

Life By Way Of The Spirit: Part 1: Our Spiritual Identity Rom 8:1-17

Introduction:

Lets think more about what just happened today.

As by their baptisms (3 today, 1 previously as again reaffirmed in this local context)-- Four People were joined to this particular church, and in the mystical sense of the sacraments, joined or “engrafted” into Christ.

There is a mystery, not to be confused with a myth—
There is a spiritual relation between the sign (water) and the things signified
Spiritual birth—wherein a person is said to be “engrafted into Christ”

Sign... thing signified...

Both in relation to the experience of rebirth—regeneration, faith and the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in applying faith to life—sanctification... eg. There is a spiritual (as by Holy Spirit) application of Christ’s ministry to us—

But also in relation to our identity through rebirth—this is not related to “regeneration... sanctification” per se, but related to “justification and adoption”

14:18 *“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. 19 Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.*

Therefore we must now discuss these matters thoroughly. And we must so discuss them as to bear in mind that this is the main hinge (the doctrine of justification by faith) on which religion turns, so that we devote the greater attention and care to it. For unless you first of all grasp what your relationship to God is, and the nature of his judgment concerning you, you have neither a foundation on which to establish your salvation nor one on which to build piety toward God.

John Calvin (Inst. 3:11:2):

It's as if Paul wanted to parse that out in Rom 8

Exposition:

I. Life According to the Law of the Holy Spirit vs. the law according to the flesh-- ??

2 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

Paul will begin to speak about those who walk/live according to the spirit—

who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. 5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.

What does he mean?

Notice carefully—

- *“the law of the spirit” vs. “the law of sin- ones relation to law is the key point*
- *Notice then “walk” = “live” by “live” it could as well mean “base ones life upon what was revealed by the spirit vs. base ones life upon wehat was revealed by our own wisdom/flesh...*

NOT—here talking about sanctifying work of the spirit, BUT-- the saving/justifying work of the spirit...

e.g. according to the “law” of the spirit is according to spirit that gives us saving faith in Christ in relation to the law, vs. dying faith in our own works in relation to the law..

Let me say that again slowly

- *Flesh = self-reliance (flesh is NOT physical)*
- *Spirit = God-reliance (Spirit is ‘THE’ SPIRIT, NOT JUST spiritual or some vague power)*

Rom. 4:12 and to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

*I.e. He first wants us take ourselves/our works/ our circumstances LESS seriously so that we can take God and especially his power by the Holy Spirit for us in Christ and in the world MORE seriously
REPEAT*

FOUNDATIONS: vs. 3: *For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do.*

*By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he **condemned sin** in the flesh, 4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in relation to us,*

Result: 5 *For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit*

e.g. WE live with less focus on our own works of the flesh =- e.g. less obsessed with ourselves and what we must do and more obsessed with God and what he is doing!! . **our source of confidence: Where we look to gain security and significance in life**

Effects:

- **6** *For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.*

e.g. live in peace vs. anxiety—Assurance!!!

- **17** *For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.*

e.g. We live with less hostility against God and more enjoyment of him.

Notice the relation of assurance to our disposition toward God!!!
When we are afraid, we despise—we are in an adversarial relation
When we are safe—we cherish— we are in an ally relation

So many today don't like religion(which is how they hid not liking God), But casue the God of their relation is NOT according to the saving faith of the Holy Spirit that changes how we relate to the law of God...

- If faith in self—we hate God because we are always defensive and never able to satisfy him (since his law is go holy)

Why because we are not afraid of his anger... 8

Those who are in the flesh cannot please God

- IF faith in Christ as by the gift of the holy spirit—we love God because now, in relation to God, we are considered righteous

Therefore “walk according to the spirit” = walk relying on God as by the power of the Holy Spirit” that raised Christ from the dead... we turn away from “self-reliance” in order to be God reliant...

8:9*You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. 10* **But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.**

Clearly, Paul is here talking about the work of the Holy Spirit that gives us saving faith as to now put our trust in Christ (v.s the flesh) as to become righteous—again, this is the work of the Holy Spirit that is further described as the same power that raised Christ from the dead as to give us a new life... and to point, a new relation to God's law and therefore God himself!

