

THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION
November 26, 2017 Morning Service
Romans 8:12-17

Our God is indeed awesome. Take your Bible and go to Romans chapter 8. We're looking through this eighth chapter during these days leading right up to Christmas. For those of you that worship with us by radio, television, through the Internet and to our team over in Warrington, welcome to all of you this morning. We invite all of you to find your place in Romans 8. We'll begin in verse 12. Two weeks ago we looked at the first eleven verses and then Shaun Pillay preached last Sunday in my absence. Then I'll be here today and we'll walk right up through this chapter until Christmas Eve and you'll want to be a part of that whole day. Don't miss Christmas Eve morning here at 10:00 for one service and then all afternoon, 4:00, 6:00, 10:00, and 11:00. We'll be in those services here as well as over at our Warrington campus.

Romans 8 and we come this morning to begin in verse number 12 looking at a message that we take the title right out of this text, The Spirit of Adoption. Romans 8, beginning in verse 12. You listen now. This is the word of God.

So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—for 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. For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a [here it is] spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and 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.¹

Now there's one of two ways to enter a human family. Number one, you can be born into that family. We have two children. Those two children have been born into our family. Another route of coming into a family of course is that you are adopted. Our dear minister of music, Jon Tyner, and his sweet wife, Angie, they had Jack. He was born into their family. Then they have Eli and Ben and they were adopted into the family. All three of those are their sons. They bear their name. They have been brought into that family. You come into a human family either by birth or by adoption. When you enter God's family you come both by birth and by adoption. You must be born of the Spirit if you are in God's family. You must be born again. You've been born of the flesh. Then you must be born of the Spirit.

Secondly, you are also adopted into God's family and He takes you out of the slavery of sin and the family of lostness and picks you up and puts you into nothing that you do on your own, puts you into the family of redemption. Adoption is the act wherein God receives you into His family and gives you all the rights and privileges of children.

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He confers on us the name of His only begotten Son, Christ. Therefore, we are called Christians. Anyone can be adopted into God's family. Jew or Gentile, black or white, American or African. You must be born again. When you are saved you are then adopted into God's family and you're given a name, the name of His Son, the name Christ. They were first called *Christianous*. Christians in Antioch. So if you've been saved and born again and if you have been adopted into the family of God, I want to show you out of this text this spirit of adoption.

There are five simple truths that I mine out of this text today for us to see. So let's start. You jot these down. You think about them and if you've never entered God's family I pray today that you would believe on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. We're praying that you would be adopted sitting there in your living room, listening in your car, by radio. Maybe you're at the Warrington campus this morning and you've come into this new place and maybe you're sitting here in the Olive campus. Wherever you are, if you've never been born again and understood that God's received you and planted you into His family, I encourage you today to believe on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be – what's that word, church? Saved, saved, gloriously saved.

When you are adopted, I want to show you five truths around adoption out of this text today. Here we go. Number one. Adoption begins with transfer. It's found in verse 15. *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!"* At salvation we are adopted and when we are adopted spiritually we are given a new nature. Listen to the word of God in Galatians 4:4-5. *But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive [what?] the adoption as sons.*

If you've had children then you remember their birth. Mothers, you remember when they brought that little boy or little girl and laid them across your chest. You saw them for the first time. Not long until they cried. They whimpered. They came out hungry. They were ready to eat. If you'd give them your knuckle, they'd suck on it. You were glad because you wanted that reflex. I don't know why we do this but we run right down to the walking end of them and count their toes. Ten. That's good. You look at fingers and little nose and ears. In a little while they'll cry.

When you are adopted and born spiritually, you cry and what you cry, this text says, is "Abba! Father!" It's the first cry of the new spiritually born. Abba. It's the Aramaic word that a child would use of crying out to its father. Abba. Then the word Father is in the Greek language and it is used by the more mature person to cry out. Father. It speaks here of the growth that begins at the transfer. When we are adopted then having been born we are then transferred into this new family.

I've shared with you about going to the transfer at our own adoption agency out here with Bethany. I've been once and I've promised God I'd never go again. As they took the baby out of that momma's arms and that grandmother and they took it over across the room and placed it into the arms of that family that would adopt that baby

and that baby got a new name and a new mother and a new daddy and they transferred. That's what they called it. They transferred that child literally to another.

Let me tell you, friend, when you came to God, when God reached for you He transferred you out of your own domain of death and sin and darkness and doom and hell and put you into your Father's arms of eternal sovereign salvation and when you understood that for the first time you cry out, "Abba! Father!"

