

Heirs of God 6-17-01

Romans 8:17-27

Last week we looked at the first 16 verses of Romans 8 and saw the wonder of being in Christ. We have no condemnation because of what He did for us. We are in Him and let the world see Jesus in our body as it goes about yielding to the life of Christ in us. As sons of God we can go to our Daddy and expect patient and loving instruction – as we grow up into his likeness.

Now let's continue on in verse 17 with the fact that in Christ we are sons.

Romans 8:17 (NIV)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.

In the Jewish system you could have a share the inheritance, as could any other brother, while the Father was alive (see the parable of the Prodigal in Luke 15). This verse is saying that since we are God's children we have a share in his estate. We are co-recipients with Jesus. You say, "That's great, but just what is it that we are heirs of?" Well the simple answer is - EVERYTHING! That is a little too hard to grasp so let me share a few verses that describe it! 1 Cor 3:21-23 (NIV) All things are yours, ²² whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future--all are yours,²³ and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.

Rev 21:5-7 (NIV)⁵ He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."⁶ He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life.⁷ He who overcomes will inherit **all** this, and I will be his God and he will be my son. As sons of God we inherit all – everything made new.

Normally as a younger brother you would only get 1/3rd of the estate. But since you are in Jesus and He is in you, there is no separation of your share and his share. Everything belongs to you both. You don't inherit this decaying world, but everything God makes new. It is yours. It is your inheritance because of what Christ has done for you. If we could grasp how much that means we would be like those people who suddenly have Publisher Clearing House knock at the door with a check for 10 million dollars. They jump up and down and scream when all they are getting is a bunch of money. Knock, knock, knock – "Are you a son or daughter of God? I have good news for you. You've inherited EVERYTHING!"

We consider those who inherit wealth fortunate. What do you consider the ones who inherit everything? We can't grasp the wonder of that. But that verse goes on to give a warning. We share the inheritance IF we share his sufferings. I knew there was a catch. This is not some kind of special call or unique experience as all who will live godly, IN CHRIST JESUS, will suffer persecution. 2Tim 3:12 You can't live godly and avoid suffering for Christ. The world hates an example of godly living so they will mock

and discredit you, or in some cases kill you. So if you stay faithful you will share in his suffering, and then share in his glory.

If having the restored creation be our inheritance is hard to grasp, how will we grasp sharing the glory of Jesus Christ? The glory of God is the radiance (outshining) of his attributes. Personally, I don't exemplify goodness, righteousness, holiness, love, justice, and all that my Father is. I rely on Christ having been that for me. But the day is coming when I will shine with his glory. In fact that is why God called us.

2 Thess 2:14 (NIV)¹⁴ "He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." The prophet Isaiah mentioned it a number of times. Isaiah 60:21 (NIV)²¹ Then will all your people be righteous and they will possess the land forever. They are the shoot I have planted, the work of my hands, for the display of my splendor.

The splendor is the same as the glory. God has called you to display his splendor, to share in the glory of Christ. Can you imagine a greater inheritance?

¹⁸ I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

Those sufferings – Paul calls 'light and momentary' – are nothing compared to sharing the glory of Christ. Hold up rejection of this world along side being an heir of God – for the display of his splendor throughout eternity. Any comparison? I don't think so. But that is the trick the enemy likes to deceive people into. He loves to have them think that it's not worth it. Temptation to give up on God's testing or give in to temptation can only happen when your vision of what is in store for you is less than reality. If you don't have a vision of the marriage feast of the Lamb you might wonder if it wouldn't be better to give in to the temptation. Jesus endured temptation and testing for the joy that was set before Him. We do too.

Notice, too, Paul writes in the future tense. It is true that we are beginning to be changed from glory to glory. But Paul has in mind the finished product, "the glory that will be revealed in us".

19-23 (NIV)¹⁹ The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.²⁰ For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope²¹ that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.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.

What is happening in these verses is the reverse of what happened in the Garden. I'd call it restoration (Peter does in Acts 3:21) but in a way it is greater than restoration for through all the spiritual war of the history of man we have learned of the richness of

the love and mercy and grace of God. Adam could never have seen it like you and I do today. And so it is greater than restoration. Sharing the glory of Jesus is all the more awesome when you look at what we were and the change He has made in us.

