

ARE YOU A CHILD OF GOD?

TEXT: ROMANS 8:14-17

INTRODUCTION:

1. I have entitled this morning's message, "Are you a child of God?" and my text is Romans 8:16.
2. In Romans 8:16, the King James Version says, "the Spirit itself," whereas most modern translations say, "the Spirit Himself."
3. This is because the Greek word "spirit" (*pneuma*) is neuter in gender. According to the rules of Greek grammar, the personal pronoun must agree with its antecedent in gender, therefore, the translation "itself" is correct grammatically.
4. But since the Holy Spirit is a Person, the pronoun "Himself" is correct theologically.
5. I want to speak this morning on this important subject: "Are you a child of God?"
6. There are many people who go through life without ever knowing the answer to this question.
7. And there are many people who go through life very confused over this question. For example, because we have all been created by God, they believe that we must all be God's children.
8. When Paul was preaching on Mars Hill in Athens, he said, "For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device" (Acts 17:28, 29).
9. But while we are all children of God by creation, the Bible says that we need to become children of God by regeneration. Jesus said, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (John 3:7).
10. It is possible for a person to be lost and yet think that he is a child of God.
11. And it is possible to be a Christian and yet not have assurance of salvation.

I. WE CAN KNOW BY THE WORD OF GOD

1. The Word of God gives us assurance that we are children of God (cf. I John 5:12, 13; John 1:12; 3:16).

2. I heard about a liberal minister who taught that we were all God's children. He himself was not born again, and he did not believe a person needed to be born again to be saved.
3. One morning he preached a sermon entitled, "For ye are all the children of God" (Galatians 3:26a).
4. He went on to say that people are basically good and decent, and that we are all God's children, and we are all going to heaven, etc.
5. However, he deliberately left out the rest of that verse. Galatians 3:26 says, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."
6. "Faith in Christ Jesus" is essential. Hebrews 11:6 says, "But without faith it is impossible to please" God.
7. The Bible teaches that those who do not have faith in Christ are not children of God. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).
8. John 3:36 says, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."
9. If the wrath of God abides on you, you are not a child of God.
10. In order to become a child of God, one has to be born again (John 3:3-8).
11. The new birth is described in James 1:18 – "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." "Begot" refers to the new birth; and "the word of truth" refers to the Bible, the Word of God.
12. Ephesians 1:13 says, ye trusted the Lord, "after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation."
13. First Peter 1:23 says, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever."
14. Those of us who are saved know that we are children of God because the Bible gives us assurance that we are born again.

The Bible says that we have "passed from death unto life" (John 5:24; I John 3:14).

II. WE CAN KNOW BY THE WORK OF CHRIST

1. When we speak of the work of Christ, we are referring to His work on the cross – "It is Christ that died" (Romans 8:34).
2. "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures" (I Cor. 15:3).
3. "Yea rather, that is risen again..." (8:34).

4. “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Romans 10:13).
5. This is the only way to become a child of God.
6. Romans 6:23 says, “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”
7. Have you received this free gift of salvation?
8. Ephesians 2:8, 9 says, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”
9. Romans 5:1 says, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
10. Do you have peace with God?

III. WE CAN KNOW BY THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT (8:14-16).

1. Referring to Romans 8:16, John Wesley said “By the testimony of the Spirit, I mean an inward impression of the soul, whereby the Spirit of God immediately and directly witnesses to my spirit that I am a child of God; that Jesus hath loved me, and given Himself for me; that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God.”
2. Do you have this witness of the Spirit (8:16)?
3. Are you being led by the Spirit? (8:14)
4. Spurgeon said that they who are the sons of God, are not those who just say they are the sons of God, “but those who undoubtedly prove that they are by being led, influenced, gently guided by the Spirit of God.”
5. A good illustration of being led by the Spirit of God is the story of the children of Israel in the wilderness. They were led by a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night. When the cloud moved, they moved. When the cloud stopped, they stopped and they set up camp (Numbers 9:15-23).
6. The pillar of cloud was the visible representation of the invisible God.
7. The pillar of cloud by day, and pillar of fire by night is a beautiful picture of the Holy Spirit.
8. Numbers 12:5 says, “And the LORD came down in the pillar of the cloud.”
9. Deuteronomy 31:15 says, “And the LORD appeared in the tabernacle in a pillar of a cloud.”
10. Romans 8:14 says, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” The Holy Spirit leads Spirit-filled believers.

