

# The Freedom of Sonship

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Preacher: Paul Hay

[ 0 : 00 ] We're interrupting a pastor's sermons on Acts to bring you my sermons on Sonship. It's a very special topic.

And for the next three weeks we're dealing with Romans chapter 8 on the Sonship and today dealing with the freedom of Sonship. It's the greatest privilege in the world to be the King of Kings, children of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

There's an interesting thing. I deliberately chose the word Sonship and it's interesting. Even in the footnote, it says for Romans 8.15, it says, the Greek word for adoption to Sonship is a term referring to the full legal standing of an adopted male heir in Roman culture.

And that's part of what it is. And it's also, if you ever saw the series on TV, Downton Abbey, or you would know that the family had three daughters and none of them could inherit it because they were daughters.

So some distant kind of person had to come and inherit it because he was a son. And that's why I've deliberately chosen the term Sonship because only the son had the full rights.

[ 1 : 26 ] And that's why we're all sons. Male or female, we're all sons. Let us read Romans 8, 1 to 17. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Because through Christ Jesus, the law of spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering.

And so he condemned sin in the flesh in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh, but according to the spirit. Those who live according to the flesh have their mind set on what the flesh desires.

But those who live in accordance with the spirit have their mind set on what the spirit desires. The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the spirit is life and peace.

The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the realm of flesh, but are in the realm of the spirit, if indeed the spirit of God lives in you.

[ 2 : 37 ] And if anyone does not have the spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, that even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the spirit gives life because of righteousness.

And if the spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his spirit who lives in you.

Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation, but it is not to the flesh to live according to it. 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.

For those who are led by the spirit are children of God. The spirit you receive does not make you slaves so that you live in fear again. Rather, the spirit you receive brought about your adoption to sonship.

And by him we cry, Abba, Father. The spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. And if we are children, then we are heirs, heirs of God, and go heirs with Christ.

[ 3 : 40 ] If indeed we share in his sufferings, know that we may also share in his glory. Powerful passage. Powerful passage. Martin Luther called it the most beautiful passage in the Bible.

In a way, it's a lot like that. We are all sons. And as I mentioned before, Galatians 3.26 says, Male nor female, slave nor free. You're all sons.

And we're all firstborn sons. We all have the full rights. Galatians 4.6 says, Because you are his sons, God sent the spirit of his son into your hearts, and by him we cry out, Abba, Father.

We are the full rights. Adoption under Roman law was kind of interesting. Unlike our adoption, where we usually adopt a baby, they adopted an adult male.

And what it was, was a wealthy couple, who didn't have an heir, would pick a worthy son, and make him their heir. And when that happened, he was no longer part of his old family.

[ 4 : 47 ] It was as if he was never there. He gave away all the rights of his old family and gained all the rights of the new family. And even if other sons were born, that were born by birth, he still had the full rights of sonship.

That's what it means. That's why he makes a comment in the footnote in the NIV, that it's the full rights of sonship. And it took place in the presence of seven witnesses, so everyone would know that the adoption had taken place, that this person was now the son of these particular parents.

It was a great privilege. And it gives us an idea what our sonship is all about. Because what it means is that God has taken us when we were poverty-stricken, debt-ridden sinners, and given us new life, new birth.

2 Corinthians 5.17 says, Therefore, as anyone in Christ, a new creation has come. The old is gone. The new is here. And then Colossians 2.14 says, Having canceled the charge for illegal indebtedness who stood against us and condemned us, he has taken it away, kneeling it to a cross.

It's all taken away. We no longer have the debt of sin in ours because Jesus paid that debt. It's all taken away. And then 1 Peter 1.3 says, Praise be the God and Father, Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 6 : 24 ] In his great mercy, he has given us new birth and a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. We're born anew. We're all adopted.

It's ours. And that's why we have the full rights. Completely full rights. And we have full freedom.

We have many freedoms because we are the children of God. We have freedom from bondage to the law. It's interesting. Someone said, why did Paul write Romans 8?

