

Romans

I. The Role of the Believer

A. Romans 8:12-18 . . . So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— [13] for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. [14] For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. [15] For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" [16] The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, [17] and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him. [18] For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

B. Prayer

II. The response of the Believer to the role of the Holy Spirit

A. As you may recall in our study of Romans 2, one of the things Paul was explaining was who God justifies, who He credits with righteousness, and to whom He gives the gift of eternal life.

1. Here in Romans 8:13, Paul addresses that same issue when he says, "If you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live."
2. And the important truth that Paul is affirming is that saving faith and sanctifying faith are one and the same faith. In other words, those who are saved by faith continue to exercise their saving faith in putting to death the deeds of the flesh and putting on the deeds of righteousness. And conversely, those who are sanctified by faith are saved by that very same faith.
3. Therefore, one of the dependable proofs that we have exercised saving faith in the redeeming work of Jesus Christ is putting to death the deeds of the flesh by the power and assistance of the Holy Spirit.
4. From here, Paul goes on to present a second proof of being justified by faith or as we say, saved by faith –

B. Romans 8:14 . . . For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

1. The question we must ask is, “What does it mean to be led by the Spirit of God, because that is another proof we are sons of God? In answering this question we will look no further than Romans 8:1-13.
 - a. Romans 8:4 says that being led by the Spirit of God results in living a life that fulfills the requirement of the Law.
 - b. Romans 8:5 says that being led by the Spirit of God results in setting our mind on the things of the Spirit.
 - c. And Romans 8:13 says that being led by the Spirit of God results in putting to death the sinful deeds of the body.
 - d. Therefore, we know we are being led by the Spirit of God if we are obviously and measurably turning away from sin and pursuing holiness in all our behavior.
 2. The second thing to see in vs 14 is that Paul shifts from using the “master/slave” imagery to using a father/son imagery. And I am pointing out this switch because it is important for us to see is that in both cases the selected imagery is used to make a point.
 - a. In Romans 6, he uses the master/slave imagery to show the power sin has over us while we are living in sin, and then to show the necessity of obedience to God and His standard of righteousness for living a godly life after coming to faith in Christ.
 - b. Here in Romans 8, Paul uses the father/son imagery to show that God is our Father and we are His children in order to reinforce the truth that we are completely secure and perfectly safe in His hands – regardless of the circumstances.
 - c. And why is Paul bringing this truth into focus here in vs 14? Because he is beginning to talk about the fact that we cannot be led by the Spirit of God into godly living without encountering suffering. And to confirm this truth, he ends this section with these well known words: “For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
- C. Romans 8:15 . . . For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"
1. In referring to *a spirit of slavery that leads to fear again*, Paul is not talking about our slavery to God, but rather our pre-repentance and faith in Christ’s redeeming work slavery to sin. And the fear he is

- speaking of is the fear of God's wrath and condemnation that will come upon all who are serving sin.
2. What Paul is doing here is using our old master, sin – whose sole purpose is to destroy us – to create a contrast that emphasizes the goodness and loving kindness of our new master, God.
 - a. And the contrast is even greater than that between two masters, because our new master is also our loving father – a loving father who teaches and cares for and disciplines us for our good and the good of everyone else whose lives we effect.
 - b. Therefore, in contrast to the fear of condemnation we felt when serving sin, we can now feel perfectly safe and completely secure because we the children of our heavenly Father.
 3. Which raises the question, how did we go from rebels and enemies deserving damnation to children of God who are completely and perfectly safe in His hands? And though I suspect you already know the answer, let me remind you again.
 - a. Paul put it this way in Romans 5:8-10 . . . But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. [9] Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. [10] For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.
 - b. And in Ephesians 1:4b-6, Paul says, "In love [5] He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, [6] to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.
 4. Returning to Romans 8:15, Paul concludes with these words, "You have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"
 - a. To help us see the significance of Paul's use of "Abba! Father!" and especially in relation to suffering as a Christian, I want to show you where Paul is going. In vs 16-17, he says, "The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, [17] and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, IF INDEED we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him." Now with those two verses in mind, let's look at the two words "Abba! Father! And there are three points I want to make.

- b. First, “Abba, Father” is the use of two words to say a similar thing. Both words mean “father,” though “Abba” seems to express a more intimate sense of endearment and trust. The picture the combination of these two words portrays is that of a child in distress raising his voice and reaching out his arms for his father to pick him up and make him feel safe from whatever is threatening his sense of well-being.
- c. Second, this two word combination is used only three times in scripture, here and in Mark 14:36, and in Galatians 4:6. And Jesus use of these words is their first recorded use.
 - (1) Jesus used them in Gethsemane when He was crying out to His Father while pondering the suffering that lay before Him – suffering that included incredible injustice, severe physical pain, and being forsaken by God.
 - (2) This story is told in Mark 14:32-36 . . . They came to a place named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, "Sit here until I have prayed." [33] And He took with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be very distressed and troubled. [34] And He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved to the point of death; remain here and keep watch." [35] And He went a little beyond them, and fell to the ground and began to pray that if it were possible, the hour might pass Him by. [36] And He was saying, "Abba! Father! All things are possible for You; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what You will."
 - (3) And it is this example of crying out to God in times of great distress over impending suffering or while enduring such suffering that Paul sets before us. And the truth we can cling to and depend on is that as children of God, we are safe in His hands, and when we feel distressed, we can cry out to Him like any child cries out to his father.

