

# Romans 8:13-17

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[ 0 : 00 ] All right. Well, I was going to suggest the same, but I didn't know how to, so I'm glad Wes decided to do that. I'm thankful for talented musicians. I think it's rather amazing that Wes broke a string or two, maybe, I heard.

And that was his harmonica guitar playing debut, and he carried on just the same. So we appreciate that, Wes. A very good morning to you. If you'll take out your copy of God's Word and turn with me to Romans chapter 8.

But it's very, very good to be back with you today. You may or may not know this, but I wasn't here last week because I had a stomach bug, and I appreciate the concern and the prayers of everyone who knew that and was worried about me.

Please keep praying for our family. You may notice that the rest of my family is not here this morning. Our house over the past couple of weeks has kind of felt like a health clinic and not a home. We have another little guy sick now.

Cademan yesterday, we took him to the park, and rather than his normal joyful self to be at the park, he walked around with his arms hanging like this and just walked around, at which point we thought, something's wrong with Cade.

[ 1 : 08 ] And got him home, and he had 103 temperature. We laid him down at 12.15, and he took a five-hour nap. And we went back in and checked on him at 5.15.

And, I mean, I don't know how much he actually slept during all that time. We went in there, and he was laying on his back in his crib, just staring at the ceiling. And so we've given him medication. He's doing much, much better this morning.

But that's where the family is, and we're ready for a little relief from illness around our house. So please keep them in your prayers. Let's read this text together. This morning, I'm going to be focusing our attention on verses 14 through 17, but I want to include in our reading verse 13.

I really want these five verses, and although I'm going to be focusing on four of them, I want you to include verse 13 in your minds. I really want you to take these home and meditate on them, carry them with you in the coming weeks.

I believe it'll have a profound effect on your life if you do. So let's read together, beginning chapter 8, verse 13. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die.

[ 2 : 17 ] But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 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 a son 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, provided we suffer with him, in order that we may also be glorified with him.

Please join me in prayer. Father God, we thank you for the blessing of your word. We thank you that you sent us Christ, your word embodied.

And we also thank you for the written word that we can study this morning. And I pray, Father, that today the truths of these four verses will not be lost on us.

That they will affect us in a deep way. And an understanding of who we are in Christ will cause us to live as Christ lived. In spite of all my preparation, I am incapable of changing hearts.

[ 3 : 30 ] No amazing thing I can say or say anything in an amazing way will cause anyone to think any differently unless your spirit intercedes. So I pray, Father, that you will do so this morning.

That you will be at work in our lives. That we will all believe the truth of your word this morning. And I pray this in the precious name of Christ. Amen. So, Paul in chapter 8 has been talking to us about life in the Spirit.

What that looks like. We have been justified by faith and we now have the Spirit of God. And how is it that our life should look in light of the great truth of the Gospel? And how is it that we live by the Spirit?

And he turns to kind of conclude that section to speak of our sonship. This great doctrine of our adoption as sons in Christ.

And it is a precious, precious truth. And so, I want to show you from these four verses, verses 14 through 17 this morning, three things. Number one, if you have placed your faith in Christ, then you are a son of God.

[ 4 : 38 ] If you have placed your faith, saving faith, in the personal work of Jesus Christ, then you are counted as a son of God. And you have His Spirit dwelling within you.

The Spirit of God then dwells within you and you are a son of God. So, how is it that we live righteously before God? It is by His Spirit.

Because we will be led by Him if we are sons of God. The parallel text to this text is found in Galatians 4, verses 4 through 6. And it reads, But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. So you are no longer a slave, but a son. And if a son, then an heir through God.

So we see that the Spirit generates within us two changes in our attitude toward God. We see that we are no longer slaves, but sons.

[ 5 : 56 ] Our text in Romans says, We did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall into fear, but we received the spirit of adoption as sons. And so we see this change that's generated within us.

Number one, we now have, as Christians, a humble submission to Jesus' Lordship. A humble submission to Jesus' Lordship. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul wrote, Therefore, I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says, Jesus is accursed.

