



ROMANS 8:14-17

For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. 15 The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." 16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. 17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

NOTES FOR LEADERS

We have water baptism coming up this Sunday, the 19th of November, at all 3 services. Sign-ups can be done on the church website or by contacting the church office.

START TALKING

1. What stood out to you from Sunday's message? What challenged you or encouraged you?
2. What has God been doing in your world - what can we celebrate?

START THINKING

Read Read Romans 8:14-17

1. What stands out most to you from these verses?
2. How easy or difficult is it for you to view God as your Father? Why?
3. On Sunday, Steph said that the role of the Father is: To provide, to protect, to defend, to guide, to correct, to encourage, to counsel, to support, to nurture, to love, to affirm, to console at times, and to cherish. Which of these words are most meaningful to you about God's fathering in your life? Do you have a recent example of how God has fathered you?

START SHARING

1. Being an heir of God is about carrying on the "family mission" and the "family name". How would you summarise God's mission on the earth? And how involved are you in that mission?
2. Read Romans 8:17. On Sunday, Steph said that we each have our own part to play when it comes to sharing in the suffering with Christ for the sake of the Gospel. Share about a time when you aligned yourself with God's mission for the sake of the Gospel, and it caused some difficulties. What did that look like? What was the outcome?

START PRAYING

Spend some time praying for the needs of your group.

START DOING

What practical steps will you take in your daily life to ensure you allow yourself to be led by the Holy Spirit? Start putting them into practice this week.

Steph Bester shared an encouraging message this Sunday in Week Three of our Romans 8 series.

There are two big foundational areas that each of us needs to be consistently growing in in our walk with God:

- The first is how we see God. The greater the picture we have of God in our minds and in our hearts, the greater that picture will influence how we live our lives. So we need to be constantly growing in that.
- The second is that we need to be constantly growing in how God sees us. We need a deep, special revelation from God on exactly how He sees us. And Paul's words (inspired by the Holy Spirit) in Romans 8 help us with that.

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1. Being led by the Holy Spirit

For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. Romans 8:14

The Holy Spirit doesn't push, He doesn't drive, He doesn't force, He doesn't manipulate, He doesn't deceive. (Those are all tactics that the enemy uses.) The Holy Spirit leads and leads in a very gentle way. The Amplified Bible adds the following word in verse 14: For all who are allowing themselves to be led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. (With the emphasis on the word 'allowing'.) The Holy Spirit leads, but we must allow ourselves to be led by Him. Another way to say that is to choose to follow the Holy Spirit's leadership.

So where does He lead us? He leads us into truth. He leads us into righteousness. He leads us into freedom. He leads us into a greater understanding of who God is - of how mighty and incredible God is, of His glory. He leads us into a greater understanding of how God sees us.

We don't like to think about this, but there is an enemy out there that is planning to frustrate and limit us, to bring brokenness and trouble into our lives. When we allow ourselves to be led by the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit will lead us to avoid what the enemy has planned for us. It's not something we should be concerned about every minute of every day. But it is a reality for us as children of God.

The Holy Spirit leads us away from poor and unwise decision-making into good and wise decision-making. He leads us away from the things of the world that can snare us, trap us, and that have no life, and he leads us into the things of God that are of eternal value.

The Spirit of God also leads us into the mission of God. God has a mission for humanity. Jesus Christ is at the centre of that mission to make Himself known to the world. With God, through Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit leads us into the will of God. And very specifically, He leads us into the will of God for our individual lives inside of His mission for humanity.

Each of us has an assignment and a mission from God that we need to walk out. Many of us don't experience the true life of God in our lives because we are not clear on our assignment. We are not clear that we are on mission with God to save humanity. Each of us has a part to play in God's greater mission. It is when we lay down our dreams and goals and pick up the assignment of God that we experience the life of God flowing through us. It is at that time where we bring our few fish and our few loaves of bread, and God multiplies it because it's part of the assignment that He's got for each of us, for humanity.

Are you allowing yourself to be led by the Holy Spirit?

2. Being adopted into God's family.

The Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." Romans 8:15.

In the Roman world of the first century, an adopted son was a son deliberately chosen by his adoptive father to perpetuate the family name and to inherit his estate. He was in no way inferior to a son born in the ordinary course of nature. Under

Roman adoption, the adopted son lost all rights in his old family and picked up and gained all the rights and inheritance of the new family. In modern terms, when we think of the concept of adoption, what comes to mind is someone in need, and God's Spirit moves in the heart of people to meet that need.

In the context that Paul was writing this, the readers would have understood it slightly differently: This was about a family that needed a son to continue the family name and pick up the family inheritance. So when we read these words in Romans, God is saying to us, "I have chosen you. I have adopted you into my family so that you can carry the family name and that you can continue with the inheritance."

Outside of Jesus, no single person ever born was born as a child of God. We become children of God when we are adopted by God into His family to carry His family name and to continue in His inheritance.

Paul says, by whom we cry Abba Father; and he specifically chose those words because the people of the day would have understood Abba as the term being used by a child talking to their dad at home. So, it was a personal term. And in this scripture, he introduces familiarity. When we get adopted into God's family, there's a familiarity, there's a closeness, there's an intimacy - it is personal. It is definitely not over-familiar, but it is very personal. Paul wanted his readers to understand that God the Father becomes a personal Father once He adopts you into His family.

So, what is the role of a father in the life of a child? To provide, to protect, to defend, to guide, to correct, to encourage, to counsel, to support, to nurture, to love, to affirm, to console at times, and to cherish. Children of God is something we are; it's not something we're trying to be. We may at times be naughty, difficult, rebellious children of God, but it doesn't make us any less a children of God.

3. Being Heirs of God and Co Heirs with Christ.

Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. Romans 8:17.

The last part of the sentence says, provided we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him. It's one of those sentences that we prefer to skip over.

Jesus didn't suffer because it was a tough economic climate. Jesus didn't suffer because the interest rates were high. When we look at our lives, we don't really suffer because of things that make it inconvenient or make us uncomfortable. The context of this suffering in Paul's writing is suffering for the sake of the Gospel.

Christ suffered because He had a message and a mission. He was making the kingdom of God known to the world, and many rejected this message. His suffering came because of His mission. The writer of Romans, Paul, suffered because of the mission. And each of us, as children of God, if we want to partake in the inheritance, we'll also experience suffering.

The world is hostile towards God. When we take a stand for what is right, many will be upset. When we share the Gospel message, some will receive it and be blessed, and others will reject it. So, we each have our own part to play when it comes to sharing in the suffering with Christ. It's not the type of suffering that we often look at; it is for the sake of the Gospel.

Because of Christ in us, God sees us the same way that He sees Jesus. He doesn't see us as less than Christ. We've been adopted into His family, He's given us the family name, and He looks at us the same way that He looks at his son, Jesus. Not because we deserve it, not because of anything we can do, but because of the incredible love of God through Jesus Christ. We are heirs because we are children of God.

We all start our journey with the realisation that we are sinners and in need of saving. But sometimes, we get stuck right there. We have to move on from that identity as sinners in need of saving to the identity of a child of God - a child who carries His family name, an heir to an inheritance with Jesus. When we have a real revelation that we're children of God, that we're adopted, and that we're co-heirs with Christ, there's freedom and boldness.

Through the words written by Paul in Romans, God wants us to understand how He views us. He wants us to be free. He wants us to be courageous. He wants us to be bold. And he wants us to allow ourselves to be led by the Holy Spirit.