

Adoption as Sons
Romans 8:14-17
September 3, 2020

Review

Chs 5-8 The gospel and the sure hope it gives

7:1-8:17 The triumph of grace over the power of the law

8:1-4 God has done what the law could not do. God sent His Son to atone for sin, and condemned sin as Christ bore that sin. And now the life-giving Holy Spirit has set the Christian free from sin's penalty and power. God's purpose was that we would be made to obey the law of God, which we do as we walk according to the Spirit.

8:5-8 Those people who are in a fallen, unredeemed condition, Paul terms as being "according to the flesh." They set their minds on the things of the flesh, and are spiritually dead. Their mind is hostile to God, unable to submit to God's law. They cannot please God.
In contrast, the redeemed are termed as being "according to the Spirit." They set their minds on the things of the Spirit, and have eternal life and peace with God.

8:9-13 The redeemed are in this new position, because the Holy Spirit has made His home within them. Anyone who does not have the Spirit does not belong to Christ. If Christ is in you, although your body is unswervingly headed toward death, your spirit has been made alive. And the Father will one day give life to your body through His Spirit.
Because of God's grace to us, we have an obligation, but not to flesh. For if you live according to the flesh, you will suffer eternal death. But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the flesh, you will live spiritually and eternally with God.

Three blessings given to the person indwelt by the Holy Spirit:

1. The blessing of adoption as a son of God (14-15)

Question: What comes to mind when you think of the truth that the believer has been adopted by God?

14 “For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.”

To be led by the Spirit is to live in the condition described in verses 4-13 as...

1. Being indwelt by the Spirit (9)
2. Being according to the Spirit (5)
3. Setting your mind on the things of the Spirit (5)
4. Walking according to the Spirit (4)
5. Putting to death the deeds of the flesh by the Spirit (13)

The Spirit leads those whom He has regenerated, and He does so...

1. By working in us (Phil 2:13)
2. Stirring our heart to love God and to hunger and thirst for righteousness (2 Cor 3:17-18; Matt 5:6)
3. Through the Scriptures He inspired (Psalm 119:105)

This verse is closely related to **verse 13**

In **verse 15**, Paul expounds upon the blessing of being made sons of God

Question: Verse 15 contrasts slavery and adoption as sons. What are some of the key points of difference?

Verse 15 is not talking about the slavery mentioned in the following verses:

- **1:1** “Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus...”
- **6:17–18** “But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become **slaves of righteousness.**”

Such verses speak of the wholeheartedness of the Christian’s service to God.

Verse 15 speaks of the sort of slavery from which we have been freed, a slavery that produces fear. Such fear is also spoken of in...

- **Heb. 2:14–15** “Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through **fear of death** were subject to lifelong slavery.”
- **1 John 4:17–19** “By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. We love because he first loved us.”

Verse 15 does not deny that the Christian fears the Lord, but teaches that the Christian has been given a new relationship with God in which love for God as his Heavenly Father is the Christian's primary motive.

15 "...you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons..."

1. When we received the Holy Spirit, we received adoption as God's sons
2. The term "adoption as sons" comes from Greek and Roman law
3. We did not belong to God's family and had no right to be added. Yet in His grace, God adopted us as His sons, giving us the full rights and privileges of sonship in His family.
4. But God did more than perform a legal act of making us His son. He actually gave us His own Spirit, so that we are now in His family by nature, His nature having been created in us by the Spirit in regeneration.
5. Adoption gives us both a new status, and new relationships
6. **Eph. 1:5-6** "he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved."

15 "...by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!'"

"Abba"

1. **Mark 14:35-36** "And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, '**Abba, Father**, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.'"
2. An Aramaic word
3. Early church fathers who came from Antioch, where Aramaic was spoken, and who probably had Aramaic-speaking nurses, unanimously testified that *Abba* was the address of small children to their fathers.¹
4. The term reflects love and intimacy with respect.
5. The Jews did not address God in this informal way, but Jesus constantly addressed God in this way, and even used it in doubled-form in Gethsemane.
6. Apparently this was so striking to Christ's apostles that they remembered it in its Aramaic form and sometimes repeated it in Aramaic even when speaking or writing in Greek

¹ In James Montgomery Boice, *Romans*, 2:842.

7. Connects the believer's cry with Christ's cry

15 "we cry, 'Abba! Father!'"

1. A term for prayer in the psalms
 - **Psa. 3:4** "I cried aloud to the LORD, and he answered me from his holy hill."
2. In adoption, God has given us the privilege of...
 - Access to God in prayer
 - Approaching God as our loving Heavenly Father
 - Addressing Him as Father
3. The Holy Spirit almost immediately teaches us to use these privileges
4. A sign of life
5. Scripture does not say the Spirit teaches us to cry, "I am God's son!," but rather teaches us to go to our Heavenly Father in prayer
 - The Spirit teaches us to look to God as our Heavenly Father, rather than to contemplate ourselves

Application

1. Examine yourself to see if you have the Holy Spirit. Are you led by the Spirit (14)? Do you approach God as your Father in prayer (15)?
2. When Satan tempts you to dread God's judgment, or you find that love for God is absent from your motives, remind yourself that you have received not the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but the Spirit of adoption as sons.
3. Thank your Heavenly Father for adopting you into His family.
4. When you think of other believers, think of them as your brothers and sisters who, like you, have been adopted by God in His grace.
5. Utilize the privilege of praying to God as your loving Father.
6. Be assured of God's love for you.

Next week:

2. The blessing of the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit (16)
3. The blessing of an inheritance from God (17)