

Adopted for Glory

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Date: 01 June 2019

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[0 : 00] We are going through Romans 8 with the overall theme of assurance of salvation in Christ. So two weeks ago, David Coylewood spoke on reason number one for the assurance of our salvation.

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ because Christ has taken the condemnation on the cross. And last week, Rob Patterson spoke on reason number two, the Holy Spirit has come to give life.

The law of the spirit of life supersedes the law of sin and death. It is like the law of aerodynamics supersedes the law of gravity. When the law of the spirit of life is at work in us, the law of sin and death no longer has anything to do with us.

This week, I would like to speak on reason number three, that is how the Holy Spirit helps us to live like children of God. And Rob has been very helpful in explaining the term of Abba Father.

And then Marty gave us a very good illustration in terms of being adopted by God. All right, before we start, shall we pray? Father God, we thank you for the fact that we could call your Father, even as we come before you, the Holy God.

[1 : 31] And it is such a privilege for us to come before you as our Father, no longer fearing any condemnation. Oh, Father, we know that you want us to have more, more than no condemnation, but a life that is worthy of your calling, a life that is totally out of our own expectation.

For you have prepared for those who love you, things that we have never thought of, never seen, never heard before. Oh, Father, help us to see you clearer this morning as we come into your word. Thank you, Father. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. For this sermon, there will be quite a number of verses that I will be going through. I'm sorry, it will be a bit rushed, I thought.

But I'll put those verses on the screen. Hopefully Marty can follow. So we start with Romans 8.12. So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.

We are debtors. We can understand that many of the adults in Australia are debtors to the banks, but are we all debtors? We are debtors in the sense that we will, we all have needs that we cannot supply ourselves.

[3 : 04] Needs like happiness and recognition. Our flesh tells us that it can give us happiness and recognition if we live according to its ways.

We try the way of the flesh, and it just seems to get what we want, and so we became debtors to the flesh. So to illustrate this point, I will go to the Old Testament.

The books of Exodus and Numbers tells us about the Israelites spending 40 years wandering in the wilderness before they were ready to enter God's promised land.

So one of the problems they faced was the supply of food, and so they became hungry. To satisfy their hunger quickly and easily, the way of the flesh was to grumble.

They grumbled against Moses and against God for bringing them out of Egypt and now starving them to death in the desert, in the wilderness. Despite their grumbling, God sent them food from heaven.

[4 : 10] So they seemed to get what they wanted by grumbling. They did not realize that, or they did not know that God would have given them food if they asked for it humbly.

So after some time, so they haven't learned their lesson, they haven't changed. After some time, they grumbled again because the food they ate was the same every day.

They wanted more variety. And so the character just remained the same throughout those 40 years. So God was preparing them to live in the promised land where there would be plenty of food for them to enjoy, but they would spoil the enjoyment of such food if such enjoyment had become more important than the enjoyment of God.

So God was taking time to prepare the Israelites for the promised land. However, the Israelites lived according to the flesh. They were impatient. They could not see the bigger glory that is to come. They just wanted to enjoy the small things there and then. The flesh is short-sighted because it knows that it does not have forever to live. It wants to enjoy quickly and easily.

[5 : 28] When we are debtors to the flesh, we satisfy the desires of the flesh by the deeds of our bodies. The deeds of the body are mentioned in Romans 1, verses 18 to 32.

So they include idolatry, sexual immorality, covetousness, malaise, gossips, and disobedience to parents. Such deeds are designed to get what the flesh wants quickly and easily.

All right, we go to Romans 8, 13. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

The Israelites who grumble against God all died before they could enter the promised land. I do not know what they all died from, but I know that at least some of them did die from the effect of overeating because God gave them food and they ate so much that they died.

It is a scary thing when God gives us what our flesh wants. Romans 1 again mentioned three times about God gave people according to what they wanted. Number one, according to the lust of their hearts, in verse 24.

[6 : 40] Number two, according to the dishonorable passions, in verse 26. And number three, according to their debased mind, verse 28.

We know that instant noodles are tasty, quick, and easy to make. However, if we eat instant noodles every day, we will certainly die young.

Eating just instant noodles every day is not only harmful to our bodies, it is also harmful to our characters. So, you see, preparing food, cooking, presenting food are all part of training for patients and for servanthood, for hospitality.

And amazingly, as we spend time to prepare and cook and present food, we become able to taste an enjoyment that we never tasted before. If by the spirit we put to death the dish of the flesh, we will live.

We will suddenly find that the things we enjoyed before were dishonorable, debased, or silly. And far glorious things have come to be part of our life.

[7 : 48] So do you know that there is a kind of love, a kind of joy, a kind of glory you can only have if only you would listen to God, trust him, and put to death the dish of your body.

How do we put to death the dish of the body? The first step is to crucify ourselves with Jesus. So we read from Romans 6, verses 6 to 8.

We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. So now if we have died with Christ, we will also live with him.

We no longer live as debtors to the flesh. Once we are free from the flesh, the Holy Spirit can then help us to remove the dish of the body. Does it mean that we now become debtors to God instead of debtors to the flesh?