It's because he'd written Romans 7. And you read Romans 7, and here Paul talks about the good that I would do, that I don't do, and the bad that I don't want to do, that I keep on doing.

I keep struggling. And it's interesting to see the debates among people whether Paul's talking from his old life before he became a Christian and his life as a Christian. And all the context seems to see that he's talking as a life as a Christian.

[ 7 : 29 ] Sometimes people get the idea that Christians can live a sinless life. It can't happen. It certainly hasn't happened in my life. Like the Apostle Paul, I'm also called Paul, and I feel the same way that sometimes the good that I want to do, I don't do.

And things that I don't want to say, I sometimes say. That's what it's about. Romans 7, 19 says, For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do.

This I keep on doing. So he felt condemned by the law. And interesting enough, that was the purpose of the law. To bring about condemnation.

It was the purpose of the law was to lead us to Christ. To say, here's what the standard is. This is it. And you can't do it. I like to use the illustration about trying to swim across the ocean.

How many of us would make it? None. I don't want to get 10 feet. Lots of you would get a whole lot further than me. And you could say, I got a lot further than Paul. What difference does it make if you drown?

[ 8 : 46 ] And that's what we keep comparing ourselves to with other people and say, oh, I'm better than him. Well, the comparison is Jesus Christ. Are you better than him?

And that's the point. We cannot do it. He cannot keep the law. But what does Paul say in response to all this struggle of trying to keep the law when he can't do it?

He says in Romans 8, verse 1, a beautiful verse, there's no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. The law condemns us, but not those who are in Christ Jesus.

All who have confessed Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, repented of their sins, and turned to him have no condemnation at all. We don't have to live under the law.

That's the problem. And note the word now. Paul's not talking, oh, in the future, you're going to be free of condemnation.

[ 9 : 50 ] No, he says now. Now, as a child of God, you're free from all condemnation because Jesus has paid the price. It's all taken care of.

Of course, if people haven't confessed Christ as Savior and Lord, then they do stand condemned. John 3, 18 says, whoever does not believe in him is not condemned.

Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. Condemnation, but not for those who are in Christ Jesus.

It's impossible to keep the law. Apostle Paul couldn't do it. I can't do it. Neither can you. It just cannot be done.

The law can only point out what's wrong. And that's where we come across this beautiful verses in Romans 8, 3 to 4.

[ 10 : 47 ] For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did, by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us who do not live according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

We don't have to worry about living by the law because Jesus Christ lived by the law for us. He took upon all our condemnation for us.

So we have freedom from bondage to the law. We don't have to worry about it. Wonderful thing. And we also have freedom from bondage to sin.

In Romans, it talks about two types of condemnation. The first is a judicial condemnation. He talks about in Romans 1 to 3.

And he talks about the condemnation of the law, the legal condemnation. And then it answers that with justification. That we are justified, as someone put it, just as if I had never sinned.

[ 11 : 58 ] It's all taken care of. And then Romans 7 deals with the experiential condemnation. The idea that, oh, whoops, I did it again. I blew it. And I've sinned again.

But that's when we experience that kind of feeling. But Romans 8 deals with that. Where it says, there's no condemnation. All their sins have been covered.

People think that, okay, there's a problem. I cannot keep the law. I screwed up. And I've done it. I've only been wrong. But that's not the way it is.

We cannot keep the law. And it doesn't matter. Jesus Christ kept the law for us. Jesus Christ lived a sinless life.

It's very popular among some Christians to say, well, okay, Jesus paid the price for my sins. And I need God's grace to get salvation.

[ 13 : 01 ] But I need to keep working to keep my salvation. That's a mistaken notion of what sonship is all about. What adoption is all about.

Adoption is not that way at all. Adoption is a permanent contract. A permanent fellowship. Not a conditional contract. How many of you would ever disown your children because they screwed up once?

It doesn't happen that way. We don't do that. That's what sonship is all about. We cannot defeat God.

