

If you have a **yardstick**, it can tell you how tall you are, but it can't make you any **taller**.

The **law** can't save you - but it **can** show you that you **need** to be saved. In fact, that's the key: that's what it's for. We have the **Ten commandments**, which show the need for salvation. They are the **spiritual** yardstick.

But let's look at the beginning of the passage for this morning.

Now, the **Hebrew**, **Greek** and **Roman** view of childhood was not the same as ours: a child was under the control of tutors and governors. Although he was **destined** to become the heir of the father, he wasn't granted **all** the **privileges** of a son until he came of age. That age **varied** in the different cultures. There are a number of ceremonies that were **symbolic** of the **adoption** of the child as a **son**: the **Bar-Mitzvah** was the ceremony of the Jews; the Romans had a special occasion when a son was given a **toga virilis** - the garment that showed that he was a son of his father in his own right. The same is true in the Pacific nation of **Vanuatu**, where we lived in the early 1990s, where a child became fully a **son** and a **man** when he came of age.

It's under this understanding that we have the principle of **sonship**: it's not **automatic** - it comes through an action by the **child** and the **father** - you don't become adopted as a son **without** the **decision** of the **child** and of the **father**.

Now, right throughout the scripture, and through this passage too, we have some choices:

- Do you want to be under **law** or under **Christ**?
- Do you want to be a **slave** or a **son**?
- Do you want to be a **self-made** Christian or a **Christ-made** Christian?
- Do you want to go back to the **slavery** from which you have been **delivered**, or do you want to remain in the **glorious freedom** for which Christ set you free?

That is what we are talking about here. Suddenly, through **Christ**, we have the **opportunity** not to be a slave any longer, but to become a **son**, a **joint heir** with Christ. The son, loving the **father**, calling him **Dad**, which is the name in verse 6. Just like Jesus, we are **privileged** to call our God, who made everything that ever was made, **Daddy**, which is in English the same as **Abba**.

Under Roman law, and the tradition in Vanuatu, and the tradition here, when someone becomes a **son**, they take on a new **name**. That's what happens when you are born and become a son, or when you are adopted as a son. Indeed, when you are born here, you will generally take the name of one or both parents. And **everything** we do is in that **name**, so that we might hear that someone has brought **honour** (or **shame**) to the family **name**.

And when we become Christians, we have the **privilege** to take **God's name**. In that sense, **everything** we do is in **God's name**. In Colossians 3:17, Paul says "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."

At least in part, that's the **commandment**: in Exodus 20:7 "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

It's **not** just about what you say when you hit your thumb with a hammer. When you take the name of the LORD your God, you **mustn't** take it in vain. It's a very serious matter to take your family name...to be a **Halliday**...or a **Bazley**...or a **Christian**. None are names to take lightly.

Now, if we are **Christians**, **sons**, no longer **slaves**, we have the **name** that is **above** every name, and I would certainly say that a good name is something that can, by any yardstick that measures us, make us **walk tall** indeed.