



Sermon Transcription • Abbotsford

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Christian Benefits - (Romans 8:1-17)

[Please Note: This transcript has been lightly edited for ease of reading. Also, some headings have been added in square brackets to aid the reader in locating portions of the sermon.]

The first time I ever travelled outside of the United States on a trip counted to me — Listen, my mother is Canadian, so, no offence to anybody, but Canada didn't count in my heart, anyway, because it always felt a little bit like home. My family is from Prince Edward Island and all that sort of... so when we moved to Canada it just always felt normal. I grew up eating Shreddies, so it was like, yeah, it's fine. But, the first time I had ever travelled out the U.S. to a place that felt really foreign to me was when my mom decided to use some of the money that she had earned working to send us to Manzanillo, Mexico. I didn't know where that was and this was before the days of Google Maps and so I pulled out a map and I traced it all the way down. I had some friends who'd been to Mexico, to that area actually say, "Yeah, it's really warm, but it's not the United States." And I was like, "Well, ya, obviously. Neither is Canada, the United States." "Yah, but it's *not*. Just don't expect something different." So, I was like, "Oh, okay." We ended up going down there and they were right. If you've been to those parts of the world, I was immediately thrust into a setting that had stark differences between the wealthy and the poor down the main street of the town. I was stunned every night by my inability to go to sleep, much of that was due to the fact that there were animals crawling across the walls. Little demogorgons going all over anywhere [laughter] and I was freaked out of my mind thinking that they were going to eat me at night. I remember, actually, as the week went on just begging my parents, "Can we just go to eat somewhere normal?" Of course for me normal, just normal. And they were like, "Well, okay, we'll go to Domino's pizza." And I was like, "Meh." I mean Domino's in barely pizza on the best of the days and so then you go down to Mexico and they just didn't get the message, apparently, on what that was supposed to taste like. I remember going to Domino's thinking, "This is just not right at all." We got to the end of the week and my sister and I were just begging ...We got to go home. We got to go home. We got to go home. We got to go home." Right? I'm scared all of the time inside the house, outside the house, you know, I grew up coddled, okay? Let's just be honest about it. So, we finally get to the airport and there is an eight hour delay for our plane to leave. I was just so upset and bothered and I looked out on the tarmac and there were these guys having lunch and I was like, "No, not lunch. Plane. Go fix the plane!" Finally, we got up in the air and my father said to me about an hour into the flight, he poked me and he said, "Hey, look out the window." I looked down and there was this big city and he said, "You know what that is?" I said, "What?" "San Diego" [sighs with relief] I said, "Oh Dad, even if we crash, we are safe." [laughter] We landed, actually, in San Francisco. I kissed the ground in San Francisco. I didn't like San Francisco prior to that, but I loved it that day. I kissed the ground. I remember getting back to our house in the



east side of Seattle and everything that I complained about prior to going was now a rich blessing. I loved our house. I loved the yard. I loved all of the things... “oh, it’s so wonderful”. This is what happens, of course, when you travel sometimes. You go away and you come back. This is the only reasonable explanation I have for camping, right? [laughter] That you go out and you live homeless for a while and then you come back and you’re like, “Oh, I have a house. Look! Indoor plumbing. It’s amazing.” I told a guy the other day, actually, that I think this is the reason we send our kids on mission trips. There not doing a whole lot of missions, the high school kids, so we should called it organized suffering trips, right? So, that they come back and they just are finally thankful for the food that you make for them. You’ve had this experience, I know you have. You realize what you’ve got when you’ve been away for a little bit and you get some perspective on it.

