

✠ **Lifting our eyes**

– **Continuing in Romans 8. Re-read all of 8, do notes...**

– **Last week- We live by the Spirit!**

– **We have seen how one of the chief ways we orient our hearts to God's Spirit within us, is to KNOW AND BELIEVE WHAT IS TRUE OF US IN CHRIST... even when we don't feel like it. We've talked a LOT about what is true of us as believers... because scripture does. BUT NOW, Paul invites us to lift our eyes from what is true of US, to what is true of GOD- because even as he has made us NEW CREATIONS in our spirits, WE HAVE THIS LIFE BECAUSE OF HIM.**

– **Verses 14-17... What is TRUE OF GOD- in his relationship/presence with us, (NIV/NKJV)**

¹⁴For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. ¹⁵The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."¹⁶The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

¹⁷Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Romans 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

✠ **He is the One who LEADS us**

– **Image of God going before us, but almost like he's walking backwards, right there, continually calling us to him, to his work, his perspective. (Ski instructor)**

– **God leads us by his word. He leads us by reminding and reinforcing in our hearts what is true, best. He leads us by convicting us. Maturing us.**

– **LEADING means we must choose to follow- it is not compulsion, but an act of freedom, out of love and faith, for us to follow.**

– **BUT MOST IMPORTANT HERE- because we are children of God, we will be led by the Spirit of God!**

We are led by God as our eyes are fixed upon HIM.

– **Reality is that we can't be led by God when our eyes are fixed on ourselves.**

✠ **He is the One who has ADOPTED us into freedom**

Romans 8:15 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."

– **First: Adoption. Word is a picture of a child who has totally separate from a family, because of the choice of the father, being granted the FULL RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES of being a son/child- including inheritance, which we will get to. To be adopted is to have a complete and irrevocable change of identity.**

– **We have been adopted OUT of bondage- what bondage? Sin. Condemnation. FEAR. HEAR- A primary marker of our flesh is that it is AFRAID. We could do an entire lesson on fear. We fear pain. We fear being alone. We fear being found out. We fear for our children. We fear the uncertain, the unknown, what we can't control, and what is different.**

– **BUT NO MORE, for we are NOT in the flesh! And the Spirit is always leading us to KNOW that our greatest possession is that we are LOVED BY GOD, and this will never change. AND FRIENDS, Fear cannot withstand the unyielding power of love!**

- *And as if this weren't enough- that we've been adopted, Paul goes on to give us what may be the most intimate picture of God's love for us, and it is that we may cry out to God as a little child looks to a loving and present father... ABBA. DADDY.*
- *Word "Abba".. Aramaic word denoting the simple word a child has for a parent... It is a picture of unfettered trust and adoration. It is the word that Jesus used in the Garden of Gethsemane, facing the cross, when he said "take this cup.." but ABBA, Father- your will be done. I trust you.*
- *FRIENDS- we are able to experience the truth of our adoption by God, freedom from bondage and fear... when we say to God... ABBA FATHER... I trust you!*
- *THIS IS KEY! The center of our confession here is GOD. MORRIS: "The spirit does not cause us to cry out "I am God's son", but rather "GOD IS MY FATHER". When we are being led by the spirit, our hearts will look to god rather than contemplating ourselves.*

In times of great joy or great struggle, we cry out to HIM!

- *We won't cry out to God when our eyes are fixed on ourselves!*

† He is the One who REASSURES us

Romans 8:16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

- *Picture of intimate presence of God, telling us continuously (if we are listening) that we are his*
 - *My flesh, afraid, says "I am less than". The Spirit says... NO, YOU ARE MINE.*
 - *My flesh, prideful, says, "I AM ALL I NEED". The spirit: "No, you are mine, I am all that you need"*
 - *When life demands that we surrender to fear and intimidation, The spirit says "I am GOD, and YOU ARE MINE! If I am for you, who can stand against you! Trust in me and don't be afraid... What can man do to you?"*
 - *AND IN THE EMOTIONAL ups and downs of life, when we find ourselves with a downcast heart, or doubting God's goodness and presence... IF WE LISTEN, we will hear the spirit say as God said to Israel through prophet Isaiah (43)*

"Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. ²When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the LORD your God! THE SPIRIT BEARS WITNESS TO US...."

