Romans 8:12-17

Verses 12-14:

--Here, Paul gives us something of a summary and a transition to some of the other wonderful aspects of our sanctification in Christ.

--***Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 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. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God.***

--First, we are not debtors to the flesh. We owe the flesh nothing. We are living by a new and transcendent law.

--True, our bodies are not yet redeemed, and the Bible acknowledges the attention we must and should give to the necessities of our bodies. Jesus proves this in the Lord's prayer, and also in His life and miracles. *Get her something to eat. . . feeding the 5000. . . sleep in the boat. . . taking the disciples aside to rest, etc.*

--Even so, the desires of the flesh should not become the captain of the ship! Holy Spirit life is not to be ruled by fleshly life. We now are able to live life in the Spirit and not death in the flesh.

--How is it that we ***put to death the deeds of the body?*** How is it that we live? Paul clearly tells us that it is. . .***by the Spirit. . . led by the Spirit!***

--Now, living by the Spirit and being led by the Spirit mean something more than us receiving guidance as the Spirit points us in the right direction. It can seem like the Israelites had it better with the pillar of cloud and fire than we do, but as we see and learn looking at their example, knowing the right direction to walk doesn't ***put to death the deeds of the body***! *Kadesh-Barnea*

--What use is it to know the direction of God's will for your life and to go live an ungodly and fleshly life there? No, our new law and leading are better. It is a leading into life, the life of God as a divine nature.

--It means I believe Christ lives in me—therefore He is Lord—and He leads me day in and day out through everything related to my personal and public life. <u>*We*</u> are being led. <u>*He*</u> is not. We cannot orchestrate our own personal growth. We must trust the process of abiding in Him.

--What does that look like practically? Simple faith and obedience in the clear public Word and personal faith and obedience within the bounds of the Word.

--Where will that type of life lead us? To: graces in character, spiritual experience, spiritual gifts, spiritual warfare, service, revelation, evangelism, self-denial, deeper faith, and even when we make mistakes: confession, repentance, restoration, etc. . . Christian life and maturity. Christlikeness.

--The issue is (even with those who sincerely love Christ) that we don't get to choose the path. I must be led. Led by God through His Holy Spirit. Led in a lifelong process, and yes, some parts of the journey are easier and more enjoyable than others.

--That this process even takes place means that we are the true children of God. Sons and daughters who have come of age. There is a dignity of identity with this reality in us as Paul pleaded with the Christians in Corinth to understand in: ***2 Corinthians 6:11-18***
--God did not make us His sons and daughters to leave us debtors to the flesh. *"You are *My* Son!—**Leviticus. 18: *I am the LORD your God!*** (Nakedness, Fornication, Incest, Adultery, Homosexual sin, Bestiality, Abortion, etc.)* God's name is identity and character.

Verses 15-16:
--**(15) *For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."***
--The Spirit of God in us looks like something. His work is not random. There is something off if we don't fear Him in the correct way. Paul talks about the Spirit we ***did not receive*** to help us more clearly see the Spirit we did receive. He does this on more than one occasion:
1 Corinthians 2:12: *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.*
2 Timothy 1:7: *For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power of love and of a sound mind.*
--The Spirit of God in us is not one of bondage and fear. It is one of familial relation that draws near to God. *Adam in the garden Vs. Us in new-birth*
--What kind of spirit is it? ***The Spirit of adoption!*** A spirit of sonship! Paul takes it for granted that the Gentile Christians understand the language of ***Abba, Father*.**
Galatians 4:6: *And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, 'Abba, Father!'*
--There are unknown and unseen works of the Spirit in all lives, but childlike prayer is not one of them. Expressing our sonship is to be as simple as a child's first words, and as intuitive as the knowledge of children as to who their parents are.
--God would have this witness to be known and lived in for His children. He never intended to leave us in this world feeling like orphans. Strangers and pilgrims, yes. Orphans, no.
--Wasn't this the very teaching and example of Christ? Jesus made something unique happen.
John 1:11-13: *He came unto His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*
--It was Jesus—the Father's own Son—who taught us to pray ***Our Father in heaven. . .*** and to ***pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret. . .*** and who commanded Mary to tell the disciples: ***go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God'***.
--Jesus Christ is the only One who could reveal this truth to us! So foreign from what even Abraham, Moses, David, or Elijah knew. Even strange to the disciples at first!

