

Romans 8:14-39

Good morning Mercy Church...

Many of you, I suspect, were eagerly awaiting Pastor Spence's sermon on womanhood in Genesis, but due to some health issues with an extended family member he was not able to be with us this morning. So he will deliver that message next week. Please be lifting up the Shelton family in your prayers this week.

Over the last few weeks we have been in a series that we have entitled "Created." We have been exploring the creation story in Genesis 1-3. We've been trying to answer the age-old question that asks: "What is my purpose in life? What are we all here for? Why do I exist?" These are obviously enormous questions, right? They're huge. And as Bible believing people, we don't leave this answer up to chance. We search the scriptures to give us answers to what might be life's biggest question. We've also been talking about the idea that in our day it's easy to confuse our passion for our purpose. Purpose is what we exist for, passions are the things that excite us. Passions are right and important to have, but they must grow out of our purpose in life. When we don't know our purpose though, it's really easy to allow our passions to become the very thing we give our lives and identity toward.

When it comes to our purpose in life, I fear that many of us forget a foundational truth that we should be building our identity from. This morning I think we need to be shown from the scriptures the unfathomable reality of our adoption as sons and daughters of God. It is from this foundation that we build our identities as followers of Jesus.

Y'all, I'll be honest... I think we desperately need this word this morning. Over the past few weeks, the Lord has been stirring something in my heart that I think we all need to hear, including myself. Too many of us day after day are believing lies about who we are in Christ. Too many of us forget what God has said about those who have given their lives to him. When we believe lies, it leads to worry, anxiety, bad conclusions, and a false sense of reality. Church, I'm preaching as much to myself this morning as I am to you. This morning I want to remind you of who God says you are. To do that we will be in one of the richest passages in all of the Bible. So, if you have one please open to Romans chapter 8.

As we walk through Romans 8, I will be focusing on Romans 8:15-39. I'm under no illusion that I will pull out everything that is in this text, but as we survey this passage I promise one thing... the Apostle Paul's words in this passage are clear, compelling, and life changing! As we survey this enormously important chapter, we will be moving pretty quickly so keep that Bible open and ready to follow along.

I believe there are two major things he's trying to show us in these verses and these are the things I want you to walk away with: **1) How to live as children of God (vs. 15-25) 2) How to face life with confidence (26-39).**

To start, let me catch you up on what Paul has been talking about up to this point. In chapter 7 we see Paul showing us that Christians still wrestle with indwelling sin. He says, “But what I hate I do.” We see that even though Christians sin, we see that there is a growing hatred of our sin. Tim Keller says that, the fact that Christians struggle with sin, but hate the sin that they commit keeps us from either the legalism that says: Real Christians don’t struggle with sin anymore, or the permissiveness that says: Real Christians are human; they sin just like anyone else; therefore, our sin is not that big of a deal. We see in 7:22, that The Spirit of God has come in and transformed our “inner being.” So, we actually desire to live Holy lives, but our sinful nature is still strong enough to keep us from what our NEW desires want.¹ And at the end of Chapter 7, Paul says “Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” And he answers his own question by saying... “Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!”

And then we see one of my favorite verses in all of the Bible that says, “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” This word condemnation is a legal term that says for the Christian, God has condemned sin in the flesh by sending his own son to pay the penalty for sin through his death on the cross. It’s with this verse that we can cry out that we’re forgiven! Our debt has been paid! Praise be to God! And for the next 13 verses Paul shows us that indwelling sin is overcome through the power of the indwelling Spirit. We were once unable to resist sin, but through the Spirit we now have the power to do so. Amazing!

1) How to live as Children of God

And This brings us to vs. 15-25. And remember in these verses Paul will show us how we are to live as Children of God...¹⁵For 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!”

At salvation, we received the spirit of adoption not fear. Too often, Christians fall back into this “spirit of slavery” that Paul talks about, which leads to fear. Specifically, fearing God. The Holy Spirit wipes out any desire to turn God into a slave

¹ Romans for you, pg. 11

master or our boss. As Christians we don't need to live in fear of God or in fear of our sin.

Instead of a spirit of Fear, Paul says that the spirit we receive is one of adoption. Through Christ, we have gone from enemy to son or daughter. Church this is massive for us to understand when we look at what we were created for. We we're created to relate to God not from a position of a fearful slave, but from the position of a child.

- A slave obey's under compulsion - A son obey's out of their love for their DADDY
- A slave works for fear of punishment - For a son, discipline is loving instruction
- A slave is insecure and scared to slip up - as son has security of their DADDY'S love
- A slave is consumed with external compliance - a son concentrates on their relationship
- A slave has to work, but is given no honor - a son is honored, and invited to join the work.²

We live as children of God when we don't fall back into the spirit of slavery. Fight to remember that You're a son or daughter of God.

- How many of you have ever prayed to God and called him "daddy?"

And then as we move to 16 & 17 we see the inheritance we have in Christ,

¹⁶The 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...

The spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God... This simply means that the spirit confirms to us that we are His. There is some debate as to the what the fullness of what this verse means, but I believe it means exactly what it says here. The Spirit testifies to us that we are God's children. The Spirit gives us assurance of our salvation. I think this largely comes from how the Spirit interacts with us on a daily basis. (ex. Comforter, conviction of sin, etc). So, the Spirit testifies to us that we're his children, and 17 explains the inheritance we have in Christ. Listen to this, If we're children then we're heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ! Ha! In glory, we will receive the inheritance of honored children. We will see more about this in the verses to come so I won't spoil it.

² Ibid, 34.

But let's not miss the ending to this verse, ¹⁶The 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 that we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

You might be asking, what in the world does that mean? Well, in 16 & 17 it seems like Paul gives us two evidences of those who are God's children the first is that the indwelling spirit testifies of our salvation, that we're God's children of God. And the second evidence is that we suffer with him. A sign of someone who knows God is that they are willing to suffer for the sake of Christ. To the Christian, we know that a call to follow Christ is a call to die to ourselves and to pick up our cross and follow him (Matt. 16). When Jesus said this he explicitly meant to tell us that suffering would be part of the deal. This is why we ask people two questions when we baptize them... Do you believe that Jesus has done everything necessary to save you? Will you go wherever he tells you to go and do whatever he tells you to do? We want people to understand that God might call you to do some things that don't make sense and it might cost you your very life. Taking risks for God, should be like breathing.

For Paul, suffering was part of the deal. He understood that when he gave his life to Jesus it also meant suffering

But look at what Paul says next in 18, ¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

Y'all, all of our suffering for the sake of following Christ is worth it!

For so many of us we let the approval of man or the desire for money or comfort sway us from the joy of suffering for the sake of Christ. One of my favorite Christian's in History once said this... **"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose."** - Jim Elliot. Anything we "lose" for the sake of Christ in our lifetime, are not even worth comparing to what we have waiting for us in glory! Paul will comment more on this in a little.

As we move along to verses 19-25, we see an illustration of some of the suffering Paul is alluding to. But this kind of suffering comes from simply being in our world. Let's read this section...

¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected

it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. ²³ And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

So, remember, Paul is talking about how we are to live as God's children. These 6 verses are a description of what we're living in right now. Because of Adam and Eve's sin in the garden, we see that all of creation is groaning and longing for eternity and for the pain of this world to end. At the fall of Adam and Eve, the world was flipped on it's head. What was once a paradise is now a place of thorns and thistles that accompanies our jobs, which makes all of our work difficult (Gen. 3:17-19), we see pain in childbirth for the woman, and we see a world full of brokenness.

In these verses we see that there are two things that are groaning: creation & man. Look at verse 22 & 23, ²² For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. ²³ And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Creation is groaning together in the pains of childbirth... That's an interesting metaphor. Here is what that means. Creation, like a mother in childbirth, knows that in this present moment she is in A LOT OF PAIN. And all the mothers in the room said "Amen, brother." But this pain is not purposeless & it comes with a future hope. A mother can bear the pain of childbirth because she knows that on the other side of this pain, awaits her sweet child.

And you'll notice that Paul, said "until now." What does now mean? Well, let's keep reading... ²³ And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

This means that people also groan and long for the completion of God's saving work. But hold on Paul, I thought you were already talking to Christians? Here is what he means... People who live in this verse 19-25 reality, which is all of us, live in this already but not yet reality. When Paul says that Christians have the "first fruits of the Spirit," He means that their adoption as already been secured in a legal sense, and we currently enjoy the many privileges of being children of God, but there are still privileges we haven't yet received: the redemption of our bodies. We will one day have perfect resurrected bodies. This is great hope for the believer. One day I don't have to feel like there is an Ice pick sticking out of my neck when I get up from bed in

the morning. One day, I won't sound like Darth Vader when I sleep because of my sleep apnea mask. Trust me fellas, aint nothin sexy about a man in a sleep apnea mask. Haha. But all joking aside... it's hard to live here sometimes isn't it. Things aren't they way they should be.

But look at Paul's next couple verses. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

As Christians, we know that it's this hope that we put our faith in. We don't see it now but we eagerly await with patience... Even though life is hard, even though we are groaning.

So.. we just saw how we are to live as children of God. We are to remember that we are son's and daughters... and we are to remember that the hope that we have through our adoption... we get God, and we get a future hope in glory... our resurrected body and a resurrected earth. God will fix all of it.

2) How to face life with confidence (26-39).

So, we live in this 19-25 reality, which is hard. So, how do we life with confidence in this life?

Romans 8:26-30 - The Spirit intercedes for us

Starting in verse 26, Paul transitions and starts to tell us how we can face life with confidence in light of the groanings of creation and mankind. I'll be honest with you guys, things are about to get wild. What Paul reveals to us in these next few verses should blow you away. Here is what he says in 26-30. ²⁶ Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. ²⁷ And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because^[b] the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. ²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good,^[c] for those who are called according to his purpose. 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 firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Romans 8:31-39 - Jesus intercedes for us and we are more than conquerers.

³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be^[d] against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ³³ Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.^[e] ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all the day long;
we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.’