

VII. The Holy Spirit in Biblical Perspective
Led by the Spirit
“The Spirit of Adoption and the Spirit of Fear”
Romans 8:1–17
Dr. Harry L. Reeder III
March 6, 2016 – Morning sermon

This is our fifth and final study in Romans 8:1–17. Our focus in this study will be on Romans 8:12–17 but we’ll start by reading the first eleven verses. Romans 8:1–11 says [1] *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. [2] For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. [3] For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, [4] in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. [5] For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. [6] For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. [7] For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. [8] Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*

[9] You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. [10] But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. [11] If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. The grass withers, the flower fades, God’s Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

When you send me away on a three week study sabbatical there are about seven things I am committed to do and I find great joy in doing that. One of those commitments is to bring back to the session three or four ministry theme possibilities for the next year. For this year the session chose the Spirit of God particularly being led by the Spirit of God and I think it is absolutely appropriate in light of our focus last year on the inerrancy, sufficiency, infallibility and supremacy of God’s Word. Put no confidence in the flesh for it is the Spirit who gives life. My Words are Spirit and life. God’s Word and God’s Spirit work inseparably so it’s absolutely appropriate that we do this. Then this phrase, led by the Spirit, comes right out of Romans 8:14 which says [14] *For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.* This is our glorious theme verse for this year.

Dutifully beginning in the late fall when that decision had been made I started thinking of how I wanted to start the year of sermons and when I read Romans 8:14 it just took off for me. Here’s the issue. First of all, for me Romans is the majestic book of the Bible but I praise the Lord for all 66 books. For me the book of Romans is like Mount Everest, it’s the pinnacle. It’s a magisterial text for me and it’s absolutely extraordinary. I believe Romans 8 is the magisterial chapter in the magisterial book because here Paul gives a magisterial exposition of the Holy Spirit. It’s not given in some line item systematic theology but there are these moving parts that are coming together that are cohesive in the supremacy of Christ and the glory of the Father.

For instance, in the text the Spirit of God, the Father dwells in you. The Spirit of Christ, the Son of God dwells in you. You see the Trinitarian dynamic of your salvation right in

this text but what is drawn out of the text is this glorious dwelling presence of the Holy Spirit that is in you, upon you, with you and at work in us. We are being led by the Spirit of God. These are sons of God. In other words He gives us our inheritance title – sons of God.

Sons of God are not referred to as sons and daughters because in that culture that would have been meaningless. When He says ‘sons of God’ that was a title. If you are a son of God then you are the inheritor of the family. So all, if you’re male, female, Jew, Gentile, bond, free, for it doesn’t matter who you are because if you’re in Christ, your title is inheritor. You inherit as joint heirs, as fellow heirs. Who are the sons of God? They are being led by the Spirit of God. This is where I felt a necessity in this text to take some time, not only because of its breadth, height, depth and length but also for another reason.

The reason is this. Most of the time people just say ‘I’m just being led by the Spirit.’ What they are referring to is a notion of personal guidance from the Holy Spirit. This last week I did a blog on the fivefold paradigm to vote with Christian wisdom. I received some wonderful feedback but I also received some interesting feedback. One response I received the person basically thought my blog was a waste of time and that when he votes he would just allow the Spirit to lead him in how he voted. What do you mean? When you walk into the voting booth is the Spirit just going to pick up your pen and circle the one you should vote for?

When the Bible uses this phrase multiple times ‘led by the Spirit’ it’s not a matter of personal guidance but I understand personal guidance yet the context is that you are being led from something to something – led from sin to the Savior, led from the kingdom of darkness to the Kingdom of light, led from death unto life, led from enmity unto peace, led from to – and that’s the language used here. At this point I’m going to review briefly what we’ve already covered in these first eleven verses of Romans 8 from the past four studies.

