

## *Led By the Spirit*

(Romans 8:14-18)

The theme of this section is that of “*Son ship*” ...speaking of this newfound relationship we now have with God, in that how that “*In Christ*,” we have entered into this completely different relationship with God, in that we have literally become one of His children, and He our Father. Paul says, <sup>14</sup>*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God*. I want you to think with me for a moment, exactly what Paul is saying here. Think about the transition that takes place in a believer’s life, according to the truths of chapter seven and eight. We go from that of *guilty, condemned sinners, under the judgment and wrath of God*...to that of being declared totally innocent and justified before God, who have become the objects of His affection, one of His very own children, and partakers of His divine inheritance. That’s mind boggling to me... As hard as that is for me to grasp at times, Paul declares, that is exactly what has happened to all those who are “*Led by the Spirit of God*.” Paul says, <sup>14</sup>*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God*.

That statement, <sup>14</sup>*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God*...that statement automatically becomes the central focus of this passage. All of the promises and blessings that Paul goes on to declare here, about being the children of God, about being “*heirs of God’s divine inheritance*,” about being “*joint heirs with Jesus*,” all hinge on whether or not a man is “*led by the Spirit of God*.” <sup>14</sup>*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God...they are the sons of God*. What does he mean by that? What does it mean to be “*led by the Spirit*?” **Are you “led by the Spirit of God?”**

It is these questions that we will be considering this morning... Given what Paul says here, it becomes imperative that we understand what it means to be “*led by the Spirit*.” And not just understand what it means, but more importantly, that this is true in our lives. When you consider everything Paul has been speaking too leading up to this statement, you realize that it all comes down to one of two things, a man is either being “*led by the Spirit of God*,” or he’s being “*led by the flesh*”... Every one of us are walking in one of those two spirits, we are being “*led*” by one of the two...and given everything Paul has been saying up to this point, which one that is, will determine whether or not our future is one of life and blessings, or death and destruction.

Everything Paul has been saying up to this point, has been a contrast between walking in the Spirit, and walking in the flesh. Paul set the theme right off in the first verse of this chapter, “*There is therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus...who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*.” This matter of the flesh and Spirit dominate this chapter, and with good reason, a man’s life hangs in the balance as to which one he walks in, or as Paul puts it here, which one he is “*Led by*.” Paul makes it crystal clear there, that all who walk in the flesh, cannot please God, and therefore are condemned. He reiterates it again here right before he declares this truth about our being the children of God.

<sup>12</sup>*Therefore, brethren, we are debtors...not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.* <sup>13</sup>*For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die* ...Paul says...*but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live*.....  
<sup>14</sup>*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God*.

Given what Paul says there, we do glean a little better understanding of what it means to be “*led by the Spirit of God*.” Here Paul speaks to the “**Practical application**” of what it means... And that is, when by faith; we mortify the deeds of the body/flesh...that we might live to Christ, serving His will, and His ways in our lives. According to Paul, all who *live in the spirit*, or all who are “*led by the Spirit*,” are those who, by faith...“*take up the cross of Christ*,” as it were, and day by day, “*Mortify the deeds of the body*,” putting to death the deeds and desires of the flesh, so they can submit their lives unto Christ... Paul says, those who do this, they that are “*led by the Spirit*,” .....**they are the children of God!**

As I said, that is the “**Practical Application**” of what it means to be “*led by the Spirit*,” in the sense of “*living out our faith*” is concerned, putting our faith into “*Actions*.” We “*walk by faith*,” when day by day we live our lives by putting to death the desires of the flesh that we might submit ourselves to Jesus Christ, serving His will, His desires in our life. That is the “**Practical Application**” of what it means

to be “*led by the Spirit*”... Here in verses fourteen through seventeen, Paul speaks to the “*Implications*” of “*being led by the Spirit*”... <sup>14</sup>*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, **they are the sons of God.***

Paul says it is those who walk in “*this manner*,” those who live a life of “*putting the desires of the flesh to death, to yield their lives to Christ*,” that are the true “*Children of God*.”

That brings us to the passage we have for this morning... Here Paul uses the analogy of a father/son relationship to help us better understand what it means to be “*led by the Spirit*.” The emphasis here is on the “*Blessing*” of this new found relationship we have with God “*In Christ*,” in contrast to the “*burden and fearful relationship with had with God*” prior, under the old covenant, when we were under the Law. Paul’s main point here is, that this being “*Led by the Spirit*,” is not one of fear or bondage, Paul says...<sup>15</sup>*For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.* That expression, “*Abba, Father*,” is a term of endearment; it is our term for “*Daddy*.”

Here Paul equates our being led by the Spirit of God, to that of a loving relationship between a child and his father. Just as a father loves his son, and the son the father, that’s how it is in our new found relationship with God. Our new relationship with God, is not one of bondage and fear, where we serve God out of fear of judgment, but rather it is a relationship of service and devotion to God out of love, as that of a willful, loving submission of a son to his father. It is that “*kind of Spirit*,” that “*kind of lifestyle*” that Paul is referring to here, when he says, “<sup>14</sup>*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, **they are the sons of God.***”

Listen, if you’re here this morning, and you do see God that way, this is the relationship you have with Him, in that of a child loving it’s father...that very Spirit in which you serve Him, “*Bears Witness*” that you truly are His child. <sup>16</sup>*The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:* The fact that you now love God, and do see Him as a loving Father, and willfully and joyfully submit to Him, and serve Him...that very “*spirit*” bears witness that you truly have been “*born of God*,” and are now one of His children. It is only natural for children to love and obey their father, right? I certainly loved my father. It was only natural to love and honor my father, to follow his guidance and direction in my life. Well, it is this very same kind of relationship I now have with my heavenly Father. It’s not a burden to me to serve Him, or to obey Him...nor do I serve Him out of fear, in the sense of fearful judgment if I don’t. No, not at all, I now serve God out of pure love, I truly do see Him as my Father, and me as one of His children.