11 *If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.*

AS then our relation to the law as by the regenerating power of the HOLY SPIRIT that gives us saving faith in Christ...

Notice then two things:

1) The immediate context has to do with Justification

Vs. 1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

This concludes vs. 7:24 Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

This concludes a long line of reasoning that began back in rom 3:

For there is no distinction: 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. 26 It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

This is worked out in relation to faith and in relation to

- Faith—chapter 4
- Covenant Theology and the First Adam —chapter 5
- Suffering chapter 5
- Baptism – chapter 6
- Relation to Mosaic Law- and purpose of law that both convicts of sin and directs us to Christ --chapter 7

Such as to bring us to the conclusion:

As to our sin: 7:24 Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

As to our Hope in Christ: 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

Key Benefit—Pertains to our relationship to God's law

No longer “guilty” but “innocent” (legal sense)...

WCF:

1. Those whom God effectually calleth, he also freely justifieth: not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous; not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; nor by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness; but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them, they receiving and resting on him and his righteousness, by faith; which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God.

The heart of the Reformation debate with Rome was over the distinction between “imputation” and “infusion” of righteousness (LC #77).

2. Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification: yet is it not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love.

2) The proceeding context has to do with Adoption

So now—re=read the rest of what Paul as an explanation of this—notice how it ends up

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

This promise is based upon the OT expectation that God would restore his wayward Israel (prodigal sons-- Israel = “sons”—per Jacob’s name change in Gen 32 and 35) as to be like “orphans” that are adopted back into God’s fatherly love... example:

Hos. 14:1 Return, O **Israel**, to the LORD your God,
for you have stumbled because of your iniquity.

2 Take with you words
and return to the LORD;

say to him,
“Take away all iniquity;
accept what is good,
and we will pay with bulls
the vows of our lips.

3 Assyria shall not save us;
we will not ride on horses;
and we will say no more, ‘Our God,’
to the work of our hands.

In you the orphan finds mercy.”

Hos. 14:4

I will heal their apostasy;
I will love them freely,
for my anger has turned from them.

Symbolized Jacob's new spiritual relation to Yahweh and stands for the reconciled Jacob through God's forgiving grace. Symbolizes a personal relation of reconciliation with God. Jacob's struggle with God is set forth by Hosea as a prototype of the true Israel, as the normative pattern for the house of Israel in order to become the Israel of God.

e.g. Adoption wants to accentuate the contrast between our old vs. new identity—as radical a difference as a slave/servant/employee to a son/child

15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” 16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

E.g. Paul wants us to consider ourselves God's children less God's slave such as to replace fear with confidence.

The Key here is slavery/fear vs. adoption/security/assurance

• ***Slavery—live in fear***

- Slave: no sense of “entitlement” in relation to the owner—got to earn everything!! You don't have a “special” relationship with the owner

- **Sonship—live in assurance...**

- Child—entitlement by virtue of your relationship with the Owner.

Notice: “have received the Spirit of adoption... ABBA Father”

Abba" (Aramaic for "daddy")

1. Term used by small child to his/her father.

Show of accessibility and dependence.

2. Jesus always used term in his prayers.

Mk.14:36- "Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee; remove this cup from me, but not my will, thy will be done."

-What do we discover in this occasion when Jesus used the term? desperate, vulnerable, intimate, dependence.

the great sweetness of this name he frees us from all distrust, since not greater feeling of love can be found elsewhere than in the Father."

vs. 17: Heirs of an inheritance with Christ

Difference between servants wages and child's inheritance. Owed vs. given with compassion and detail.

Heb.6:12,17- Heirs to all the promises pertaining to this life.

1 Pet.1:4- Heirs of salvation

Heb.1:14- Heirs of the grace of life

1 Pet.3:7- "heirs to the kingdom"

Mt.25:34- inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Eph.1:18-...that you know what is the hope to which He has called you, what are riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints.