And no one can say, Jesus is Lord, except in the Holy Spirit. So the Spirit of God generates in us this new attitude toward Christ.

We recognize humbly that Jesus is Lord. We can't do so otherwise. And we submit to that Lordship. Number two, the Spirit generates within us a bold and childlike confidence.

In Mark 14, 36, Jesus says, Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me, yet not what I will, but what you will.

[ 7 : 07 ] And we know this is the prayer he prays in the Garden of Gethsemane, before he's to be delivered to Pilate to be crucified. Abba, Father, all things are possible for you.

And here's where Paul is borrowing this language, this terminology of Abba, Father. It's this bold, childlike confidence. The word Abba is actually the Hebrew word, which you've probably commonly heard as Daddy.

was that endearing term that Jewish people called their fathers, Daddy. And I recognize fully now as a father, and as a father of a son who says Daddy to me, that he's laying a claim on me when he says Daddy.

I am Cade's provider, and I'm his protector. When Cade comes to me and says Daddy, he's coming to me because he knows that I love him, and I want what's best for him.

When Cade's doing his own thing, he never includes me in that process. But when Cade needs the love of his father, he comes to me saying Daddy. The English word we have here for father in this phrase, Abba, Father, is the Greek word pater.

[ 8 : 28 ] And it means literally father in the Greek, but that terminology would have been giving the great reverence and respect that a father deserved.

So this Abba, Father, is as if what we're claiming when we say this is that He is mine, God is mine, Abba, and I am His Father.

What a precious truth. If we could just take hold of that and believe it this day, believe our lives would look radically different.

Another way we can say this, as we saw in 1 Corinthians 12, 3, Jesus is Lord and God is my Father. What a great thing to proclaim.

And out of this humble confidence, we're empowered to live as the children of God ought to. Now, ladies, it's important for you to see and understand that Paul is not being sexist when he speaks of our adoption.

[ 9 : 35 ] As sons. The Roman Greek understanding of adoption played a major part in his writing here.

Adoption was something that was incredibly important in this culture. And someone who was adopted could not be unadopted. Did you know that's the case with our adoption laws? That when a child is adopted, that child can never be unadopted. A child, if I was in a situation where I could no longer care for Cade, I could drop him off someplace and say, I no longer could be this child's father.

But if I were to have adopted Cade, I can't do that any longer. The law does not permit me to unfather that child. Substantial for our understanding of who we are in Christ.

That there is nothing and no one that can take us out of his hand. We have been adopted. It has been sealed for us forever to be sons of God.

[ 10 : 39 ] Now, in the Greek culture, being a son of a father meant a lot. It meant that you were to be a herald of the father. You were to be a reflection of who the father was.

You were meant to show the father's character in the community. In the same way, as Christians, we are called to do just that.

to show the world who our father is by properly reflecting his character. And we'll speak about that more in a moment. But it was a substantial thing to understand that when a son was adopted, he was asked to do the very same thing.

So the father had come to this orphan child and adopted the son and given him the full rights to his inheritance and to the bearing of his character as one who wasn't adopted.

So ladies, you are, in this cultural context, a son of God. You want to be a son of God. Paul wasn't sexist, but he was speaking to a very masculine-dominated culture.

[ 11 : 56 ] So he was using the language that they would have understood and would have found precious. the ladies who read this letter or had this letter read to them would have said, me, a son of God, would have been substantial and mind-blowing for them.

So as the sons of God, number two, if you are a son of God, then you will live as a son of God. That's the implication here.

We see, verse 14, that those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. Now, what he's trying to give us is some empirical data, some way that we can observe who the sons of God are. Those who are led by the Spirit into righteousness, verse 13, to put to death the deeds of the body, those who are killing sin and living to God, those are sons of God.

That's the exterior measure of that thing. But that is not what makes us sons. Living like sons does not make us sons.

[ 13 : 05 ] Being sons causes us to live like sons. You know, it's one of my great struggles to find the perfect analogy.

And I always say to you that analogies always fall short. And they often do. And so, if you're trying to come up with a great analogy for this, and I've had a few that came closer than others, and I think the favorite one that came into my head, as you can see, I'm attempting to grow a beard.