We experience the Truth of who we are as we listen to HIM.

- *We won't listen to God when our ears are fixed on ourselves!*
- *AND NOW... Paul takes it to the next level... as His Children...*

† He is the One who gives HIMSELF to us

Romans 8:17a and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ,

- *Just on its face... this is mindblowing. We are children of God, therefore we are heirs- all that is his is ours... better said, all that is OF HIM is now OF US. Even more, we are CO-HEIRS with Christ. Everything that is CHRIST'S as the SON is ours as brothers and sisters of Jesus. How do we even grasp this?*
- *TWO THINGS. First, we tend to think of an inheritance as something we receive when a parent or relative dies. While this would of course true, for people Paul is writing to, especially Jewish concept- an inheritance was something fully true and realized NOW. For*

a son, his identity as heir of his father started the day he was born. FOR US.. our identity as HEIRS OF GOD began the day we were ADOPTED.

- SECOND, inheritance wasn't chiefly about possessions- while there might be possessions that would pass to the son, the greatest thing the child inherited was his fathers NAME. His nature. His character. His presence.
- FOR ME, I may inherit some possession from my father. Maybe not. They are not certain. WHAT IS CERTAIN that I inherited from him, to a large extent, is WHO I AM. He and my mother were PRESENT to me, and shaped me.
- This is true of all of us. For the good or bad, we all have been shaped by our parents or authority figures- that is our most lasting inheritance.
- WHAT HAVE WE INHERITED FROM GOD, NOW? AS we are present to him as his children, we have inherited his NATURE. HIS CHARACTER. HIS PURPOSE. HIS HOPE. PEACE. DIGNITY. GOODNESS. HIS LIFE, which is everlasting.

As God's children, our inheritance is HIM

- We don't experience our identity as God's heirs when our eyes, our identity, is fixed on ourselves!
- And now Paul gets just inconvenient. For in this life now, as heirs of God, there is one more attribute of our inheritance, our sharing in His Life...

✠ He is the One who calls us to share in His SUFFERING.

Romans 8:17b (heirs...) if indeed we suffer with Him,

- Really get into this next week, but just few thoughts
 - This doesn't refer to suffering that is common to humanity because of fall
 - Paul is describing the suffering we will share because we belong to Christ. In Paul's time, and in parts of the world now, that suffering is persecution. We may experience this in some minor ways, and this may increase, but our suffering is not persecution.
 - Rather, we suffer as Christians because God leads us to LOVE PEOPLE. And when you really do love people, it will lead to sacrifice. HEAR- opening our hearts to the needs and brokenness of this world will cost us. It will happen! If it doesn't, its quite possible that we are not being led by his spirit.
 - "Self-centered Christians who serve the Lord halfheartedly seldom have to pay a price for their faith. They are of little threat to Satan's work because they are of little benefit to Christ's."
 - Again, unpack this more next week, but for now:

We will endure and prevail in times of suffering when we understand that we are suffering WITH HIM.

– BUT GREATER STILL...

✠ He is the One who will bring us into His GLORY.

Romans 8:17c (suffer with him) that we may also be glorified together.

- What is God's glory? It is the unfettered, unfiltered reality of ALL OF WHO HE IS. His power, his beauty.. beyond our comprehension... and yet, it is entering into this fullness of who God is that is our destiny. More to be said in coming weeks... but friends, BECAUSE THIS IS TRUE... our response..

As we live by His Spirit, our hearts will give Glory to HIM.

WHO IS OUR GOD?

- *Our leader.*
- *Our adopter- redeemer- our DADDY.*
- *Our reassurance- present reminder of what is true*
- *One who gives us life, himself*
- *We share in his suffering now*
- *We will share in his Glory for eternity*