The first thing we learned was the necessity of the Spirit of God in you and leading you. He does this two ways – negatively and positively. We see the negative way in Romans 8:9 when He says *[9] You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.* In other words to belong to Christ you have to have the Spirit. It’s not come to Jesus and you get the Spirit of God. No, the Spirit of God has to come to you to take you from sin and its law of sin to bring you to the law of grace and the dominion of grace in your life. The Spirit of God has to come and take you to that but then He does it in the positive in Romans 8:14 which says *[14] For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.* So the Holy Spirit is necessary to have Christ, stay with Christ, walk with Christ and end up with Christ. He is not an added blessing for He is the Blessed One who brings us from death unto life.

Secondly, we learned that as a Christian I am not alone, I am never alone and I will never be alone therefore I will not, I must not live as if I am on my own. Why is this a problem? You have inside of you an old man. You get a new heart, a new record, a new family, a new home and a new life in Christ when you come to Jesus but you still have an old man that is within you. That old man was nourished in the flesh, meaning living independent of God. So the old man keeps telling you can live the Christian life on your own. We happen to find out in the Bible that without Him we can do nothing but we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. The strength of God in our lives is the Holy Spirit. He is in me, with me and will be with me all the way to glory. So I am never alone.

By the way, I have a new man that says to the old man that ‘you’re dead wrong’ for I will endeavor in humble reliance upon Divine grace and the power of the Holy Spirit in dependence upon the Lord. I have that inside of me and Satan is outside of me and Satan is

always attacking. One of the ways he attacks is through isolation. You're alone. Do you remember how that got to Elijah? Elijah got some encouragement from 7,000 but our encouragement doesn't come from 7,000 but from the Lord. He says He will never leave us nor forsake us. You are never alone for He is with you so don't live as if you are on your own.

Thirdly, we learned that the Spirit of God sent by the Father to lead Christ has been sent by Christ to lead us by grace to glory. There is a very careful choosing of that word. He doesn't just say 'the Spirit of God' but He also says 'the Spirit of Christ.' In other words, the Son of God Incarnate who was the Christ, who won the victory for our salvation, the Father promised the Son then the Father promised the Spirit upon the Son who was with the Son from His birth all the way to the cross from the tomb all the way to glory, so that Christ has purchased our redemption. Now that Christ sends that same Spirit of the Christ to His sons and daughters and that Spirit of Christ is upon you. It is the same One (Holy Spirit) that was with Jesus here on earth is with you also. He is with you from the new birth to glory.

Fourthly, we learned to be led by the Spirit of God is not only a triumphant declaration of our new destination but is also a celebration of our new vocation. We not only have a new destination but a new location. I not only have a new home but a new calling in life. God has called me so I am being, thinking, walking and forgiven. Romans 8:1 says *[1] There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.* I am under the dominion of grace and no longer under the dominion and power of sin. I have been forgiven of the penalty of sin and I've been emancipated from the power of sin. If you have a life love you have to have a life view to develop the life style which is the study we are doing on Sunday nights. The life love constrains us. The mind of Christ develops us. He tells us not to think according to the world. Don't have the mind of the flesh that brings death. The mind of Spirit brings life.

How can I as a Christian have the mind of flesh that brings death? Whenever you begin to interpret life through a world centered, man centered view of life you start bringing death to your testimony, marriage, family, parenting and everything. You have to learn to think Christianly. What happens when someone dies that's close to you? How do you see it? What happens when you lose a job? How do you see it? What happens in the adversity or prosperity of life? How do you see it? That will determine how ultimately you will respond to it. So we want to have not only our being but our thinking that leads us to our walking.

We have the walk of the family of God as the children of God. For some of you all I have to do is look at the kid and I know who the dad and mom are. They walk just like you. We have the walk of the Father. We have the walk of the Son. It's both a confident walk and a walk of humility because we don't deserve this walk. It is confident and one of contrition both at the same time. So we have a new life that we're living on the way to our destination and a new calling, a vocation. Now where is that calling going to lead us? Let's look back at the text.

