

Sermon notes:

Good morning. Today I am talking on just a small part of Romans. We have heard some of the context of Romans the last few weeks.

Paul Trebilco talked about what was going on at the time the letter was written to the Roman church. The tension between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians. And Richard talked on sin in the first 3 chapters. Sin according to the Jewish Christians and the gentile Christians would be starkly different. But this letter talks strongly about death and life, sin and righteousness. It is amongst all of this that this passage sits. Verse 12-13 talk of this before the next section but they are tied together.

Our reading today is Romans 8:12-17

Romans 8

¹² Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. ¹³ For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

¹⁴ 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.^[f] And by him we cry, “*Abba*,^[g] 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.

¹²⁻¹⁴ So don’t you see that we don’t owe this old do-it-yourself life one red cent. There’s nothing in it for us, nothing at all. The best thing to do is give it a decent burial and get on with your new life. God’s Spirit beckons. There are things to do and places to go!

¹⁵⁻¹⁷ This resurrection life you received from God is not a timid, grave-tending life. It’s adventurously expectant, greeting God with a childlike “What’s next, Papa?” God’s Spirit touches our spirits and confirms who we really are. We know who he

is, and we know who we are: Father and children. And we know we are going to get what's coming to us—an unbelievable inheritance! We go through exactly what Christ goes through. If we go through the hard times with him, then we're certainly going to go through the good times with him!

1. Children of God- hear it many times before I hope.

In these 4 verses we are told 4 times we are children of God.

- What does this term mean in reality, in real life what does it mean- rather than just one of these Christian head knowledge things. What does being a child of God mean in your own life today? What does it mean for tomorrow?
- Knowing this is your identity and knowing that this is our identity, how does that affect you, how this identity change your life?

Paul has just been talking about our old life verses new life in Christ. Death and life. Being a child of God has this intensity about it as well. I imagine a very dynamic speaker reading this passage full of emphasis and exuberance, but really the topic justifies a dynamic response!

- We may be used to the idea of being a child of God- which is awesome by the way- but I want us to re grasp, how amazing it is to be children of God!

Verse 14 starts by saying it is the Spirit's work in us that **leads** us to be children of God.

As I was taught the gospel over the years I was taught so much about choice. It's my **choice**, I need to make a choice, I need to choose God, Jesus died on the cross and now it's up to me I need to make a choice. And while choice is part of it and important. We need to not lose sight that God chose us first. Loved us first.

- In verse 14- we are lead by the Holy Spirit- God moves
- V15 we receive God's Spirit when HE adopted us- we didn't adopt him- again God moves
- V16 his Spirit joins with our spirit affirming we are God children- again God moves

- V17 we are heirs, children of God and we share in his glory and suffering- we share.
- God moves by leading us to himself
- God moves by adopting us
- God moves by reassuring us we really are adopted
- Then we share in the life of God

We do have **choice** within this, it's daily, hourly choices even- but it starts with God choosing us, first God moves to us, brings us in, makes us family, makes us at home.

Being **pregnant** has been re teaching me how much God must love us first. This baby who is growing inside me has caused me a much harder life than before- morning sickness is a terrible name- it could be called every waking hour sickness (thankfully that has mostly passed), along with being tired etc etc- and yet through all of this I love this child. I love this person who I have not met yet. I am protective, and I love- before this child has **done** anything other than grow. How much more does God love us regardless of what we do! Before we have done anything he loves.

This baby inside me can't adopt its self any more than we can adopt ourselves into God's family. God does the adopting, we receive God's Holy Spirit when he adopts us as his own children v15.

I believe God's arms are open wide for all who say, yes to being adopted.

We are not **just** adopted as another child. We are fully adopted to the highest standing.

The word used, means the adopted child would not only be a child but an heir. They would receive **all the legal rights and privileges** that would be given to a natural child by Roman law. For example- the Roman emperor Julius Caesar adopted Octavian as his heir and Octavian changed his name to Augustus and later ruled the empire.

God fully **adopts us** and adopts us to the standing of co-heirs with Christ. If you can understand that let me know later. Co-heirs- isn't that crazy! He not only adopts us but gives us the highest possible standing as a child.

This is something that is hard to grasp and therefore I don't think we live it out very well. I think many of us believe we are **second rate Christians**. Or think we aren't a very good Christian. Maybe we hope others don't ask us about how often we read our bibles because it's hardly ever, or maybe we haven't had a good routine of quiet times for who knows how long. Or maybe we think we are bad Christians because we struggle with prayer. Because of our actions or lack of actions we give ourselves the title of a bad Christian, or a second rate son or daughter of God. You may think yes I am a son or daughter but I'm not a very good one. And maybe we haven't been the best behaved son or daughter- **but**

Your adoption was not based on **your** actions. Your worth and the love God has for you as a child of God does not fluctuate depending on what you do or don't do.

I'm reminded of movies about **princes' and princesses** who for some reason don't want to claim their identity and go around pretending to be someone less than their identity states. Pretending to be no-one when really they could do so much with the authority they have if they only walked in it.

Our identity as a child of God is set at the highest possible place. You have been adopted by God and we are co-heirs with Christ that is the truth. That is our identity.

The Message version puts it this way

God's Spirit touches our spirits and confirms who we really are. We know who he is, and we know who we are: Father and children.

2. Not fear not slaves,

V15 says ¹⁵The 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 children of God.

This passage says this is your **identity**- Children of God. And this part speaks of how we act as children. We don't act in fear. We don't act as if there will be punishment from our master. We should act as children of God.

