

In the Family Now

How Adoption, Sonship, and the death of the flesh lead to a life we never expected

4.6.25

Message 31

Romans Series

Romans 8:12-17.

¹²So then, brothers and sisters, we are not obligated to the flesh to live according to the flesh, ¹³because if you live according to the flesh, you are going to die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

¹⁴For all those led by God's Spirit are God's sons. ¹⁵For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear. Instead, you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry out, "*Abba*, Father!"

¹⁶The Spirit himself testifies together with our spirit that we are God's children, ¹⁷and if children, also heirs—heirs of God and coheirs with Christ—if indeed we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

Introduction. Romans has hit hard to this point.

A. The Apostle Paul has been hammering away with:

- a. Righteousness
- b. Justification
- c. Law
- d. Dying to self
- e. Wrath and the Wages of Sin.

B. If you stop reading too early in Romans, we might walk away with a picture of salvation that is simply unreachable and unattainable.

1. We feel like this old flesh will never die.
2. We feel forever attached to the Law of sin and Death.
3. We doubt if it is possible to ever live the life that Jesus calls us to.

C. The truth of the matter is that this is impossible.

1. We are not able to save ourselves.
2. We are naturally corrupted by sin.
3. We cannot save ourselves and, left to ourselves, we are in the most helpless of conditions.

D. Then these verses come in like a breath of fresh air.

1. I could never have bought my way into the family of God.
2. I couldn't earn my way to be a son of God or a co-heir with Jesus.
3. In fact, I never would have imagined it was even possible.
 - a. And if this passage wasn't in the Bible, I would say it was absolute heresy.
 - b. Who would imagine that God would adopt someone like you and I into His family?

E. I was once on the outside looking in.

1. But now, I have a seat at the Father's table.
2. I have a room in the Father's house. (John 14).
3. When Jesus was baptized in water, the Lord proclaimed, "This is my son in whom I am well pleased."
 - a. God had never told anyone that before.
 - b. But now, our relationship with God is such that He calls us sons and co-heirs with Jesus.

c Now, we can call God “abba,” and He can tell us, “Well done, son or daughter.”

Let us jump into unpacking this beautiful passage and leaning into how much Jesus loves us.

¹⁴For all those led by God’s Spirit are God’s sons.

¹⁵For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear. Instead, you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry out, “*Abba*, Father!”

1. The Spirit leads me to my new Father.

A. In the natural, our fathers have a tremendous influence on our lives.

1. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 17.6 million children, nearly 1 in 4, live without a biological, step, or adoptive father in the home.* That’s enough children to fill New York City twice or Los Angeles four times over.

85% of youths in prison come from fatherless homes

71% of high school dropouts come from fatherless homes

90% of all homeless and runaway children are from fatherless homes

60% of youth suicides are from fatherless homes¹

2. This natural reality reflects the spiritual reality.

3. Who your father is determines if you live or die.

B. In John 8, the Jews are arguing with Jesus, and they claim, “Our father is Abraham.”

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<https://www.nolongerfatherless.org/statistics#:~:text=71%25%20of%20high%20school%20dropouts,suicides%20are%20from%20fatherless%20homes>

1. Physically, in the natural, this is true.
2. They were physical descendants of Abraham.
3. But Jesus calls them out in the harshest way:
4. He says,

John 8:43–45 (CSB)

⁴³Why don't you understand what I say? Because you cannot listen to my word. ⁴⁴You are of your father the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie, he speaks from his own nature, because he is a liar and the father of lies. ⁴⁵Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me.

C. You could almost view this as a biblical version of a "your momma" insult.

1. Jesus says their father wasn't Abraham, a man of faith and belief.
2. Instead, your father is a murderer and the father of all lies, Satan himself.
3. And you are a murderer and liar, just like your daddy.

D. What we can determine from Jesus' teaching is this:

1. If you embrace the truth of who Jesus is, then His Father is your father.
2. If you reject Jesus, then your father is Satan.
3. And you will share in your father's fate.

