

Romans 8: 12-17

09-25-2016

Bainbridge Presbyterian Church

As an Adopted Child of God's

When Betty and I are traveling we have always found it really interesting to attend a worship service in the town wherever we spent Saturday night... It is an inspiring time, believe me, to worship with strangers... and we highly recommend it to anyone when you are away from home...

Don't skip church just because you are on vacation, step outside of your "box" and meet some new brothers and sisters in Christ!

Yes, we find it most interesting because we are worshiping with children of God's own making ~ of His own creation -- who are so welcoming and as interested in our church life as we are in theirs...

After all, they all are His adopted children too!!!

The scripture that I have chosen to build today's message from is found in the book of Romans... I don't know about you, but there is something about the book of Romans which attracts my attention frequently... It is like a "comfort food"... makes one feel good inside!

Many scholars consider this 8th chapter, one of the greatest chapters in the entire Bible!!! For sure, some of the most familiar and beloved pieces of scripture are in Romans, especially here in chapter 8...

Although I did not read it this just now, but, this 8th chapter opens with a wonderful assurance in verse 1, which states **“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are IN Christ Jesus...”** It goes on to say **“We know that for those who love God, ALL things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose..”**

Yes, we all can think of times when life did not go the way we wanted, however, it worked out for our own good AND WHY??? Simply, because it was done for **“for those who are called according to His (God’s) purpose...”** That all becomes clear when our hind-sight becomes 20/20 vision...

This chapter 8 closes with a powerful and positive message in verse 38 (which we all know by heart by various wordings) saying...

“For I am convinced that there is nothing in death,, in the realm of spirits or superhuman powers, in the world as it is or the world as it shall be, in the forces of the universe, in heights or depths, nothing in all creation that can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord...”

That is my friends how most Christians come to know Romans 8 through these famous and extremely comforting, yet powerful verses... And,,, rightly so...

Biblical scholars often state that **this chapter 8 contains more references to the Holy Spirit than in any other chapter in the entire Holy Bible!!!**

In your quiet time later today, perhaps you might enjoy a full read through chapter 8 – as a refresher session – and who knows, perhaps something will pop out at you which you have overlooked in the past...

The Apostle Paul talks about what happens to each of us when we become a Christian; making for complete changes in our life – the way we think and the way we react; the way we see life and the way we look upon our fellow man...

From my personal prospective, I would like to add one more thought to Paul's thoughts of change, and that is the way we see death... the way we can accept death; not as an ending, but truly as our SECOND birthdate into Eternal Life...

Having said all of that, this morning I really want to center my thoughts more on verse 14, which states: **“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 sons of the Holy Father...”** (repeat that)

That is **where the concept of being adopted comes to surface** that we hear about so often... This clearly tells us when and where we **ALL** become brothers and sisters, according to Paul...

Before I go any further, I must state that although the Bible continuously speaks of “Sons of God” (always in the male gender), you ladies know that by NO means are you left out OF God's loving circle...

In fact, to support that assurance, Paul wrote in Galatians 3: 26: **“For in Christ Jesus, you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ, you have put ON Christ. There is neither**

Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave nor free; there is neither male nor FEMALE as you are all ONE in Christ Jesus..."

So how did we all become brothers and sisters to Jesus Christ???

Something happened that truly was not of a natural event. Because by flesh, we were never sons, **but slaves**; we did not have a standing as a child of God, because we were **OUTSIDE of the family of God...**

We were slaves to sin; full of fear, especially the fear of death... That is who we were, a person full of sin...

UNTIL we were baptized into the Christian faith... It was then that the Power of the Holy Spirit transformed each of us into a new life with Christ Jesus...

Simply stated, **GOD ADOPTED EACH ONE OF US the day we were baptized... HE BROUGHT US INTO HIS FAMILY; MAKING US HIS CHILD... IN THE SAME WAY HE CLAIMS JESUS CHRIST AS HIS CHILD...**

We now have a whole new life to live, **and I might add, new rules by which to live our life by...**

A couple years ago, I happened to run across a discarded copy of a senior high student's English composition, written by a lad who had been adopted out of a Russian orphanage when he was 8 years old...

This young man wrote that originally, he lived year around, in a tent in the woods on the outskirts of a Russian city, with his single mom and several siblings. He recalls one day, in the dead of winter, when he was about 4 years old, he and his family were discovered by some Russian soldiers, living there in the woods...

Right away, the children were placed in a local orphanage in town... At first, he thought he would now have a wonderful life, because there was a solid roof over his head & solid walls, TRULY warmer there than in a tent; he got to sleep on a real bed and ate hot cooked foods!!! However, that soon turned sour when a doctor labeled him “unadoptable” due to his breathing issues...

A LONG story made short, he **WAS** adopted by a young couple from Otsego County... As this high school senior wrote, for the second time, he saw this couple walk through the orphanage looking each child over fairly closely... So boldly, he jumps up, grabs the man’s hand and asks him, “**Will you be my daddy???**” The man did not reply in any way!!!

However, several months later, that couple returned to adopt him; flew him to America to live now as an equal member of their large (all adopted) family...

His life changed completely... He now has adequate food to eat; excellent health care and a loving family...

He is a grateful child of our Creator’s...

I’m sure, you all are familiar with several who were adopted – perhaps someone here today has had that blessing happen in their personal life or in their family’s...

There is one point I wish to bring out here, and that is being each one of us is an adopted child of God’s, that places us on the same level of value as any legally adopted child in our midst...

So too, God’s way of life IN US has given us new rules to live by; given us a new status and greater responsibilities...

PLUS, it has given us FULL security in our future eternal life...

God has given each of us the Spirit of adoption as His child... This changes the way we are to live today... Since we now have received the Spirit, we NOW are **LED** by the spirit...

Of course, NOW the Spirit will lead us in the ways that are pleasing to our heavenly Father...

So, I ask each of you today: HOW are you living, according to the flesh which needs to die???

What are those sinful deeds of the body that you need to put to death???

The Spirit is calling you today to repent... to accept the Spirit's efforts as it changes you ; YES, to live your life as a TRUE adopted child of God's...

May the Spirit lead you in the way of righteousness this coming week...

As children of God... **We are His heirs** – awaiting our full inheritance...

Paul writes: **“The Spirit himself bears witness with all spirit that we are children of God's, 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 GLOROFIED WITH HIM”...**

Christ lives eternally in the heavens above, so too, we shall join him one day, living forever in eternal glory...**That will be our REAL inheritance...**

Begin treating everyone in the same manner you would Jesus Christ if He was sitting next to you in your pew or approaching you on the

street... Everyone around you truly is His adopted child and kin to His Holiness as is you...

Enjoy your newly adopted siblings and share His unconditional love – **EVERY DAY** with anyone whom He graces your presence with...

Pray with me please. We give thanks, Holy God, for those who have chosen to adopt homeless children, giving them a new life of love, much the same way you adopted each of us in baptism. Help us to meet strangers as our adopted sibling from this day forward. May we never forget the price your son, Jesus the Christ, paid for our eternal life...

Shalom and Amen.