

### 23. Learning the Importance of Being the Children of God

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that at the moment they placed their faith in Christ, they were set free from the condemnation of sin. We saw, instead, that they are now under the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. We began to see some of the differences that have happened in each of our lives since we have placed our faith in Christ. Today, we will learn about some additional changes that have happened in our lives because we are now under the law of the Spirit of life.

Romans 8:10-11 says, “And if Christ *is* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin, but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.” At the moment that we placed our faith in Christ, He placed the Holy Spirit in our lives. The Holy Spirit gave spiritual life to our human spirit. Ephesians 2:5 says, “Even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).” Here, we see that in addition to the Holy Spirit, Christ also lives in our lives. Galatians 2:20 says, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” As a result, we now have spiritual life and a desire to please God.

Acts 2:24 tells us that the Father raised Christ from the dead. Here, we see that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God and that Spirit dwells in us. The Father who raised Christ from the dead is also the One who has given life to our mortal bodies. A mortal body is a body that will die. Here, we see that even this physical body that will die has been given spiritual life because of the fact that His Spirit (the Holy Spirit) dwells in us. That is why 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 tells us, “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.”

In the Old Testament, the Jews had a building called the temple in the city of Jerusalem. In contrast, we see that today our physical bodies are the temple of God. That means that every place we go, the temple of God is present. We want to help our children understand this important fact, because their bodies are also the temple of God. That means that everywhere we and our children go, we are representing God to the world by the things that we say and do. That is why 2 Corinthians 5:20 says, “Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.” We want to help our children fully understand the great privilege that we have been given to be ambassadors for Christ. We have been given the privilege to speak for God and beg others on the behalf of Christ to be reconciled to God. What an awesome privilege to speak for the Creator of the universe.

Romans 8:12-13 goes on to say, “Therefore, brethren, we are debtors--not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 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 fact that God has given us life means that we have a debt. However, that debt is not to the sinful desires of the flesh. That is why we no

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longer need to live according to the flesh because the sinful desires of the flesh no longer control our lives. We saw in a previous topic that when we live according to the flesh as a Christian, we experience great misery and feelings of failure. Romans 7:24 says, “O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” We see that a Christian living in sin is very miserable and experiences a mental and emotional death (feelings of total failure).

That is why these verses encourage us by the Spirit to put to death the deeds of the body. This is a moment by moment process that will continue for the rest of our physical life. Each time that we are tempted we have a choice. We can choose to sin. When we make this choice, we feel fear, guilt or shame. In contrast, we can choose to yield to God and be obedient to Him. He then gives us His strength to be obedient. When we make that choice, we experience inner peace. Philippians 4:7 says, “And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Then, Philippians 4:9 promises us, “The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.” This peace that God gives us as we are obedient to Him is beyond human understanding.

We also read about another of the things that God does for us as we choose to yield to the Holy Spirit and let Him lead us. Romans 8:14-15 says, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father.’” Sin drives us because sin produces fear, guilt and shame. In contrast, the Holy Spirit leads us in our lives. Galatians 5:18 says, “But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.” The Holy Spirit leads us through the Word of God as He helps us to understand it. 1 Corinthians 2:14-16 says, “But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is *rightly* judged by no one. For ‘who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?’ But we have the mind of Christ.” The Holy Spirit helps us to understand the Word of God and then gives us His strength so that we can be obedient to that Word.

When Adam sinned, he received the spirit of bondage. Genesis 3:10 says, “So he said, ‘I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.’” As soon as Adam sinned, this verse says that he was immediately controlled by fear, guilt and shame. At the moment of salvation, we see that we received the Spirit of adoption. The word “Abba” means Father or Daddy. As a result, instead of being afraid of God and hiding from Him, we can now come boldly to God as we would to a loving father because we come to God through Christ. Hebrews 4:15-16 says, “For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” Because we are the children of God, He invites us to come boldly into His presence and enjoy fellowship with Him.

In fact, Romans 8:16-17 promises us, “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together.” We see here that once we place our faith

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in Christ, the Holy Spirit joins together with our human spirit to assure us that we are the children of God. Before we became Christians, we read in Romans 2:15, “Who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves *their* thoughts accusing or else excusing *them*.” God used our conscience to convict us of our sin. In contrast, after we become Christians, Paul said in Romans 9:1, “I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit.” Here, we see that the Holy Spirit bears witness with our conscience. As we see here in Romans 8, one of the things that the Holy Spirit bears witness with our human spirit is that we are the children of God.

The fact that we know that we are the children of God also includes several benefits. The first benefit that we have is that we become the heir of God. An heir is a person who has received an allotted inheritance because they are a child of a certain person. Here, we see that as a child of God, every Christian will receive an inheritance. Titus 3:7 says, “That having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” In this verse, we see that one part of that inheritance is the fact that we have been promised eternal life.

In addition to being heirs of God, we also read that we are joint heirs with Christ. The book of Hebrews begins in Hebrews 1:1-2 by saying, “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by *His* Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds.” In this verse, we see that the Father has appointed Christ as the heir of all things. Since we are joint heirs with Christ, that means we will share all things with Him. This means that we will receive a full inheritance.

Since we are joint heirs with Christ, as Christians that means we will also have the privilege of sharing some of His sufferings. In Acts 5:41-42, we read, “So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus *as* the Christ.” Here, we see that it is a privilege to be counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ. To be counted worthy by Christ to share in His sufferings means that we are very special to Him.

However, just as we share in His sufferings on this earth, we can also look forward to the day when we will share His glory for all eternity. This is also a great privilege because we are glorified together with Christ. As we help our physical and spiritual children understand the importance of being the children of God, we see that relationship means that we will enjoy both blessings in this present life and then for all eternity. Those eternal blessings will never come to an end because of the fact that we are joint heirs with Christ and will share them for all eternity. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand the importance of being the children of God.