[8 : 53] Yes, in a way, it does. In fact, we are always debtors to God because God created us and everything else. Now that God has redeemed us in Christ, we have become twice indebted to him.

There is a debt called the debt of gratitude in many cultures. This is very common in Asian countries because of the big gap between the rich and the poor. So for example, if I'm very poor and I got a medical bill that I couldn't pay and that's very common in the Philippines and my boss or friend, whoever, who I'm rich, helped me to pay the medical bill, so under the practice of the debt of gratitude, I will be forever indebted to my boss.

He can always tell me to do something for him, expect me to comply to his wishes. It is a debt that I could never finish repaying. While it is proper for us to be thankful to God's grace and mercy, God does not have the debt of gratitude in mind when he saves us because in Matthew 11, 28-30, Jesus said, Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

The yoke of the flesh is heavy because it is a debt that we could never finish repaying. The yoke of Christ is light, even though it is also a debt that we could not repay because we have, it is light because we have been adopted as sons of God and fellow as with Christ.

[10:46] We note that while Romans 8-12 says that we are debtors not to the flesh, it does not continue to say that we are debtors to the Spirit. So in Romans 8-14, it says, For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

So Romans 8-14 says that we are a lot more than debtors to the Spirit. The Spirit is making us into sons of God. We are not only redeemed by our Master, we are also adopted as sons of our Father. Sons are all those who will receive the inheritance and have all the privilege at home. So in the sense of inheritance, it does not matter if we are male or female, we are all sons in Christ. If Christ died to just secure the forgiveness of our sins, we will always live in fear because we do not know how or when we could fully repay Christ.

But Christ died also to secure our adoption as sons of God. I owe my Father a lot, but such debt is different to the debt to my rich boss.

[11:58] I know that my Father delighted in giving me everything, even his own life. I would sadden my Father if I tell him that I want to repay all that he has done for me.

However, I will also sadden my Father if I decide to live a life unworthy of his name. That is why it is only those who are led by the Spirit are sons of God.

As the Son of God, Jesus was led by the Spirit to spend 40 days in the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. The devil's strategy was to appeal to the flesh of Jesus.

He said, if you are the Son of God, you should have the power and privilege to satisfy yourself instantly and easily. So in Matthew 4, 3-4, we read, And the tempter came and said to him, If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.

But Jesus answered, It is written, Men shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. Jesus was telling the devil that it was exactly because I am the Son of God, I will not grumble when I am hungry.

[13:15] My Father tells me to fast for 40 days, and I will gladly live by his word. Jesus showed us what it is like to be led by the Spirit to live like a child of God.

He delighted in God's word. He obeyed God not out of fear, but out of joy. So we go to Romans 8.15, For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, Abba, Father.

For many of us who grow up in Christian families under the care of loving fathers, we may not appreciate the full impact of calling God Abba, Father. And if we have a chance to visit the orphanage, we might start to understand what a privilege to have someone for us to call Abba, Father.

Many children there would long to be accepted as someone's children. But for many of us who are adults who have been living independently from God, either rebelliously or religiously, God tends to become a stranger and we have no interest in knowing him intimately.

many. But when the spirit of life comes to us, our hearts are drawn to God and a miracle happens as we start to taste the love and sweetness of calling God Abba, Father.

[14:43] The sweetness of no longer living like an orphan, we are love and we belong. Romans 8, 16-17, the spirit himself bears witness with our spirit and 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.

In the Gospels, we see Jesus calling God as his father very laterally. If we are not used to calling God Father, we may feel a bit uncertain calling God as our father, especially in front of other people, we may feel we are being presumptuous to address God as our father.

The Holy Spirit himself helps us to be sure of our status as God's children, reminds us God's promises, he helps us to delight in God's word, he helps us to pray, especially when we pray, we just suddenly feel so lateral to call God as our father, and he helps us to sing songs of worship to God.

He moved us to care for God's other children, so calling God as our father also means that we would care for others in the same family. So all these things bear witness that we are children of God.

[16:07] It is difficult for us to comprehend what being heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ means. We are more than privileged to be accepted by God, but God wants to give us more.

We shall come to this point a bit more when we get to Romans 8.32, which says, He who did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all

things?

In Christ, we have the equal status as heirs of God as Christ. God wants to give us all things. God wants us to know life as life should be, full of truth, love, full of beauty, full of joy, and full of righteousness.

However, verse 17 sounds like a fine print in the contract. It says, Provided you suffer with him in order that you may also be glorified with him.

But verse 17 is not a fine print, it is just a repeat of what has been front and center of Romans. So in Romans 5, verses 1 to 5, we read, Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

[17 : 24] Through him we have also obtained access by faith into his grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, whom has been given to us.

So the Holy Spirit has been given to us, and the Holy Spirit changes our longings. In the past, we seek greatest enjoyment from this world before we die, and therefore we tend to grumble when things don't happen according to what we like it to be.

Now, with the Holy Spirit in us, we long for something far greater, the glory of God. We are waiting for the time when God appears in all his glory, and we share in this glory.