Note: As children, the Holy Spirit is a surety given us by the Father to even greater things to come.

Notice how this changes things:

Slave: Compulsive obedience. Obeys God and moral codes out of fear of rejection--a compulsive, driven moralism. "Driveness" in work. Unrealistic goals. Lot of self-criticism.

Child: Obeys out of joy in your Father and out of gratitude for the certainty of his love. "How can I live so ungratefully to one who will never reject me?"

Slave: Hiding. Lots of strategies to hide our inner and outer failings from ourselves and one another. Lots of gossip, blame-shifting, anger at other races/classes, defensiveness.

Child: Open and transparent. Freedom from having to put up a front. Able to appreciate people who are different and hurting. Repentance to others is more natural, done with joy.

Slave: Isolation. Feeling that no one understands, that no one cares. An unwillingness to trust *or* intense, idolatrous trust of someone who inevitably disappoints and lets you down.

Child: Because of openness and transparency and a lack of self-absorbed self-pity, a growing circle of friends with whom you are neither too independent or over dependent.

Slave: Controlled by people's opinion. Expectations and approval of others become the real moral standard. When we get away from other Christians, we lapse.

Child: Integrity and courage regardless of who is watching. "The only person whose opinion counts is my Father's! Who cares what the rest think?"

Slave: Despair in troubles. Sees troubles as "paybacks" from God. A 'slave' in trouble either is filled with: *Guilt* (because you feel you deserve it) or *bitterness* (because you feel you don't!)

Child: *Sees trouble as the wisdom of Father. You know God won't give you what you deserve (so you aren't guilty) but you deserve far worse than you will ever get (so you aren't bitter).*

II. Relation of Adoption/Sanctification in Relation to Regeneration

- a. Adoption is in one sense by regeneration. We are "re-begotten" (made) children of God.

- b. Distinguished in "order of salvation" from regeneration
 - 1) Regeneration precedes adoption and is in order to it.
But as many as received him, to them gave he the privilege to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name: which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (Jn.1:12)
 - 2) Regeneration precedes faith and faith precedes adoption
For you are all the children of god by faith in Christ Jesus. Gal.3:26
- c. Regeneration is not conditioned upon faith,, adoption is.
- d. Regeneration is a creative act, adoption is an legal act.
We are authorized to become children of God...
The former effects our nature, the latter our relations.
- e. Regenration adapts us to our place in God's family, adoption formally introduces us into it. By the one we have tempers of children, by the other their rights.
- f. Regeneration *makes us* God's children; adoption recognizes and treats us as his children and invests us with all the rights, privileges and immunities of his children.
Otherwise our "rights" would be contingent upon our "tempers".

III. Relation of Justification to Adoption

In relation then to Justification—Adoption in comparison:

- a. Both are forensic acts transacted within by the legal authority of God...
- b. In justification, the forensic action is to put us in God's standing with the eternal Kingdom/"STATE" of God-- in adoption it is of relation of a child to parent.
Justification: God as judge and ruler on behalf of the kingdom/state of God
Adoption: Paternal relation

It is one thing to be approved by a governor, another to be loved by a father. (p.486)

Again—if justification introduces believer into kingdom society or polity, adoption \introduces the believer into the society of God's family.

c. . A subject of moral government is not an heir per se. Heirship supposes another relation, that of a child. Therefore, justification doesn't entitle to an inheritance, adoption does. It is grace upon grace.

d. Adoption is a translation from the family of Satan into the family of God.

"A change which is distinguished from that of regeneration in that it is legal, formally authoritative and irreversible."

Girardeau

Rom **8:41-44**

e. Both justification and adoption presuppose regeneration, but are not about what happens to us, rather who it makes us...

IV. Benefits of Justification/Adoption

A. Heirship:

It is all that can be conceived or believed as embraced in the paternal favor and love of God.

HOME! All that is wrapped up in that sweet, transcendent word, heightened, sanctified, glorified and projected everlastingly; our Father's house, because Jesus' Father's house with all it includes of fellowship with God the Trinity, with holy angels, with glorified saints, with elect relatives, brethren and friends. Ineffable communion! And to this will be added to it ought can be added, all outward circumstances of glory which can be collected by an Almighty Father around the brethren of his Son."

