

The privileges
And
Responsibilities

of
The sons
of
God

The privileges and responsibilities of the son

'Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham.' Gal 3:7

"But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God," John 1:12

"Those who were not my people I will call 'my people,' and her who was not beloved I will call 'beloved.'" "And in the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' there they will be called 'sons of the living God.'" Rom 9:25-26

Background to the title son

From the Old Testament there can be no doubt that parental power over the children by the father was unlimited. The power of the father over the son was so great as to be a matter of life over death. Gen 22:2-3

While the father had the power, he was also responsible for instructing his son in both the religious traditions and in the matters of his own trade or profession. The father trained the son to reflect his character and authority in all he did in the community. *'Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.'* (Prov 22:6) *"Only give heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently, so that you do not forget the things which your eyes have seen and they do not depart from your heart all the days of your life; but make them known to your sons and your grandsons."* Deut 4:9

"You shall teach them to your sons, talking of them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road and when you lie down and when you rise up." Deut 11:19

The father extends to his son his strength, authority and concern. The strength of the father continued in his son, and the function of the son is to bear the character of his father;

this is the role given to him by the one who calls him his son.

Even as a son can expect to partake of the fathers excellence; his obedience is to be equilavent to that of a servant to the father. A son then honours his father. *'A son honours his father, and a servant his master. Then if I am a father, where is My honour? And if I am a master, where is My respect?'* Malachi 1:6

These characteristics of the father son relationship were known in the days Jesus came to live amongst the Jews. Very early in Jesus walk John the Baptist said, *"I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God."*(John 1:34) And these same father son characteristics are still relevant in the Christians relationship with the Father and the Son. The first century Jew understood the term "the Son of God" to mean "the Messiah." And they understood this to mean that Jesus, as the "Son of God" was not only the Messiah but God incarnate.

Heb 1:5-6 Ps 2:7 Ps 89:26-27

This is seen when Nathanael came to Jesus he said “*Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel.*”
John 1:49

This common knowledge of the privileges and responsibility of the son is clearly seen in the story of the Prodigal Son. The younger son, who wasted everything the father gave him, was willing to return to his father as a slave.

The elder son was unhappy with the younger son on his return being celebrated with the father's ring of authority being placed on him, along with the father's best robe. These items were the very things he believed belonged to him, and even though he was resentful, still his father said to him, '*Son, you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours.*'
Luke 15:31

The title son of God

The title 'son of God' can sometimes refer to Israel (Matt 2:15) or to man as created by God (Luke 2:38) or to redeemed man generally (Rom 8:14, 19, 23) In the New Testament we see

it refers to Jesus as the heavenly, eternal Son who is equal to God.

Matt 11:25-30, 17:5; Heb 1:1-3, 5, 8

Jesus is the unique Son from the father, who fully reveals the Father to the world. *"All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him."*

Matt 11:27

The Son's oneness with the Father

As the Son sent by the Father He existed before He came into the world.

John 3:17, 5:23, 10:36

Jesus claimed that He and His Father are one. "I and the Father are one." (John 10:30) *"He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. Believe*

Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves." John 14:9-11

The Son of God had the authority of God

Jesus claimed to have the power of God. Since Jesus is God He is the giver of eternal life (John 3:16, 36, 20:31) He claims the authority to raise people from the dead; (John 5:25-29) and to forgive sins. (Mark 2:5-7) these things only God can do. I Samuel 2:6; Isaiah 43:25

He is the one who has all authority from the Father to give life, pronounce eternal judgment, (Matt 25:31-33) and rule over all the nations. John 3:36; 5:20-22, 25; 10:17, 16:15

Further, Jesus says He has the power to answer prayers, (John 14:13-14) and that He will be with His followers always. (Matthew 28:20) The Bible shows Jesus to be the creator of the universe. (John 1:3) and He says, "*All that belongs to the Father is mine.*" John 16:15

The Son of God did the work of God

"Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner." (John 5:19) The Son of God said, "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working." John 5:17

God's greatest work was the sending of His only Son into the world that man may be saved from the power of sin. Not only was God's Son's ministry necessary, so was His death. And that dying was "*the work of God*," for it assured the purchase of all mankind and enabled the redemption of all. Eph. 1:14

As the work of God Jesus chose to die for the sins of the world. (John 3:16-17) His baptism in water indicated that intention. He worked "*the work of God*" during His three and a half year journey to Calvary; He was always seeking

the attention of listeners so they might understand and believe.

"This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent." John 6:29

Christians are sons to reflect the life of their Father

Christians are called sons of God; this includes men and women as it refers to the status and responsibility of all God's children. The title son is not so much a title of honour but the function of reflecting the Father's character through obedience to him and dependence upon Him. It is only in fulfilment of the given role that the term 'son' becomes one of approval and honour. This is the meaning of *'so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven'* Matt 5:44

"Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

Matt 5:16

Jesus is saying, our light, our good works, and our love for our enemies, proves we are indeed sons of God.

So therefore we are to be perfect as He is perfect. Only children born of God can show forth the life of God.

'Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.'
Eph 5:1-2

Jesus is not asking those who are born again of God to do something they have no ability to do. The children of God, the sons of God, have the Spirit and will be able to produce the life and character of God as a tree produces the fruit of its kind.

The Lord Jesus is telling us to be true to the life of God in us who are saved by grace.

As sons, Christians enjoy oneness with the Father and The Son

Jesus came to save us from alienation from God that sin brings, so that we might be reconciled with the Father. He came so that we can have fellowship with God while we still walk on earth.

'Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him." John 14:23

"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you."

John 14:16-17

"I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Matt 28:20

As sons, Christians share the inheritance of The Son

'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.'

