

St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church
June 11, 2017
Trinity (WELS B.)
Romans 8:12-17 EHV



So then, brothers, we do not owe it to the sinful flesh to live in harmony with it. For if you live in harmony with the sinful flesh, you are going to die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the actions of the body, you will live.

The Spirit Assures Us We Are Children of God

Indeed, those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery so that you are afraid again, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we call out, "Abba, Father!" The Spirit himself joins our spirit in testifying that we are God's children. Now if we are children, we are also heirs – heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, since we suffer with him, so that we may also be glorified with him.

Children of our Heavenly Father, precious in His sight for Jesus' sake
Security! Security is something they have at Fort Knox! Back in 1933 President FDR issued an Executive Order which outlawed the private ownership of gold coins, gold bullion and gold certificates by American citizens – forcing them to sell to the Federal Reserve. In the next 4 years the Federal Government bought up about \$12 billion in gold. The Federal Government had all the gold and no safe place to store it. So in 1936 they began to build the US Bullion Depository at Fort Knox, Kentucky. For a little more than ½ million \$ they built the Gold Vault. It's on the corner of Bullion Boulevard and Gold Vault Road. It is built out of granite mined at the NC Granite Quarry. The gold was hauled on 500 rail road cars and delivered by registered mail. Back in 1974 *Fake News* – nothing new under the sun – *Fake News* – a lawyer in Washington DC said that all the gold at Fort Knox had been taken by a few elite people – and that the vaults were actually *empty!* So a bunch of reporters were allowed inside the vaults to see all the gold was safely there. Other than this one time when I was a student at Northwestern College – no member of the public has been allowed inside. What do you think? Security? All the gold is safe inside?

What is secure – what is safe – is our immortal soul’s salvation. Our souls are safe because the Holy Spirit – in our ♥s is our guarantee!

Today God’s Word says, The Holy Spirit Is Our Security!

1. We are God’s Children

2. We are heirs of Heaven!

The part of God’s Word we are concentrating on is part of the Apostle Paul’s letter to the Romans! President Armin Panning wrote the People’s Bible Commentary on Romans. He introduces Romans saying, the Apostle Paul wanted to go to Rome for a long time – but his Heavenly Father had a plan for Paul’s missionary journeys. The Lord wanted Paul to *“plant the gospel in the major urban centers of Asia Minor and southeastern Europe – cities like Ephesus in Asia Minor; Philippi and Thessalonica in Macedonia, and Corinth in Greece. Now, however that work had been completed and Paul could think of turning his attention to other areas. His immediate interest was to go to the West, to Rome and the regions beyond, including Spain. Only one other task needed the apostle’s attention before heading west, and that was the delivery of the collection to the poverty-stricken Christians in Jerusalem. Because of that delay and in preparation for his eagerly awaited visit to Rome, Paul sent ahead the letter we have come to call Romans!”*

Context! It’s always important to be aware of the context – what’s going on – in the chapter before the one we are concentrating on. God’s Word is Law and Gospel – sin and grace. At the District Convention that pastors and teachers attended this past Monday and Tuesday we talked about the Lutheran Reformation. We heard a scholarly paper about the different controversies that rose up in the Church some 500 years ago. 500 years ago – the devil attacked the truth of the Gospel. The devil succeeded only to the extent he was able to mislead people because they were not familiar with and not faithful to God’s Word. My Seminary roommate Pastor Roy Hefti talked about *losing the pure Gospel still today – losing the doctrine of justification – this beautiful thing that Christ has done. We can lose it by borrowing too many spare parts from the junkyards of mega-churches to keep the Lutheran machine moving, like trying to interchange Chevy and Ford parts. We can lose it by turning the great commission about what Christ has done into the great commercial about what we are doing. We can lose it by building entire instruction courses and mission agendas around our own “ministries” (What we are doing) rather than on Christ’s redemption (what He has done). We can lose it*

by portraying salvation as a minor repair job rather than a rescue story. We can lose this chief article by paying lip service to the cross and empty tomb, but trading away its transforming power for a litany of laws, steps and principles prescribing structured plans to overcome sinful habits – leading souls to either pharisaism or despair. We can lose it by making the rich text of the Bible itself dwell in the shadow of the preacher’s fantasy of being an entertainer. We can lose it by replacing it with a theology of self-help and self-interest, garnished with a few Bible passages. These “other gospels” (Cf. Galatians 1) are appealing to human nature, for they make man the center instead of Christ. But these “other gospels” are impostors.

