

Spirit of Adoption

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[0 : 0 0] We call to the Romans, chapter 8, and we will read verse 15.

Amen.

Together. And so on. I would like to consider this passage with you beginning at verse 15 and through to verse 25.

Passage which deals with the subject of the sons of God. Now, a fortnight ago today when I was with you, we looked at the first part of this chapter.

In which we saw the distinction that the apostle draws between the Christian and the non-Christian with reference to the flesh and the spirit or the Holy Spirit.

[1 : 3 2] We saw that the life of the non-Christian is dominated by the flesh and the things of the flesh. He lives after the flesh. He walks after the flesh.

His mind is on the things of the flesh and so on. Whereas the Christian, his life is regulated by the Holy Spirit. He walks in the spirit.

He lives in the spirit. He thinks upon the things of the spirit. And so on. And so on. And we saw that the Christian also has this great privilege in that he is helped by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit. He, the Holy Spirit, indwells them. And the Holy Spirit leads them. As many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

And the particular aspect of the leading of the spirit, which the chapter here speaks of, is leading, helping, guiding, directing the Christian in the conflict that he has to wage with the flesh and the things of the flesh and so on.

[2 : 5 1] He is a man who is locked in battle, engaged in conflict. And the particular aspect of the spirit's leading that we are here brought face to face with, therefore, is the help that the spirit gives the Christian in this conflict.

And we saw that that help is not in this way. He isn't born above the field of conflict. He isn't lifted up above and beyond these things so that they are not realities in his life.

He lives in this present evil world, confronted with all that is real about the flesh and sin.

And the spirit leads them, helps them, to overcome the victory in the field of conflict.

And today, as we turn to this passage beginning at verse 15, we will look first of all at the position that the Christian occupies, the very privileged position that he has in this conflict.

[4 : 0 2] He is spoken of as a son or a child of God. In verse 14, they are the sons of God. In verse 16, they are the children of God.

And in verse 17 again, children and heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. And in verse 21, we will be brought in the glorious liberty of the children of God.

You see, these passages, these verses speak of this privileged position that he has, the Christian has. He is a son of God, a child of God. And then, secondly, look at the place which the Holy Spirit occupies with reference to that son, or with reference to the sonship of the Christian.

In verse 15, he is the spirit of adoption. He is the spirit who has brought us into that relationship with God. We have been adopted into the family of God so that we are now called the children of God, or the sons of God.

And as members of that family, as sons, the Holy Spirit witnesses to our spirits concerning our sonship.

[5 : 23] Verse 16, the spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit. And this is what he tells us, that we are the children of God. In other words, the spirit confirms to our spirit or to our hearts the knowledge that we already have, that we are the children of God.

And then, as children, we are brought face to face with our privileges in two ways. We are heirs of God, verses 16 and 17, and joint heirs with Christ.

These are the privileges that we have as sons with reference to God. And then, and more particularly, this passage brings before us from verse 18 to verse 23, the pathway that we travel in this world as the children of God.

We are on the way to glory. This is the theme here, this is the thrust. But, on the way, as children in this world, we suffer.

If we are to reign with them, then we must suffer. So there you have the pathway of the Christian brought before you as a pathway which is full of sufferings.

[6 : 48] On the way to glory. And interestingly, in this passage, something is in sympathy with the Christian as he suffers on the way to glory.

It is the creation. From verse 19 onwards, the earnest expectation of the creature or the creation waits for the manifestation of the sons of God.

For the creation, verse 20, was made subject to vanity. Verse 21, the creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

And we know that the whole creation groans and travels in pain together until now. So there you have a very wonderful picture in the Bible of the world, the creation around you.

The creation around the Christian in sympathy with him as he groans his way in suffering towards the glory that awaits him.

[7 : 54] Finally, you have in this passage something else. The great encouragement that he has in the path of suffering towards glory. In verse 23, he has the evidence in him, the first fruits of the Spirit.