I don't know that I'm doing a great job of it, but certainly, growing a beard does not make me a man. But being a man, I can grow a beard.

Now, that falls short because not all men can grow beards. Some men I respect deeply. Wes, being one of them, gave it a good shot for seven months, and it was bad.

But he's a man I respect. So the analogy falls short. But here's another one for you. This is a rock. And the rock always does its job perfectly.

[ 14 : 16 ] Without fail, this rock, I'm going to try to set it up the edge here so you can see it, this rock is just sitting here. Doing the very thing that this rock was created to do.

This is what it was doing when I found it in the parking lot. Doing nothing else. But the fact that this rock is just sitting here does not make it a rock, but it's a rock, therefore it just sits here.

Are you with me on that? Now, there are some exterior things we can see about the rock that let us know it's a rock. This rock is just sitting here would be one.

It's gray. The fact that it's not jumping around in trees lets me know it's not a squirrel. There are things I can observe about it and say, that's a rock fit for my analogy this morning.

I will pick it up and take it inside with me. And I should have washed it off. It's getting my Bible all dirty. But nonetheless, we can observe that it's a rock. But it's because it's a rock that it does its job perfectly.

[ 15 : 19 ] It just does what it was made to do. And that's how we should be like the rock. As sons of God, we should live as the sons of God.

Now, of course, we carry around the baggage of our flesh. It's the point that Paul's making in verse 13 that we should be putting to death those things in us.

That flesh, those deeds. We should be putting that to death and living to God. It's the great truth that someday will be delivered from our body of flesh that should be so profound in your life.

If you understand how you ought to live, how your life should look, and how vastly you fail at that, being delivered from that someday should blow your mind.

Someday, my body will be glorified and I will be set free from this weight of my flesh. So, how does it look?

[ 16 : 23 ] What should our lives be looking like as the sons of God? Number one, we should be putting to death the deeds of the flesh. Verse 13, as I showed you, and a couple of weeks ago I showed you that if we're going to put off the old self, we must put on the new.

We must live to God. And we have a great example of that in Christ. The only man who ever lived a sinless life.

Let's take our cues from Him. And let's live in righteousness. And number two, and here in our text, we will suffer as Christ suffered.

You see there in verse 17, we'll be heirs with Christ provided we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him. We're going to celebrate that this week, aren't we, on Good Friday? The ultimate and final suffering of Christ on the cross, the bearing of God's wrath for our sin. Let's look quickly in the Scriptures.

[ 17 : 28 ] I'll encourage you to jot these down. What was said of suffering, that those who are sons of God, Christians, will suffer, Jesus said it in Luke 9, 23, if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

That verse has nothing to do with dieting or any of the other various things we want to apply it to in our life. That's not a cross. A cross is where you die.

A cross is where you suffer and bleed out. It's not the place where we inconvenience ourselves slightly for our Savior. Paul said it, 2 Timothy 3, 12, Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

The author of Hebrews said it, Hebrews 12, 6 and 7, For the Lord disciplines the one he loves and chastises every son whom he receives. It is for discipline that you have to endure.

God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? Peter said it, 1 Peter 4, 13, But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.

[ 18 : 49 ] Take joy in the fact that you suffer in this world because it is evidence, that's what he's saying, it is evidence that you are a son of God. Because if you suffer now, you will one day rejoice and be glad at the revelation of his glory.

Because you're a son of God. And what kind of suffering is he speaking of here? I believe all kinds. The persecution, calamity, disease, death, those things that sin bought the world.

We ought to suffer all the time in this world. Look at the following verses in Romans later. As the creation groans, for the return of Christ, so should we.

This world ought to feel so foreign and strange to us that we long for Christ to return and set all things right. Suffering ought to be a part of our daily activity.

Living in a place that we don't belong. On top of that, we're going to deal with sicknesses. My family is going through that now.

[ 20 : 03 ] consequence of the fall. We're going to deal with persecution. If you live godly in this world, people will not like you for it.