E. In our natural, fallen condition, Satan is our father.

1. That's why we needed to be adopted.
2. That's why Jesus had to pay the price of redemption.

3. When Adam and Eve sinned, they were not only kicked out of the Garden, they were kicked out of the family.

4. In order for us to be brought back into the family, there had to be a radical reconciliation and that is what Jesus did.

2 Corinthians 5:18–19 (CSB)

¹⁸Everything is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation. ¹⁹That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and he has committed the message of reconciliation to us.

F. Thanks be to Jesus, who reconciled us to God through Himself.

1. In the story of the Lost/Prodigal Son, the oldest brother had the say as to if the younger son could be restored back to the Father.

2. He controlled the future of the Lost son.

3. The story ends on a cliffhanger, wondering will the Jewish audience reconcile the prodigal back into the family.

4. But the good news for us is that our adoption in the family isn't dependent upon the Jews but upon the PERFECT ELDEST SON, who was willing to endure the shame and bring us into the fold.

For us, though we are born into the family of Satan, the Spirit brings us into a new family with God as our Father.

And in that family...

2. The Spirit leads me into a new Family Dynamic (not of fear but of sonship)

A. When Satan is your father, fear is the natural result.

1. What Paul had in view here was the result of the Law.

2. The Law and the commands were good.
3. It was God's Law that He gave to Israel.
4. However, it was never designed to bring salvation but to point us to the One who could save us.

B. The Law brought with it fear.

1. Fear of rejection, failure, and an overwhelming realization that I'm not good enough.
2. A great picture of this today are the Mormon's and Jehovah's Witnesses.
 - a. They have no assurance of salvation.
 - b. They work extremely hard out of fear and not love.
3. Perhaps your earthly father motivated you by fear.
 - a. More than likely, that is the only motive he understood.
 - b. He was afraid of failure, of losing control, or maybe he was just angry.
4. Then when you got saved, you brought that same type of fear into your relationship with God.
 - a. Fear is a powerful motivator, but love is the greatest.
 - b. 1 John 4:18 (CSB)
 - ¹⁸There is no fear in love; instead, perfect love drives out fear, because fear involves punishment. So the one who fears is not complete in love.

C. A Good Father's love is not merit-based.

1. I don't work to earn my Father's love, I work because I am loved.
2. The atmosphere of God's household is a place of love, not fear.

D. We cannot define or describe love by our own measurement.

1. A good parent disciplines and challenges their children.
2. Sometimes the child assumes the parent “hates” them.
3. But this is what the writer of Hebrews said:

Hebrews 12:5–11 (CSB)

⁵And you have forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons:

**My son, do not take the Lord’s discipline lightly
or lose heart when you are reprov’d by him,
⁶for the Lord disciplines the one he loves
and punishes every son he receives.’**

⁷Endure suffering as discipline: God is dealing with you as sons. For what son is there that a father does not discipline? ⁸But if you are without discipline—which all receive—then you are illegitimate children and not sons. ⁹Furthermore, we had human fathers discipline us, and we respected them. Shouldn’t we submit even more to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰For they disciplined us for a short time based on what seemed good to them, but he does it for our benefit, so that we can share his holiness. ¹¹No discipline seems enjoyable at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

E. Discipline and correction from God are positive signs:

1. God loves you.
2. You are part of God’s family.
3. That God has a purpose for your life.
4. God doesn’t discipline Satan’s kids, He corrects His own.

F. Discipline is different than wrath.

1. Discipline has a redemptive and training purpose.
2. Wrath is destructive and punitive.
3. By being adopted into God's family, we are shielded from God's wrath.

1 Thessalonians 5:9 (CSB)

⁹For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

4. Discipline is not the same as wrath.

G. Too many Christians may be putting their flesh to death, all the while yelling at God, "You HATE ME!!!!"

- a. But God is not an abusive Father, but a loving Father.
- b. Our Heavenly Father establishes boundaries because His first concern is our holiness, not our happiness.
- c. If you let a child have whatever makes them happy, you end up with an adult who is worthless.

