

Sonship, Suffering, Glory

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[0 : 00] Good morning. My name is Matthew Capone and I'm one of the pastors here at Cheyenne Mountain Presbyterian Church and it's my joy to bring God's word to you today.

We're continuing this morning our series in the book of Romans. You'll remember that Romans is a letter written by the Apostle Paul in the 50s AD.

And it's called Romans because it's written to the churches in the city of Rome and this letter is about the gospel. It's about the good news of Jesus' life and death and resurrection.

And we are now in the middle of chapter 8 which is about life in the Spirit. That is life in the Holy Spirit. And we are moving kind of from this discussion we've been having about holiness to all the benefits that come to Christians from the Holy Spirit.

So we're moving from talking about the life of holiness where we've been for a while to talking about all the benefits, all the blessings that God gives to his people through his Spirit.

[1 : 09] And that's where we'll be in many ways through the rest of the chapter. And so as in previous weeks we're going to go from top to bottom. I invite you to turn with me to Romans chapter 8 starting at verse 14 which you'll find on page 7 of your worship guide.

And as we come to this passage remember that this is God's word. Proverbs chapter 30 tells us every word of God proves true. He's a shield to those who take refuge in him.

So that's why we read now Romans chapter 8 starting at verse 14. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear. But you have received the spirit of adoption as sons by whom we cry Abba Father.

The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. And if children then heirs. Heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.

[2 : 23] Provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. I invite you to pray with me as we come to this portion of God's word.

Our Father in heaven we do come again this morning to thank you and praise you. For your words that you've given us.

To show us the great mercy and grace that you've given us in Jesus Christ. Show us our great need for that very same grace.

And we ask that you would be with us by your spirit in a special way here and now as we look into your word. That you would open our eyes. You would unstop our ears.

You'd clear our minds. You'd soften our hearts. That we would be able to see and hear and understand and believe. Everything written in your word.

[3 : 21] And we ask these things in the mighty name of Jesus Christ. Amen. Some people, many people, consider Romans chapter 8 to be among the greatest chapters in the entire Bible.

If not, in fact, the greatest chapter. And it's for good reason. This is the payoff of the work that we've done over the last number of months.

Paul has explained that salvation comes not by works but by God's grace. That was chapter 5. And then he spent chapters 6 and 7 in the beginning of chapter 8 talking about this question of holiness.

Are we still holy even though we're not saved by works? Yes. That's chapter 6. Does that holiness come by the law? No. That's chapter 7. Holiness instead comes by God's spirit.

That's chapter 8. And now that Paul has clarified this need for holiness, the source of holiness, that it comes from the work of the Holy Spirit, he's going to explain to us the great benefits, the great blessings that come from our salvation.

[4 : 38] Now as we come to this portion, we need to remember where we left off last week because verse 14 picks up from where verse 13 left us.

You'll remember verse 13 tells us life comes from walking in the spirit. Life now and life in the future comes from obedience, from living lives of holiness.

Which raises a question that takes us to verse 14. Why is that so? Why is it that our lives of holiness are the path to life?

Paul goes on to tell us verse 14, because walking in the spirit, obeying God, means that you are a son.

Verse 14. For all who are led by the spirit of God are sons of God. First, it's important to remember, to know what Paul means here by being led by the spirit.

[5 : 41] He means what we've talked about previously the last number of weeks. Being led by the spirit in context means that you are fighting against sin as empowered and enabled by God's spirit.

That's what it means to be led by the spirit. In other words, it does not mean, sometimes Christians import a meaning from outside of the text, being led by the spirit does not mean that God is going to tell you by his Holy Spirit which car to buy.

That is not what it means to be led by the spirit. That's not what Paul's talking about in Romans 8. No, he's talking about the obedience that comes from a new heart. So you'll see on page 7, the leading of the Holy Spirit is his continual work to influence God's children to understand the Holy Scriptures and obey them.

Are you in the battle? Are you putting sin to death as we talked about last week? Are you doing this work to understand the Holy Scriptures and obey them?

If so, you are being led by the spirit. You're living the life that comes by the spirit. Those who put sin to death have God's Holy Spirit.

[7 : 12] Okay, that's review in a sense. Now we talked in verse 9 about the fact that all Christians have the spirit. Verse 14, though, tells us something new. Those who have the spirit are sons of God.

Now we have to understand here the meaning of sons. Son is what Paul uses because in his context, first century Rome, that was inheritance language.

Sons were the heirs. So if you are a woman and you are a Christian, guess what? You are a son of God. And you're a son of God in the sense that you're an heir.