And we also have freedom from the bondage to death. Romans 8.2 puts it very beautifully. Because through Christ Jesus, the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.

The law, sin, and death are all linked together because one leads together. It's because breaking the law means we sin.

[ 14 : 07 ] Breaking God's law means we sin. And because of that, it brings about death. For the wages of sin is death. But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. We don't have to.

We share in the victory of Jesus Christ. Romans 8.10-11 says, And if Jesus Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness.

And the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you. He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of His Spirit who lives in you. Amen. Jesus conquered death.

It's been done. Taken care of. Galatians 2.20 puts it this way. I've been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.

Hebrews 2.14-15 says, Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in the humanity so that by His death He might break the power of Him who holds the power of death.

[ 15 : 24 ] That is the devil and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. All of us are afraid of dying. We're afraid of what lies beyond.

It's natural. But Jesus conquered death. One of the interesting things that the Romans found when they were crucifying Christians and putting them to death and stuff, they found that the peaceful way they went just totally amazed them.

How could people go to death so freely and easily? And that meant many Christians, many Romans, to accept Christ.

Hebrews 2.10-12 says, In bringing many sons and daughters to glory is fitting that God for whom everything exists should make the pioneer of our salvation perfect through suffering.

But the one who makes people holy and the one who made holy of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters. He says, I will declare my name to my brothers and sisters. In the assembly I will sing your praises.

[ 16 : 28 ] We have freedom from bondage. Freedom from bondage to fear as well. And Romans 8.15 is a beautiful verse in this. It says, The spirit you receive does not make you slaves so that you live in fear again.

Rather, the spirit you receive brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, Abba, Father. Beautiful verse. Listen, we have to understand what the term Abba means.

Abba is a Maramaic term. It was Jesus' native language. It's a language he grew up with. And it's a term that he used in the Garden of Gethsemane when he was praying to God, his father, in great anguish.

He used the term Abba. It's a familiar term. And it's one that no slave or anything would ever use. And it's never used.

It's by Christ. And now it's given to us. We can use that term. It's similar to what might call dad. It means that we don't have to live in fear.

[ 17 : 35 ] It's like people, some people think that we have to approach God as a great taskmaster and go through all kinds of intermediators to even get even close to his presence. But what it says, no.

We can approach God as a loving father. Once, during the time of the Civil War in the States, one young man who was injured and more was trying to get attention of the of President Lincoln.

And he just couldn't, you know, he couldn't get through and stuff. And he was, happened to be young, talked to this young boy and said, I've got all this problem. You know, I've been injured and I need attention. And the guy said, young kid said, well, come to me.

And he followed him and stuff. And he gets into the thing and then Lincoln says to me, and he says, what's your problem, son? And it made all the difference because it was his son.

His great crest was intimately glad that the soldiers received what he needed. Because he came in through the presence of the son.

[ 18 : 42 ] And that's the way we can come into God's presence. Through his son, Jesus Christ. Because he paid the price. That's why we pray in Jesus' name.

Because it's his bank account, not ours. But we need a real commitment. Romans 10, 9 says, if you declare with your mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you'll be saved.

can't trust in our own resources. We need to trust in God's resources. We need to accept God's grace.

That's what sonship is really all about. And we're set free. And, you know, it's amazing how many people don't live in the freedom that they enjoy.

We're set free from bondage to the law. Set free from bondage to sin. Set free from bondage to death. And set free from bondage to fear.

[ 19 : 43 ] Yet so many people live as if they're still in bondage. They live as if somehow their sin has defeated God. You know, I screwed up and God, you know, it's all over.

It's not that way at all. We're sons. God is never going to give up on us. As it says at the end of this beautiful chapter in Romans, for I'm convinced that neither death nor life nor angels nor demons neither the present nor the future nor any powers neither height nor depth nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God than is Christ Jesus our Lord.

Nothing. We have nothing to fear. We're sons. Let us live as if we are sons. Let us live as if we are sons.