Eph 1:3

Our privileges as sons means we are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a people belonging to God, a holy nation. We share in the inheritance of The Son and we will rule with Him one day *'provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.'*

Rom 8:17

This spiritual inheritance is a motivation for obedient Christian service. The believer's inheritance will be presented for faithfulness and obedience to God. *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled*

and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you."

1 Peter 1:3, 4

The sons of God learn obedience

God determined that the sons would learn obedience as the Lord learnt obedience. All those who follow Jesus are tested in their obedience.

Heb 5:8-10

Jesus commanded us to make disciples and to teach them to obey all He has commanded. Our obedience is necessary if we are to reflect the life of the Son; for in His obedience He was able to reflect the life of the Father. In giving us the commandment to make disciples, the Lord assumes our obedience will mean we will do what He commands

As sons, Christians do the work of God

'For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.'

Eph 2:10

Our salvation is not by works of our own, but salvation means we do God's work. We are saved by God to do the work of God. Genuine salvation is entirely of God but it most certainly results in a life of good works for God.

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father."

John 14:12

In sending us on His behalf Jesus gave us authority to act on His behalf as sons of God. *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

Matt 28:18-20

The work done by the sons is all the things that God commands. This work follows the example of the Son, because He abides in the

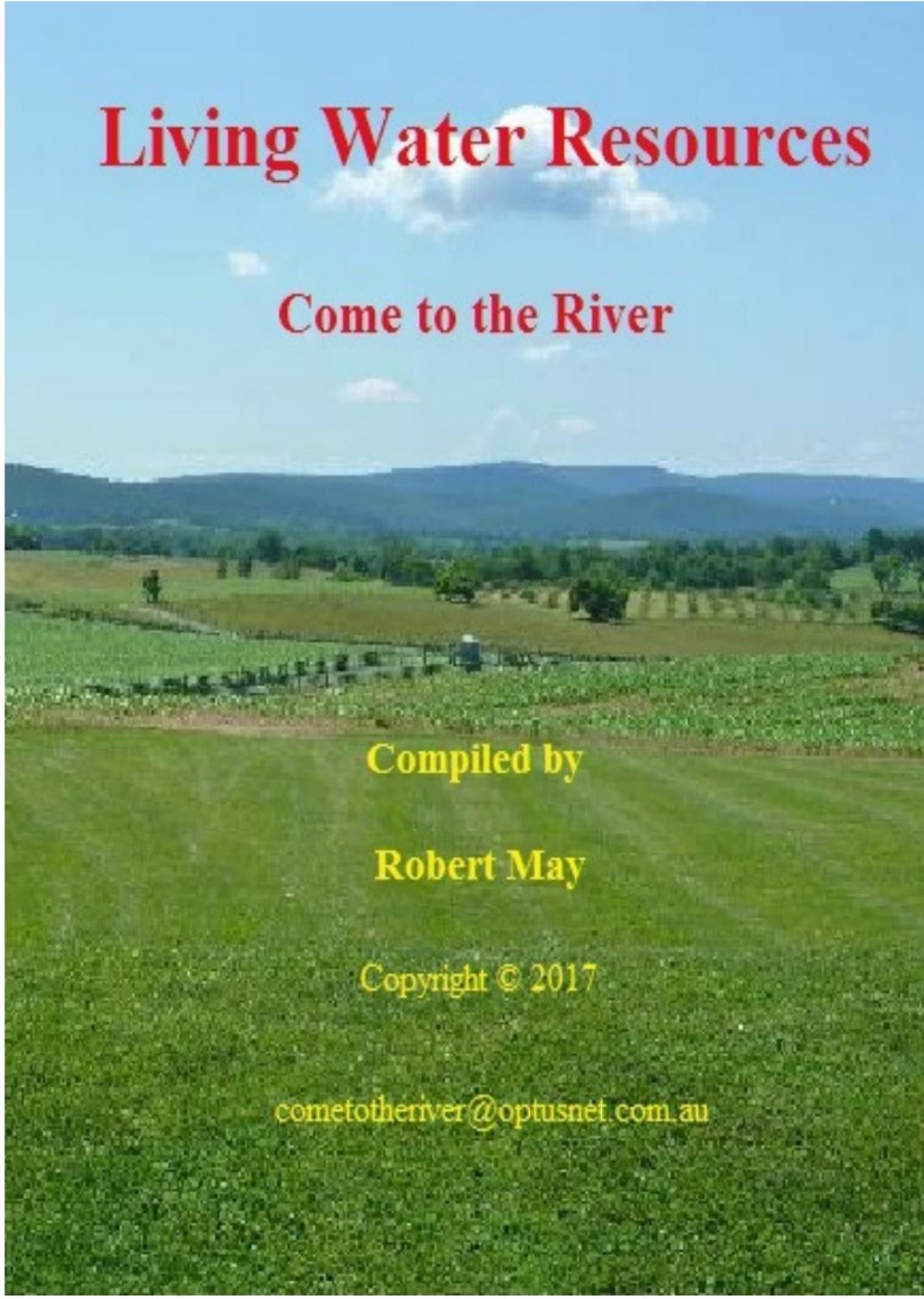
Father's will, when we obey we abide in His will as we follow the example of the Son.

As sons, we bring His gospel into the world of darkness so that those who are in bondage to the evil one might come into the light of the kingdom of God. *'I am sending you, to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'* Acts 26:17-18

The sons of God have the responsibility of revealing our Father's heart. The sons do the Father's work by taking His message into the world. Everywhere we go and everything we do we represent God. So our life must be consistent with His life, otherwise the unsaved will conclude that He is not better than they.

So 'we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ.' Col 1:28-29

Living Water Resources



Come to the River

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