I sometimes think that we, as Christians, need to get a little perspective on what we’ve got. Familiarity can breed contempt and maybe doesn’t breed contempt, but it just breeds boredom. “Yeah, yeah, yeah, I’m a Christian. Uh-huh.” We go to church. We hear the same phrases over and over again. They’re just so common. We don’t really realize either what they mean or how many blessings that we actually have. And it’s hard, listen, it’s hard in our culture today because we feel increasingly ostracized. It’s hard to be a Christian. We focus a lot on the difficulty of it. We talk about it more and more. Sometimes it’s important to take a step back and just have a look and say, “Let’s just think for a minute about the *benefits* of being a believer in the Lord Jesus.” That’s what Romans 8 actually is. This is the Apostle Paul basically giving you a list of benefits. Remember if you get a credit card, a new one, and it comes with that little booklet on the side that no one ever reads. It’s got benefits listed... These are all the benefits of having this card... Romans 8 is basically that pamphlet. Paul is saying, “Listen, let’s stop for a minute and just focus on all the things that it means now for you to be a believe in the Lord... what do you get because you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ? I’m going to highlight three of them in Romans 8:1-17 here. There’s more, but there is three big ones.

1. We are free from condemnation.
2. We live according to the Spirit.
3. We are adopted as children.

[We are Free from Condemnation]

Here is the first of those: Romans 8:1-4,

“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”

There’s a lot there and I want to break it down a little bit for us. The first big point he is trying to make is “Listen, there is no condemnation for those who are Christians. If you are in Christ Jesus, which is



what it means to be a Christian, that's the definition of it, you no longer stand condemned." That word 'condemned' or 'condemnation' means the just penalty for a guilty person. So, the wages of sin, according to the book of Romans, is death. The wages of sin is death. So, therefore, if you have sinned, you deserve death. This is why some really creative types have translated this first line of Romans 8 this way: They have said, "Now there is no death penalty for those whose who are in Christ Jesus." Because that is the just penalty for your sins, it's what you've earned. So, in your mind you should be thinking, "Alright, so I was on death row." Justly so, because you have failed to live up to the standard that the righteous God has given. You are there, you have rebelled against Him, you are on your way to the guillotine, lethal injection, noose, whatever it is. You are picking out the food for your last supper and then, out of nowhere, you get pardoned. The guard comes to the door and says, "No, listen, actually, we're going to let you go." Then moments later you're on the street walking down a free man, a free woman, instead of somebody who is going to die in the coming moments. And, as you're walking down that street, you're thinking, the question that's coming to your mind, of course, is, "How did that happen? How did I go from being fully condemned to free from condemnation?" And Paul actually answers that question in verse 2,

"...because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death."

Now, I want to explain that line. I got to go back. He's playing around with the word "law" here. So, let's go back to Romans 7 where he starts his little law game. Romans 7:22. What does that mean? "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set us free from the law of sin and death?" Well, you go back to Romans 7:22 and here is what it says. Now, follow here, it's a little bit tricky. Romans 7:22-25,

"For in my inner being I delight in God's law [okay, so what law are we talking about there? Well, that's probably, likely, a reference to what we call the mosaic law, the law of Moses that was given to the people of Israel. So, in my mind, Paul's saying that In my inner being, I rejoice or delight in the law of God.], but I see another law at work in me, [so there's the law of my mind, which I agree with and want to keep, but then there is at work within me this other law. Verse 23,] ...I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind [that's the law that he is agreeing with, the law of God] and making me a prisoner of the law of sin [that's the one that's in my body. Two laws; one in my mind, one of my body. It's making me a prisoner of law of sin] at work within me. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?"

So, in other words, he's basically saying, "Listen, every time that I want to agree that yes, God, I want to not covet, for example, because your law says it. But, whenever I try to do that in my life, it doesn't happen." So, there's a barrier, there's a clog, there's a blockage, there's something stuck... "there's another law at work in the members of my body that is defeating the law of my mind." Verse 25,

Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord! [So, he gives you an indication as to where he's going to go in chapter 8] So then [summary], I myself in my mind as a slave to God's law, but in my sinful nature a slave to the law of sin."



Now, Romans 8:1-3,

“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus [well, why not?], because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life [that’s a new one. That’s not the law of my mind and it’s not the law of my body. It is an alien law. There’s another law in town. The law of the Spirit of life] has set you free from the law of sin and death [that’s the one that was in my body.] For what the law [the one of my mind] was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh [by the law of my body], God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering.”

