



Tim Pauley
PO Box 58403, Charleston, WV 25358
304.767.8430
tim.pauley@capitolcom.org

More Than Conquerors

Studies in Romans 8

Study 4 – Benefits of Belonging (Romans 8:12-17)

The Benefits of Belonging

Good or bad, much of life around the statehouse revolves around the two-party system. We quickly realize there are a great number of benefits for those who belong to the majority party. The leadership positions of senate president and house speaker. The chairing of committees. The size and location of offices. Even the parking places are distributed based on membership in the majority.

This is but a glimmer of the truth we find in the Bible of the benefits for those who are followers of Jesus Christ. We read that those who have trusted Christ have been “blessed with every spiritual blessing” (Eph. 1:3). Perhaps the greatest of these blessings and benefits is what Paul shares with us in Romans 8 – that we have been ADOPTED into God’s family. As Paul spells out for us the blessings and assurances we have because we have been made right with God, he reminds us of what must be the greatest of them all – Believers have been adopted by God and have all the benefits of belonging to the family of God!

Paul writes in Romans 8 of the great blessing, assurance, joy and peace we have because of our relationship with Christ. Though we were sinners, Jesus lived, died, and rose again for us so that through faith in Him we might be made right with God. Because we are right with God, we have the grand benefits Paul now shares. We have the assurance there is no condemnation if we are in Christ (8:1). We have the Holy Spirit living in us (8:9-11). Now Paul teaches us what takes place because we have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us:

¹²So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— ¹³for 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. ¹⁴For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. ¹⁵For 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!” ¹⁶The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and 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.

Paul tells us that if we have genuinely trusted Christ, then we have the Holy Spirit living in us. And if we have the Holy Spirit living in us then we will be working, fighting, and striving to get rid of the sinful thoughts, attitudes, and actions in our daily lives. Paul shares with us the truth that we do so because we are the children of God. He reminds us what the Bible teaches about our adoption. Those who have trusted Christ alone for salvation have been adopted into God’s family. As the Holy Spirit works in our lives He will remind us and make real to us and assure us of this truth.

An Amazing Truth

In Romans 8 Paul tells us that the Holy spirit will be working in the lives of believers to remind and assure them of the amazing truth that those who have trusted Christ have been adopted into God’s family and have been made children of God. This is an important reality taught in several places in the Bible.

¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:12-13)

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, ⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. 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. (Ephesians 1:3-6)

⁴...When the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, ⁵ so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. ⁶ Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” ⁷ Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God. (Galatians 4:4-7)

See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. ² Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. ³ And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. (1 John 3:1-3)

All these passages describe for us the amazing truth that God took us as sinners, made us right with Him, and then made us His children. Notice some of the truths we learn about our adoption by God.

Our adoption was planned for us by the Father. It was God's plan to demonstrate His love, grace, and mercy by redeeming and adopting sinful people to be His children.

Our adoption was costly. It cost Jesus His suffering and death to redeem us to be God's children.

Our adoption changed our legal status. While once we were children of wrath (guilty and under God's judgment and children of disobedience (Eph. 2:1-2), now we are children of God's love and grace – members of His family.

Our adoption brings us all the rights and privileges of being God's children. Paul tells us that as God's children we are heirs of God and fellow-heirs with Christ and we look forward to being glorified with Him.¹

The picture Paul first paints for us in Romans is of us standing guilty before the judge. The judge brings down His gavel and declares us innocent in the eyes of the law because our penalty has already been paid for us by Christ. Now Paul pictures the judge, rising from the bench, laying aside His robe, and taking us home to become a part of His family. It is a wonderful truth that there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Is it not an even greater truth that the believer can know they are a child of God and can cry out "Abba, Father"! We can hardly even begin to understand the implications of what it means for us to become the children of God. But Paul gets a start by sharing with us that this truth provides us great assurance as well as a great motivation to please our Heavenly Father.

The Assurance of Our Adoption

Paul tells us of the assurance and blessings we have if we have been made right with God. We have been given the Holy Spirit and the Spirit will work in our lives to inform us, assure us, help us to understand, and make real to us a truth that has already taken place in our lives. If we have indeed repented of our sin and trusted Christ alone for our salvation, then we HAVE been adopted into God's family. Romans 8:14 tells us if we have the Spirit and are being led by Him we "are the sons of God".

The Spirit does not lead us to fear. As slaves of sin we were under God's judgment and lived in fear of Him. But for believers the Spirit leads us understand our relationship with God to the point we can cry out "Abba, Father". "Abba" is a term of intimacy and endearment, as a child might cry out "Daddy".

It is the Holy Spirit who brings us into God's family, giving us new life as we are "born again" (John 3:1-8). It is the

presence of the Holy Spirit that gives evidence that we are indeed children of God as He works in our lives. But for our benefit and blessing the Holy Spirit gives us assurance in our hearts that we are God's children. In this assurance we have all the blessings Paul writes about in Romans chapter 8. Paul writes that "***the Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are the children of God***" (8:16). This may mean that the Holy Spirit serves as a second and more trustworthy witness that we are adopted by God. We can have this assurance in our hearts and minds because we know these truths from the Bible. But the presence of Spirit in our lives serves as an even greater witness to give us assurance. This can also mean that the ***Holy Spirit testifies TO our spirit.*** The Holy Spirit works to witness to us the glories of the truth of our adoption in Christ. I believe either or both of these are true. The very presence of the Holy Spirit and the evidence of His work in our lives is a witness to our adoption. Also, the Spirit will be at work to witness to us to assure us of all we have as children of God.

The Motivation of Our Adoption

When we understand the truth of our adoption into the family of God and experience the reality of that truth by the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives, it becomes our greatest and highest motivation to live for and please our Heavenly Father.

A child will have a likeness to their father. A child will have a desire to be like their father. As children of God, the Holy Spirit will be working to make us more like our Father. He will give us a desire to be more like our Father. This is why Paul says that "***...If by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.***" (8:13-14).

The Holy Spirit leads us by bringing the of God to us, "***...Because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. (Romans 5:5).*** The Holy Spirit also leads by stirring up our love for our Heavenly Father.² This is the Spirit by which we cry out, "Abba, Father". We should not seek to please and obey God out of a sense of slavish fear, but out of a heart of love for our Father.

➤ ***There are certainly benefits to belonging to the majority party in the statehouse. We can only begin to imagine and understand the benefits of being adopted into God's family.***

¹Piper, John. *Adoption: The Heart of the Gospel*. <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/adoption-the-heart-of-the-gospel>.

²Piper, John. *The Spirit-Led Are the Sons of God*. <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/the-spirit-led-are-the-sons-of-god>.

CAPITOL BIBLE STUDIES

Thursday, February 8

8:00 AM House Government Org. Conference Room (East Wing)
12:00 Noon Senate President's Conference Room