

Romans: Verse-by-Verse

Romans 8:17, 23

The keynote of Romans 8: The Holy Spirit “testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children”. Four things the Holy Spirit does to “testify with our spirit that we are God’s children”.

1. The Holy Spirit leads us into holiness. – vv. 13-14
2. The Holy Spirit replaces fear with freedom. – v 15a
3. The Holy Spirit prompts our relationship to God. – vv.15b–16
4. The Holy Spirit is the firstfruits of our heavenly inheritance. – vv.17, 23

Looking at the fourth work of the Holy Spirit in testifying to our relationship to God:

• A “Forever” Relationship:

Verse 17: “Now if we are children, then we are heirs as well—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ.”

Our immediate thoughts on “our heavenly inheritance” typified by 1Peter 1:4: An inheritance “can never perish, spoil or fade”. Numerous verses that speak to this future, heavenly inheritance: Acts 20:32; Ephesians 1:14; Ephesians 1:18; Colossians 3:24; Hebrews 9:15.

• Another Type Of Inheritance

The Levites: Joshua informed the Levites that they would not receive an allotment of land in Canaan:

- Joshua 13:14: “But to the tribe of Levi he gave no inheritance, since the offerings made by fire to the LORD, the God of Israel, are their inheritance, as he promised them.”
- Joshua 13:33: “But to the tribe of Levi, Moses had given no inheritance; the LORD, the God of Israel, is their inheritance, as he promised them.”

Asaph’s words in Psalm 73: (Asaph was a Levite and Songwriter):

“Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.” -- Psalm 73:25-26

The Future In The Past: What God was instituting for the Levites, he intended for all of his children:

-- Romans 8:17: “Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.”

-- Romans 8:23: “Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.”

• A Dramatic Turn of Events:

Nowhere in the Old Testament are Israelites and Jews described as God’s “co-heirs”.

It’s one thing to be the heir of an earthly father – and share the inheritance with your brothers and

sisters – who are your co-heirs. It’s an entirely different thing to be the “Heir of God – and be Jesus’ co-heir”.

Our inheritance is still future, but it is anything but uncertain. Why? The Holy Spirit is the “firstfruits” guaranteeing what has been promised.

The Holy Spirit is in us is the guarantee that we will inherit all that God has planned for us.

• **A Qualification: Verse 17:**

“Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, **if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.**”

The Scriptures put a strong emphasis on the principle that suffering is the path to glory.

1. Christ’s Suffering:

“You foolish people! You find it so hard to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures. Wasn’t it clearly predicted that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his glory?” – Luke 24:24-25

2. Peter’s Teaching -- Suffering as a prelude to victory:

• 1 Peter 2:19-21:

For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God. But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

• I Peter 4:13:

“Instead, be very glad—for these trials make you partners with Christ in his suffering, so that you will have the wonderful joy of seeing his glory when it is revealed to all the world.” I Peter 4:13

3. Paul’s Perspective:

- Romans 5:3: “Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance...” –
- Romans 8:18: “I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.”

A Future Reality guaranteed by the indwelling Spirit: v. 23

“Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.”

A distinctly resurrection/new life perspective: 1. Our adoption as sons and daughters. 2. The redemption of our bodies.

Question: Since we have already been adopted into God’s family, why does Paul add a “future-event” sense to this adoption?

The larger picture: Verse 22 -- “We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the

pains of childbirth right up to the present time.”

The earth is waiting for the moment when God will give it rebirth. Peter: A moment in which the elements will melt with fervent heat. John the Revelator: The moment a new heavens and earth appears.

The Holy Spirit serves as our “deposit”, our “guarantee” that one day God will not only renovate creation but finish the work he has begun in each of his sons and daughters.

God has begun this final transformation in our hearts, but the physical transformation has yet to be accomplished. I’ll touch on this later, but we are the grounds of creation’s hope. God’s new creation has already begun – but it is in us first – then it will be worldwide.

John Stott: “[We are] caught in the tension between what God has inaugurated by giving us his Spirit and what he will consummate in our final adoption and redemption.”

- **Next time:** The earth’s expectation.