So, I’ll give you an illustration here that maybe will help. I’ve been watching a lot of volleyball lately, both of my boys play volleyball for their school team. I want you to imagine that the volleyball coach likes to yell his commands from the side and his command is simple, “Win! I want you to win! In order to win we must have the ball land inbounds on their side of the net. Win! Win! Win! Win! Win! Everyone gather around. Win!” The kids all go out, “Win! Win! We’re going to win! We’re going to win!” The ball comes over, first point of the game, we’re going to pass it, setter sets it, coach is yelling “Win!”, guys goes up to spike it and he hits it and it goes right into the block because, on the other side of the net, there is like seven feet tall guys and they just up and they block it. Boom! Right back down. The coach is saying, “Did you not hear me? I said win! That’s my law. Win.” So, they do it again, pass it, set it, hits the block, down. Pass it, set it, hits the block, down. Every single time that they try, that we, our team, we try to win, to do what the law of the coach is, we fail because there is a blockage. O wretched team that we are! Who will deliver us from these two bodies of death? [laughter] That’s a great illustration. What do you need? You need a better player and in comes Jesus who is awesome at volleyball, [laughter] right, and he comes in and he just like [makes screeching noises] dropping and he’s hitting over the block, around the block. Who cares about the block? There is no block. And, all of the sudden, every time the ball comes over it’s not failure, it’s success. Is it your success? No! You stink! That was proven! Whose success? It’s Jesus’, but Jesus’ success is attributed to your team and you say, “Yes! We’re winning!” The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death. Therefore, there is no condemnation. There is *no* condemnation for those who are.. “yah, but I act really bad a lot as a Christian”... there is *no* condemnation! How you act as a Christian is not material to this! I know, it’s scandalous, but this player, this Jesus, he keeps winning. Jesus fulfilled the law in us so we are free from condemnation even though we sometimes still feel like we’re under it.

Listen, if I had to describe the way that Christians act toward their spiritual... the way that they understand their relationship to God, here’s how, after years of being a pastor, that I would summarize how most Christians think. So, I come to faith in Jesus and, as a result, [holding up a water bottle] I am filled to the very brim with goodness. Right? So, my cup is filled with the water of God’s grace. But then, once I come to faith, I’m not really that good at it, okay? So I start to fail a little bit. [taking a sip from the water bottle] And so even though I began kind of in a righteous state, I’m not as righteous anymore or I’ve lost a little bit, right? And if you’re Ezra... [drinking a large amount of water] [laughter] yah, it’s not going well, right, so... So now when God looks at me, I mean, He was happy at the



beginning, when God looked at me of course He looked at me and said, “Welcome to the family.” But now, He’s kind of “I wish I never would have brought them in.” So, what do you need? Well, what you need is a little bit of infusion so you go to church, right? That’s always works. [pouring water in from another bottle] And then you go to a community group, [pouring more water into the bottle] right, do some prayer and you get filled back up to the very tippy top. Of course, the problem is that when you went to the community group you didn’t really like the people, [drinking water out of the bottle] right, and after church you said a few words [taking another drink]. [laughter] So, here’s the thing. You started out in a state of grace, but now the way it works is you either get filled up and you’re out of condemnation or you get drained down and you’re in condemnation. So you kind of always view God as being either really “Yay, you’re doing well!” Or “Oh, I’m so disappointing in the way that you are doing and I wish I never would have picked you.”

What Paul is trying to argue is this is an absolutely rubbish way of viewing things, that your cup is always filled, not because you’re great, but it’s filled with the water of Christ. It’s his water. It is overflowing. You can never empty it out. Even though you fail as long you return, He welcomes you over and over. He’s actually awfully fond of you. Even in your moments of deepest, darkest weakness, he’s fond of you.

