That is into the Spirit of God – which is the spiritual life of God. Paul explained in:

1Corinthians 12:13 By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body... and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

At baptism, we become **children of God** - possessing the Father's name.

People in the world do not have the **Father's name** – because they have not **repented** of sinning... they do not have the **faith** of Jesus Christ that they might be saved... they have not laid their life down in the watery grave of **baptism** that they might live again. Paul reiterates: Do not be a part of that world.

2Corinthians 6:17 Wherefore come out from among them [in the world], and be ye separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and **I will receive you**,

2Corinthians 6:18 And will be **a Father unto you**, and ye shall be my **sons and daughters**, says the Lord Almighty.

God becomes our **Father**, rather than the physical dad we've always known and loved – and still do – but we receive the **Father's name**.

When do we take on the Father's name? We aren't born with it! We know that we must have the Father's name to be assured of having His protection in this evil world. Jesus shows this in His prayer recorded in John 17. Notice verse: 11.

John 17:11 Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

When we are born, we are named after our dad's last name. We are given, and we take on the Father's name in baptism – showing that we have become children of God. We were baptized into the Father's name and spirit life – the same name and spirit Jesus has.

Matthew 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

If we didn't have the same family name as the Father, how could we expect to inherit His kingdom? Strangers do not receive an inheritance. We are told in Ephesians 2:19 and 3:15 that we are not strangers but members of the family of God. Therefore, as His children, we literally become His heirs – just like Jesus.

Romans 8:16-17 The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the **children of God**: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.

We are joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, the Son of God! That is why the children of God are called saints i.e., "holy ones," because we are set apart by the Father's name! In this life on earth, we continue to go by our dad's family name. As baptized Christians, children of the Kingdom of God, Jesus writes His Father's name upon us. In Revelation 3:12 Jesus says to us,

Revelation 3:12 I will write upon him the name of My God...and I will write upon him my new name.

Revelation 14:1 actually reads in the Greek texts, "...having His [Jesus'] name and His Father's name...

When we began our physical life we were given our dad's surname – his last name which is common to all the members of the family.

At baptism, with the **receiving** of God's Holy Spirit we begin to put on God's spiritual life with our **Father's name** – making us **children of God**.

It is God's Spirit, **united with our human spirit** that makes us children of God, which gives us the beginning of Spiritual Life.

John 1:12 As many as **did receive Him**, to them gave He power [**privilege**] to become the **sons of God**, even to them that believe on **His name**:

John 1:13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh [speaking specifically of our dad], nor of the will of man, but [**by the Will**] of **God**.

At baptism, God the Father begets us, Sires us – not biologically, but Fathers us **spiritually** – giving us His **name**.

Then John says, "We apostles saw Him with our own two eyes – we are **eye witnesses!**"

The title of today's sermon comes from here:

John 1:14 And the Word [Jesus Christ] was made **flesh** [a human being], and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the **only begotten** of the **Father**,) full of grace and truth.

Up to this point of time, no man on earth had ever been "Full of grace and truth."

One of the first points that John makes is that we have been called to tap into that same **grace and truth that Jesus received from His Father.

As Christians, we are privileged to receive the same **grace and truth** that Jesus received from His Father.

John 1:16 And of His fullness we have all received, and **grace for grace**.

That is an incredible statement when we understand that John is telling us that Christians receive the **fullness of God** and grace for grace!

Let me speak of "**grace**" for a moment because in this era of God's Church – grace is a topic we've shied away from "in favor of Law keeping."

Let me assure you that "grace" and "law keeping" are not mutually exclusive of one another.

The word translated "grace" in the New Testament comes from the Greek word *charis*, which means "favor, blessing, and kindness." Grace is a good word – you'll find it more than 150 times in the Bible.

When the word "grace" is used, we in God's Church have always defined it as "**God's unmerited pardon**" – meaning, we do not deserve to be saved.

God's unmerited pardon is a much more powerful meaning than "favor, blessing, and kindness."

But in John 1:14 we saw that Jesus was full of **grace** and truth. Please make this distinction, brethren:

Jesus **did not need God's **unmerited pardon** – because He never sinned.

That is not the kind of grace being spoken of here, or in John 1:16. What then does "grace for grace" mean in John 1:16?

God the Father **bestowed every blessing, favor, kindness and gift on His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

Bestowed – that is the operative word. It means – Presented to: Conferred upon: Can you imagine how God the Father **bestowed** every blessing, favor, kindness and good gift upon His **only begotten Son**, Jesus Christ?

But John is revealing something incredible here: John is saying that the **very same favor and kindness that an only son receives from his father – in this case God the Father for His Son, Jesus Christ – is **now** being **bestowed on us!**

The Father gives us everything that He once gave to His **only begotten Son**, Jesus Christ.

