

Romans 8:12-25

Good morning and thank you for joining us. You have lots of choices of places in which to fellowship, and we're grateful you're here with us. Would you please turn in your bibles to Romans 8?

We're continuing our verse-by-verse study through this incredible book, and you remember that we're not running through Romans, or racing through Romans, rather we're reasoning through Romans. Last week we ended our study in verse 11, and we spent a lot of time talking about the freedom we have in Christ through the Holy Spirit.

This morning we'll continue to see what the Bible has to say about us living in the flesh vs living in the spirit, and then we'll move into one of the most powerful sections in my opinion of the Bible, as the focus shifts to our suffering, which we'll spend the next couple of weeks studying.

We're going to pick up our study in verse 12 and go through verse 25, and the title of this morning's message is COUNTED WORTHY

Let's pray.

12 Therefore, (because of everything we've discussed the last 2 weeks in Romans 8) brethren, 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. The book of Romans has declared numerous times to us that even though we have died with Christ, we still have a sin nature. And we must make a constant choice—to walk according to our flesh or according to the spirit.

The Bible constantly reminds us that living after the flesh ends in death. We need this reminder because we are often deceived into thinking that following our fleshly desires is the best route take.

Gods desire is that we walk in the Spirit. **1 Peter 1 13 Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 14 as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; 15 but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."**^[fn]

Later on we'll see Paul's exhortation to us in **Romans 13:14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.**

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. Just as the Spirit of God gives us victory over the flesh, the Spirit of God will also lead us in life. Aren't you so glad we don't have to navigate this crazy world on our own?

SHOW PITON PIC Several years ago Kim and I got to travel to St Lucia for our 10 year wedding anniversary. Thank you Costco travel!

One of the highlights of the trip was hiking the Gros Piton mountain. It was physically challenging, but we had a guide who led us the entire way both up and down the mountain. Without that guide leading us, we never would've reached the summit

CLOSE PIC

And for every Christian, the Holy Spirit acts as our guide by showing us the way to go, like a guide goes before hikers on a pathway blazing a safe trail for them.

But you know that just as with hikers, Christians don't have to follow our Guide. We can go a different way from that which the HS is leading us, taking a much more complicated and dangerous path.

Lets read verse 14 one more time

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. Please notice with me that verse 14 doesn't say:

"As many as go to church, these are the sons of God." It doesn't say, "As many as read their Bibles, these are the sons of God."

It doesn't even say, "As many as take communion, these are the sons of God."

In this text, the test for sonship is whether or not a person is led by the HS.

15 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." Living as a child of God means we're to have an intimate, joyful relationship with God. And this relationship with God isn't "with the man upstairs" or with a God who is somehow at a distance. No, our relationship with God is so close that we can refer to Him as Abba, Father, which means 'Daddy'!

See, as Christians we're not only born of God's Spirit, we're also adopted. Kim and I have close friends who've been through the adoption process of children many times, and it's a grueling process. And I know some of you here also know the process of adoption intimately.

When a child is adopted, they have the confident assurance that never goes away that they're wanted!!!

GOD WANT'S YOU!!!! Can you believe it! Listen there's days I don't even like myself, how can God not only like me, but want me and love me so much He adopted me!!!

It's important to remember that Jesus called God Abba...

Mark 14:35 He went a little farther, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. 36 And He said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will."

It's easy for us to think of Jesus relating to the Father with this joyful confidence of saying Abba, or Daddy, but we may think we are disqualified for it. I mean He's Jesus, we're, us!

But the Bible tells us that we are in Christ – we have the privilege of relating to the Father even as Jesus Christ does.

Now for a variety of reasons, many Christians struggle with this concept of Abba Father. Because of the way we were raised, or some sort of heartache or betrayal or abuse from our earthly fathers, many find it very difficult to accept that there is a Father in heaven who loves us and has everything for us. And if that describes you, I pray you know that God will never mistreat you, He will never ignore you, He will never forsake you.