In the Garden man was clothed in glory. When he chose to sin creation saw the glory depart and knew trouble was coming. Sure enough, the whole creation was cursed because of the sin of man who was given dominion over creation. Thorns and briars filled the earth. Disease and decay – physicists call it entropy – began as things continually went from order to disorder. Imagine how far the world has fallen from that original order considering things steadily decay. Animals became carnivorous. Fear of death gripped all living creatures.

Now creation waits to see the glory clothe man again. Because when that happens – when our adoption is finalized – our bodies are redeemed – that is, transformed into ones capable of being clothed in glory, creation knows it will soon be going back to its perfect state in which God originally created it. That is why it waits in **eager** expectation. Now, read those verses again and see what I am sharing with you. Vs 19-23 Creation is groaning – like a pregnant woman tired of carrying that ever increasing load and anxious for the birth to take place. And we groan along with creation too, waiting to be delivered from conditions that are under the curse of God. Death, old age, disease, and inhumanity oppress all created things, and so we groan, waiting for the final deliverance.

I have a thought I'd like to share with you, not as doctrine but as an idea to consider. It seems to me that the day Paul looked forward to is the same one that the prophets foretold – when the world will be ruled by the sons of God. There has been a lot of speculation about the ark of the covenant being found in the last days – but let's look at what the prophet Jeremiah said and see if it ties in with sharing Jesus' glory. Jer 3:16-17 (NIV)¹⁶ In those days, when your numbers have increased greatly in the land," declares the LORD, "men will no longer say, 'The ark of the covenant of the LORD.' It will never enter their minds or be remembered; it will not be missed, nor will another one be made.¹⁷ At that time they will call Jerusalem The Throne of the LORD, and all nations will gather in Jerusalem to honor the name of the LORD.

The ark was the container for the manna (Jesus – the bread that came down out of heaven), the Ten Commandments (Jesus – the word made flesh) and Aaron's rod (a symbol of resurrected life, and a sign of who God chose). It was the object upon which God displayed his glory, the Shekinah Glory, over the Mercy Seat. Is there any object in all creation that has received more mercy than you and me? Are we the containers of the life of the Lord Jesus? Are we the city of the great King? Then, I think no one will wonder about the ark any more because when we are clothed in glory, the people of the world will recognize us as the reality of which the Ark was a shadow. What do you think, wood covered in gold – the Throne of God – (that is the place from which He rules)? Let's move on.

²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

Faith sees down the road, and even though we do not possess the physical fulfillment, we taste of it in the spirit. That is why the previous verse says we have the Firstfruits of the Spirit. We have the initial bushel, knowing that the whole harvest is soon to follow. And so we wait patiently. We are like the Apostle Paul when he said to depart is far better, but there is work to be done here. And so we wait until his perfect time.

²⁶ In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.²⁷ And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.

The Spirit also sees what will be done in us and prays to that end. We are not as in tune as we should be and often would pray for things that are not God's will - not what is best for us. But we can count on the Spirit interceding for us in a better way than we could ever express. The Father perfectly understands the groaning of the Spirit on our behalf. I have to use words to express my thoughts as to what the Spirit is groaning about but remember his groans express it in a much better clearer way than my words. Those groans say something like, "Father of Paul, see his great need to let go of the need to feel in control. You see how that causes his emotions to be unlike yours. You know how it comes from the lack of knowing how much Your control is out of love and concern that He be all You plan for him to be. He is in your Son and so I ask You to help Him yield his mind to the mind of the Son." And on and on He prays as those groans say God's heart for you and pray them into reality. You see that last verse says He intercedes for you in accord with God's will. What more could you ask? The Father knows what is on the mind of the Spirit in those groans, because the Spirit is praying His will. Our good Father has plans for your future and they include being clothed in the glory of Christ, liberated from a sin sick world, and heir of everything when God makes all things new.

Hold that up to the little trials we go through, the suffering for the cause of Christ and we find we agree with the Apostle, there is no comparison. Get a vision for inheriting everything, sharing the glory of Christ, for displaying his splendor, and wait patiently.