Brendan Manning tells a story. Brendan Manning was an Irish priest. He was one of the best writers, actually, about the grace of God that had been around for a long, long time. Anyway, Brendan Manning he tells this story about a man named Edward Farrell who travelled from his hometown of Detroit to visit Ireland where he would celebrate his uncle’s eightieth birthday. Early in the morning of his uncle’s birthday, Edward and his uncle went for a walk along the shores of Lake Killarney. As the sun rose, his uncle turned and he stared straight into the breaking light. For twenty minutes the two of them stood there on the lake shores silent, staring into the sun. Then, kind of out of nowhere, his elderly, eighty year old that day uncle began to skip along the shoreline, a radiant smile on his face. Well, Edward had to run to catch up with him and, after he caught up with him, he asked, “Uncle Seamus, you look very happy? Why?” “Yes, lad,” [spoken with an Irish accent] the old man said, tears washing down his face, “I’m happy because the Father is very fond of me.” In the moment that Uncle Seamus experienced how much he was loved by his Father in Heaven, an overwhelming joy flooded his heart and he began to dance along the shoreline.

You should dance more. The reason that you don’t dance more, the reason that I don’t dance more, the only explanation I have for that is that you and I don’t really understand how much He loves us. There’s no condemnation. We are free from it.

[We Live According to the Spirit]

I want to go back to verse 3. We’ll read the end of verse 3 to give you a little bit of context. Romans 8:3b-9,

“And so he condemned sin in the flesh, [and then verse 4] in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met is us, [so, we are the people who have the righteous



requirement of the law met in us by Jesus. We are also] who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. [Now that is the statement of fact. That is not what we call an imperative. He's not commanding you to do that, He's saying you are. If you are a Christian, you *are* those who don't live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.] Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh [again, doesn't say *don't* be in the realm of the flesh. You however are *not* in the realm of the flesh] but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ."

So, there is this idea that he is playing with that makes these verses really easy to understand. He is talking about flesh and spirit as governing authorities. He's done this throughout Romans 5-8. When Paul talks about law, he's talking about the laws governing authority. When he's talking about sin, it's a governing authority. So, I've talked about Lawland and Sinland, in this case, Flesh-land, that's all the same place. It's the same country with its certain rules that people who live there must follow. But then there's this other land Graceland, it's Spiritland. Same place, it's another country that has particular rules that one should follow because they live in that particular land. So, each land has it's own rules and here is his point: Christians are living in Spiritland. If you live like you are in Fleshland, you're acting contrary to who you are. So, I want to go back with that in mind. I'll read the passage again. Notice how this unlocks everything that he just said. Romans 8:5-9a,

"Those who live according to the flesh [those who live in Fleshland] have their minds set on what that the flesh desires; [of course they do because that is what it means to live in Fleshland, is that you obey the government. If not, you go to jail.] but those who live in accordance with the Spirit [those who are in Spiritland] have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. [Yah, that's what marks them. They obey the Spirit's desires.] The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; [so the people in Fleshland don't like the rules of Spiritland. That is why they aren't there.] it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God. [But] You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed, the Spirit of God lives in you."

You live in this other land. Live like someone who is in that land!

I want you to imagine for a minute that the United States passes a law for their citizens that they need to do a country line dance every morning while reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.." I grew up saying this, right, as an American citizen. ".. and to the republic who which it stands, one nation under God..." That line, that thing, right? Put your hand over your heart and you do a country line dance. Now you might think this is stupid, but, really, have you noticed the government of the United States recently? This is a very realistic possibility, okay?



[laughter] [starts dancing] “I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America...” I don’t know if this is Irish dancing or country line, it doesn’t matter. [stops dancing] This is a law now. Every morning, country line, pledge of allegiance, same time. Everybody who lives within the borders of the United States. American citizen like I am, you grow up doing that. Well, then I moved to Canada. I come here and I’m coming out of my house one morning because we’re going to go to breakfast together. I stop outside of your car and you’re like, “It’s cold. Get inside.” I say, “Ahh, I’m sorry. I just forgot that I have to do this country line dance while doing the pledge of allegiance.” I’m in front of your car now. [starts dancing] “I pledge allegiance to the United States of America...” [stops dancing] Half way through, what are you going to be saying? “What are you doing?” “Oh, it’s this law in the United States that I have to do it..” And, at some point, you’re going to say, “Brother, you’re not in the United States. Hello! You’re in Canada. So, people who live in Canada ought to live according to the rules of Canada. Those in the States, yes, I can see how you’d have to do that, but you don’t live there anymore. Stop acting like you live there. Be, Jeff, who you are! A resident of Canada. Be who you are.”

