

WHY ALL THE FUSS?

Why contend with those who hold to a false gospel—specifically, the works salvation party? I mean ... it's really close to what we believe. Why not just try to come together on the things we have in common?

WHY? THREE THINGS.

ONE, IT'S THE GOSPEL. And if we do not agree on the gospel, then nothing else matters.

TWO, IT'S THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL. The Holy Spirit of God teaches us the word of God as the word of God, which transcends the norms of contemporary society and the wide-road tendencies of the professing church.

THREE, IT'S OBEDIENCE TO THE GOSPEL. It really is that simple. Obedience to God and his word of truth demands that we “make a fuss.”

Isn't it interesting how “good Christian people” sometimes turn the truth upside down? I am so thankful that we have the word of God to turn things right-side-up again. Do you really want to base eternity, or anything else for that matter, on the whims and opinions of people?

A. OBEDIENCE BY CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH.

- (Jude 3 ESV) Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.

B. OBEDIENCE BY SILENCING THE DECEIVERS.

We are to silence the rebellious, empty talkers and deceivers who hold to works salvation, i.e. the circumcision party.

- (Titus 1:10–11, 15-16 ESV) For there are many who are insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision party. They must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach.

C. OBEDIENCE BY UNDERMINING FALSE CLAIMS.

We are to intentionally and methodically undermine the false claims of deceitful workers who insist that they are doing the same work on the same terms as we do.

- (2 Corinthians 11:12–15 ESV) And what I am doing I will continue to do, in order to undermine the claim of those who would like to claim that in their boasted mission they work on the same terms as we do. 13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 15 So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.

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- (Galatians 4:7 ESV) So you are no longer a slave, but a **son**, and if a **son**, then an heir through God.

- (John 8:35 ESV) The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever.
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- » **Scot McKnight explains the importance of staying with the “son” translation ...**

I wish to make two points, the **first** about **translation** and the **second** about **sensitivity**. In our final section I shall try to “update” the message of Paul about sonship for our world.

- » **FIRST, THE MATTER OF TRANSLATION.**

What is an acceptable translation of the word *huios* (“son”), which refers to a male child? This word does not refer to a girl, and it is different than the term “child” (which largely describes the developmental stage of a person). Furthermore, there was something in the reference to a son that would not have been conveyed in the term “child” or “daughter,” namely, the privileges inherent to becoming a man and inheriting a father’s estate (in a patriarchal world).

- » Thus, in preferring the term “child” (as the NIV does at 3:7) something is lost. Is it best to lose something so as not to be offensive? I think not, at least not in this case.

- » I am all for each of these maneuvers in our interpretation and in our application; I am not, however, for the translation of any text that would harm the original message. No matter how important it is for us to make the gospel relevant, there comes a point when we must not tamper with the message so as to make it relevant. I believe this applies to the matter of sonship in Galatians. While I am deeply disturbed by patriarchy and chauvinism, I do not believe that the way

to eradicate them from society is to re-translate ancient texts so as to give the impression that they never existed.

- » **SECOND, THE MATTER OF SENSITIVITY.**

- » Having said that I prefer not to re-translate the whole Bible so as to avoid all traces of patriarchy, I am also of the view that it is fundamentally important for Christians to be sensitive and to be as “nonsexist” in their language as possible (with the above proviso). [McKnight, S. (1995). *Galatians* (p. 206). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.]

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- » **Dave’s take on this discussion ...**

So what do we take away from this? What does all of this mean? I had first titled this week’s message—“*Our Adoption as Sons (and Daughters) of God.*” (Let’s not leave the women out, right? Chauvinism, feminism, etc. ...)

But McKnight’s excellent commentary on the text changed my mind. Why? Because we lose the strength of the teaching if we change the translation because we are overly sensitive to contemporary culture.

We forfeit the power and assurance of this text when we move away from the use of “son.” The issue here is not masculinity or femininity but position and place in the family and kingdom of God. Our adoption as sons—men and women—equates to full rights and privileges as the heirs of God.

So for maybe just this instant, ladies, be thankful for your full, equal standing before God as “sons of God.”