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The Spirit confirms our adoption 1

Romans 8:14-16 (AMP)

¹⁴ *For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.*

¹⁵ *For [the Spirit which] you have now received [is] not a spirit of slavery to put you once more in bondage to fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption [the Spirit producing sonship] in [the bliss of] which we cry, Abba (Father)! Father!*

¹⁶ *The Spirit Himself [thus] testifies together with our own spirit, [assuring us] that we are children of God.*

We have been talking about what it means to be led by the Spirit of God and being led we are assured that we are His children. We have been adopted into His family and have become a part of His kingdom.

The genuine believer's life is basically characterized by the Spirit's leading, just as it is basically characterized by Christ's righteousness.

God always wants His children to be certain that they belong to Him and are secure in Him.

On behalf of the Ephesian believers Paul prayed that;

Ephesians 1:17-20 (AMP)

¹⁷ *[For I always pray to] the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, that He may grant you a spirit of wisdom and revelation [of insight into mysteries and secrets] in the [deep and intimate] knowledge of Him,*

¹⁸ *By having the eyes of your heart flooded with light, so that you can know and understand the hope to which He has called you, and how rich is His glorious inheritance in the saints (His set-apart ones),*

¹⁹ *And [so that you can know and understand] what is the immeasurable and unlimited and surpassing greatness of His power in and for us who believe, as demonstrated in the working of His mighty strength,*

²⁰ *Which He exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His [own] right hand in the heavenly [places],*

Later in the epistle Paul offered a similar prayer,

Ephesians 3:16-19 (NASB)

¹⁶ *that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man,*

¹⁷ *so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love,*

¹⁸ *may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,*

¹⁹ *and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.*

Paul also assured the saints at Colossae;

Colossians 1:9 (NASB)

⁹ *For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,*

He had great devotion to them and it is seen in his writings;

Colossians 3:16 (NASB)

¹⁶ Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Perhaps the most definitive passage on the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit is in Paul's first letter to Corinth.

1 Corinthians 2:14-16 (NASB)

¹⁴ But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

¹⁵ But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one.

¹⁶ For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ.

In other words, even God's own children could not understand their heavenly Father's Word apart from the illuminating work of His Spirit within them.

The second major way in which **the Spirit** leads God's children is by their sanctification.

The Spirit not only illuminates our minds to understand Scripture but divinely assists us in obeying it, and that obedience becomes another testimony to our salvation.

The humble child of God knows he cannot please his Lord in his own power. **But** he also knows that, when he sincerely labors in the Lord's work in accordance with the commands and principles of Scripture, the Holy Spirit will bless that work in ways far beyond what the believer's own abilities could have produced.

It is then that our heavenly Father is deeply pleased with us, not for what we have accomplished but for what we have allowed Him to accomplish in and through us.

It is not our work in itself but our spirit of obedience to Him and dependence on Him as we do His work that brings joy to our heavenly Father's heart.

It is through our faithful obedience that we experience the gracious working of **the Spirit** in our lives.

And as with His divine illumination, His divine work of sanctification gives us assurance that we are indeed **sons of God**.

Paul admonished the Galatians by saying;

Galatians 5:16-17 (NASB)

¹⁶ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

¹⁷ For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.

And he goes on to say;

Galatians 5:25 (NASB)

²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

As with illumination and all other divine works, we cannot understand exactly how God accomplishes His sanctifying work in us.

We simply know from His Word, and often from experience, that He performs spiritual works in and through us that are not produced by our own efforts or power.

Often, we become aware of the Spirit's activity only in retrospect, as we see His sanctifying power bearing fruit in our lives from seeds planted long beforehand.

We also have the blessed assurance that, although we are not consciously aware of the Spirit's work in us at all times, He is nevertheless performing His divine work in us at all times. He not only gives and sustains our spiritual life, He is our spiritual life.

It is our Father's great desire for His children to submit to the leading of His Spirit, for the sake of His glory and for the sake of their spiritual fruitfulness, well-being, and peace.

Another work of the Spirit is that;

WE ARE GIVEN ACCESS TO GOD BY THE SPIRIT

Romans 8:15 (NASB)

¹⁵ For 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!"

In this work the Holy Spirit confirms our adoption as God's children is by freeing us from the **spirit of slavery** that leads us **to fear again**.

Because God's children share in flesh and blood, we are told by the writer of Hebrews;

Hebrews 2:14-15 (NASB)

*¹⁴ Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,
¹⁵ and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.*

No matter how cleverly they may manage to mask or deny the reality of it, sinful men are continually subject to fear because they continually live in sin and are therefore continually under God's judgment.

Slavery to sin brings slavery to fear, and one of the gracious works of the Holy Spirit is to deliver God's children from both.

John Donne, the seventeenth century English poet who later became pastor and dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in London, wrote in "A Hymn to God the Father" the following lines;

Wilt Thou forgive that sin where I begun
Which was my sin, though it were done before?
Wilt Thou forgive that sin, through which I run,
And do run still, though still I do deplore?
When Thou has done, Thou has not done;
For I have more.....

I have a sin of fear, that when I have spun
My last thread, I shall perish on the shore;
But swear by Thy self that at my death Thy Son

Shall shine as he shines now and heretofore:
And, having done that, Thou hast done,
I fear no more.

Paul reminded Timothy of this great truth;

2 Timothy 1:7 (NASB)

⁷ For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.

John assures us that;

1 John 4:18 (NASB)

¹⁸ There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

At this point in Romans, Paul is not so much emphasizing the transaction of **adoption** as the believer's assurance of it. Through the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, we not only are truly and permanently adopted as children of God but are given a **spirit of adoption**.

That is God makes certain His children know they are His children. Because of His Spirit dwelling in our hearts, our **spirit** recognizes that we are always privileged to come before God as our beloved Father.

The term **adoption** is filled with the ideas of love, grace, compassion, and intimate relationship. It is the action by which a husband and wife decide to take a boy or girl who is not their physical offspring into their family as their own child.

When that action is taken by the proper legal means, the adopted child attains all the rights and privileges of a member of the family.

The first adoption recorded in Scripture was that of Moses. When Pharaoh ordered all the male Hebrew children slain, Moses' mother placed him in a water proof basket and set him in the Nile River among some reeds.

When Pharaoh's daughter came to the river with her maids to bathe, she saw the basket and had one of her maids retrieve it. She recognized immediately that he was a Hebrew child, but she took pity on him.

Moses sister, Miriam, had been watching nearby and she offered to find a nursemaid for the child, as her mother had instructed. With the approval of Pharaoh's daughter, Miriam, brought her own mother who was then paid to take Moses home and nurse him. When Moses was a young boy, he was brought to the palace and adopted by Pharaoh's daughter (Ex. 2:1-10)

Another account recorded was that of Esther, when her parents died, she was adopted by an older cousin named Mordecai, who love her as a father and took special care to look after her welfare (Esther 2:5-11)

And perhaps the most touching adoption mentioned in the Old Testament was that of Mephibosheth, the crippled son of Jonathan and the sole remaining descendent of Saul. And you know that story as you had a sermon on that a couple of weeks ago. (2 Sam 9:1-13) Adopted by King David.

We have some beautiful pictures of how you and I were adopted into the family of God. Our spiritual adoption by God of you and I is portrayed in these adoptions.

We will talk more next time.