

Pt 22 Romans 8:12-17, Children of God

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Romans 8:12-17

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together.

We pick back up in our studies in Romans where we left off 3-weeks ago. Our last study we looked at the first 11 verses which assures us that there is no longer any condemnation for those who are in Christ. In other words, those that are truly saved have zero reason to worry about having to pay for their sins. Our sins can no longer condemn us to punishment and hell.

Today we look at the next 6-verses which also brings us great news – the fact that those who are saved are also made children of God, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. We will talk about that more here in just a few minutes but first let's look at verses 12-13:

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

Once again, Paul uses that familiar term “**therefore**,” meaning, “because of what I just said.” And that was, of course, “**there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.**” He also spent quite a bit of time differentiating between the flesh and the Spirit, which he does again here in these verses.

Paul says, “**we are debtors.**” I think we all know what that means “**one who owes another.**” Unless you are just filthy rich then you have been or are currently now a debtor to someone. Most people have to go in debt to purchase a home. We remain a debtor to the bank for 25, 30, or 35 years. We bought our little house 26-years ago, back in 1995. We are still paying on it, so we are in debt to U.S. Bank for another 10-years. I look forward to when that debt is fully paid.

The same with most people's automobiles. Unless you want to drive around in a junker all the time and break down every time you go somewhere, you go in debt for a vehicle. These days, you can go in debt up to 8-years on a new vehicle loan.

But Paul is not speaking of our earthly debt. In fact, he says we are **NOT debtors to the flesh**; meaning our mortal, sinful bodies. If we were debtors to our flesh, just as he says, “**ye shall die.**” Because we all know sin brings forth death. A person who dies in their sin, dies a debtor to the flesh. The only way to pay that debt is by going to hell and suffering eternally – the problem with that is, you will never pay off your sin debt. It is a never-ending debt because no one can afford the payment. You could actually call Hell a debtor's prison with a life sentence with 100% interest rate.

But we who ARE saved are NOT debtors to the flesh. Someone has already paid our sin debt. That Someone is the Lord Jesus. Jesus paid our sin debt when he hung on the cross at Calvary. He was the final atoning sacrifice for sin. It please God the Father.

We see that in **Isaiah 53:10-11** Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. 11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

When it says, “it pleased the LORD to bruise him,” does mean it made God happy to sacrifice His own Son, no, it means it **pleased his anger and wrath toward sin.**

You see, sin angers God. He hates sin **and the sinner who sins.** People do not like to hear that. Instead, we hear the old Christian cliché’ “**Hate the sin but love the sinner.**”

I want to say something to you and want you to hear me. It is little fluffy sayings like this that have weakened the Gospel of Jesus Christ. People no longer feel responsible for their sins. They blame society, their parents, their peers, the doctor, the lawyer, the psychiatrists, you name it, they blame their sin on everyone but themselves.

So, the thought is, we are supposed to only hate the sin and not the individual sinner. Well, let's be clear about something. While God is a loving and merciful God, he's long suffering, and He sent His Son Jesus to die for us – I want you to know that the Bible is very clear that God's wrath and anger is directed toward the individual sinner:

Don't just take my word for it, let's see what the Bible says: **Psalms 5:4-6** For thou *art* not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. 5 The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest **all workers** of iniquity. 6 Thou shalt destroy **them** that speak leasing: the LORD will abhor the bloody and deceitful man.

- Who or what did the Bible just say that **God hatest**? “**all workers of iniquity.**”
- Who or what did the Bible just say **will be destroyed**? “**them that speak leasing.**” (that means liars, in other words sinners)

Over and over and over in the Bible you will find God's wrath is upon **the sinner.**

You may say, “well preacher, that was in the Old Testament.” Well, how about we see what the Bible says in the New Testament? **John 3:36** 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.

- Who or what does the wrath of God abide upon? “**him that believeth not.**” The individual sinner.

You cannot separate the sin from the sinner. Sin does not sin by itself; it requires a vessel to sin. We sin because of our fallen sin nature that we inherited from Adam, but we sin because we are in rebellion against God and God hates that.

We have taken the responsibility of sin off the sinner. We've tried to give them some reprieve from their wickedness. We don't want to upset anyone or make anyone mad.

And we wonder why the Church has lost its power these days? It's because we have diminished the Word of God. **Romans 3:4** God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

So, before we go around pronouncing these little cutesy Christian clichés we better make sure it lines up with the Bible.

I am glad that I do not have to worry about God's wrath on me as a sinner because through the atoning sacrifice of Christ, my sin debt has been paid.