He has as he goes, as he journeys along, as he journeys from time to eternity, he has a foretaste of this glory in his heart.

The Spirit gives him a foretaste of what awaits him. That's in any other word, first fruits. And then, the other encouragement he has, that his hope is certain to be fulfilled.

We are saved by hope, but hope that is seen is not hope. But if we hope for that, we see not. Then do we with patience wait for it. Now, very briefly this morning, I would like to just go through these thoughts with you.

First of all, the position that the Christian occupies in this world. He is the Son of God. He is a child of God. Now, there are some who are of the opinion, and I think correctly, that this is really the apex of the redeeming work of Jesus Christ.

[9 : 09] You know that there are three great privileges that, and some of the children in the Sunday school just know what are doing this catechism. There are three great privileges that the Christians have in connection with the redemption that Christ has purchased for them.

And these privileges are justification, adoption, and sanctification. Now, justification, just to put it, just to explain the terms very briefly to you.

Justification is a term which speaks about what God does for us. He puts our relationship to himself right. He puts our standing right.

He puts us right. Adoption is the position into which God brings us as those who have been put right. We are brought into his family as those who have been justified by faith and Christ.

We are brought into this relationship with God. We become his children. And sanctification is the process that God therein begins, that God begins when we are justified and when we are adopted.

[10 : 17] He begins a process by which he is making us right. He is cleaning us away from sin, wounding us away from sin and cleansing us from sin until at the end of the process of sanctification, we have what we call holiness.

Holiness is the end product of sanctification. Now, adoption is, if you were going to say, if it were right to say this, and I think it is, we could say this, we would say it, that adoption is a more wonderful privilege than justification.

It is wonderful that God could put any of us right. It is even more wonderful that we would be made the children of God. And this is the thing that John spoke about when he said, right in chapter 3, look, look at this.

Behold, what manner of love, the greatness of the love of God, that we should be called the children of God.

This was the thing that he couldn't get over. God has made me a child of his. And this is the theme of the apostle here. We are sons of God.

[11 : 34] We are children of God. We have been brought into this wonderful relationship in which God is beginning a process so that at the end of the process we will be like himself.

The idea here is the idea of family likeness. This is why God brings us into his family. So that we will become less and less like the family we were taken out of and become more and more like the family we have brought into.

As sinners unsaved we were, as Jesus says, ye are of your father the devil.

We belonged to his family. And we were governed by the flesh, as the first part of this chapter tells us. These were the things that mattered to us in that family bond.

All that mattered was sin and the service of sin. And the more a person is in the service of sin, the more it becomes like the devil whom he serves. But now, in justification of standing as put right and in adoption, we are brought into the family of God.

[12 : 57] And we begin to serve the Lord as a son. We love him as a son loves his father. We respect him as a son respects his father.

And in that family, the Christian is becoming more like the God whom he serves.

So that at the end of that process of sanctification, the Christian will be perfect like his father in heaven. He will be perfect like his savior Jesus Christ.

And when at the end of time, Jesus will stand before the father and say, Father, behold I and the children which thou hast given me, those for whom I died in the world, and those who were sanctified by thy spirit in the world, look at them.

At the end of the day, it will be said of that whole family, including Christ, that he will be the firstborn among many brethren.

[14 : 21] In other words, they will all be like their older brother, and he will have the preeminence amongst them. The sons are the children of God.

That's a position, the privileged position, that the Christian occupies, with reference to God. He is a son of God. And then secondly, this passage tells us of the place that the Holy Spirit has, in this privileged position, of the Christian.

He is, in verse 15, the spirit of adoption. And he is, in verse 16, the spirit that witnesses to them, that they are the children of God. Now, the spirit of adoption here, I know that this is rather a difficult term, but this isn't, I haven't got time really to deal with this fully.

There are lots of things that could be said about this. But let's confine ourselves just to one thing. The Holy Spirit is he who, as it were, brings the individual into this privileged position, in which he is a son of God.

