

Christmas I Sermon 3 by Bishop Michael Hawkins

By the Right Reverend Michael W. Hawkins

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We think about Christmas today in terms of adoption and redemption. Why did God send his Son to be born of a woman, to redeem and to adopt, to redeem us and to adopt us as his children? This is the message of both our Epistle and Gospel. His name is Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. His name is Emmanuel, God with us. In Jesus the Saviour we have redemption. In Emmanuel, God with us, we are adopted.

Paul refers us to two great divides and infinite gulfs. We are separated and distinguished from God as creature from Creator, and as sinner from Holy. The atonement, or at-one-ment, our being at one with God, means bridging this chasm. Since the divide is infinite, only an infinite being could bridge the gap. In the Saving Incarnation and Death of Jesus Christ,

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God has adopted his creatures as his children and redeemed sinners. He was born the Only Son, but he shares this. He would not remain the one and only, but is rather the first-born. He died the righteous one, but he would not remain so, and thus he shares his righteousness with us. Rebellious servants become redeemed children through the gift of Jesus Christ, who was born and died for us. This is the Gospel.

We are forgiven children, and God is our Father through Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit. For what God has done for us in Jesus Christ, adopted and redeemed us, he convinces us of this by the sending of the Holy Spirit into our hearts.

Christmas is about family. Today is sometimes called Holy Family Sunday, but we would be wrong to think of Jesus, Joseph and Mary alone, for THE Holy Family is the Family of God, of his adopted and forgiven children. And if God so owns

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and forgives us as his children, we are bound to accept and forgive one another as brothers and sisters in Christ, in the family of God.