I don't know if you've ever watched the old movie "The Patriot" about the beginning of our country. The man in that movie had five children. His wife had died and his least little girl was so scared she never would talk. Finally when her daddy was going off to war she cried out that first word, "Father. Father." He ran back to grab her. She said, "Father, don't go." He said, "I promise I will return."

Have you told your Father you love Him this morning? Every day you get up you ought to look up to your Father and say, "Lord, I love you." You ought to tell Him every day. Every day. I love you. Some of you don't say you love Him because you really don't know Him. If you get to know Him, you'll really love Him. Abba! Father! We find the Holy Spirit using that in Galatians 4:6. *Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, [What did the Spirit cry? The Spirit cried out] "Abba! Father!"*

Father. It's the way Jesus prayed. In Mark 14:36 we find that when Jesus came praying that the cup might pass from Him, He cried out, "Abba! Father!" Have you known transfer? Are you a saved man or woman sitting here the Sunday after Thanksgiving? Have you been transferred into the kingdom of God? Adoption begins with transfer. You've got to know you know and the way you know is that you cry out, "Abba! Father!"

Secondly, this text tells us that adoption, while it begins with transfer, it demands an obligation. Oh yes it does. Look in verse 12. *So then, brethren, we are under obligation.* [Every one of us. All these choir members that were singing up here, all of you around on the balcony and ground floor, we are under an obligation], *not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die* [He's speaking of eternal damnation there. If you live according to yourself you'll die and go to hell. You live to the flesh. You live for yourself, unto yourself, for yourself, by yourself, you die. You must die. You die physically. You die spiritually]; *but* [he then says] *if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*

Here's our obligation. After we've been transferred into the kingdom of God we are under obligation to put to death the deeds of the body. Yes indeed. Put to death the deeds of the body. What are those deeds? Colossians 3:5 helps us understand that where He says: *Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to* [five things, dead to] *immorality, [dead to] impurity, [dead to] passion, [dead to] evil desire, and [dead to] greed, which amounts to idolatry.*

Let me tell you, friend, when you come to be into the Spirit life, into the adopted live, into the saved life, you have an obligation, an obligation to put to death the deeds of the flesh and there they are. Immorality. You're not your own. Therefore, you do not walk in immorality. You do not walk in impurity. You walk in purity. You don't walk according to the passion. That's the lust.

Has America been shaken to its root over this word passion? My Lord and my God. Some people have been shocked that Hollywood was based on sexual passion. What planet did you come from? Our sexual revolution has come full circle and it is giving birth to godlessness all around us. Everywhere. Awful. Dear friend, if you've been adopted into the family of God, you put to death those things.

Friend, when you get saved it doesn't mean you can't see. It doesn't mean that there's no fire in you. It means that the Spirit of God has put a governor within you. You put to death immorality and impurity and passion, your evil desire and your greed. The Spirit of adoption. When you come to be adopted, your family has given unto you some things but let me tell you, when you come into that family you've got some obligations too. When God receives you into the family, you have some obligations just as adopted children have some.

Well we see it first with transfer. Secondly we see it with obligation. Number three. Adoption then involves guidance. Look in verse number 14 where the Bible says: *All who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.* When you're led by the Spirit. That word led, *ago*, in the Greek, led, means to be governed or propelled. I am led. I am propelled of the Spirit. Therefore, I am a Son of the living God. Hear me. Not everyone is a child of God. No, sir. You've got to be saved. You must be adopted into His family.

Have you ever seen – I'm waiting – have you ever seen an editorial cartoon in any paper, anywhere that somebody dies and they are at the gates of hell rather than at the gates of heaven? Everybody goes to heaven in the newspaper. It doesn't matter what kind of music you sing, the life you live, you're just getting ushered into the gates and Peter's standing out there and he's got a long beard and a cane. He's saying, "Come on in." That's the way the newspaper always shows it.

Let me tell you, friend, everybody is not a child of God. The way is narrow and few are they that find it but you can find it. Yes. Hallelujah. Once you do, those that are led of the Spirit, not those that are led of the flesh, not those that sing great, not those that can preach, those that are led, propelled, governed by the Spirit of God, these are the children of God.

Number four. Adoption manifests assurance. Adoption manifests assurance. Look in verse 16. *The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God.* The Spirit of God testifies to my spirit that I'm God's child. John Wesley writing about this particular verse in his commentary, Wesley said this. "This witness is an inward impression into the soul whereby the spirit of God directly witnesses to my spirit that I

am a child of God. The Spirit of God witnesses to my spirit and affirms to me I am – it's called peace that passes all understanding.”