You receive the inheritance. It's helpful that Paul then in verses 16 and 17 also uses the word children. So we're not left just with the word son. But he's saying, and we're going to get to this in a little bit, in verse 17, the inheritance is yours.

It is not simply or merely that God has forgiven your sins on behalf of Christ and credited you with his righteousness.

[8 : 20] No, even more than that, he's adopted you. You're his child. The inheritance is all yours. So last week, living by the spirit, we ended seeing that it leads to life, right?

Life now, life in the future. Paul now adds on to that. It is not only that the spirit leads to life. It also leads to inheritance and intimacy.

The spirit does not just lead to life, although it does. The spirit also leads to inheritance and intimacy.

First, verse 15, Paul tells us about the intimacy of our sonship.

For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption as sons by whom we cry, Abba, Father.

[9 : 27] So he starts in the negative. No, there is no spirit of slavery to fall back into fear. Paul here is referring to what it was like when sin was controlling your life.

Remember, we spent a ton of time talking about this in chapter 6. Chapter 6, we dove deep into what is the power center of your heart, of your life?

Is it a power center controlled by sin, or is it a power center controlled by the Holy Spirit? And if you're a Christian, it is the latter. The Holy Spirit rules and reigns in your life.

So fear and slavery, those are all behind you. There's no need to fall back into that. No, actually, you have something now positive.

You've received the spirit of adoption as sons. Received reminds us of what we saw a couple weeks ago, that every Christian has the Holy Spirit.

[10 : 27] There are not some special Christians with the spirit and normal, regular Christians without it. No, it is what you receive as God's gift as one of his children. Every Christian is given the spirit.

And it's given by grace as a gift. The spirit of adoption as sons is reaffirming verse 14, which is that those with the spirit are sons.

They are heirs. Even more than that, the Holy Spirit communicates this reality to you in the deepest places of your heart.

The Holy Spirit communicates this reality to you that you are one of God's children in the deepest places of your heart.

That's what Paul is getting at when he says, by whom we cry, Abba, Father. By whom?

[11:36] Meaning it's by the spirit. The spirit. The spirit. God's Holy Spirit. Enables and empowers us to cry out to God as our father in prayer.

The Holy Spirit enables and empowers us to cry out to God as our father in prayer.

And it's in that sense that the Holy Spirit is the spirit of adoption. So our God is not a distant or far off God, but a God who gives us the intimacy of a child with their father.

Our God is not a distant or far off God. He's a God who by his spirit assures us and gives us the intimacy of a child with their father.

This word cry is significant as well. Notice what Paul doesn't say. He doesn't say pray, although this cry is a type of prayer.

[12:53] He does not say that we call God father, although we do, because it's not strong enough. No, we cry.

The Greek word here is a crying out, almost a wailing. We cry to our father, reminding us, telling us, teaching us that God our father is the one to whom we run when we are in distress.

God our father is the one to whom we run in our distress. We feel, because of the Holy Spirit, deep in our souls that we belong to God.

And so because of the Holy Spirit, in and with the Holy Spirit, it comes out of us as a cry. A cry for help.

A cry for aid. And the point is this. Because of the Holy Spirit, when trouble comes, we run to God in prayer.

[14:07] Because of the Holy Spirit, when trouble comes, we bring it to our father unfiltered.

We bring him the deepest pains and longings of our heart, which helps us to begin to see why Romans chapter 8 is one of, if not the greatest chapter in the Bible.

You did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption as sons by whom we cry, Abba, Father.

Verse 16 goes on to tell us why we can be so bold.

The spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. In other words, the Holy Spirit gives you the confidence and the boldness that you need to approach God in this way.

[15:26] And even more than that, the Holy Spirit gives you a deep and firmly rooted certainty that God is your father.

The Holy Spirit gives you this unshakable trust and confidence that you belong to him.

Do you have certainty that God is your father? Do you know beyond a shadow of a doubt that you belong to him?

Do you know it, we might say, deep down? Does it run all the way to your roots?

I hope it does. What Paul is telling us is that when it does, that is because of the work of the Holy Spirit.

[16:35] God's spirit at work in your heart assuring you, reminding you, convincing you that you belong to him.

He bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. Spirit gives you powerful confidence. Spirit gives you this felt sense of God's love.

Remember we talked about that in Romans chapter 5, verse 5. The love of God poured into your hearts by the Holy Spirit. It doesn't say the love of God poured into your mind by the Holy Spirit, although of course our minds understand God's love.

No, God's love poured into your hearts. It's a felt sense of God's love given to you by his spirit. And it's not something that you can generate on your own.

Do you have confidence that God is your father and that you belong to him? If you do, that is because of God's spirit at work in you.

[17:53] The spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. That is the intimacy, the connection that comes because you are a son, whether you're a man or a woman

because you're a son of God.

