

The Holy Trinity
June 7, 2009

Romans 8:14-17
195-278-277/263-192

We Are Children of the Triune God

I. Led by the Holy Spirit.

II. Loved by the Father.

Dear Christian friends,

Today – **Trinity Sunday** – so needs to be **emphasized**. Today brings home a point even **many Christians** have forgotten or ignore. The point that there is only ONE REAL, true God. It does make a difference – a **difference** that lasts for all eternity – WHAT GOD a person believes in. Allah of the Moslems – the “**god**” of the **Mormons** and the JW’s – the thousands of gods and goddesses of the Hindus – the generic god of **society** and the **lodges** (PICK your god as you see fit) – these are all false gods. They are as WORTHLESS as the Baals and Dagon’s of the OT **even though hundreds of millions** of people may **fervently** and **devoutly** worship them. The ONLY God who can help and save us is the TRIUNE God of the Bible.

As important as **knowing** WHO is the real God – a **person’s individual relationship** with the triune God is JUST AS important. This also has eternal consequences. Based on these verses we can joyfully and confidently say, “WE ARE CHILDREN OF THE TRIUNE GOD!” We are 1)led by the **Spirit**, 2)loved by the **Father** and 3)saved by the **Son**.

I. Led by the Spirit.

“Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.” It’s the Holy Spirit who led us to **know** and **believe** in the triune God. Nobody in their **right mind** would ever come up with such a doctrine. It makes absolutely no sense. There is only one real God who **at the same time** is THREE separate and distinct Persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Or to use the words of the Athanasian Creed, “the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God, yet they are not three Gods, but one God.” There’s NO WAY you can explain that except to say GOD SAYS that’s who He is so that’s who He is. Who knows God BETTER than God Himself? Who are we to TELL God who He **can or can’t** be?

The Holy Spirit has also led us into a personal relationship with the triune God – has made us children of the triune God. **As we heard** last week it takes a miracle worked by the Holy Spirit for anyone to be a Christian. Nobody decides to **become** a Christian – the Holy Spirit makes us Christians. THROUGH the gospel the Spirit has led us to trust in Jesus as our Savior from sin and death.

The Spirit also leads in LIVING our Christian faith. Paul here has been talking about our living HOLY lives. He’s already said, **“Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you.”**

There is only ONE real, true God – the triune God. There are only TWO kinds of people on earth – believers and unbelievers – Christians and heathen. A person’s life is **either** CONTROLLED by the Holy Spirit or by his own **sinful nature**. Now **every Christian** also has a

sinful nature that every day fights God and leads us Christians into all kinds of sins. The sinful nature is daily battling the Holy Spirit trying to REGAIN CONTROL of our hearts. It's a never-give-up struggle. If the **Holy Spirit** is not in control or is NO LONGER in control of a person's heart that person is NOT a Christian **no matter what** they may say.

Let's be very clear here. DAILY the Christian sins – and he **daily repents**. It DOESN'T BOTHER the unbeliever – it **doesn't bother** our own sinful nature – if we don't go to church every week – if we push God off to the side in our lives. But AS CHRISTIANS **“being led by the Spirit”** that does bother us. If it DIDN'T we wouldn't be Christians any more.

We can look at our DAILY **Christian life** and wonder if we **really are** Christians. Here too the Spirit helps us. **“The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.”** The Spirit testifies to us THROUGH His Word – **“You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.”** We don't base our relationship with the triune God on the lives we live as Christians but SOLELY on Jesus and all He's done for us. Through Word and sacrament the Spirit points us to Jesus as our Savior – keeps our **“eyes fixed on Jesus”** – FOR THE ASSURANCE that **in Jesus** we really are children of the triune God.

II. Loved by the Father.

The Spirit has led us to **know** and **believe** in the LOVE of God the Father. We call God our **“Father”** for He is our CREATOR God. All three Persons were **involved** in creating the world but it's especially the work of the Father. WHAT A WORLD He made for us! **Even though** we no longer live in the Garden of Eden it's still a fantastic world!