Now you can be a Christian and doubt. Bunyan helped us with that in *Pilgrim's Progress* when he wrote about Mr. Fearing. Do you ever look at your hole card sometimes and just wonder, “Am I really a Christian?” If you got saved when you were a kid you'll always walk through these waters. I got saved when I was 10 years old. When I got to 16 or 17 God began to deal with my heart about lordship and about preaching. I didn't want to preach so I said, “Lord, I must be lost.” So I sat down with my Bible and tried to lead myself to the Lord. I did. “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” That's me. “Whosoever will call on Me.” Well I've already done that. I called on the name of the Lord. “Well then you're saved.” I said, “Yeah, but I don't feel like that.” God was calling me on to deeper water and a more obedient walk.

Do you know that children that are adopted need great assurance? Because everyone will ask this question. “Why didn't my momma want me? Why didn't they want to keep me? What put me in this condition that some other family had to care for me?” They're not casting rocks at their adopted family. They're just looking back and they're just wondering.

Let me tell you, if you know adopted children, friend, you need to love on those adopted kids. Even when they're 40 you need to love on them. They need to understand not only that they're family but people around don't look at them as second class citizens. Well the same way that adopted children in our culture – and thank God for those that adopt children. We ought to have more of it. Kids around us everywhere needing families. Thank God for those that are reaching out.

We were at our Thanksgiving meal. In-laws were at our house. Not my in-laws but Rachel's in-laws, the other grandparents, and the grandparents said, “Have you heard our good news?” I said, “Well I haven't.” They said, “We're going to be grandparents again.” I immediately looked at my daughter. She said, “No, no, no.” But in the family one of the older children, they are working through the adoption process. So we prayed, O God, help them. Just at the right time, the right baby, boy, girl, age. There's something amazing though deep in the heart of an adopted child that says while doubt is easy, there's something deep within the heart of that adopted child when they look up at a mom and a daddy that did not give them physical life but received them. In the heart of that child there is deep, deep, deep gratitude. Assurance that these folks will never, ever leave me.

Now, beloved, look here at me. You've been adopted by the Lord God. He will never, ever disown you. When you have been born of the Spirit and adopted into His family there is great assurance and His Spirit will bear witness to your Spirit that you are His child. We sing this song. Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine. Oh what a foretaste. You know what a foretaste is, don't you? That's before they move it on Thursday to the table you go by the stove. That's a foretaste, Amen? You may get your hand slapped but you've got to hurry. Oh what a foretaste of the glory divine. I'm an heir of salvation,

purchased of God, born of His Spirit, washed in His blood. This is my story and I'm stickin' to it. Amen? That's it. Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine. Oh what a foretaste of the glory divine. I'm an heir of salvation. Yes. Amen.

Blessed what? Assurance. You ought to be sure today and if you're not sure, you ought to run down this aisle and talk to me. You ought to run to that Next Step Table today. Blessed assurance. Jesus is mine.

Number five. Adoption provides inheritance. Yes, Amen. Adoption provides inheritance. Look at it right here in verse 17. If we are His children and His Spirit bears witness to our spirit that we are His children, *and if children* [and we are his children, we're], *heirs also* [Amen], *heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.*

We are an heir. We will get the inheritance. Galatians 4:7 says: *Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.* Amen. You have your inheritance. Titus 3:7 says that we are justified by His grace so we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. We are heirs.

Friend, listen to me. The inheritance is not heaven. The inheritance is not living forever. The inheritance is Jesus our Lord. We receive Him and everything that Christ has we have. He is our elder brother according to Hebrews 2:11. *For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren.* Verse 12. *"I will proclaim Your name to My brethren, In the midst of the congregation I will sing Your praise."*

That's the Lord. It's the High Priest. He's saying that "You're my brother." He is our elder brother. Brother Jon, forgive me for not calling to ask this but his unique family with Jack as the older brother and then there are two that have come into the family. Everything that Jack has, Ben and Eli have. I haven't looked at their will. I don't know this but my guess is it would be divided 33 1/3 apiece. An earthly father may not do that but I'm telling you, the heavenly Father does it that way. Jew, Gentile, black, white, rich, poor. We come in and the heir receives from the Father and what we receive is the greatest gift. Going to heaven is just – that's the cherry on the top. The inheritance is Jesus. He's the one you need to know. When you're in Christ and Christ is in you, that's it. It's the Christ life. That's the inheritance. We receive our inheritance of the Lord.

Now look back in this text. Have you got your Bible open? Now look at it here. All this in the spirit of adoption. Notice it in verse 13. *For if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit.* Verse 14. Those being led by the Spirit. Verse 15. We have received a Spirit of adoption. Verse 16. The Spirit Himself testified. It's the Spirit life.