And he is the spirit of adoption, not the spirit of bondage. The Holy Spirit, in other words, works in that person's heart, not to make that person afraid of God, but to give that person the freedom of a son, in his relation to God.

[16 : 01] He brings us into our relationship with God, in which we adopt the disposition, of the spirit of a son, with reference to his father.

Our relationship to God has changed. So, now we begin to reverence God. We respect God. We love God. We have faith in God.

We are thankful to God. With others, we are brothers, in the presence of God. And with others, we share fellowship, by faith, in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our sons, we trust, in the fatherly care of God. Our sons, we obey, lovingly, the demands of our Father in heaven.

Our sons, we want to become like, our Father who is in heaven. We have had a desire, to be conformed to his image.

[17 : 13] We have had a desire, to become holy, to become God-like, in our relationships. That is the spirit of adoption. The Holy Spirit, adopts us into the family of God.

The Holy Spirit brings us into this relationship, when he indwells us. And the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit, bestows upon us, and instills within us, the spirit of the Son, the spirit of adoption, the spirit of, of, of, of, of, of, of a childlike relationship, to our Father in heaven.

He produces, this disposition, within us. And then, with that disposition, verse 16, the spirit bears witness, with our spirit, that we are, the children of God.

And again, this is a very difficult version. Again, lots of things should be said about it. But just again, let's confine ourselves to one thing. But whatever else he's saying, I think he's saying this, that the Holy Spirit confirms, to our own spirits, the evidence, that we have ourselves, that we are the children of God.

Notice how he puts it. The spirit bears witness, with, or to, our spirit. Or the spirit bears witness, together with our spirits, that we are, the children of God.

[18 : 43] In other words, there are two ways, here in which, a Christian can know, that he is, a child of God. There are two ways, in which you can know it.

First of all, you can come to that conclusion, from the evidence, that you have within yourself, that the Holy Spirit, has given you, the disposition, of a Christian, the disposition of a son.

Answer the questions, that I mentioned earlier, the things that I mentioned earlier. A Christian, a child of God, a son of God, is a person, who has, reverence for God, respect for God, as his father, love for God, as his father, honour to God, as his father, obedience, to the will of God, as his father, a desire, to be conformed, to the image, of his father in heaven, a desire, to become holy, like God, his father, in heaven.

A desire, to have fellowship, with God, with others, who are the children, of God. Now, these are the things, which are true, of every single Christian, no matter who, who he or she is.

It's true, of every Christian, that they have, this disposition, you have this evidence, in yourself. You can deduce, these things, you can come to the conclusion, that you are a Christian, from the evidence, that you have within you, that these things, are there.

[20 : 16] But there's something else. The Holy Spirit, also, witnesses, with you, Spirit, that you are a child, of God.

The Holy Spirit, confirms, as he, as he, brings his, his own influence, to bear upon your spirit, that you are, a child of God.

In other words, this is a witness, over and above, the witness, that you have yourself. You have, we have the witness, in ourselves, says John. We have the witness, in ourselves, that we are the children, of God.

Every Christian, has that witness, in himself, the evidence, in himself. But here, is a privilege, that every Christian, has, as well, from time to, maybe not all the time.

The assurance, of the Holy Spirit, communicates to him, when he witnesses, infallibly to him, that he is, a child, of God.

[21 : 27] Though I don't say, that the Christian, has this all the time. I would say, that there are times, when the Christian, has it more clearly, than at other times. I would say, that the Christian, always has, the disposition, of a son, because he is, always a son of God.

He is never, anything else, but a child of God. And apart from these cases, when he may be, in a backslidden state, when he has no right, to say, that he is a child of God, because he doesn't have, the evidence, that he is a child of God.

But apart from these, situations, every Christian, has the evidence, in himself, that he or she, is a child of God, at all times, he has the disposition, of the son, the attitude, of the child, to the father, reverence, respect, obedience, love, faith, trust, and so on.