Matthew 11:27:** ***All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.*

--And what amazing things Jesus has revealed! True, Jesus alone is *the only* eternal begotten Son, but it is also true that we are adopted sons and daughters. We are being brought into something eternal and divine. Into the familial relation in the heart of God before the world began.

--Please read this passage and listen with this context of adoption in mind: ***John 17:20-26***

--We are more than God's creation. We are His children. This new birth, by something more than blood, brings us into a new family relationship. *Adoption brings you into a specific quality of family life—sad or happy in this world—but His eternal family is the best.*

--We can struggle with our human family. Even following Christ can drive a wedge into family relations **(Mt. 10:34-39; Lk. 12:49-52)**. But on earth, the human family is just a dim picture of the ultimate family in heaven. Praise Him He has made us part of it!

Ephesians 3:14-15:** ***For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named…*

Packer (Knowing God): "The prospect before the adopted children of God is an eternity of love."

--**(16)** ***The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,***

--How does this happen? First, this is a declaration and not an explanation. How the Holy Spirit communicates with human spirits is a mystery, but it is a mysterious *fact!* It is a clear Bible doctrine.

--There are those who claim that we cannot know if we are saved. They say it is presumption at best and pride at worst to claim something so radical. Yet God says—the One who actually saves us—we *can* and *do* know if we are the children of God.

--Those who claim that we cannot be sure of our salvation leave out of consideration what God has done for us and focus only on what we do for Him—our own legalistic works.

Ephesians 2:8-9:** ***For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.*

--Notice the language: ***The Spirit Himself…our spirit***—the Holy Spirit and our spirit are now come together with nothing in between—no veil to separate them. The outcome of that is a personal spiritual witness.

1 John 2:13:** ***I write to you, fathers, Because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, Because you have overcome the wicked one. I write to you, little children, Because you have known the Father.*

1 John 3:24:** ***Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.*

1 John 5:10:** ***He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself, he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son.*

--If God is real, this must be true! God must be able to make Himself known outside of all human necessity. If you have not yet received this witness of the Spirit, what should you do?

--Go directly to God and tell Him that this promise of His is yet to be made known to you through His Spirit. Then humbly place yourself before Him, willing and obedient to what He might say.

Verse 17:

--***and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.***

--No sonship—No heirship. No adoption—No inheritance. Yet we have both!

--What is Christ the inheritor of? Everything! And that inheritance is yet to be fully enjoyed and fully divided.

--I don't believe the suffering mentioned here is to be seen proportional to the inheritance as much as it is to be seen relational to the inheritance. Yes, there will be rewards, but the context here seems to be our sharing in His suffering due to sharing in His life here in this time of earthly groaning.

--The word here for ***suffer*** is used only one more time in Scripture in **1 Corinthians 12:26** in relationship to one member of the body suffering and all the body suffering with it. The idea is that of joint-suffering—to suffer *with*.

--Paul knows that all the sons and daughters of God are called to face a measure of suffering in this life, for a time, if need be.

Philippians 1:29-30:** ***For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear is in me.*

--It is in this way God is working a heart-connection to His kingdom in us. In our suffering here, there is a measure of gratification that we too have a share in the eternal kingdom we are inheriting in Him. *Acceptance of suffering gives value. Why else would some people care so much about their lawn, truck, house, or career?! So too, with the commands of Christ.*

Acts 5:40-41:** ***And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.*

--They were not just happy to have pain. They realized their suffering marked them as part of a bigger purpose and linked them to another inheritance. So too our suffering for Christ, whether in a fallen world, with family, at work, or school, with friends, or from the unsaved world. . .

--We are called ***holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling (Hebrews 3:1),*** and ought to walk worthy of the calling with which we were called.
--In Christian life, suffering is acknowledged, but so also is the glory of the inheritance. We will soon enter into our inheritance—incorruptible, undefiled, that fades not away and is reserved in heaven for us.