1. Here: Present benefits amidst the trials of life

2. Hereafter: at the resurrection of the dead.

B. Freedoms:

1. From an slavish temper of obedience

2. From bondage to human authority when exercised contrary to or apart from the word of God.

3. From bondage to temporal and typological aspects of the OC law

Col. 2:16 Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a sabbath. 17 These are only a shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.

4. From bondage to the moral law as a standard of justification.

C. Privileges

1John 3:1 See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

1. Privileged access as children vs. respectful distance of servant

"The free spirit of filial obedience, leading to boldness of access to God. ...The servant, with hat in hand, stands at a respectful distance awaiting the orders of his master; the child of God, as Luther has graphically suggested, rushes into the presence of his Father, leaps into his lap, and nestles in his bosom." (p. 493).

2. Offering imperfect, though sincere obedience to God, with hope of its acceptance

3. "The wholesome, loving, saving discipline of children in God's family"

Hebr. 12:5 And have you forgotten the exhortation which addresses you as sons?-- "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor lose courage when you are punished by him. 6 For the Lord disciplines him whom he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." 7 It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? 8 If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

V. The Manifestations of our New Identity: Justification/Adoption:

- A. To render honor and obedience to God as a Father.
- B. To render filial affections and feelings:
 - 1. Filial love
 - 2. Filial trust
 - 3. "Submission to, and acquiescence in, his parental will and government" (p. 494)
 - 4. Filial hope
- C. To imitate him as a Father "even as our Father in heaven is perfect," "for then you will be children of your Father in heaven," "imitators of God as dear children"

Matt. 5:48 You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Phil. 2:15 that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,

Eph. 5:1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.

Rom. 8:29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren.

D. "To render to the Lord Jesus the utmost honor, love, gratitude and obedience, as our Brother through whom alone we are related to God as a Father.

E. To seek and receive the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of adoption, bearing witness with our spirits that we are children of God.

F. To love all God's people, and treat them as our dear brethren. "It should be a maxim with us, that whenever we perceive in others the lineaments, however faint and disfigured with error or weakness, of our Father's children, they shall surely experience the embrace of a brother's arms" (p. 495).

Calvin (Institutes, Book iv, 17.40) says that during communion, each individual should consider "whether, after his (Christ's) example, he is prepared to give himself to his brethren, and to hold himself in common with those with whom he has Christ in common; whether, as he himself is regarded by Christ, he in his turn regards all his brethren

as members of his body, or, like his members, desires to cherish, defend, and assist them".

1Ths. 4:9 But concerning love of the brethren you have no need to have any one write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another;

1Pet. 1:22 Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere love of the brethren, love one another earnestly from the heart.

1Pet. 3:8 Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love of the brethren, a tender heart and a humble mind.

1John 3:14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.

1John 3:16 By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

G. To separate ourselves from the world, so far as it is out of sympathy with God our Father.

H. "Ever to aspire with longing towards heaven--our Father's house, the family gathering place, our glorious and everlasting home." (p. 495).

Col. 3:1 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

Hebr. 11:13 These all died in faith, not having received what was promised, but having seen it and greeted it from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. 14 For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. 15 If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

Inferences:

How deep the Father's love for us
How vast beyond all measure

That He should give His only Son
To make a wretch His treasure

How great the pain of searing loss,
The Father turns His face away
As wounds which mar the chosen One
Bring many sons to glory

Behold the Man upon a cross,
My sin upon His shoulders
Ashamed I hear my barking voice
Call out among the scoffers

It was my sin that held Him there
Until it was accomplished
His dying breath has brought me life
I know that it is finished

I will not boast in anything
No gifts, no power, no wisdom
But I will boast in Jesus Christ
His death and resurrection

Why should I gain from His reward?
I cannot give an answer
But this I know with all my heart
His wounds have paid my ransom
(repeat)