D. Romans 8:16-18 . . . The Spirit Himself testifies (*says the same thing*) with our spirit that we are children of God (*because we have been adopted into God's family*), [17] and if children, heirs also (*a legal and therefore undeniable inheritor*), heirs of God (*He is the Father*) and fellow heirs with Christ (*He is God's first born son by birth, we follow by adoption*), if indeed we suffer with Him (*a condition for remaining a legal heir*) so that we may also be glorified with Him.

1. Paul presents here a qualifying mark or condition for being glorified with Christ. And I suspect that we understand that to be glorified with Christ we must first be born again, we must be justified, we must be God's child. Therefore, this qualifying mark of willingly and purposefully suffering with Christ is not in addition to being born again, but the natural result and therefore normal proof of being born again.
 - a. As Paul affirms that this is that natural result of repentance and faith in Jesus when he says in 2 Timothy 3:12, "All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."
 - b. And Jesus said in John 15:20, "Remember what I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also."
 - c. Paul speaks about his personal experiences of suffering with Christ and for Christ in 2 Corinthians 4:7-11, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; [8] we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; [9] persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; [10] always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. [11] For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh."
 - d. And Paul taught his disciples that they too would suffer as a Christian. Luke records just such a teaching in Acts 14:21-22, "After [Paul and Barnabas] had preached the gospel to that city [Derbe] and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, [22] strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."
2. So why is suffering with Christ a qualifying mark or condition for being glorified with Him?
 - a. Because we verify that we have repented and come to faith in the redeeming work of Jesus when we suffer on His behalf to grow spiritually ourselves, and to build His kingdom, and to declare His truth, and to call unbelievers to repentance and faith in Him.

- b. If we are unwilling to suffer with Christ and for Christ, we verify we are only using Christ for our own selfish ends rather than submitting to Him and serving Him for His ends. And when we use Him, we are just like the 5000 who returned in hopes of getting more free food.
 3. Paul makes it clear we are to suffer with Christ, or together with Christ. We are not called to suffer for the sake of suffering. And suffering alone is not the natural outcome of becoming part of the Body of Christ. We suffer with Christ!
- E. What does it mean to suffer with Christ? To answer this question we will look at the sufferings of Christ, and as we do, I urge you to consider how you are doing at willingly and deliberately following Him into situations where you suffer like Him.
1. The sufferings of Christ and how they apply to us.
 - a. Jesus suffered by going from being God to a human being, and from being the Master to a servant, and from making all the decisions to following orders. This is the suffering of humility and humble service.
 - b. Jesus suffered by being repeatedly tempted by the devil.
 - c. Jesus suffered by living with minimal physical and material possessions that, if He had more, could have provided a significant measure of earthly comfort and convenience.
 - d. Jesus suffered by having to live and work with the foolishness, immaturity, and pride of his disciples. This is the suffering of a leader who calls and leads his followers rather than drives and tries to control them.
 - e. Jesus suffered the pain of being used for selfish ends – by those who came only for the food or to watch more miracles.
 - f. Jesus suffered rejection – from those who came to listen to His teaching, from intentional followers, and from family members.
 - g. Jesus suffered being misunderstood and misrepresented – by those challenging His teaching and His claim to be the son of God.
 - h. Jesus was tested by trapping questions designed to make Him look bad or get in trouble with the authorities.
 - i. Jesus suffered hostility – often driven by the envy of Jewish religious leaders.
 - j. Jesus suffered abandonment – by disciples on the night He was betrayed.

- k. Jesus suffered gross injustice – especially before the Jewish leaders / Pilot / Herod.
 - l. Jesus suffered being falsely accused – not only in the hours leading up to the crucifixion, but also during His three years of ministry.
 - m. And finally, Jesus suffered death. He gave up His life for God’s sake, and for your sake, and for my sake. He died for us.
2. The results of the suffering of Christ points to the results of suffering with Christ.
- a. Suffering with Christ is educational.
 - (1) Jesus learned how difficult it is to obey when the cost of obedience is suffering. It was this lesson that contributed to His being a compassionate High Priest who sympathizes with the weaknesses of His followers.
 - (2) Suffering with Christ teaches us much about the sin and selfishness still within us. Enduring such suffering teaches us about the faithfulness of godliness, patience, perseverance, reliance on the Holy Spirit, the power and wisdom of prayer, how to overcome evil and injustice with good, and how to love our enemies and those who mistreat us. And such suffering builds and strengthens what faith we have.
 - b. Suffering with Christ fulfills God’s will on earth as it is in heaven. You will not suffer for doing the will of the world, for that is what impresses them. But if you do the will of God, you will certainly please God, but the world will not be impressed, and their unhappiness with you is often a cause for suffering.
 - c. Suffering with Christ is a sure way to be salt and light in a sin darkened world. Surely good deeds, compassion toward the needy, and acts of love are all worthy expressions of Christianity, and are not to be neglected. However, suffering for Christ, which means we are suffering for righteousness sake, sets us apart from everyone else in a way that greatly magnifies the saltiness and light of a godly life.
 - d. And finally, suffering with Christ significantly contributes to God’s plan of bringing truth, salvation, and hope to the lost and perishing.

III. Conclusion

- A. May we, with Paul, consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.