

## Message Four

### Participating in God's Sonship

Scripture Reading: Eph. 1:4-5, 9, 11; 3:11; Rom. 8:14-15, 28; Gal. 4:6

**Eph. 1:4-5** *Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love, <sup>5</sup>Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.*

**Eph. 1:9** *Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself.*

**Eph. 1:11** *In whom also we were designated as an inheritance, having been predestinated according to the purpose of the One who works all things according to the counsel of His will.*

**Eph. 3:11** *According to the eternal purpose which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

**Rom. 8:14-15** *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. <sup>15</sup>For have not received a spirit of slavery bringing you into fear again, but you have received a spirit of sonship in which we cry, Abba, Father!*

**Rom. 8:28** *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.*

**Gal. 4:6** *And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father!*

**I. God's eternal purpose is to produce many sons for His corporate expression—Eph. 1:9, 11; 3:11; Rom. 8:28; 2 Tim. 1:9:**

- A. According to the Bible, the spiritual significance of sonship is that a son is the expression of his father.
- B. God desires to have many sons because His intention is to have Himself expressed in a corporate way.
- C. God does not want simply an individual expression in the only begotten Son, but a Body expression, a corporate expression, in many sons—John 1:18; Heb. 2:10.

- D. For eternity, God will be expressed through a corporate Body of glorified sons; this is God's intention—v. 10; Rev. 21:7, 10-11.
- E. Sonship, therefore, is the focal point of God's economy, which is the dispensing of Himself into His chosen people to make them His sons—Eph. 1:5; 3:16-17a.

## **II. In eternity past, God predestinated us unto sonship—1:5:**

- A. God predestinated us unto sonship according to the good pleasure of His will—the desire of His heart—vv. 5, 9; Phil. 2:13:
  1. God has a will, in which is His good pleasure.
  2. God predestinated us to be His sons according to His pleasure, according to His heart's delight.
- B. God's marking us out beforehand was to destine us unto sonship—Eph. 1:5:
  1. We were predestinated to be sons of God even before we were created.
  2. As God's creatures we need to be regenerated by Him so that we may participate in His life to be His sons—John 3:3-8; 1:12-13.

## **III. First, the believers are children of God, and then they gradually grow up to become sons of God—Rom. 8:14-15, 23:**

- A. The central thought of the book of Romans is that in His salvation God is making sinners His sons with His life and nature so that they may become constituents of the Body of Christ for His expression—3:23; 8:15; 12:4-5.
- B. In Romans 8 *sons* indicates a more advanced stage of growth in life than *children*—vv. 14, 16:
  1. *Children* refers to the initial stage of sonship, the stage of regeneration in the human spirit—John 3:6.
  2. *Sons* are the children of God who are in the stage of transformation in their souls—Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18.
  3. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God"—Rom. 8:14.

## **IV. As sons of God, we have received a spirit of sonship—Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6:**

- A. It is possible for us to be sons of God only in our spirit, which has become a spirit of sonship.
- B. Because the Spirit of the Son of God has entered our spirit and we have been born of God in our spirit, our spirit has become a spirit of sonship; this spirit is a mingled spirit—1 Cor. 6:17.

C. Sonship in this spirit includes the life, the position, the living, the enjoyment, the birthright, the inheritance, and the manifestation of a son; such an all-inclusive sonship is now in our spirit—Rom. 8:15

**V. “Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father”—Gal. 4:6:**

A. *Abba* is an Aramaic word, and *Father* is the translation of the Greek word *pater*; the combining of the Aramaic with the Greek title expresses a stronger affection in crying to the Father, implying an intimate relationship in life between a genuine son and a begetting father—Mark 14:36; Heb. 5:7; Lam. 3:55-56; cf. Luke 15:1, 20-24.

B. The Spirit of God’s Son has been sent into our hearts; actually, the Spirit of God came into our spirit at the time of our regeneration because our spirit is hidden in our heart—John 3:6; Rom. 8:16; 1 Pet. 3:4:

1. On the one hand, we received a spirit of sonship in this spirit crying, “Abba, Father” (Rom. 8:15); on the other hand, the Spirit of God’s Son is crying in our heart, “Abba, Father” (Gal. 4:6).

2. This indicates that our regenerated spirit and the Spirit of God are mingled as one spirit, and that spirit is in our heart—1 Cor. 6:17.

3. This also indicates that the sonship of God is realized by us through our subjective experience in the depth of our being—cf. Matt. 5:3, 8.

4. The more we cry, “Abba, Father,” in the spirit, the deeper will be the sweet intimate sense in our heart in our relationship with our Father.

**VI. All the sons of God will be brought into glory; this is our destiny—Heb. 2:10; Rom. 8:21:**

A. Glorification is the step in God’s complete salvation in which He will completely saturate our body with the glory of His life and nature according to the principle of His regenerating our spirit through the Spirit—vv. 21, 23, 30.

B. This is the last step of God’s complete salvation, wherein God obtains a full expression, which will ultimately be manifested in the New Jerusalem in the coming age—Rev. 21:2, 7, 10-11.