Romans 8:12-13 says *[12] So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. [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.* John Owens says this about these two verses. Either you are going to kill sin or it will kill you. You might think differently about this just because you're saved. You can be saved and still get your marriage killed or your testimony or bring death to your family, if you're not walking in the Spirit and putting to death the deeds of the body. You can be forgiven of the penalty of sin, out from under the power of sin but if you let the old man, give the devil an opportunity and begin to think and live wrong, there are consequences in this world. But He is saying with this new power within you, you're now a debtor but this isn't paying back your salvation, it is that you are not your own. You have been

bought with a price therefore I'm not going to live according to the flesh in self-reliance, self-absorption and self-gratification. I want to live according to the Spirit and when you do that you put to death the deeds of the body. Then he goes on.

Romans 8:14–17 says [14] *For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. [15] For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, (the testimony of sin is walking in fear) but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" [16] The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, [17] 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.*

Here He takes us into this new life and tells us how to start it off. You are not your own for you have been bought with a price. You belong to the Lord. You have both sonship and servanthip. Christ owns your body, your soul, your affection, your allegiance and you have given Him everything who gave you everything to save you. You are not paying back for your salvation. You are just loving to serve your Savior. So you are not your own. What does that mean? It means let's go to work for Jesus. Let's start killing sin and killing our sin first. Let's kill the practice of that sin. While you are doing that you're going to be assaulted in this world. So you have the Spirit of God within you and you have been adopted by the King.

Did you notice that nine times in the reading He refers to us with family terms? He uses sons, children, father, Son of God and He repeats them. He is telling you something. You not only have a new heart, a new record, a new life but you have a new family, a new Father, new brothers and sisters. You are now a child of God. More than that, every one of His children are first born. They are all sons. They all are inheritors. You inherit not only eternal life but you inherited a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. You have been forgiven. You have His righteousness that clothes you. He is preparing a home for you and will give it to you when you get there.

You also inherited suffering. It has been granted unto you not only to believe in Him but to suffer for His sake. Why do Christians suffer? The answer will be in the next study but the first answer is that He is getting you ready for heaven. How was Jesus prepared for glory? He learned obedience in His suffering. How are you being prepared for glory? It is through your suffering. The Bible says you've been adopted into the family of God but John says in I John that our adoption is not yet seen. In other words, there are a lot of people walking around that have no idea you have been adopted into the family of God and one day they will and that will be when you get your new body but you already have a new heart. He is making your adoption clearer and clearer as He is transforming you through suffering. That's when you're growing. He is changing you.

These aren't just accidental difficult times. These are things that even when they are the attack of Satan, the sovereign God is using this in our suffering. He is using it to perfect us to glory. The text ended by saying we suffer with Him to glory. We aren't suffering adding to the sufferings of Christ for our redemption. The sufferings we are going through that have been appointed by Christ are transforming us and all the while the Spirit of God is in you. When the sufferings come you cry 'Abba Father!' The Spirit of God bears witness in the midst of the suffering that you are a child of God.

You cry out in the midst of a broken world in suffering, Abba Father! Cry out! It was the same word used of Bartimaeus when he said "Lord have mercy!" It's the same word that is used of Jesus when He said "My God, My God why hast Thou forsaken Me?" It's the same word when He cries out "Father into Thy hands I commend My Spirit." It is used fifty times in

your Bible and almost every single time it is out of distress upon an assured Helper. So when that suffering comes and He is transforming us, cry out.

The world will probably cry out to God when they suffer but usually with a malediction. They may even say "Oh God!" but that is not what we say. We say "Father, I'm at the end of myself but You've said no trial will take me such as not is common to man and with it You'll make a way of escape. I have nowhere to turn, Father!" We are learning this as a nation – republican, democrat. No, no we need to cry out, "Father God, save us!" we will continue to cry out in the midst of a broken world anywhere and everywhere but not the children of God because the Spirit of God dwelling within them cry out in the midst of suffering.

So, here is the takeaway with a little bit of development around it. The sons of God, led by the Spirit of God, are now enlisted, adopted and emancipated. This Spirit of Christ is with you from your new birth to glory, the same One that was with Jesus from birth to glory. You have received the Holy Spirit and you have been enlisted into the army of God and you have been commissioned to go to the battle. We are at war. We are in battle against the devil, the world and the flesh.

