

Romans 8, Part 1 – Abba, Father

2 weeks ago Jerry shared from Romans 6 that if we are in Christ, our old self died, crucified with Christ so that we are set free from the power of sin.

Last week Kirk went through Romans 7 and the marriage analogy, that we now belong to another – Jesus – and the fruit of belonging to Christ is a new life.

<i>If I am "married" to the law:</i> <i>• I tend to measure myself by performance.</i> <i>• I focus on what I'm supposed to do.</i> <i>• Preoccupied with rules, standards, and appearances.</i> <i>• Failure produces shame/condemnation.</i> <i>• Success produces pride.</i> <i>"Am I doing enough?"</i>	<i>If I belong to Christ:</i> <i>• I obey because I love Him.</i> <i>• I want to please Him, not meet a requirement.</i> <i>• I depend upon Him rather than myself.</i> <i>• Failure drives me back to Him.</i> <i>• His life begins producing fruit through me.</i> <i>"How can Christ's life be expressed through me?"</i>
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For those of us who have struggled with living on the left side of this chart, we cry out:

*Rom 7:24-25 Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?
Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of
God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.*

Set FREE in Christ

*Rom 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those **who are in Christ Jesus**. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life has **set you free in Christ Jesus** from the law of sin and death. 3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. 5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. 6 For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but **to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.***

If we are in Christ, we **have been** set free from the law of sin and death. We now live by the law of the Spirit of life! The mind set on the Spirit **IS** life and peace. This is truly great news that we need to grasp hold of and walk in to fully enjoy the freedom, life, and peace that Jesus Christ has purchased for us.

- How many here today want to walk in freedom?
- How many here want to live a life that feels truly alive?
- Do you want a life full of purpose, and gratefulness, and peace?

We are all in the right place this morning! So let's strap in and dig into this together.

Are you In Christ today? Right out of the gate we see this is where it starts, we must be **IN** Christ for the rest of this chapter to apply to us. What does it mean to be In Christ?

We are trusting completely in the work of Jesus on the cross, who fulfilled the judgment upon sin (v3) that we could be declared righteous and now walk by the power of the Spirit and fulfill the law (v4).

If you haven't made this declaration in your heart yet, do it today! If you haven't followed through with baptism to show your heart's intention to follow Jesus, do it today!

In Christ we are set free from our flesh

Paul jumps into this, talking about a fleshly or natural mindset. We use the term "head space" a lot. But it really comes down to what we set our minds on.

*Rom 8 5 For those who live according to the flesh **set their minds on the things of the flesh** ... 6 For to set the mind on the flesh is death... 7 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. 8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*

What does it mean to have a mind set on the flesh? Let's define flesh first of all.

Flesh = human desires, human effort, human ways of thinking, not submitted to God, not pleasing God → slavery to fear and death

*Rom 8:5 For those who live according to the flesh **set their minds on the things of the flesh**,...*

*Eph 2:1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, **carrying out the desires of the body and the mind**, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.*

*Gal 5:19 **Now the works of the flesh are evident:** sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these.*

*2 Tim 3:1 But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. 2 For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, 4 treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 **having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power.** Avoid such people.*

So it is basically living like an atheist, with us at the center of the universe, doing what WE think or feel is best.

Biblical example: Esau (Son of Isaac, twin brother of Jacob, later called Israel)

Gen 25:29 One day when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau arrived home from the wilderness exhausted and hungry. 30 Esau said to Jacob, “I’m starved! Give me some of that red stew!” (This is how Esau got his other name, Edom, which means “red.”)

31 “All right,” Jacob replied, “but trade me your rights as the firstborn son.”

32 “Look, I’m dying of starvation!” said Esau. “What good is my birthright to me now?”

33 But Jacob said, “First you must swear that your birthright is mine.” So Esau swore an oath, thereby selling all his rights as the firstborn to his brother, Jacob.

34 Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and lentil stew. Esau ate the meal, then got up and left. He showed contempt for his rights as the firstborn.

Our flesh is our earthly nature, our desires to do what we want when we want and how we want. It is an issue of our will, choosing our own way at all costs. Short term thinking. But, if we are in Christ, that power has been broken and we can now live in accordance to not my will, but God’s will which is birthed in us by the Holy Spirit which has taken up residence in you as a follower of Jesus and a New Creation. So let me ask this again...

Are you in Christ? And is Christ in you?