Chapter 7 ends with the frustration of trying to do the right thing. We don’t! We can’t! Salvation is found in Jesus’ blood, His sacrifice, His triumph. Paul wrote: **So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is present with me. I certainly delight in God’s law according to my inner self, but I see a different law at work in my members, waging war against the law of my mind and taking me captive to the law of sin, which is present in my members. What a miserable wretch I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then I myself service the law of God with my mind, but with my sinful flesh I serve the law of sin.** Romans 7:21-25 EHV

So then, brothers, we do not owe it to the sinful flesh to live in harmony with it. For if you live in harmony with the sinful flesh, you are going to die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the actions of the body, you will live. Our sinful nature – our sinful flesh is a nasty business! It’s like the piggert on the farm that literally wallows in the mud. The sinful flesh is selfish-- self-centered, self-seeking, self-serving. It plays fast and loose with the truth. It’s like the little child with chocolate frosting all around their mouth saying they didn’t eat the brownies. They deny, deny, deny, deny – thinking eventually you will become tired and frustrated and simply send them away! The sinful nature is a mind that can imagine the most gross and foul and disgusting sins concerning “hugs and kisses” that would make your cheeks burn with shame if anyone ever found out what you were thinking. Although most people never will know *Jesus does!* The sinful nature – when frustrated – is capable of lashing out – with pushes and shoves – that leave behind black eyes and bruised cheeks and broken noses – that are explained away with lies about falling into door knobs and furniture. Frustrations that lead people to curse and swear and punch

people with words--in their hearts and in their feelings – leaving bruises and scars – that are so deep inside you can't see them – and they don't seem to heal! We don't have to think that way – and we don't need to act that way – when we live by the Holy Spirit!

Indeed, those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery so that you are afraid again, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we call out, "Abba, Father!"

Led by the Holy Spirit – we are sons of God – sons – heirs! I am an heir of my earthly Father. When my earthly Father goes to Heaven what he has will be mine! A gold pocket watch that belonged to my Grandfather Edward Schultz, became my Father's when Edward died – when he was only 42 years old. Some day that pocket watch will be mine for a few years – before it becomes Matthew's watch – and before you know it – Matthew will pass it on! When I go to Heaven Matthew will have a wooden hammer – that I got from a carpenter in Bethlehem – from a carpenter named Joseph! Someday Matthew will own a shepherd's rod – from a Bedouin shepherd from the hills by Bethlehem. Such earthly inheritances are not worth much money – were I to try and pawn them in Las Vegas. They are of some sentimental value to my family – but not as far as this world is concerned. But the fact that we are sons of God means we have an inheritance in Heaven that can be purchased only at the exceedingly high price of the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God!

We did not receive a spirit of slavery so that we are afraid again! Afraid? Did you ever see *The Wizard of Oz*? The first time Dorothy and Toto and the Scarecrow, the Tin Man and the Cowardly Lion meet the Wizard do you remember that scene? The Wizard is this enormous face! There is the flash of lightning and the hammering thunder – and everyone literally trembles! They stumble and fall – they can hardly talk. Eventually they all flee from the presence of the Wizard to try and get the Wicked Witch of the West's flying broom! There are the flying monkeys, those guys with the spear axe weapons going yo – we – yo! Yo-we-yo! And finally there's the Wicked Witch of the West! Remember that fear? That's the fear the ancient Romans had for their many gods – angry and violent! Fear is what motivated the people in Peru – to literally drug pretty young women – and literally throw them into volcanos to try and appease the gods they thought were making the rocks and the poisonous gas and the flaming lava fly out from the volcanoes because they were angry! **But you received the**

Spirit of adoption by whom we call out, “Abba, Father!” By grace through faith—we view our Heavenly Father. We are not afraid of our Heavenly Father. Instead we call Him, “Abba!” That’s what little ones call their Father—the way little Otter calls Grandpa “Papa” and Grandma “Maa’ma” That’s the tender love we have for our Heavenly Father who loved us first and loves us best!

The Spirit himself joins our spirit in testifying that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, we are also heirs— heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, since we suffer with him, so that we may also be glorified with him. The implication of these few words is profound! We are God’s children. God is our Heavenly Father. Jesus is our brother. We are heirs of a place in Heaven. This is our inheritance— eternal joy at the forever wedding feast in Heaven. I was at a wedding feast just the other day. We had all kinds of things to drink. There were all kinds of drinks— some with a wedge of orange and a cherry— some with huge stuffed olives— some with pickled mushrooms— some with long green beans— or celery or little pearl onions— fermented grain beverages— some dark— some lite— some craft brews. There were trays of snacks— smoked salmon— different kinds of sausage and cheese and little crackers with all kinds of spreads. There was prime rib— pink and delicious or chicken— a salad with caramel and apple slices— potatoes— and much more! There were slices of wedding cake— 5 layers of chocolate or white and more! Nice— *very* nice— but imagine the forever wedding feast in Heaven. In Heaven we are heirs— not just heirs of things and stuff— but heirs of eternal life— where there is no more death or mourning or crying or pain. Where the old order of things is gone. Where Jesus will make everything new! We are sure to have troubles in this world. There will be painful frustrations. We have a rose bush in our back yard— with grass and the finest little thistles— and old broken branches with thorns. Because Jesus loves us doesn’t mean we won’t have pain and grief in this life. But the apostle Paul wrote, **“For I conclude that our sufferings at the present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us. In fact, creation is waiting with eager longing for the sons of God to be revealed. What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will trouble or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? Just as it is written: For your sake we are being put to death all day long. We are considered as sheep to be slaughtered. No, in all these things we are**

more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor rulers, neither things present nor things to come, nor powerful forces, neither height nor death, nor anything in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:18f EHV. Amen!

To God alone all glory!

Rev. Anthony P. Schatz