This “*Spirit of bondage*,” this “*Spirit of fear*” that Paul mentions here, refers to serving God out of obligation or fear. Paul says, that’s not the Spirit we’ve received or walk in, we don’t serve God out of fear or bondage. Listen, I know people who do walk in this kind of Spirit, and I’m sure you do too. Those who serve God out of fear, out of obligation and so on. Their whole motivation for serving God, and being obedient to Him, stems from fear of judgment and punishment, if they don’t. It’s easy to spot those who have this kind of relationship, because they live in constant fear, always wandering if they’ve done enough, if they lived right in order to please God. They live with this constant thought of “*looming judgment over their head*,” that if they falter or deviate a little this way or that way, God will bring down judgment on them, or even cast them out. Thus their whole service and devotion to Him out of fear...

But beloved, Paul’s point here is, that *is not* the kind of Spirit we’ve received... Anyone who has that “*view of God*,” is a “*Slave*”...not a “*Son*.” Their service to God is motivated by fear and judgment. And that kind of life reveals, “*an erroneous view of God*.” Those who serve God in that way, reveal their view of God is anything but a loving Father, but rather more of a tyrant. But that’s the kind of relationship that many have with God, there’s people around us this morning, who are sitting in churches, sitting under preaching that uses fear and guilt to motivate them to serve God. They teach that if you don’t obey, God’s going to deal harshly with you, that if you mess up in the slightest, you’re gone! If you falter in the slightest to the left or right, you’re damned to hell! My heart breaks for these folks...that has to be a miserable life, that is nothing but bondage and torment.

Beloved that is not the God I serve...that is not the God of Scripture, the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ! When you see God for what He is, when you see Him through the revelation of the Cross, it changes everything! You realize He's not that kind of God at all, but rather He's like a loving Father, who desperately loves His fallen children, and would do anything for them, even to the point He'd offer up His only Son for us. Beloved, if God loved us enough, to crush His Son under the full weight of His wrath and Judgment...while we were yet sinners, the enemies of God, out here living in direct disobedience to Him, living in sin, living for this world, and the things of this world...if God loved us enough then, that He offered up His Son for us...what does the future hold for those of us, who have repented and turned to Him? I mean if God didn't judge and condemn me back then, when I deserved it the most I'd ever deserved it...why would He condemn me now, that I've turned from this world, and have become one of His children? Paul pretty much says that very thing in chapter five... *"**But God commended his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. <sup>9</sup>Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. <sup>10</sup>For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.**"* Paul pretty much said what I just said, if God would offer up His Son for us, when we wretched sinners, separated from Him...how much more will He do for us, now that we are His children? If you understand what I'm saying, you realize that's hard to comprehend the depths of God's love for us.

Well, it is this great love for us, that has resulted in our conversion... Through the gospel of Jesus Christ, we've been transformed from hopelessly condemned sinners, to the redeemed, born again children of God, manifested, Paul says, by a willful and loving submission to Him in obedience as a son to his father.

*<sup>14</sup>For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. <sup>15</sup>For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. <sup>16</sup>The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: <sup>17</sup>And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; **...if so be that we suffer with him**, that we may be also glorified together.*

Notice, Paul places "a condition" concerning all these promises...and that is, if we "suffer with Him." Two times here in verses 17~18, Paul eludes to the fact, that all these "blessings that come with being God's children"...are not without a price... Paul alludes to the fact, that along with the blessing of being a child of God, there will be suffering involved. It is inevitable...we have but to look at Christ, and the way He was treated, to know this is true.

Jesus Himself warns us over and over throughout that to follow Him, was not an easy way of life. The "Way of Christ" is a life of "Self-denial," a life of "Self-sacrifice,"...a "life of suffering in the flesh". Rather than a life of nourishing the flesh, pleasuring the flesh, we've chosen a life of putting that flesh to death, so that we might live our lives to Him! The "Way of Christ" is one that is contrary to this world. We are "walking against the grain," you might say. And as a result, the natural result is that there will be conflict, there will be friction. Again, it's inevitable, there's no way you can walk against the ways of the world, and there not be conflict. And not on our part, the trouble will come by the hands of those who are of this world. Jesus warned His disciples of this in John 15... *<sup>18</sup>If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. <sup>19</sup>If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. <sup>20</sup>Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you;*

Bottom line, this "life" we are called to, is not "an easy one"... BUT...**it is the way that leads to Glory!** (Vs 17b~18)...*if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. <sup>18</sup>For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

Simply put...*"It will be worth it all!"* Whatever we may go through here in this world, whatever we may suffer as the result of following Christ...it does not compare to the glory that we will receive in the end! It will be worth it all!