*Rom 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those **who are in Christ Jesus.***

*Rom 8:9 You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, **if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you.** Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. 10*

But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

Please, if you really question whether you are in Christ, or maybe you are constantly losing your battle with sin so that you aren't living free, make sure today! Just commit yourself fully to Christ and surrender whatever the Holy Spirit is telling you to surrender. You can do it now. You must do it now!

When it comes to **wavering**, the apostle James put it this way:

*Jam 1:5 If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. 6 But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. 7 Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. 8 **Their loyalty is divided between God and the world, and they are unstable in everything they do.***

What are some ways that **Christians**, genuine followers of Jesus live according to the flesh and why?

- We undervalue our worth (think we are the sum of what we do)
- We overvalue our importance (we become the center of our universe)
- We live like atheists (depending only on ourselves)
- We make decisions based on fear of something other than God
 - Fear of man
 - Fear of death
 - Fear of consequences
- Ultimately, we don't trust the love of God.

It comes down to having a unregenerated mind. If we think straight → we can walk straight

If we have **mixture in our thoughts** we don't hear **the voice of the Spirit** clearly. And the voice of the **flesh is LOUD**.

But if you are in Christ, you are a child of God

Rom 8:12 So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For all who are led by the Spirit of

God are sons of God. 15 For 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!” 16 The 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 we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

Led by the Spirit = things of the Spirit, life and peace, the Spirit of adoption, His Spirit bears witness to our spirit that we are children of God → raised up in him, glorified with him (provided we suffer with him – there it is again.)

Biblical example: Joseph

Recall the example of Joseph, one of 12 sons of Jacob (also called Israel). He had the dreams about ruling over his brothers. Out of jealousy his brothers sold him to slave traders and then lied to Jacob that he was killed by wild animals. He had many years of hard service, unjust prison time, forgotten and neglected. He did not choose instant gratification when his master’s wife wanted to sleep with him. He didn’t choose despair when forgotten in prison. But Joseph believed what God had said about his future, and he continued to look to God as his deliverer. Later, God enabled him to rise to prominence in Egypt and helped not only Egypt, but also his own family to survive a 7-year famine.

When Joseph’s brothers appeared in Egypt to buy grain, you can see Joseph wrestling with the thought of vengeance. He puts on a hard exterior and plays some mind games with his brothers, forcing them to bring their youngest brother Benjamin back with them and then setting him up to be a thief who will be held by Joseph as a slave. But because of his mind set, he eventually relents and reveals to his brothers who he is.

*Gen 45:5 And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. 6 For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will be no plowing and reaping. 7 **But God sent me ahead of you** to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.*

*8 “**So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God.** He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt.*

Joseph chose to

- Believe what God said about him.
- Stay faithful even when everything turned against him time and again
- Chose to see God’s hand in the circumstances rather than the evil of men.
- So he could choose forgiveness and grace over vengeance.

Many of us, all of us to a degree, have hurtful things in our past. Things done to us that were wrong and sinful. Take an example from Joseph and ask God to help you reframe that event according to God's work.

“So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God.

It may not be at all apparent how the thing that happened to you could be used for good by the LORD, but ask the Holy Spirit to help you see it in the light of how God uses all things to the good of those who love him and are called according to His purpose. (But that's next week, I'm getting ahead of myself.)

How do we walk as children of God?

1 John 3:1 See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!

- **Receive and believe in Christ.** (John 1:12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.) You have the RIGHT to become children of God!
- Adopted in with full rights as sons and daughters
- So you can become conformed to the image of Jesus, **in the likeness of his character and holiness** (Rom 8:29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.)
- This happens by the transformed of the Word (Rom 12:2 Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person **by changing the way you think.**)
- This allows us to actively putting sin to death in our lives by the Spirit.

*Rom 8:12 So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but **if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body**, you will live. 14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 For 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!” 16 The 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 we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.***

Just like Joseph, we have to put off instant gratification. We have to be willing to suffer as we wait for God's timing. We have to do what Jesus commands us to do even when we are punished for doing good.

What does life as a child of God look like?

- We understand there is something much bigger than us in life
- We have the Spirit of the Living God living in us empowering us
- We battle sin by letting God's Spirit and Word renew us
- We make decisions by following after the God who loves us
- Hearts full of love and hope
- Growing in obedience, discipline
- Building each other up in love in the body of Christ

*Rom 8:15 For 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!"*

This is in so many ways such a simple message. But so much depends on understanding who we are, and learning to walk accordingly.