So, Paul’s point: Be who you are. You have an obligation, in fact, to live according to the rules of your new land. It’s what he says in Romans 8:12-13,

“Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation— but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; [that’s what that whole land was about] but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.”

So, here’s the big question that you need to ask: If I look at my life, does it look like I’m living in Spiritland or am I still doing a stupid dance?

There was a woman named Henrietta Green who lived between the years 1835 and 1916 in the United States. She was widely considered by her neighbours to be the cheapest woman around. She frequented soup kitchens when they were open and when they were not, she would feed herself and her family on cold oatmeal, being too stingy to heat it. Her son had some medical troubles with one of his legs and eventually had to have it amputated because Henrietta was waiting for treatment from a free medical clinic. She actually died of a seizure while having an argument over the virtues of skim milk... Very few people showed up at her funeral and even fewer came to the lawyer’s office when it was time to divide up her estate. Only a couple of distant family members were there when the lawyer explained that Henrietta Green died with over thirty-one million dollars in the bank.

Is there a greater shame in the world than somebody who has got so much but acts like they have so little? Isn’t that why we get angry with sports star who perform below the giftedness that they have? It’s such a shame when you have been given so much and you act like somebody who has been given so little. But, Christian, do you have any idea how much you have been given? Do you have any idea the riches that you have been given, what has been lavished on you? That’s a word that doesn’t even do it justice. You say, “Well, no, I don’t. Show me. Okay.”



[We are Adopted as Children]

Romans 8:14-17,

“For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption into sonship. And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. 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.”

We’ve been adopted into His family.

This is one of my favourite stories in the Old Testament and it’s about a little guy named Mephibosheth. I probably like it because the name is fun to say, Mephibosheth. He was the son of Jonathan, who was the son of Saul the king. The way it worked, of course, and still probably does work, is that the royal line runs through families. So, if Saul was chosen to be king, the next king is going to be Jonathan, and the next king is going to be, try to say it, Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth, he’s just a little kid, a little baby at this point, but it doesn’t matter. If his grandfather and father die then he is the next king. The problem, of course, in Israel at this time is that God had chosen David to the king and everyone knew it. So, even though Saul was still on the throne, everyone knew David was actually going to take the throne eventually. Well, Saul and Jonathan are out in the field and they are fighting in a battle and they die. So, who is the next king? Well, everybody kind of looking naturally at it say, well, Mephibosheth is the next king, this little kid, but everyone knows that David has been appointed king by God. What do new kings do with the rivals to the throne? They kill them. So, everyone in the palace knows that David is on his way, Saul and Jonathan are dead, and Mephibosheth is in the line of fire. So, his servants pick him up and they run to the door and they drop him and he breaks his legs. They pick him up again and they run and they take off to Lodebar, right, which sounds just like it is, Spuzzum. It’s just out there, [laughter] right? It is as far away as you can get from anything. And he hides there. Of course he hides there. He’s afraid that he’s going to die if the king ever knows where he lives. He grows up there. One day, years later, David is at the palace and he says,

“I made a vow to Jonathan, my best friend, that I would show honour to his family if he ever died. Does anybody know where Mephibosheth is because I want to show him honour.”

“Well I think he lives in Lodebar.”

“Where?”

“Ya.”

“Well, go get him.”

They take the chariots, the royal chariots. The king’s guard goes out to get Mephibosheth. You can imagine that day in Mephibosheth’s life. He’s just sitting there doing what he’s always done. Sitting in his chair, can’t walk. Down the dirt path comes the king’s chariot. What is he thinking?



“Uh-oh. They found me.”

“Mephibosheth, come with us. The king wants to see you.”

“Uh-oh”

They take him all the way back across the countryside, he gets to the palace of the king, they wheel him in or walk him in somehow, and he stand before David and he says to David, “What on earth, O king, would you have to do with a dead dog like me? I am no threat to you, man. Don’t be afraid of me.” David says, “No, no, I didn’t bring you here to kill you. I brought you here to bless you. I promised Jonathan I would bless his family so here is what I want to do. I want you to come into my family, I want you to be in my home, I want you to live in my palace, and I want you to eat meals with us every day, me and my children.” In fact, at the end of story in 2 Samuel 9:13 it says,

“And Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, because he always ate at the king’s table; he was lame in both feet.”

