



## NEW LIFE: Co-Heirs With Christ

**By: Peter Bales**

*No. 15, February 4th, 2024*

Paul talks about how we become children of God as we come to Jesus. Then he talks about how we are co-heirs with Christ! READ (Romans 8:17-23).

To inherit means that we receive something as an heir at the death of the previous holder—we didn't earn it. We talked at Christmas about how God gave us himself. At the cross Jesus died so that there is no longer any distance or any separation between us. Therefore, our inheritance is God! Communion with him. We are heirs with Christ, which means we have access to the father too!

### **1. What do you think it means that we have an inheritance from God?**

There's something interesting in these verses we read above. Notice that verse 23 said, "we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship." But earlier in the chapter it says, "the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship." Do we have it or NOT?!?

This is what I call verses "in tension." They seem like they can't both be true. There are many verse like this in the Bible and you have to look deeper at what is going on to understand. In this case we have what's called "Already-Not Yet." The Jews were expecting the Messiah to free them from Roman rule and install a new heavenly kingdom. Did Jesus do this? He *did* bring the kingdom, but it is also *still coming*! The kingdom is here and it's not *fully* here. It's 'Already', and 'Not Yet.'

This is an important aspect to remember. In this particular case, we are adopted as sons and we are waiting for the fullness of this adoption to be revealed. 1 Cor. 13:12 says, "Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known." As co-heirs with Jesus, we have access to the Father and the resources of heave. AND, we live in the tension of the "In between."

### **2. What does it mean to you that the kingdom is "Already" and "Not-Yet?"**

### **3. Can you think of any other verse that are "in-tension" or seem to say opposite things?**

What else does Romans 8:17 say about us as co-heirs with Christ? It says we are co-heirs with Christ, "...if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory." Sufferings? Something that is characteristic of the IN-BETWEEN: Suffering! We are basically promised suffering. It's part of the groaning and frustration...

One of the problems with suffering is that we often view it from the wrong perspective.

We often see suffering as “God doesn’t care.” Some would say that it shows that “God doesn’t exist” However, the Bible tells us many times that we should expect suffering.

When Jesus was about to go to the cross, he warned his disciples beforehand and told them that it would be difficult. He said, “Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy” (John 16:20). Then he follows that up by saying, “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

Wait—does it LOOK like Jesus has overcome the world? Does it look like evil is winning sometimes? That’s the point. That’s why Jesus is telling us this. That’s why Paul is telling us this. We can’t trust our eyes to interpret things. Jesus has already won the battle, but his kingdom has NOT YET been made known.

Another verse that illustrates how we live in the “in-between” is Matthew 6:10, “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” It shows us that we are in the period when we have access to the Kingdom, but it is still coming! And Jesus *wants* it to come! But in the meantime, we have suffering because we aren’t in heaven yet. We are still in a sinful world with death and destruction. But thankfully, death is not the end.

In this context, what does Paul say next? Read Romans 8:26-28.

- 4. How does Paul encourage us to handle suffering?**
- 5. What is the perspective of suffering that Paul is presenting?**

Paul ends this section by quoting Isaiah 44:22:

As it is written:

“For your sake we face death all day long;  
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

Then he says:

“No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,<sup>13</sup> neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:36-39)

- 6. Does Paul’s encouragement give you hope?**
- 7. Why is it so easy to think God has forgotten us when we endure suffering?**
- 8. What do you think will be the glory that is revealed in us through suffering?**

*GOING DEEPER> READ 2 Cor. 1:3-7. Reflect on how God the Father is compassionate and comforting toward you in the midst of suffering.*