Though there are times, when that may not, be all that clear to you, but what I do say is this, that there are also times, in every Christian's experience, when the Holy Spirit, in his own wonderful way, convinces him, with infallible evidence, assures him, that he is, a child of God.

I'm sure that there have been times, if you want to put it like this, I'm sure that there have been times, when you've come into a place of worship, maybe feeling pretty, down in the dumps, as I say, and maybe, dead in your spirit, a Christian, perhaps, there's a word singing here today, Psalm 42, oh, thou my soul, why are you cast down, why are you so dismayed within me?

[23 : 10] There are times, when you come in, feeling pretty indifferent, haven't you? To some place of worship, and perhaps, God in that place, has used something, a sermon, a prayer, or something, to, to, to, to, to bring home, in a wonderful way, to your heart, with convincing evidence, the fact, that you are a Christian, the spirit witness, and you went out that door, rejoicing in your heart, absolutely assured, that you were a Christian, what was it?

The spirit witnessing, with your spirit, that you're a child of God, there are many ways, but the Holy Spirit does it, I haven't got time to deal with it, when we have, thirdly here, the privileges of the son, in verse 16 and 17, he is an heir of God, and he's a joint heir with Christ, this is, God, as we, God, as the psalmist says, Psalm 16, God is mine inheritance, again, Psalm 73, who do I have in the heavens, but thee, O Lord, the Christian, in other words, is an heir of God, he is, he has, he has a right, an entanglement, to all that God is, and all that God has, that God can communicate to him, there are things that God cannot give him, you know what they are, the incommunicable attributes of God, God cannot give that to anybody, his eternity, his infinity, his omniscience, his omnipresence, his omnipotence, and so on, but he is an heir of all, that God can give to him, and he is an heir of God, with Christ, we are joint heirs, with Christ, and this speaks of Christ, glorified in our human nature, when Christ was, when he went up on high, he received what he prayed for,

Father, glorify me with thine own self, for the glory I had with thee, before the worlds began, before the worlds were, he went in to share, in his human nature, the glory of God, the greatest and the majesty of God, and in Christ, we are all for that as well, because Christ was united to us, in his death, and now in our adoption, we are united to him, he is our brother, and we were right, to the glory of God, in Christ, we are jointed, with Christ, that's what makes us, heirs of God, the fact that we are, united by faith, to Christ, in our effect, your calling, and the fact that as children, our faith is in him, we are with him, heirs of God, jointed, with Christ, of God, and then fourthly, as the Christian lives, in this world, a child of God, a son of God, an heir of God, heading towards, the glory of God, the pathway, that he has to tread, is now brought before us, in verses 18 to 23, that is if we suffer with him, that we may be glorified together, for I reckon, that the sufferings, at this present time, are not worthy, to be compared to the glory, shall be revealed in us, and so on, here we have no objector, of the son, on the way to glory, he is led there, by the spirit, he walks there, he struggles on, towards this glory, the earth lives, no easy life, he isn't born, with a silver spoon, in his mouth, he finds the going, pretty rough, and pretty tough, he is to suffer, that he may be glorified, these are the conditions, underlaying the victory, that awaits, the privilege of son,