The reason we **no longer live** in a perfect world is that little three letter word that **begins** with “s” and **ends** with “n” and has a big “I” in the middle. Sin is putting “I” – self - at the CENTER of everything in place of God. Sin is not letting God BE GOD of our lives. God may say what He wants but I will decide if I want to or not. God may have HIS IDEAS of how I should live my life but I will be the final judge of that. Do YOU KNOW some people who think like that? That's our society! That's ALSO your sinful nature – and mine!

Pushing God out of the picture doesn't make God **disappear**. We can ignore and avoid – even FOOL – other people – but you can't get away with that with the triune God. Go back to that OT reading – Isaiah summoned into the presence of the **holy** God. **“Woe to me!”** he cried. **“I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips.”** God's holiness is REAL. Our sin and **guilt** are real. The holy God REALLY SHOULD send us to the **eternal realities** of hell.

But WHAT A LOVE our heavenly Father has for us. **“For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship.”** The Spirit has given us the JOY and **confidence** that for Jesus' sake God has forgiven all our sins. Trusting in Jesus we DON'T HAVE to be afraid of God or wonder **what kind** of mood He's in. **Trusting in Jesus** there's no need for us to hide from God or avoid Him. God LOVES us!

In Jesus we have received **“sonship.”** That's a legal word. God the Father so loves us that He's ADOPTED us – given us the LEGAL STANDING of being His own children. Yes I/we've ignored and defied and **disobeyed** Him. Yes, I've so hurt Him in **so many ways** – so disappointed Him and taken advantage of His **grace** and goodness. My heavenly Father doesn't say, “It's OK – don't worry about it.” But He does say, “It's ALL FORGIVEN because of Jesus. You are My child – my DEAR, dear child!” WHAT LOVE!

So “we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’” Abba is what a little Hebrew child would call as he came running to his dad. “Abba, Father!” That’s not a TIMID WIMPER but a cry of love – confidence – dependence on the “Abba.” This is MY “Abba” – He loves me – He’ll help me. WHAT A LOVE to be able to call God our “Abba, Father!”

III. Saved by the Son.

“Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs of Christ.” It is all because - and ONLY because - of Jesus that we are “children of God.” Jesus – the Second Person of the Holy Trinity - took on our human flesh and blood – took our place under God’s law – and took care of everything to save us. With Jesus’ perfect life every commandment has been perfectly obeyed. With Jesus’ innocent sufferings and death on the cross all sins of all people have been PAID in full. With Jesus’ triumphant resurrection from the dead death and the devil has been defeated. With Jesus we have a whole new relationship with God. We are the redeemed, beloved – FORGIVEN – children of the triune God.

We are so loved – so blessed – but we are also called to “suffer with Christ.” Being a Christian is not God’s promise of an EASY life. In the rest of this chapter Paul deals with “our present sufferings.” Read Romans 8 in your devotions this week. You’ll be glad you did. You’ll find yourself going back to it again and again.

We also suffer JUST BECAUSE we are Christians. As Christians we have different morals and values and priorities than unbelievers do. They don’t like it. Look at how our country is even becoming ANTI-Christian. How dare you say homosexuality or abortion, etc., are sin – say that only Christians are going to heaven. We say that BECAUSE GOD says just that. But rather than FACE UP to their sin and repent so many just want us Christians to SHUT UP.

As Christians we not only have to STAND UP to the unbelieving world but ALSO to our sinful nature. As Christians we are called to “deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Jesus.” EVERY DAY we have to tell our sinful natures, “NO! I can’t do that. I’m a Christian – a child of the triune God.” It’s NOT EASY or FUN doing that when everybody else is doing whatever. But God’s forgiveness IS NOT God’s permission to keep on sinning.

Here we “suffer with” Jesus. ONE DAY we will “inherit” with Jesus – share “in His glory.” SAVED by Jesus we can confidently look forward to eternal life in heaven the very moment we die. WHAT A LIFE that will be – God having “made everything new” – God having “wiped every tear from our eyes.” When you get frustrated fighting that “good fight of faith” look again at the goal – the VICTORY of heaven. Then you’ll say as Paul does in the very next verse, “I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.”

Led by the Spirit – loved by the Father – saved by the Son WE ARE children of the triune God. Our God is the ONLY REAL God. He’s ours to cling to – ours to SHARE with the world. Amen.

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