3. The Spirit leads me to a new Family.

¹⁶The Spirit himself testifies together with our spirit that we are God's children, ¹⁷and if children, also heirs—heirs of God and coheirs with Christ—if indeed we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

A. First, we should notice that adoption carries full rights and privileges.

1. We are not step-children, but full children.
2. A few of my favorite memories of pastoring have been the times of sitting in a courtroom and watching some of you legally adopt children.
3. By the command of a judge, everything changes.

- a. Names change.
- b. Legal documents change.
- c. Histories and futures change.

4. When we receive the Spirit of Adoption (also called sonship), we are not step-children we are children.

- a. We don't have to fight in court for inheritance.
- b. Instead, we inherit the Kingdom along with Jesus (that's wild to say out loud.)

B. New Family, New Rules.

- 1. Every family has its own culture and expectations.
- 2. What was appropriate in our old family is not appropriate in the new one.
 - a. What is celebrated in one family might be punished in another.
 - b. What is appropriate in your friend's house might get you in trouble at your own.

C. Because we have a new Father and are part of a new family, our behavior and attitudes must change.

- 1. How you handle problems in the flesh cannot be how you handle them in the Spirit.
- 2. How you entertained yourself in your old family may not be appropriate in the new.
- 3. How you dealt with emotions in your old family may not be appropriate now.

D. These changes are made possible by God's love for me.

- 1. Kids do better when motivated by love instead of fear.
- 2. I put to death the flesh not because God hates me but because He loves me.

3. Because he loves me...

4. The Spirit leads me to new possibilities.

¹⁶The Spirit himself testifies together with our spirit that we are God's children, ¹⁷and if children, also heirs—heirs of God and coheirs with Christ—if indeed we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

A. First, this new family is confirmed by two witnesses.

1. The witness of the Holy Spirit, and
2. The witness of my spirit.
3. We can also add the witness of Scripture.
4. One of God's principles is the confirmation of truth by 2-3 witnesses.
5. By these witnesses, we know we are saved, loved, and redeemed.

B. Second, the Apostle Paul mentions suffering as part of our new family.

1. Suffering was part of my old family.
 - a. We know the suffering that is part of being a son or daughter of Satan.
 - b. We know the anger, the frustration, the trouble, and heartache that running away from God brings.
2. But glory was never a possibility with my old family.
 - a. But if I embrace suffering WITH JESUS then I receive glory WITH JESUS.
 - b. There is an Active->passive arrangement here.
 - c. Paul's "if indeed we suffer with him" has an active verb tense.

1. We must actively and wilfully engage in suffering by identifying with Jesus' suffering.

2. This part of the equation requires our involvement.

d. The next phrase, "so that we may also be glorified with him" is passive and aorist.²

1. This is more than past tense, but a completed thought.

2. Jesus is already glorified, and we will be and are glorified with Him.

3. One way of understanding this aorist tense is to think of being in a helicopter and watching the whole parade.

4. If you are in the parade, you can only see a piece.

5. From the helicopter, you can see the whole thing.

e. The Apostle Paul can see the whole dynamic:

1. The Jewish people (the subject in Romans 9) rejected Jesus partly because they had no room for a suffering Messiah.

2. But by embracing the same suffering that Jesus endured, rather than rejecting it as the Jews did, we are glorified with Him.

3. In other words, **instead of being embarrassed by our new Father, we proudly identify ourselves as one of His Children.**

- a. I'm not embarrassed or ashamed that Jesus died upon a Roman cross.

² <https://www.billmounce.com/monday-with-mounce/the-aorist-so-much-more-past-tense>

b. I'm not embarrassed that God has rules and standards for me to live by that put me at odds with those around me.

c. I'm not ashamed of God's dealings with humanity, His purposes, nor His Plans.

4. Remember these words from the opening of Romans! Romans 1:16 (CSB)

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek.

C. Because the Spirit leads us into a new family, we have new opportunities.

a. The Son of God suffered, and the sons of God will suffer also.

b. But because we are co-heirs with Jesus, we share in His glory.

c. Jesus went first into this journey of death and resurrection so He could bring us safely with Him.

d. Because of Jesus, we have blessings, privileges, and promises that were never available in our old family.

Closing: Are you making the most of your new family?