You will be either the fragrance of life or you'll be the fragrance of death. And those who are dying do not like that. You will be persecuted.

how do we bear up under that kind of thing? How do we live in this world so uncomfortable? What he's trying to tell us, right?

Because we're sons of God. And if we're sons of God, then we're co-heirs with Christ. We are, as he is an inheritor of God, we are also inheritors.

Verse 16, the Spirit bears witness that we're children of God, and if children, then heirs. Heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.

[ 21 : 05 ] What are we heirs of? We're heirs of a limitless inheritance. And I'm going to answer that more completely, at least in part. I don't even know if this is a complete answer to what we're heirs of, but at least in part.

This is point number three, by the way. If you're a son of God, then you have a limitless inheritance. And there's three things we inherit at least. Number one, the world. Romans 4, 13, Paul wrote, for the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

And so if you have placed your faith in Christ, you're a co-heir with Abraham, and Abraham was promised what? The world. Psalm 24, 1 says, the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein.

So the whole world belongs to Jesus Christ and we are a co-heir with him. Psalm 2, 8, ask of me and I will make the nations your heritage and the ends of the earth your possession.

And this is the father asking the son in Psalm 2, 8, ask of me and I will make the nations your heritage. So the world will someday be ours because we belong to the one to whom the world belongs.

[ 22 : 34 ] Number 2, we will inherit God himself, which we get to experience in part now. The great work of God going on around us, our invitation to be involved in that work, the invitation to pray, to share our faith, spread the gospel around the world, is God's great love of us to involve us in what he's doing, to give us some of himself.

But one day, we will behold him fully. Now, dimly as in a mirror, but one day we will see him in all of his glory.

Romans 5, 2, B, the second half of 5, 2, says, we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. We find our great joy in the knowledge that someday we'll behold the glory of God.

Revelation 21, 3, is a picture of that glory. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them, as their God.

Psalm 73, 25, and 26, one of my favorites, the Psalm of Asaph. He wrote, Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire beside you.

[ 24 : 04 ] My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. My full satisfaction forever.

forever. So, we get to inherit the world, we get to inherit God himself, and we get to inherit redeemed and glorified bodies.

Romans 8, 23 speaks of the redemption of our bodies, and I believe that this is what Paul is trying to say in verse 17, that we will be glorified with him.

I have a body that I am so happy is going to get replaced. I am in lots of pain all the time, and I won't take the time to tell you why, but I'm in rather excruciating pain most of my days.

I am so happy to experience that because this is such a precious truth to me. Someday, my pain will stop, and I will have a new, redeemed, set right body.

[ 25 : 10 ] What a glorious truth that is. So, we've received, as Christians, an inheritance. Shouldn't this impact the way we live?

Shouldn't this spur us on to live as those who are called sons of God, to cry to God, Abba, Father, Daddy, whom I love and respect, Jesus, my Lord, God, my Father, empower me to live by these great truths carried along by your Spirit, the great glory of your name.

I hope that today, in large part, is an encouragement to you. We've experienced some chastisement throughout Romans so far.

I hope that today you walk out of here filled with joy as a Son of God. If you have never placed your faith in Christ, saving faith, a recognition that you are utterly sinful, there is no part of you that is not sin apart from Him, that you have been separated from God forever.

forever, unless you place your faith in the one who bore the wrath for your sins. You believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and that He died on your behalf.

[ 26 : 46 ] If you haven't done that, do that this day. Be filled with the joy of being called a Son of God. I think that we as American Christians have issues with our identity.

I think that we tack Christianity on to the end of a list of many other things that we are. And if you do that, any of those other things you think you are have become an idol.

to you. If you say, I am a husband who works hard to provide for my family, and I'm a Christian. Check your heart in that.

Because what you ought to say is, I'm a Christian and a husband who works hard to provide for my family. All of our life should be encompassed in our identity in Christ.

We are sons because we've been adopted. We weren't part of his family to begin with, but because of what Christ has done, we've been adopted into his family. And it is a glorious, profound truth that we should treasure in our hearts.

[ 28 : 04 ] Please pray with me. a lot of