

Guarantee of Glory

Romans 8:17-18

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 joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Today I want to ask you two important questions: (1) Do you want the glory of heaven? (2) Do you want to suffer?

Today as we continue our study of Romans 8 we will begin looking at the section that runs from verse 17 through 30. The theme of this whole section of chapter 8 is the guarantee of our glory.

Let me remind you of what we have learned so far in Romans 8. This chapter is the great chapter in the Bible dedicated to teaching us the security of our salvation that we have in Jesus Christ. In chapters 3 – 7 Paul showed that our justification is secure because of what Christ has done for us and we receive this free gift of grace by faith in Jesus Christ. So the conclusion is Romans 8:1, **“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.”**

Even though we still have indwelling sin in our flesh as we saw in chapter 7, the Holy Spirit does in us what we cannot do for ourselves. So chapter 8 describes the wonderful ministry of the Holy Spirit of God in the life of a believer in Christ Jesus. We saw in verses 2-3 that the Spirit delivers us from the law of sin and death because Christ has paid the penalty for our sin. In verse 4 the Spirit enables us to fulfill the law because the righteousness of Christ is imputed to our account. In verses 5-11 the Spirit changes our nature by renewing our mind. Then in verses 12-13 the Holy Spirit empowers us to in that new nature to overcome sin by putting to death the deeds of the body. In verses 14-16 the Spirit confirms our adoption as children of God.

That brings us to verses 17 – 30. Here we see that the Holy Spirit confirms our no-condemnation status, not only by freeing us from sin and death, enabling us to fulfill the law, changing our nature, empowering us for victory, and confirming our adoption, but also by guaranteeing our glory. Everything that Christ has done for us and that the Holy Spirit is doing in us culminates in the guarantee of our eternal glory.

Verse 30 concludes this section by saying, **“Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.”** This is the goal of our salvation. We are saved to be brought to full glory. Whoever is justified, that is, made right with God through faith in Jesus Christ, will be glorified.

Maybe you've heard the expression, "God's not finished with me yet." That's true. We are all on the way. We are headed for eternal glory. It doesn't yet appear what we will be. The world has not yet seen the glorious manifestation of the children of God. We're yet not perfected. But we're on the way to glory.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones, that great British preacher, was right when he said, "Salvation cannot stop at any point short of entire perfection or it is not salvation." There's no such thing as a salvation without glorification.

2 Corinthians 3:18 says it this way, **"But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord."** Little by little as we gaze at the glory of the Lord, the Spirit of God works in our life to give us more and more glory until finally someday when we see Jesus Christ, we will reflect His full glory. 1 John 3:2 says **"Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."**

So today I simply want to point out two things from this passage and apply them to our lives. First,

1. Our glorious inheritance as children of God.

Verse 17 says, **"and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ."**

As we saw last time in verse 15 we have **"received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father.'"** The Holy Spirit is the seal or pledge of our inheritance as adopted children of God (Eph. 1:13-14). He confirms deep inside of us that we are the children of God. He causes us to cry out, **"Abba, Father."**

When as believers in Jesus we find rising in our hearts the cry, "Abba! Father!" this is the testimony of the Spirit that we are the children of God.

Does the doctrine of God's gracious adoption of you as His child make your heart well up with thanksgiving and joy as you realize what the Father has done for you? He picked you out of the gutter of sin, cleaned you up, clothed you with the perfect righteousness of Christ, and lovingly brought you into His family as His child, where you enjoy the inexhaustible riches of His grace, both now and for all eternity!

Are you truly a child of God? How did that happen? The Bible is clear that by nature because of our sin we all are children of wrath, not children of God (Eph. 2:3). How do we become children of God? Gal. 3:26 explains, **"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus."** Instead of trusting in yourself or your good works to get into heaven, trust in Christ, who died to pay the penalty of sin for everyone who believes in Him.

If by God's grace through faith in Christ you are a child of God, then verse 17 says we are also heirs.

Have you ever thought about what it might be like to be an heir of a wealthy family, like the Rockefellers or Bill Gates? Or imagine being a child of royalty, like the Queen of England. As children of God we have something far greater. Verse 17 says, **"and if children (and we are!), then (we are) heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ."**

The sense here is that since we are children of God, then it is sure that we are heirs. Our inheritance is guaranteed because we inherit all that Christ inherits.

What is this inheritance?

A. We are fellow heirs with Christ of all things.

Hebrews 1:1-2 declares, **“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds.”**

“All things” is fairly comprehensive! Revelation 21:7 says, **“He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.”**

What does our inheritance look like?