I have changed my language because we are in war but this war has been won. On D-Day in WWII when those troops got on top of those cliffs at the beaches of Normandy that battle was won. Hitler, Nazism and tyranny were done but they had to go village by village, head row by head row, town by town all the way to Berlin. Then there was D-Day and D-Day won. V-Day (victory) is consummation of the victory. We are in between D-Day when Jesus won where He defeated sin, death, hell and the grave coming out of the tomb and V-Day when He comes again. In between we are taking the Gospel of the Kingdom and we have an armory – the Word of God. We have an Armorer – the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit out of the Word of God is putting the armor of Christ on us – the breastplate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit, the Gospel shoes that are bringing the Gospel to all the world.

Then He gives us the weapons of the Spirit that are designed to the tearing down of every fortress raised against the obedience of Christ through the Gospel of grace that changes the lives of men and women. He has now sent us into the battle. Satan has been defeated but he has not yet been destroyed. Go and resist him and he'll flee from you. The world stands in its system of rebellion. Go into all the world and preach the Gospel. That old man, the flesh is still within you and there is your first battle. Go to battle against the deeds of the flesh, the indwelling sin that is still within you. Give it no room. Raise the black flag. Grab it by the throat and kill that sin that would kill you. Christ set you free from that sin, its penalty and its power. He has given you the power of the Holy Spirit and all authority from heaven. Now here is your first battle – go kill sin until you get to be with Jesus. Now I am a sworn assassin against my sin.

I have not proved grace by playing lightly with sin. If grace has come upon you then sin becomes that enemy that still is residing and you say to God 'let me kill it.' I'll make no back room deals with sin. I want to kill it and when it comes back give me the sword again so that I can kill it again. That is what I'm asking you to do. I'll be the first one to tell you that when you get converted there are some sins that are gone right then but there are other things that go after a period of time but then there are other things that I have been fighting for forty plus years. But God's grace is sufficient and greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. He is greater than all of our sin. Don't play lightly with sin – that computer screen in a dark room or that secret life or a chat room or surfing a television menu. Call upon the God of glory

and prayer to send resources. Flee temptation. Resist the evil one and kill the sin. The Lord has enlisted you to His army against everything that raises itself up against His glory.

You also have the spirit of adoption. He has adopted you into His family. You are a child of God two ways. Number one you have God's DNA in your new life because you have been born again by the Spirit. God has also adopted you as well. Someone asked me if I had ever heard of this adoption issues called detachment syndrome and I had. I have been on my knees with some of my brothers and sisters here that in their work in adoption with so many children coming out of difficult situations have this issue. So how do we deal with it and minister to these with this issue? Together we deal with this. Yes I believe it because I have it. I have been adopted into the family of God and I still find myself looking back to what I've been taken from.

I'm so grateful for a God who sent His Holy Spirit in me to keep reminding me that where I was taken from is not my family. Here is your Father, your brothers and sisters for the spirit of adoption has been poured out among us and in us and is bearing witness and assuring us. That means He is assuring us that we are the children of God. When does He assure us? It is right in the midst of our suffering. Some probably think why do I keep going back to this Abba Father, crying out in distress, yet you are crying out to the One who will set you free for this is the promise that the Holy Spirit is with you not only on the mountain top of intimacy but in the valley of adversity. The fact that you cry out to God as your Father is the witness you belong to Him and it brings the growing assurance of your redemption.

I want to give you an illustration on this from when I was in the second grade. I lived in North Charlotte and at that age my parents decided it was time for me to learn to walk to school. To help me with this my dad walked with me from the house to the elementary school to show me how to get to the school when I walked. One part we came to was a circle where seven other roads branched off of this circle. I had to make sure I knew when I got to the circle which road to take to get to the school. My dad took the time to show me all the landmarks I needed to look for on my way to the school. The morning came for me to walk to school and about a hundred yards from our house came this sea mist and smoke from a nearby paper mill and you couldn't see your hand in front of your face. I kept walking around that circle not knowing which was the right road to take and three different times I went down the wrong one only to walk back to the circle each time.