11. Just as the pillar of cloud led the Israelites through the wilderness, the Holy Spirit directs those that are submissive to His will.
12. A.T. Pierson said, “The meek soul simply and humbly waits, and *watches the moving of the Pillar.*”
13. But in order to have the indwelling Holy Spirit, a person first has to be saved (cf. Romans 8:8, 9).

CONCLUSION:

1. The other day I read a story in the newspaper about a 24-year-old man who was arrested on Staten Island. What made this story a little unusual is that this young man is a so-called “trust-fund kid” from a very wealthy and influential family, filled with bankers, lawyers, politicians, and a federal judge.
2. His great-grandmother was Dorothy Schiff, who used to own the *New York Post*. Dorothy Schiff’s grandfather was the legendary financier Jacob Schiff.
3. The young criminal’s mother is a former Brooklyn prosecutor, now a top lawyer for a big insurance company. The article says she supposedly owns half of Times Square.
4. His father is also a former Brooklyn prosecutor, and is now a criminal defense lawyer. The father told police that he “basically washed his hands” of his son years ago, and he no longer wants anything to do with him.
5. His grandmother is married to a Manhattan federal judge.
6. His grandfather was a mayor of Beverly Hills.
7. This young criminal, Patrick Allen, was shot three times by cops on Staten Island on Thursday night after he and a friend were shooting off their guns in a wooded area in Staten Island.
8. Neighbors called 911, and when police officers arrived, Patrick Allen pointed a pistol at them and they opened fire, hitting him three times in the left leg, and once in the left arm.
9. Cops later discovered he was wearing a bullet-proof vest that may have stopped another round.
10. Allen, who has eight sealed arrests for crimes including drug peddling, is suspected of regularly buying marijuana in Colorado and shipping it back to New York for resale.
11. Following Allen’s shooting, cops seized a Glock pistol he allegedly was carrying, and they also found a rifle outfitted with a scope and sniper’s

bipod, a .38 Smith & Wesson revolver, a .45-caliber pistol, a large hunting knife, some prescription pills and several spent shell casings.

12. Now for a nice contrast...
13. Referring to Romans 8:14-17, J.C. Ryle said, "The people of whom Paul speaks in these verses are the richest people upon earth. It must needs be so. They are called "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."
14. "The inheritance of these people is the only inheritance really worth having."
15. "All others are unsatisfying and disappointing. They bring with them many cares. They cannot cure an aching heart, or lighten a heavy conscience. They cannot keep off family troubles. They cannot prevent sicknesses, bereavements, separations, and deaths. But there is no disappointment among the 'heirs of God.'"
16. "The inheritance I speak of is the only inheritance which can be kept forever. All others must be left in the hour of death, if they have not been taken away before. The owners of millions can carry nothing with them beyond the grave. But it is not so with the 'heirs of God.' Their inheritance is eternal."
17. "The inheritance I speak of is the only inheritance which is within everybody's reach. Most men can never obtain riches and greatness, though they labor hard for them all their lives. But glory, honor, and eternal life, are offered to every man freely, who is willing to accept them on God's terms. "
18. 'Whoever will' may be an 'heir of God, and joint heir with Christ.'"
19. "If any reader of this paper wishes to have a portion of this inheritance, let him know that he must be a member of that one family on earth to which it belongs, and that is the family of all true Christians. You must become one of God's children on earth -- if you desire to have glory in Heaven. I write this paper in order to persuade you to become a child of God this day, if you are not one already. I write it to persuade you to make sure work that you are one, if at present you have only a vague hope, and nothing more. None but true Christians are the children of God! None but the children of God are heirs of God!"