**Lesson 20: Adopted into the Family of God**

Text: Romans 8:14-17

**Introduction**

There are families in our church who have adopted children. God has used these families to make a tremendous difference in the lives of those adopted. The process of adoption is a very detailed and lengthy process. When it is finalized, it is a great time of celebration! Everyone who has trusted Jesus Christ for salvation has been adopted into the family of God! This is a truth that ought to be celebrated. This is the focus of this section in Paul’s letter to the Roman believers. He wanted them to be assured of their salvation. In this lesson, we will see how that adoption into the family of God by the Spirit produces assurance of salvation.

1. **Those who are led by the Spirit are the sons of God. (v. 14)** 
   1. In the previous lesson, we followed Paul’s comparison of those who have the Spirit and those who do not. The Spirit of God provided the supernatural intervention that we all needed. The Spirit is not an added blessing to the Christian life. He is absolutely essential to the Christian life.
   2. Those who walk in the Spirit mortify (put to death) sinful deeds that once dominated their lives. (v. 13)
   3. Thus, the Spirit provides a new direction in the lives of those who are in Christ Jesus.
   4. “Led by the Spirit” summarizes what Paul said regarding the new life of the believer. They no longer live by the desires of the flesh. Rather, the Spirit leads in a proper response as a child of God.
   5. The term “sons of God” indicates that we belong to God. This is a significant title in God’s Word.
      1. The LORD instructed Moses to refer to Israel as His “son” before Pharaoh (Exodus 4:22-23). If Pharaoh refused to release His “son,” it would mean the death of Pharaoh’s son. Unfortunately, Pharaoh did not take the LORD seriously.
      2. The prophet Hosea declared God’s love for Israel. “When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called My son out of Egypt.” (Hosea 11:1)
      3. Paul’s reference to believers as the “sons of God” does not mean that we have replaced national Israel. It means that we have a status that is permanent; God’s own children!
   6. The Apostle John said, “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God” (1 John 3:1a).
2. **Instead of bondage and fear, this Spirit-produced relationship brings security. (v. 15-16)** 
   1. Trying to live up to the demands of the law produces bondage and fear because we know that we could never measure up to His standard.
   2. The opposite of fear is security. The Spirit provides the security of being adopted into the family of God.
   3. Adoption was well-known among both Jews and Gentiles.
      1. In the Greek and Roman world, an adopted child carried all the rights and privileges of a natural child.
      2. Paul speaks of Israel’s adoption as the people of God (Romans 9:4).
      3. Through Christ, we are full-fledged sons and daughters of God! The Father sent the Son to make the relationship possible; He sent the Spirit to make the relationship personal (Galatians 4:1-7).
   4. Such a great truth should move us to praise! It is not surprising that this truth would even affect us emotionally. Paul said that we cry, “Abba, Father.” This is “a specially intimate term” (Gingrich). It is the same term Jesus used in addressing the Father (Mark 14:36). It reflects a secure relationship.
   5. Before you dismiss this response as emotional, consider the following: “If some Christians err in basing their assurance of salvation on feelings alone, many others err in basing it on facts and arguments alone. Indeed, what Paul says here calls into question whether one can have a genuine experience of God’s Spirit of adoption without its affecting the emotions.” (Douglas Moo)
   6. The Spirit not only makes us the children of God, He assures us that we are! (v. 16)
      1. The verb *beareth witness* means to “confirm, to testify in support of someone or something” (Gingrich). The Spirit confirms with our spirit that we are indeed the children of God.
      2. The reference to our spirit means that our adoption into God’s family has affected the “deepest and innermost part of our beings” (Douglas Moo).
      3. Does the Spirit bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God?
3. **The blessings of being in God’s family extend beyond our existence in this life. (v. 17)** 
   1. Since we have been adopted as God’s children, we have been made heirs of God. (v. 17a; Galatians 3:29)
      1. Just as the children of Israel received the land God promised them, we will receive all that God has promised to us. We are the recipients of eternal blessings.
      2. The term *joint-heirs* means that we are fellow heirs with Jesus Christ!
   2. However, our status as children of God does not exempt us from problems in this life. (v. 17b)
      1. As followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, we must remember that our path to glory will lead through times of suffering.
      2. Paul told the Philippian believers, “For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake” (Philippians 1:29).
      3. Peter conveyed the same truth to those facing persecution, “But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy” (1 Peter 4:13).
      4. Although we are facing great adversity, we can experience the peace comes with the assurance of salvation. We have been adopted into God’s family! He cares for His own.
4. **Central Idea: Believers can rest assured of their salvation because the Spirit provides the inner security that they have been adopted into God’s family.**
5. **Application: Consider what this means in your life as a believer.**
   1. If you have been saved, you are a full-fledged member of the family of God! Since you belong to Him, you have no cause for worry or for fear. This is a status that cannot change! You do not have to go through life doubting your salvation. You are in an eternally secure relationship with the Father.
   2. Live as a member of the family! Follow the new direction the Spirit provides in life. Adapt to the ways of your new family.
   3. It is natural for children to desire time with their father. Paul said we “cry, Abba, Father” (v. 17). The Christian life is not about going through religious motions. It is about cultivating a relationship with your Heavenly Father. Spend time with Him today.
   4. When days are difficult, remember that you are a fellow heir with Jesus Christ. Suffering is just for a season.

**Conclusion**

Douglas Moo said, “Paul’s description of the Spirit’s work in conferring sonship forms one of the most beautiful pictures of the believer’s joy and security anywhere in Scripture.” The Spirit of God brings us into the family of God and assures us of the fact. This is an amazing act of kindness when you consider that we lived as the enemies of God! Take time to rejoice in the fact that you have been adopted into the family of God.