Finally as I felt everything closing in on me I cried out "Daddy!" Have you ever noticed that usually when a child gets hurt they call for 'mommy' and when they are afraid they call for 'daddy'? I had just cried out "Daddy" and up came this car as the door flung open and my dad said "son I'm here, everything is okay." Out of distress – water, fire – I'll be with you and the evident is you cry out with the spirit of adoption, "Father, Father!" and He comes. He emancipates you from fear. He sets you free from fear.

Do you know why a lion roars? He roars to make you afraid because if you are afraid you become paralyzed. One of my heroes, that was his maxim. He said 'never take counsel from your fears for whenever you take counsel from your fears what you fear will paralyze you and come upon you. That is what the book of Proverbs says. Proverbs 3:25 says [25] *Do not be afraid of sudden terror or of the ruin of the wicked, when it comes.* Your fears will come upon you. We don't live in fear for we banish all fear. There is only one fear that we're allowed and it's a glorious fear. It is a fear that is the beginning of wisdom and brings liberation and carefulness in the Christian life. It's called the fear of the Lord. After that, that Lord is within you. Perfect love casts out all fear. So the opposite of fear is the love of Christ, not courage.

He has not only enlisted you in the army of God by the Spirit of God and led you into His army, He has adopted you into His family and has now led you into His love that casts out all fear. Why does Satan want to make you fearful? Why does Satan come against you? One is that he doesn't know if you're a believer or not so here is the test. Number two is that he would like to rob you of your joy. Number three he would like to rob you of your testimony, witness and ministry. So he comes and when he comes you call upon the Lord. The Lord will not only assure you but the Spirit of God by which you cry out will emancipate you from fear – fear of death, punishment and the fear of everything. That is where we are headed in Romans 8.

Satan comes to oppress you. When Satan comes to an opposition the Spirit of God causes you to look unto Christ and you will not fear though you be surrounded and though they mount up against you, you will not be fearful for if God be for us who can be against us. When Satan brings condemnation the Spirit of God sends you to Christ and you say “there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” Where is my condemnation? Christ has died for me. When Satan brings accusations what do you say? Romans 8:33 says [33] *Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.* When he tries isolation what do you say? The Spirit of God sets you free because you know nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:1–17 is telling you that when God saved you by the power of the Holy Spirit He did an extreme takeover. This is my closest to TV reality. When you are converted He does an extreme takeover and then He comes and lives within you. When He does that He does an extreme makeover. It's interesting that the Holy Spirit abides in you and He's a homemaker. I utterly hate the term 'housewife.' A woman is not a housewife. You are your husband's wife and he is your husband. The wife is the helper completer. Jesus said 'I am your Helper and I will send you another Helper.' That is the same name given to the woman in Genesis. This other Helper will be with you and abide in you. He is not just adopting you to take you home, He first adopts you and makes you His home. You are His home and wherever you go He is there. The Holy Spirit is the Homemaker and He is the Home taker. He has made you His home and will take you to the home that Jesus has gone to prepare a place for you.

There is an extreme takeover and an extreme makeover. What has sin ever done for us except an exhilarating moment for it only brings death. He takes you from the shanty of sin to the palace of grace and He by grace makes you that palace. Let the Holy Spirit speak to you. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, we have many concerns but by God's grace we would be anxious for nothing and perfect love casts out all fear. Holy Spirit You abide in us. You have taken us from sin to the Savior, now make us more like our Savior as You take us to the final home to be with our Savior but until then make us Your home. We welcome You, in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Power Point

- The necessity of the Spirit of God in you and leading you.
- As a Christian I am not alone, I am never alone and I will never be alone; therefore I will not, I must not live as if I am “on my own.”

- The Spirit of God sent by the Father to lead Christ, has been sent by Christ to lead you by grace to glory.

- To be led by the Spirit of God is not only a triumphant declaration of our new destination, but is also a celebration of our new vocation.

LIFE TAKEAWAY

The Sons of God, led by the Spirit of God, are now enlisted, adopted and emancipated.