You're one of God's children. Belong to him. Now I said with sonship there is both inheritance and intimacy. Now we've seen the intimacy.

Now verse 17 takes us to the inheritance. And if children, then heirs. Heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.

Now if I came to you and I said, you know what? There is a will and you're in it. What would you want to know? What am I getting?

What does the will give to me? Does the will give me the baseball card collection or does it give me the stocks? You know, how much is it worth? We have the same question here.

[19 : 05] If we are heirs, if we're in the will, what is it exactly that Paul is telling us we're going to get? Of course the inheritance is great. We could spend multiple sermons talking about it.

I will remind you of a few things that you already know. If you are an heir of God and a fellow heir with Christ Jesus, you are inheriting a world without sin.

If you are one of God's sons, whether you're a man or a woman, you are going to receive a new body. It's going to be a body without sickness, disease, or decay.

You are going to rule with God over the entire earth. And even more than all that, saving the best for last, you will have God himself.

God's promise in the Old Testament, his covenant promise to his people will be fully and finally true. And that promise is this, I will be your God, you will be my people, and I will dwell with you forever.

[20 : 24] forever. In fact, Revelation chapter 21 gives us an idea of what the inheritance looks like. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, behold, the dwelling place of God is with man.

That's God's presence, that's part of your inheritance. He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will be with them as their God.

that's the best part. Because God is with you, will be with you as your God, this will also happen. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more.

Neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore for the former things have passed away. That's your inheritance.

That's what you have to look forward to. That is what is named for you in the will. That's what comes because you are a son of God.

[21 : 39] And how do you get this inheritance? How do you become a son? Now Paul tells us it's because verse 17 we are fellow heirs with Christ.

He'll tell us later in chapter 8 in verse 29 that Jesus is the first born among many brothers. So you are God's son, his heir, his child.

You have the intimacy that a son or a daughter has with their father. and you have the inheritance that comes to children in the will because of the work of Jesus Christ on your behalf.

Because of the first born son you and all of God's people are brought in as his children, his heirs, his other sons.

that's what you have. That's what's waiting for you because of God's work by his son through the spirit.

[22 : 59] Finally, Paul tells us the path to inheritance runs through suffering. Suffering comes as part of the journey to the destination.

Verse 17, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. Paul here is talking about the suffering that comes to you because you're a Christian.

Remember years ago we talked about the fact there's different types of suffering in the world.

There's suffering that you experience because you did something really stupid. There's suffering that you experience just because of general sin in the world.

You know, when you get a cold or pneumonia, that's because of sin and sickness, general sin. And then there's the suffering that you experience as a follower of Jesus. Paul here is talking about that last suffering.

He's saying as you live in this world as a Christian, it is unavoidable that following Jesus will bring hardship. Paul says this also in 2 Timothy chapter 3, indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

[24 : 14] So it's not optional. Every Christian in some way will in this world suffer for the name of Jesus Christ. Jesus himself tells us that.

John chapter 15, remember the word that I said to you, a servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.

If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. In other words, as go the master, so go his servants. As goes the teacher, so goes the students.

as goes Jesus, so goes us. Jesus suffered in this world. If you follow him, you will too.

Jesus says the same thing, Matthew chapter 5. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

[25 : 28] Suffering in glory. By the way, here's a teaser for next week. Verse 18. We're going to look only at verse 18 next week.

Paul says this, guess what? Everything to come is so great, the future is so glorious, that everything else fades in comparison. The suffering isn't even worth talking about, given how amazing everything to come is.

Remember, I've been telling you, and I'll tell you again, that Romans is the fifth gospel, because what Paul teaches, Jesus taught first. Jesus teaches that we're his heirs.

Matthew chapter 5, again, blessed are the meek, for they will what? Inherit the earth. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Remember, I said part of our inheritance is that we will be with God. God himself is what's coming. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will what?

[26 : 35] See God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God, heirs.

And so, we're going to sing now that very same hope. What reward will heaven bring? Everlasting life with him, it's the inheritance that waits for you.

There we will rise to meet the Lord, then sin and death will be destroyed, and we will feast in endless joy when Christ is ours forever.

Let's pray. God, our Father in heaven, we do thank you and praise you that you have not just saved us from the penalty, the power of sin, but you've also adopted us as your sons and daughters.

You have given us the ability to cry out to you as a father, and you've assured us of that by your spirit that you have put within us. You've promised us a great inheritance in the world to come.

[27 : 49] We ask that you would use that to transform our hearts and our minds and our lives, that we would follow you and love you and obey you in faith. We ask all of these things in Jesus' name.

Amen.