Shapiro implies, taking part in all, the experiences, that he must pass through, as a Christian, and we can ascend, to the throne, and high, with Christ, only, by treading, with him, the pathway, by which, he, ascended, to the throne, it was for him, the way of the cross, to, the crown, it was from the cross, that he rose, to heaven, don't let us forget it, it was from the cross, that Jesus rose, to heaven, and it is, from the cross, that you and I, are to go as well, to heaven, and therefore, sufferings, and tragedies, and pain, and disease, and infirmities, sorrows, and death, and setbacks, battles, conflicts, these are the constant companions, of the Christian, in this life, and these things, are never far away, from any one of us, in this world, together with the hostility, and the persecution, and the misrepresentation, that you must, of necessity, have to endure, because you are a Christian, in this world, don't let us forget it, don't let us forget, don't let us forget, either that, it isn't easy, always to adapt ourselves, to these things, to adapt to someone, as put a stiff, upper lip attitude, always to have, a calm exterior, under, and roughest calm, inside, that isn't always the case, with a Christian, often, our minds, are oppressed, with questions, and doubts, and fears, as the battle rages, around us, and, within us, there is, upheaval, verse 20, the creed, to the creation, was made, subject to vanity, not willingly, we've got the same thing, in verse 21, the creature, be delivered, from the bondage, of corruption, and again, in verse 22, the whole creation, groweth, and travaileth, and pain together, until now, are not only there, but ourselves also, even we, grown within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption, of, our body, of course, life is, tough, of course, it can be, very difficult, very difficult, indeed, but then you see, even the difficulties, the Christian is sustained, by two things, what are they, in this passage, we read here, verse 18, we are to look, in our sufferings, to the crown,

I reckon, that the sufferings, of this present time, are not worthy, to be compared, with the glory, which shall be revealed, in us, you see, the present, is compared, to the future, and the relative, greatness, of the sufferings, here, are contrasted, with the greatness, of the glory, that awaits, and the greatest, of the sufferings, great though they may be, pale, into insignificance, compared, with the glory, and the greatness, of the glory, that is to be, this is exactly, Paul's argument, when he wrote, to the Corinthians, and said, we are suffering, here he says, but our sufferings, are only for a short time, and our sufferings, are only going to endure, for a short time, and our sufferings, are only going to be, like, why could he say that, why, we look, he says, not that the things which are seen but the things which are unseen for the things which are seen are temporal but the things which are unseen are eternal and something else the Christian is sustained in his sufferings by the thought that he's going to leave them behind there's a day coming when though though the going is today that will have been left behind and then something else that sustains him and this passage speaks of it and I'm nearly finished from verses 19 to 22 the sympathy that the someone has put it that the sub-human creation has for the Christian as he suffers in this world you see there's a sense in which the world which you and I live this creation the universe there's a sense in which the universe itself is looking forward to deliverance because as Paul here puts it the creation was made subject to vanity not willingly but by reason of him was objected to the same and whole in other words sin

[32 : 54] Adam by his sin brought catastrophe not into his own life but into the existence of the universe so that this world takes take the world narrow it down to the world this world today the world which you and I live the creation around us isn't able to fulfill the purpose rightly fully for which it was for which it was brought into be and why was it brought into be?

supremely to glorify God sin but sin has marked the very creation in which you and I are the very earth in which we live on which we walk and in which we struggle and in which we have these conflicts and these experiences which shock us from time to time in a sense this world itself is in sympathy with us that's what the Bible says that the day is going to come when there will be a new heavens and a new earth and then the heavens and the earth will fully fulfill the purpose for which they were created and the picture that that the idea the kind of the kind of picture at the back of the apostle's mind here is as someone has put it it's almost like like a labour room in a maternity hospital where the the creation is is is struggling as it were to come to the birth to to get to get to its to its real and fulfillment and the same with a Christian in this creation he too is struggling for emergence into this newness of life into the glorious liberty of the children of God that's the picture that the apostle has for us here of the Christian struggling to get out of this of this of the space in which he is so confined like a child wanting to get out of the womb he's confined now he wants into a bigger into a into a bigger environment and so it is with a Christian in this world in which he lives and struggles and sighs and yearns with sorrow and what not in this world he's wanting to get out he's wanting to get away he's wanting to get into the glorious liberty of the children of God he's waiting for the redemption of his body his spirit struggles within a sinful body and the spirit wants to get rid of sin and the body wants to get rid of sin as well and together they're groaning struggling looking forward to this deliverance from all the tens have been in this world and if you're a Christian you know what that is don't you think that it's wrong because you're having it rough today as a