When we become **children of God**, we too become **recipients** of the very same grace—favor and kindness that Jesus, as the Son of God, received from His Father! That's what "grace for grace" means!

Speaking of this **grace** – this abundant **fullness** from God the Father bestowed on Jesus...

John 1:16 And of His **fullness** we have all received, and **grace for grace**.

We are God the Father's begotten children! Brethren, let me add a disclaimer at this point, because there is always someone who will say, "**You make yourself equal to Christ**" – the Anointed one – or, you make yourself equal to God.

Let me give you an everyday example: I can say, "I'm a man **like** my dad is a man." That does not take away the fact that I'll always owe my dad the honor and respect due to a father. I'll always be my dad's son – and that is my rightful place.

Psalm 45:7 Thou love righteousness, and hate wickedness: therefore God [the Father], thy God, has **anointed thee** [see the word **Messiah** there] with the oil of gladness **above thy fellows**.

That is Jesus' rightful place as Messiah – superior to His brothers and sisters – and the angels (Quoted in Hebrews 1:9). But it does not make us any less His family members.

We've been **called** by God – and **invited** into **His Family** – now and forever more. Jesus is our brother.

Hebrews 2:10 For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in **bringing many sons unto glory**, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

Hebrews 2:11 For both He that sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is **not ashamed to call them brothers**.

Hebrews 2:12 Saying, I will declare thy name unto **my brethren** [brothers and sisters], in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. (Quoting Psalm 22:22)

The Family of God is composed, of God the Father and Jesus Christ, and the brethren who are now **sons of God**.

** God begets us – father's us – spiritually in His image in accordance with His Plan – so that we ultimately become the same kind of beings that He and Jesus Christ are.

1John 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father has **bestowed** upon us, that we should be called the **sons of God**: therefore the world knows us not, because it knew Him not.

1John 3:2 Beloved, now are we the **sons of God**, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be **like Him**; for we shall see Him as He is.

The word of God says that we shall be **like Him!** We are looking at the development of this incredible hidden Truth of the Family of God. The word "family" is mentioned only once in the New Testament.

Did you ever stop to think and ask yourself – where is our understanding about the **Family of God** revealed in the Bible? How is this teaching developed in the Scriptures? To whom did God reveal it?

It is interesting that the apostle Paul builds tremendously on the Family of God concept, and John comes along later and adds to it. With God's Holy Spirit – Paul was able to put it all together – as it had never been put together before. Paul wrote:

Ephesians 2:18 For through [Jesus] we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. We saw that when speaking of baptism...

Ephesians 2:19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household [as a **relative**] of God;

Turnover one chapter to Ephesians 3 – the relationship with God is more pronounced there:

Ephesians 3:14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Ephesians 3:15 Of whom the whole **family** in heaven and earth is named.

God is making a very clear distinction between those **of the world** – and those who are fully yielded to His will and way of life.

1Corinthians 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

We've come **out** of Satan's world – the prince of the power of the **airwaves**, the [evil] spirit that now works in the children of disobedience (Ephesians 2:2) – as far as our thinking and activities are involved.

We are now on God's wavelength.

Romans 8:9 You are not in the flesh, but **in the Spirit** [we are attuned to God's Spirit], if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.

Romans 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the **sons of God**.

Romans 8:15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, [endearing – “daddy”] Father.

A child’s first sound... Abba

Romans 8:16 The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the **children of God**:

Romans 8:17 And if **children**, then **heirs**; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may **also be glorified together**.

That’s our goal – being in the Family of God – in the Kingdom of God.

Romans 8:19 For the earnest expectation of the creation waits for the manifestation of the **sons of God**. [That is what creation is for:]

Romans 8:20 For the creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope,

Romans 8:21 Because the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the **children of God**.

That is God's ultimate purpose for the **creation in us of holy, righteous, spiritual and Godly character - so that we can be born into His eternal **Family**.

Romans 8:22 For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now.

Paul explained how the change in kind, from man-kind to God-kind, takes place.

Expounding further on Jesus’ analogy of being born and the mother’s labor pains in giving birth Paul tells how the purpose of all of creation: is bringing many sons to glory.

God the Father and Jesus -- Their plan has always been to add to Their family—“bringing many sons to glory” (Hebrews 2:10).

Romans 8:23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption [full sonship], to wit, the redemption of our body.

God makes us His Children now so that we may eventually be converted and born fully as Spirit beings into the God Family.

Our complete transformation into the everlasting Family of God will occur at our resurrection. When we are literally born into the Kingdom of God, as full members of the Spiritual Family of God, it will not be in these temporary physical bodies. In the resurrection to eternal life, immortal Spiritual bodies that cannot perish will replace our old physical bodies.

1Corinthians 15:44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body...

1Corinthians 15:50 Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

Philippians 3:21 The Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body.