Back to our text in the last part of verse 13b ...but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

Notice the usage of the **capital S** in the word **Spirit** here. That indicates the Holy Spirit, not man's spirit, but God's Spirit. You see, the saved person has the active working of the Holy Spirit in their lives. It is the Spirit that "**mortifies the deeds of the body.**" The word "**mortify**" means "**to be put to death.**" It is a continual process that happens in us and will continue to happen in us all the days of our earthly life.

Because we are still earthy and fleshly, we will have to continue having the deeds of our mortal body put to death by the Spirit. If you are not going through a continual mortification of your sin, then there is a good chance you have never been saved. A saved person should be going through a continual sanctification. We will never be perfect or sinless as long as we are here on earth, but we should be getting better.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

As a born-again child of God, we should be **led by the Spirit** and not our flesh. Our flesh will draw us and tempt us, and we will give into our flesh on occasion, but our flesh should not be what leads us or be our master. Saved people are **led by the Spirit of God**. This means in those times that our flesh does draw us, there should also be a very real and clear prompting of the Holy Spirit that what you are doing is sinful.

If that is you today then you can claim the title of a "**son of God, or child of God.**" Not everyone is a son, daughter or child of God. You hear all your life "well, we are all just God's children." That is another one of those little cutesy Christian clichés' that needs to die a quick and painful death. NOT EVERYONE IS A CHILD OF GOD. If you are unsaved, you are a child of Satan. You are a child of Hell. That's what Jesus calls unsaved people. How do I know that? By reading the Bible.

Listen to what Jesus told the Pharisees:

John 8:39-47

39 They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.

40 But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham.

41 Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.

42 Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

43 Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word.

44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

45 And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.

46 Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?

47 He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.

Later on, Jesus is speaking to the Pharisees again in that Woe chapter and listen to what he says to them: **Matthew 23:15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.**

The Pharisees were not saved, they were religionists. Jesus says that they go about making proselytes (which means someone who converts to a religion, in this case turning a Gentile into a Jew or converting to Judaism) and when they do, they **make him twofold more the child of hell**. Meaning, they were already bound for hell but after claiming Judaism they are twice as likely to go there.

So, no, everyone is not a child of God. But saved people, who are **led by the Spirit of God, they are sons of God**.

15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

Because of sin, lost people have the spirit of bondage to fear. The natural man fears death and is a slave to it. The Hebrew write says it like this: **Hebrews 2:14-15 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.**

But the saved person does not have the spirit of bondage to fear because the Lord Jesus has taken that away. Our text says: **but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.**

Paul uses this same terminology and reasoning in his letter to the Galatians: **Galatians 4:6-7 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. 7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.**

We do not fear death because we are sons of God. We can come before him without fear and cry out to him as we would our earthly father. That phrase "**Abba Father,**" is much like our own way of saying "**daddy, or papa.**" I called my father "dad" because I was his son. We had a father son relationship. Since God made us His children (sons and daughters) we can cry out to him with that same spirit of relationship because we belong to him.

We belong to God and are His children because he adopted us. The word **adopt** means: "**To choose to legally take another person's child into your own family and take care of him or her as your own child.**"

We were not forced upon God to be his children. We are not his "step-children." We have 100% full rights to God as our Father. Also, this wasn't a spur of the moment decision by God just to keep us from going to hell. He planned our adoption before he created this world:

Ephesians 1:3-6 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

That word "**predestinated**" means "**to determine beforehand.**"

I'm glad we weren't just some last-minute decision or pity case. God purposely determined He was going to make us his children and give us full inheritance to everything.

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:
17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together.

These two verses are some of the most glorious in all the Bible where the believer is concerned. Because God has made us His children, His Spirit bears witness with our spirit to reveal to us that we belong to him. He makes that father/son or father/daughter relationship real to the believer.

Look at what we gain because of this relationship: we become **heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ**.

You know what an heir is right? It means we become legal owners of the things of God.

Not only that, but we also become joint-heirs or co-heirs with Christ. The benefits of being a joint-heir with Christ are not just in this world but are out of this world!

The Bible tells us in **Hebrews 1:1-2** God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, **whom he hath appointed heir of all things**, by whom also he made the worlds;

If Jesus is heir of ALL things, then that makes us also heirs of ALL things.

But, one of the greatest things about his inheritance that we receive – just like anyone who is an heir – they didn't have to do anything to earn being an heir. It is simply bestowed upon them. The same with being an heir and joint-heirs with Christ. We do not have to work to receive it. It is bestowed upon us by grace through faith. By believing in Jesus, we become the beneficiaries of all that He has.

Isn't it wonderful to be a Child of God?
Isn't it wonderful to be an heir of God?
Isn't it wonderful to be a joint-heir with Christ?