Christian don't think that it's wrong for you to want to get away from the struggles and the difficulties and the conflicts and the disappointments of this present evil world there are some people who say oh it's wrong for a Christian to want that is it what are you going to make of 2nd Corinthians chapter 5 when Paul says that he's wanting what is he talking about but wanting it away we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved we have a building of God and house not made with hands eternal in the heavens for in this we groan earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with a house which is from heaven what kind of Christians are we if we don't look forward to perfection in the presence of

Christ what kind of Christians are we if we don't long for deliverance for our souls and our bodies do you know what it is you see there are people who say to you it's wrong for a Christian to want away why do they say that they say that because they're only looking at one side of the page the side of the page they're looking at this this oh it's wrong for you to be rebellious against the providence of God but my friend there's another side to that page and it is this the groaning is not just a groaning to be rid of but a groaning to be satisfied with and that's where the difference comes in and that's what the Christian has as no one else has oh I know that there are people in the world today who are suffering who are wracked with pain and perhaps whose sole thought is to get away

I know it but then you see that's where the other side of the Christian's page comes in that not only are there times when he's desperate to get away from the sufferings and the difficulties but he's also desperate to get away to the place where there are no sufferings and no pain and no difficulties and no sighs and no sorrows and as he struggles in this world with these birth pangs waiting for that emergence he has with him in the world the creation itself sympathizing with him and that's the thought that Paul has here the creation itself he says is looking forward to the manifestation of the sons of

[39 : 20] God the creation itself is groaning and traveling and I wonder in all that we refer to as the tragedies which happen in this world with all the cosmic upheavals and so on I wonder if there are any times when we think in terms of Romans chapter 8 that these themselves are the evidences that the creation is looking forward and longing for and yearning for the new heavens and the new earth that God himself has promised and as you sit in this church today do you find yourself in this category do you find yourself a part of this chapter and a part of this passage in Romans chapter 8 are you longing for deliverance from sin are you siding in this present evil world as a person who has something better to look forward to are you too longing for the day are you anticipating the glorious liberty of the children of God are you awaiting the redemption of the body are you looking forward to the greater glory are you anticipating conformity to the image of Christ and do you have just a word in conclusion that which will encourage you to hope that you are amongst these there are two things here that encourage us to hope that in verses 23 and 24 here we have the first fruit of the spirit the earnest of the spirit the holy spirit working within giving a foretaste of the glory which is to come surely there are times in your own life when the holy spirit has given you a foretaste of what awaits you surely my friend if you're a

Christian I know that this is true the believer here today I know for a fact that this is true there are times when you've had heaven on earth ah yes there are times when heaven has come into your life that has been a foretaste of what awaits you but then maybe you're here today and you don't know what that is so then you cannot look forward with hope and that's the second point here not only does the Christian have the encouragement of the holy spirit is a foretaste within him but he also has this evidence he has hope that will receive its fulfillment in heaven we look forward in hope to what we haven't yet seen he says in verse 24 and if we hope for that we see not then we will wait with patience for remember the idea he has remember that he's talking about the birth pangs here the Christian agonizing waiting for deliverance the creation agonizing waiting for deliverance and unfortunately it so happens from time to time that that which people have looked forward to they have been bitterly disappointed perhaps a something has gone wrong just the time of birth and it has blanked and shattered and disappointed all their hopes and fortunately that happens from time to time but no such disappointment awaits the

Christian with reference to the glory of heaven no Christian will be disappointed his hopes will not be disillusioned he has the guarantee within him the guarantee of the spirit witnessing to his spirit and he has the guarantee of the word of God which cannot be broken he knows that all that he hopes for will be fulfilled in the glory beyond do you have that hope today and do you have that assurance today as you live on in this world let us pray have mercy upon us oh lord and bless us with thy presence and with thy power with thy grace and with thy peace guide us along life's way and help us to look to thyself by faith coming your way to thee have mercy upon us and go before us prepare us for our evening worship and forgive us for

Jesus sake amen