It is almost too much to believe, but the Scriptures tell us that it is true. God is reproducing Himself in man through the conversion process. Do you want to know if you are utilizing God's Holy Spirit in your life? Read this next verse:

1John 5:4 For whosoever is born of God [a reference to the conversion **process] overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcome the world, even our faith.

There are people - who have gone through the motions in God's church for years - who haven't begun to really work on their personal sins - let alone begun to share a Godly love with the brethren.

God gives us the picture of a newly conceived babe in the womb that must grow and mature until the day of its birth. If an unborn infant for any reason ceases to grow and develop, it will die within the womb.

In the same exact way, if anyone deliberately refuses God's help in overcoming sin, and renounces His Way of Life - they will be stillborn - and not enter the Kingdom of God.

As converted Christians, we must continue to grow in Godly righteous character until our day of maturation - the day we have **finished our course** with joy (Acts 20:24).

Only then will we meet the criteria for our spiritual birth into the Family of God.

**At Baptism, and with the laying on of hands, we received that powerful spark of Divine Life - God's Spirit - that makes us embryonic Children of God.

Our spiritual growth process begins to convert us from being purely carnal to **entirely spiritual** - a tremendous process that will not be complete until the resurrection to Life.

2Peter 3:18 Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

We saw earlier that by God's **grace** we receive the fullness of God. That was the push from God to be sure we could make it. Brethren, a word of caution here: It was not a push - so that we could begin to coast downhill. Some people, **upon being baptized**, begin to coast along because they erroneously think, "I have it made - I'm converted now!" No, we must develop and grow.

2Peter 1:2 Grace and peace **be multiplied** unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

2Peter 1:3 According as His divine power has given unto us all things that pertain unto Life and Godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue.

Brethren, when you look into your mirror, do you see Jesus Christ? Yeah, me neither.

Ephesians 4:13 Until [that means that we are not there yet] we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a **perfect man**, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

The conversion process begins with God's Holy Spirit in us.

God is Reproducing Himself through Man - so that we can be born into the eternal Family of God.

Jesus Christ described the process leading up to our spiritual birth in the Kingdom of God to Nicodemus:

John 3:5 Truly, truly, I say unto you, Unless a man be born [*gennao*] of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.

John 3:6 That which is born [Greek *gennao*] of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born [*gennao*] of the Spirit is spirit.

Those are two different things entirely. We are somewhere between. We've been born of the flesh - begotten/conceived of Spirit - but not yet born into the spiritual Kingdom of God.

The Greek word, *gennao*, encompasses the **entire** life process in the womb from the moment of conception, the forming of the embryo, through prenatal development, to full maturity of the fetus at birth.

When studying, do not limit the meaning of *gennao*. It is such a broad concept that the Bible uses it even in the hatching of eggs.

Jesus **also** uses *gennao* to mean the **spiritual** development in a converted Christian that parallels the physical maturation period within the womb.

Conversion is a process that begins with a "newness of life" at water baptism and the laying on of hands, and continues **uninterrupted** until we are raised as spiritual beings in the "likeness of Christ's resurrection."

Romans 6:4 Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Romans 6:5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection:

This inconceivable truth is lost on the world.

They cannot grasp the awe-inspiring reality expressed in these Biblical words that convey the fact that our mere humanity is being transformed into the Family of God.

When a human being undergoes the Christian conversion process, he enters a transformation from temporary mortal life to eternal God Life. God created man-**kind**.

He made them, man and woman, capable of reproducing their species, their kind, **only** as an embryonic step in His Plan to reproduce Himself – the God-**kind**.

God is in the process of reproducing Himself by beginning with God-like children who are a part of His Family – the Family of God. In order for man to make that great leap, from **man-kind** to God-kind, God gives baptized Christians a token of His Life – which is His Spirit.

It is only when **God's Life** unites and changes our human life to be **like** His that we are made into His Godly children – and on our way to becoming fully converted.

When we are literally born into the Kingdom of God, as full members of the Spiritual Family of God, it will not be in these temporary physical bodies. In the resurrection to eternal life, immortal Spiritual bodies that cannot perish will replace our old physical bodies.

God gives us the picture of a newly conceived babe in the womb that must grow and mature until the day of its birth. As we saw, if an unborn infant for any reason ceases to grow and develop, it will die within the womb. In the same exact way, if anyone deliberately refuses God's help in overcoming sin, and renounces His Way of Life - they will be stillborn - and not enter the Kingdom of God.

God the Father has bestowed on us everything it takes – the **fullness of grace – the same **fullness of grace** He bestowed on His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. He gives it to us because now, we are also His begotten sons. He has Fathered us - just as He is the Father of Jesus.

Only then will we meet the criteria for our spiritual birth into the Family of God. And Jesus will say to us:

Matthew 25:23 Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful... enter thou into the joy of your lord.

End: Only Begotten Son