God is never too busy for you, you can go to Him whenever you desire. Just as an earthly father delights when he hears his little one say daddy!, so our Heavenly father delights when we call out to Him!!

16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

Deuteronomy 17 tells us that at the mouth of two or three witnesses everything had to be established. And verse 17 tells us

there are two witnesses to our salvation: our own witness and the witness of the Spirit.

17 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. Because we are in Christ, we have the privilege of relating to the Father as Jesus does. Therefore, we are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.

Being a child of God also means having an inheritance. In Luke 18 the rich young ruler asked Jesus, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” But the rich young ruler missed the point because inheritance isn’t a matter of doing, it is a matter of being – of being in the right family.

Like many of you, I grew up with meager means. I was fascinated by the people who would be bored and just go shopping—we didn’t have money for things like that. Getting pizza was about as big a thrill as I experienced as a kid!

While I was a young child, there was a TV show that I used to watch called Silver Spoons. **SHOW SITCOM PIC** Do some of you remember it?

The show followed the hijinks of young boy named Ricky Schroeder, who was a boy with every toy and game you could imagine, even a miniature train that would transport him from room to room.

I was so infatuated with desiring to live a life like this, I thought about it, dreamt about it, until one day as a young boy that I declared to my parents that instead of being named Brian, I would like my name changed to Ricky. Hey, it was the closest I was ever gonna get to living like he did. **CLOSE PIC**

Now that's funny and cute as a child, but much more tragic when adults are stuck with the same obsession. How many people, including Christians, are bound by the constant thoughts of earning more money, having the bigger house, getting the bigger promotion and the better car. The obsession for toys is still there, the toys are just bigger and more expensive than when we were kids!

But our focus shouldn't be inheriting more physical stuff, we should rejoice that we're heirs with Christ!

To be a joint heir with Christ means that I am an heir to God's kingdom. One day you and I will live in that glorious kingdom, the kingdom of light, and love, joy and peace.

It would be more than enough as an adopted child if God just let us eat at His table and live under His roof. I'd understand if God gave all His treasure to Jesus, but God has included us.

God hasn't given us 1% or 10%, but we're "joint heirs with Christ!" Who would've thunk, God would split His inheritance between us and Jesus. What an act of grace!

Now we know that all Christians are the heirs of God, and we will inherit glorification as well as many other blessings. But it's important to remember that the Bible also teaches that the amount of inheritance the children of God receive will vary depending on our faithfulness to God on this earth-you can read the parable of the minas in Luke 19 that illustrates this truth.

That's why that old saying is so important and applicable. What we do on earth shall pass, but what we do for Christ shall last.

Verse 17 contains this glorious promise that we are heirs with Christ, but it also contains that nasty little S word we don't like to talk about. Let's read verse 17 again **17 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

Our inheritance with Christ is critical to our understanding, because as believers in this life, we will experience suffering...

Because we are in Christ, we are also called to share in His suffering. God's children are not immune from trials and suffering.

In fact, our sharing in present suffering is a condition of our future glorification. As far as God is concerned, it's all part of the same package of sonship, no matter how much our flesh may want to have the inheritance and the glory without the suffering.

But to share in His glory, God tells us that we also have to share in His sufferings. To receive a crown, we need to bear a cross

18 For I consider (he reasoned, he weighed the facts) **that the sufferings of this present time** (that means they are limited) **are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.** In the light of eternity, we should view the cost of suffering with Jesus Christ now as insignificant ("not worthy to be compared") compared to the glory that lies ahead for us.

2 Corinthians 4:17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,

Our generation is blessed to enjoy more creature comforts than any other generation in history, so when we are reminded of the suffering that must come our way, we tend to recoil at the thought.

The word suffering used here in the Greek is pathema, which means sufferings—for any reason and in any form. And why will we endure these sufferings—because we are heirs with Christ.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are following a Savior who suffered, and bled and died. Why would we ever think we will not experience calamity on this earth?