Such a longing is so strong that we want to prepare for this. We rejoice in suffering because we know suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces proven character.

it would be a great thing when we can rejoice in our suffering with Christ as evangelists or missionaries. However, before we get there, we can start with more mundane sufferings, sufferings that we go through day by day, such as injuring our knees in soccer games, needing to get up every day, every morning, very early, to go to work, doing ministries or laundries for 20 years before getting much appreciation.

[19 : 16] So all these things that we meet every day, and see what's our attitude, we go through them. Do we grumble and say, God, why do you let me go through this?

Or do we learn to rejoice in it, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance proves our character that has been changed by the Holy Spirit.

So when we can rejoice in such mundane suffering, we will look back with amazement that we have the patience to go through them without grumbling. So just like preparing the Israelites for the promised land, God is preparing us for the land of glory.

Suffering is necessary to put to death the deeds of the body. Suffering is necessary to build our character. Such character, at least the beginning of such character, is necessary for us to enjoy and appreciate the glory of God.

So through the redeeming word of Christ, through the transforming word of the Holy Spirit, through the adopting word of God, we can be free from the foolish and short sighted ways of the flesh, and we have the hope of glory.

[20 : 23] So I would like to sum up with three points. Point one, we are debtors. We are debtors, however, we sometimes live more like creditors. Creditors are people who think they are entitled, to everything.

They grumble when they do not get what they want instantly. The story of the prodigal son tells us about a young man who wanted to enjoy his inheritance instantly.

When he used up his money and suffered, he came to his senses and remembered his father's kindness and wanted to return to his father as a slave, but his father welcomed him as a son.

A few days ago, it was requested by an elderly woman to do a home visit for her. When I went to the house, it was a very run-down house, one of the worst houses I have ever seen.

The woman had oxygen all the time. He's very thin because he's difficult breathing. He's only very thin clothing on and there's no heating in the living room.

[21 : 30] after the consultation, this patient insisted on paying me, which is very, very surprising because I've done my home visits.

Hardly anyone ever even asked me whether they should pay me anything. They just expected that it's all free and provided. I'm very surprised that this woman would ask.

I said, no, you don't need to pay. She insisted on paying me. I said, no, you just call the practice and the next day they will settle that. When she called the practice, the girls would look at the account and say, it's been paid.

But the fact that she's living in such a poor condition and wanted to pay me, it just shows the character of someone who's suffering.

But she also considers other people. And that moved me. In Matthew 5, 3, Jesus said, blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

[22 : 35] God is not holding us to the depth of gratitude. However, God would be delighted if we show him our gratitude of depth when we let our request be known to him with thanksgiving.

Point number two, be a children of God. We are children of God, however, we sometimes live more like orphans of God. Orphans of God are people who know God but live by their own strength, unlike children of the world.

Children of the world are people who don't know God and live by their own strength. Orphans of God are people who know God and then live by their own strength. Orphans of God worry about many things. They rely on their performance to gain validation.

They envy people who get more recognition. They try their best to appear strong in front of people. Suffering breaks their heart and draws them closer to God's heart.

Suffering frees us from being orphans of God and transforms us into children of God. In 2 Corinthians 12, 9-10, God told Paul, my grace is sufficient for you for my power is made perfect in weakness.

[23 : 44] Therefore, and then Paul said, therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses so that the power of Christ may rest on me for the sake of Christ and I am content with weaknesses in some hardships, persecutions and calamities.

For when I am weak, I am strong. point number three, adopted for glory or adopted for a true life.

Many times when we are suffering, we start to wonder what we did to deserve such hardship.

You may think that God was still punishing us. In times like this, maybe remember the fact that we have been adopted for glory. The Holy Spirit is leading us to the land of glory.

the present suffering is not only not worth comparing with the glory that is to come. That is going to be the next week's sermon.

So the present suffering is not only not worth comparing with the glory that is to come. It is also necessary to mold us into the children of God. As we move towards the land of glory with the help of the Holy Spirit, we put to death the deeds of the body.

[24 : 55] we learn to relate to God as our father. We rejoice in sufferings. I will end with a testimony from John Anderson. This testimony was forwarded to me by David Coderwood, written by a great foreign auditor of the Australian, appeared in an article on the Weekend Australian magazine May 11, this last month.

the article, the article says, Anderson's youngest son, Andrew, was born when Anderson was a BC cabinet minister.

For those of you who don't know, John Anderson was the deputy prime minister of Australia about 15 years ago. At that time, the youngest son was born, called Andrew.

Andrew was profoundly disabled. He lived only a few short months and was constantly in and out hospital. Julia, his wife, wrote an essay recalling that the couple they were considered an abortion, but in fact gave thanks for Andrew's life.

So in his urology for his son, delivered on August 19, 1998, Anderson said, Andrew's life often saw us wondering what we have done to deserve so much difficulty.

[26 : 23] His passing sees us wondering what we did to deserve so rich a blessing. This little fellow was quite defenseless, yet he totally and utterly disarmed us.

God taught us something we have heard about but not really understood, that his grace is sufficient for us, for his power is made perfect in weakness.

Let us pray. Father, we have heard so many promises in your word.

Father, may you make them realities in our lives. thank you, Lord. We want to be your children and live out that life they intend us to have.

For we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.