Heidi Baker is a lady who lives in Mozambique and among many things runs orphanages. She tells the story of children who are new to the house. They are told they are part of the family now, and they are allowed to help themselves to the fridge anytime they like. It takes a while before they feel like they can just walk into the kitchen and get something to eat. She says they will sneak in during the night and stock pile in case there is none left later, or if it's too good to be true. They are not acting like they have been adopted they are still acting like they are orphans. With time and love they feel at home and help themselves to what's in the fridge when they are hungry. They were still operating out of fear rather than their adoption.

In what ways are we still acting out of fear rather than adoption?

How do we approach the fridge? As you live out today how do you approach God's metaphorical fridge? How do we approach God?

3. Abba Father- Daddy

Verse 15- And by him we cry, "*Abba*,^[g] Father."

15[For you did not receive a spirit of slavery that returns you to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship, by whom we cry, " Abba! Father!"](#)

These words radiate emotion. First, we **cry**- suggests emotion and second **Abba** Father suggests emotion.

Abba Father is only found **3 times**. Here in Romans, in Galatians 4:v6 where it is used in a very similar manner as here in Romans. The other time is Jesus praying

before his death in Gethsemane and says In Mark 14v36 “Abba,^[a] Father,” “everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”

I read that for Paul, the **emotional aspect** of his faith distinguished his life now compared to before. The emotional side showed that faith was not only rational, and not primarily ritualistic but emotion made his NEW life stand out as different.

Whenever Abba is used it is used in an emotional way.

Abba means father in Aramaic but it is also used as the term of *tender endearment* by a beloved child – like an *affectionate, dependent* relationship with their father; “daddy,” “papa.”

I’ve heard people say they aren’t comfortable calling God by such informal title, as it does not give the honor that is deserved. But I think this is biblical.

I still call my parents **mummy and daddy** occasionally, for special effect. I don’t use it in everyday language but it’s a way of showing love. Earlier this year I caught dad bragging to another dad who had small children- that his grown daughter still called him daddy. He was bragging, his honor and respect were not affected, he was proud. I understand there are many reasons that you may feel uncomfortable calling God father and that’s ok. But I suppose I want you to know that from what I understand this passage to be saying, is this intimate, affectionate relationship is the type of relationship that God wants with us. And make it not only possible through the Holy Spirit but its nearly like a by-product when we are adopted.

Because of our adoption by the work of the Spirit we cry Abba Father. Because of what God does in bringing us to himself we are able to call him daddy, we are able to address God in an affectionate, intimate way not because of what we do, not because we keep the law, not because we read our bible 5 times a week, not because of our actions but because God loved us first and brought us into a close intimate relationship.

This intimate relationship of child and parent is what Jesus has with God and we are brought into that relationship of love. The trinity has been described in many different ways but one I like is the image of Father, Son and Spirit in an embrace of love. Can you imagine the three standing there in an embrace of love. Then we are brought into this amazing relationship as children of full standing. Our life in Jesus through the Spirit, God has made us co-heirs with Jesus. We are adopted fully, able to call our heavenly father Daddy in an intimate emotional way.

Being a child hold much more responsibility than being a slave. It's a whole different attitude.

The message version puts it this way.

15-17 This resurrection life you received from God is not a timid, grave-tending life. It's adventurously expectant, greeting God with a childlike "What's next, Papa?"

What is next daddy? Adventurously expectant.

Verse 17 says, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

There is glory as children of God here now and yet to come. But there is also sufferings as part of this identity. As children we are affected when the parent is affected, God's mission becomes our mission, the way God sees this becomes the way we see things. The good and the hard.

We are adopted as children of God because God loved us first, We are fully adopted and we can eat from the fridge, we can call God Abba, Daddy, we are brought into an intimate relationship. As children there will be glory and suffering.

15-17 This resurrection life you received from God is not a timid, grave-tending life. It's adventurously expectant, greeting God with a childlike "What's next, Papa?"

I just want to emphasis how all of this is God's work, we have a part to play yes but it all hinges on God's actions toward us. So often I think we make our relationship with God hinge on our actions rather than living out of our identity.

We are acting out of fear rather than assurance. Not approaching the fridge because you feel guilty for putting so little time into time with God and so avoid opening the fridge because you dont think you are allowed. God calls us into intimate relationship free from law, free from fear, God brings us close. (hand to face).

We have been given the gift of intimate relationship with our creator, we have been given the gift of being able to approach God like fully adopted children. It is the Spirit's work in our lives that makes this reality.

Lets pray:

Father thank you for thank you for your love. Thank you for adopting us as your children. We ask that you continue to help us see and understand how much you love us, Teach us to live as your children, teach us how to approach you, teach us what it means to call you Abba Father.

As your children help us to be good siblings to one another. Help us to show and teach others their true identity in you.

For those who feel like second rate Christians or bad Christians help us to encourage them.

Help us to ask you the question "what's next daddy?" help us to hear your voice and give us the courage when you answer. Help us to see the world as you do- however hard that is.

Whether in times of glory or times of suffering we are your children. And with that comes responsibility. Help us be aware but not just aware, help us to act but not just act, help us to pray but not just pray. And help us to love.

Lord please intervene in a mighty way, for those who need love, for the orphans in both the physical and spiritual ways, for those in fear, for those in slavery, for those who are suffering we ask you to intervene in their lives. If that means using us when we ask "what's next daddy" help us to respond.

Your Holy Spirit that works in us, who leads us, who brings about our adoption, who reassures us, who helps us cry out Abba Father, we give you permission to work in our lives for your glory. To love you and to love others.

Together we ask you for these things and the many more unspoken in our hearts.
Amen