Now can I just say to all of you, we must become more acquainted with the Holy Spirit than often we are accustomed or feel comfortable because it's in us. We are

spirit, soul, and body. Stop saying body, soul, and spirit. Start saying it biblically. Spirit, soul, and body. The spirit is more important than the body. Now the body's important. The body's important. You ought to clean it and feed it, watch after it but it's the least important of spirit, soul, and body because you'll have it less amount of time. You lay down that but you still live. You are not a body that has a soul. You're a soul that has a body. You will lay that body down. You have a soul, a mind, will, and emotion. Most Baptists, if you ask them say, "Do you have a soul?" they'd say, "Yeah." You say, "Well can you tell me about it?" "I don't know but I know I've got one." You do because you're a psychological being. You have a mind where you think, a will where you choose, an emotion where you feel. We all have that.

Friend, when you become adopted and born again, your spirit is made alive. It died in the garden with Adam but when you're adopted this new nature comes, the new spirit, and what we must learn to do is to expose our soul to the Holy Spirit like the eagle exposes wings to the wind. You've got to expose yourself to the Spirit of God. Like that eagle stretches out.

Many of you are old enough to have gone to Alaska on a cruise. When you get old that's where you go. Some of you are younger and your parents or grandparents took you along. I've been two or three times. I love to go to Alaska. You can see those eagles. They just sit up there. Then they unfold those majestic wings. One afternoon we were there and there was one circling the ship we were on, that little small sailing vessel. I watched. I was amazed. It was like it was effortless. He learned to use the wind to soar.

Christians need to learn to let the Spirit of God be the energy source, the power pack, the battery behind you. You can't just grunt and work. Most Baptists I know believe they get saved by grace through faith but they get sanctified by hard work. Let me tell you, friend, you've got to learn to soar with the Spirit of God. You'll have to die to yourself to get there. You say, "Pastor, I don't even know what you're talking about."

I encourage you, cut you out an afternoon, get your Bible, and just begin to read the book of Ephesians. Say, "Lord, teach me." Tell Him, "Lord, whatever You tell me to do I'll do it. Wherever You tell me to go, I'll go. I just want to expose my soul to the Holy Spirit. You'll be amazed when the Spirit of God begins to give you strength for the journey of what God will do in you.

Church, I want to tell you that the staff that serves in our church have never been so physically weary. Warrington took the juice out of us. We'd do it again. A thousand times we'd do it again and we may do it again in another place. I'm telling you, don't get tired. I'm telling you, you can do more through the Spirit life in a short order than you can ever grind and do in the flesh.

You remember three Sundays ago, I believe it was, when I showed you that piece of film from Romania with a guy that they beat his feet? I asked Dr. Negrut when I got there about that. He said, "Oh, he's my dear friend. He's dead and gone to heaven

now but he was my dear friend. I knew him.” I said, “Really?” I said, “Brother Paul, tell me again of those days.” Dr. Negrut said they were coming in persecution. He said, “One night the Secret Police had broken into my house and they had tied the electricity to the plumbing. Had we touched any faucet we’d have died.” He said, “Some of our deacons found it. Then I was told I had cancer.”

He said, “I snuck out of the country with my wife and left our two children with my mother-in-law, little girls.” He said, “I began to drive toward England. We had five dollars’ worth of gas. That’s all the gas you could get at that time.” He said, “We came to the first little town trying to find a place to stay. It was \$100 to spend the night or the equivalent thereof.” He said, “I didn’t have it of course.” He said, “We drove around looking for a place to park and spend the night in the car.”

Brother Paul had never shared this story with me before. He said, “We pulled in and there was a knock at the window.” He said, “We rolled it down and a gentleman said, ‘I see your Romanian car plate. Are you the pastor from Oradea?’ I said, ‘Yes.’ He said, ‘I’ve been here all day waiting on you.’ He said, ‘Sir, the Spirit of God told me to come and wait until I found you.’ He said, ‘I was making my last circle around this block thinking I must have missed God.’” He said, “That man took us into his home, we spent the night, and got us to England.” When they ran the tests, Dr. Negrut had no malignancy. God had touched him. The next week he snuck back into Romania and stood in front of his congregation.

Can you imagine what went through that church? It was not a usual gathering where the pastor had gone and been miraculously taken, healed, and seen for, and brought back. What does this text say in the end of verse 17? We are heirs if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified. Friend, I’m telling you, the Spirit life is the best life. There’s a cost involved with the spirit life. You may indeed suffer with Him but if you do you can indeed be glorified with Him.