It includes the world. Romans 4:13 says, **“For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.”** In other words, if you share the faith of Abraham, then you are a fellow heir with him, and the inheritance, Paul said, is “the world.” In the sermon on the mount Jesus said, **“Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.”**

God is preparing this inheritance for us. In Matthew 25:34, in parable of the sheep and goat judgment we read, **“Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’”**

We inherit the kingdom! James 2:5 - **Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?**

It is a rich inheritance. Ephesians 1:18 says, **“that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.”**

It is a sure inheritance. Colossians 1:12 - **giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.** Colossians 3:24 - **knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.**

It is eternal and reserved for us. Hebrews 9:15 - **And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.** 1 Peter 1:4 - **to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.**

But there is more, something even better:

B. We are heirs of God Himself.

“And if children, then heirs, heirs of God...” God Himself is our inheritance. This truth was taught in the Old Testament. When Israel conquered the land of Canaan, it was divided up among the various tribes. But the priestly tribe of Levi got no land, because **“the Lord is their inheritance, as He said to them”** (Deut. 18:2).

Asaph in the Psalms knew the joy of having God as his inheritance. You can read his testimony in Psalm 73. For a while, Asaph was envious of the wicked as he saw their prosperity. But then he got his bearings and realized that they would die and face God’s judgment. So in Ps. 73:22-26 he concludes,

22 I was so foolish and ignorant; I was like a beast before You.

23 Nevertheless I am continually with You; You hold me by my right hand.

24 You will guide me with Your counsel, And afterward receive me to glory.

25 Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You.

26 My flesh and my heart fail; But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

This is our great inheritance: the Lord himself! Revelation 21:3 says, **"Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God."**

If God Himself is our inheritance, then our salvation is secure because He is eternal and unchangeable and His promises never fail. The best part of the inheritance is to inherit God Himself.

If God is not precious to you, what a stranger you are to your inheritance! If you

But, then, if God is preparing all this for those He loves, why does God allow His children to suffer now?

So we come to the second half of verse 17,

2. Our present sufferings with Christ.

Paul adds (Rom. 8:17b), **"if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together."** It seems like Paul is saying that our glory with Him — our inheritance — is conditional upon our suffering with Him.

After meditating on all of the glories of being children of God and heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, the mention of suffering hits us out of nowhere. Why does Paul throw that in here? Well, I think the Holy Spirit wanted us to apply these glorious truths about our future inheritance to the present reality of life in a fallen and hurting world.

Jesus said it. Luke 9:23-24, **"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it."**

John 15:20, **"Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you."** John 16:33, **"In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."**

Paul said it. 2 Timothy 3:12, **"Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution."** Hebrews 12:7, **"If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?"**

Peter said it. 1 Peter 4:12-13, **"Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy."**

All of God's children go through trials from the world, the flesh, and the devil. We all go through trials in our families, trials with other people, trials at work (or with being out of work), trials because of our sins and the sins of others against us, health problems, disappointments, heartaches, and grief.

But, why does God allow His children to suffer? This is not the whole answer, but if Jesus, God's beloved Son in whom He was well-pleased, had to suffer before entering His glory (Luke 24:26), then why would we expect to be exempt? The popular teaching that it is God's will for His children all to be healthy and wealthy and that we need to claim it by faith is heresy!

Also, if Jesus Himself, who was sinless, learned obedience through the things that He suffered (Heb. 5:8), then why would we think that there is an easier course for us? God disciplines all of His children so that we might share His holiness (Heb. 12:5-11).

Trials drive us to dependence on God. They purify the dross from our lives. They produce perseverance, proven character, and hope (Rom. 5:3). They keep us from loving this world more than we should. And, they fix our hope on eternity (2 Cor. 4:16-18).

Paul here says that we will be glorified with Christ. Our adoption is a present reality, but there is still a future fulfillment of it, when we receive our new resurrection bodies (Rom. 8:23) and we will be in the presence of the Lord forever (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

John Piper, puts it this way,

If there were no afflictions and difficulties and troubles and pain, our fallen hearts would fall ever more deeply in love with the comforts and securities and pleasures of this world instead of falling more deeply in love with our inheritance beyond this world, namely, God himself. Suffering is appointed for us in this life as a great mercy to keep us from loving this world more than we should and to make us rely on God who raises the dead.

I know the trials and troubles of this world are hard to bear. But if you keep your eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith; if you keep looking forward to the inheritance before you, the riches of the glory of his inheritance, then you will be able to say with Paul, "**For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.**"

Our suffering comes from men. Our glory comes from God. There's no comparison! Our suffering is earthly. Our glory is heavenly. Our suffering is short. Our glory is forever. Our suffering is light. Our glory is heavy. Our suffering is in this human body. Our glory is in our heavenly bodies where we will be like Christ.

The Holy Spirit wants you to be glorified, and He understands the path of glory is through suffering. This is the Word of God to us.