Paul wasn't ignorant or blind to the sufferings we endure. In fact Paul experienced more sufferings than most of us could ever imagine. Yet Paul still considered that the future glory far outweighed the present sufferings. **2 Corinthians 11 24 From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27 in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness— 28 besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.** Uh, no thank you! Paul knew what it meant to suffer.

There's a reason Paul doesn't say 'this stinks', 'why's this happening to me.' 'This is what I get for giving God all of my life?' Paul didn't say 'I'm an Apostle, not a Bpostle, I deserve the best'.

None of that occurred, because Paul weighed the balance of suffering in this present life versus the glory of eternity.

And we're told in 2nd Corinthians of Paul's view of eternity.

2 Corinthians 12 1 It is doubtless[fn] not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord: 2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven. 3 And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God

knows— 4 how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Most scholars think this was at Lystra. But God was gracious and given him a vision of heaven.

Paul weighed the sufferings of this life, and the glory of heaven, and it was no contest.

Now we're going to talk more about personal sufferings next week...but now the attention shifts to suffering on the personal level to how all creation is suffering and longing for glory.

19-21

19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; 21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Creation was subjected to futility on account of man's sin, and creation will benefit from the ultimate redemption of mankind.

The blue whale and the spotted owl will not be safe until the day Christ returns and restores His kingdom. Creation has no future tied to non-believers who are trying to be ecologically wise. Creation is in a fallen state and its destiny is attached to you and I as believers.

Creation is longing for the day when we are restored to what we were created to be, and creation will also be free from this world of sin and bondage and it will likewise be restored.

I absolutely believe that climate change is occurring. I absolutely believe global warming is real. Why wouldn't they be? Our earth

is in the throes of sin, of course it's going to be on the path toward destruction because sin destroys!

I'm all for trying to limit oil spills in the gulf, and reducing harmful pollutants. But folks there is no saving the environment because it can't be saved until Jesus returns. Thinking we can stop the effects of sin on this earth by trying to save the environment is like trying to put a band aid on a severed arm. It won't work!

Oh but one day!!! Isaiah describes this redemption of creation in that day:

Isaiah 11:6-9 "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb,

The leopard shall lie down with the young goat,

The calf and the young lion and the fatling together;

And a little child shall lead them.

7 The cow and the bear shall graze;

Their young ones shall lie down together;

And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

8 The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole,

And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den.

9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,

For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD

As the waters cover the sea.

I wonder what it must've been like when sin entered in the garden of eden...

Because of sin, the gentle rain that waters our lawn is also the source of floods that devastates a city. The wind that lifts a kite, levels a town in a tornado. But it will not be this way forever.

22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. 23 Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. Now verse 15 told us we are already adopted, so what does this mean that we're eagerly waiting for the adoption? Well our adoption will be consummated or complete at the redemption of our body when God gives us new heavenly bodies.

1 Corinthians 15:53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

Just as the first pieces of produce to appear on a tree provide hope of a future harvest, the fruit which the Holy Spirit produces in us now (think Galatians 5) provides hope for the redemption of our bodies

If you remember when we studied Exodus, God commanded the Israelites to present a portion of their harvest that ripened first (the "first fruits") as an offering to Him.

This offering acknowledged that the whole harvest was from God and that it was really His. It was an offering that the Israelites made in faith, confident that the rest of the harvest would follow. Like these first fruits, God's gift of the Holy Spirit is His pledge that He will be faithful to His word.

So even though God has redeemed and adopted us, there is more of redemption and adoption for us to experience in the future.

We'll end our study in verses 24-25...

24 For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with

perseverance. The fulfillment of our redemption is something still distant, yet we hope for it in faith and perseverance, trusting that God is faithful to His word and the promised glory will be a reality.

One day we'll know what our eyes were created for

One day our ears will hear what they were created to hear

Romans 15:13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

AND

Hebrews 10:23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.