The author intends you to be like “What?! This lame little guy who should have died by all rights is being adopted into the family of the king and is now an heir of all the king has?” Right! This is your story! Death row release, but you’re not walking down the street just free, you are walking down the street a child of the King! Adopted into this family, daughters and sons of the Almighty King. There is certain benefits that come with that. There is three that are listed here at the end of this passage. One of them is that you are not supposed to have any fear like a slave. Look at Romans 8:15,

“The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship...”

Years ago one of the jobs that I took on when I was in college was to be a house sitter for some friends. They were actually the parents of a friend. They were the kind of family that had plastic on their couches and their house, you know, every time you walk into it, they had those vacuum marks in the carpet. There was never anything dirty in this house. And they said, “Well, you come and stay in our house while we are away on a holiday and we’ll pay you some money.” Now, I went for a day and the mother, she showed me around and she said, “Here is the most important thing: Don’t make a mess. Do not make a mess. I want no messes. We are not going to pay you if there is a mess.” Okay, so I’m freaked out now because I’m a mess, [laughter] right? So, I’m like, “Okay.” So, I would show up to this place, I would feed the dog, and I would tiptoe across the carpet so I wouldn’t ruin the vacuum marks. They wanted me to sleep in this bed, and I would lay down on top of the bed and I would lay there and not move the entire night and then I would levitate in the morning, [laughter] across the carpet and I would leave and close the doors. I’d come back and I did this for an entire week. When they came back, they came into their house and they asked me to come over and I thought, “Oh no. I ruined something.” I came in and they said,

“Did you actually stay here? We’re not even sure that you actually stayed here.”

“Well, yes I did.”



“Well, why is there no evidence that you were here?”

“Because you told me that I shouldn’t make any messes at all?”

“Well, what was wrong? Why were you so worried?”

I said, “Because I was afraid.”

Right, this is what it looks like to be an employee, this is what it looks like to be a slave, you’re always worried that if you fail there are going to be consequences. So, you live your whole life trying to make sure that you mind your Qs and mark your Ps, or whatever it is that they say. You’re worried all the time. What Paul is saying here is that slaves are worried that by failing they will face consequences, but *sons are always sons*. My kids leave their socks everywhere. They’re a mess and they are still my boys, she’s still my girl. There is nothing you can do to make God love you more and there is nothing you can do to make God love you less. He treats you like a son, like a daughter.

It’s also means... I said there were three things. There’s no fear like a slave, but, second, there is closeness to your Daddy and by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” You know that little phrase “Abba”. It’s actually an endearing term that is only reserved for your daddy. Okay, it conveys a close relationship. You have to think about a Jew hearing that. “Okay, we’re supposed to call God our daddy now? You mean the same God who is transcendent, separated, who made that temple and we couldn’t even approach him? The only person who could ever approach Him was the high priest on one day of the year and if he went into the Holy of Holies and messed it up he would die on the spot? That God, who is not to be trifled with, is our daddy? Huh?” Right. He’s your daddy so that you have *bold* access. Isn’t that what children do? They audacious in their access, aren’t they? Their requests for their daddies.

I was at a conference this week here at the church and I got a phone call. I was here for one of the evenings and my little girl, eight year old, she called me on the phone. Right when I was about to be here for the evening, had been gone all day, most of the day before. I was going to be here for the conference and she said to me, “Daddy, you come home now.” [laughter] And I said, “Honey, I can’t come home right now.” “Yes you can. You come home right now. I haven’t seen you today or yesterday and you come home now.” “Sophie, no.” “Now, Daddy.” “Okay, just hold on.” I looked around and there was nobody in the room who mattered anywhere near to me as my little girl, so I was like “Meh, I’m going home.” And so I did. The next day, I came back to the conference and I was sitting right here in the front of this room. I’m just sitting there and they are having this quiet prayer time where we are reflecting on God and His ways and then next to me, like, of the sudden I get jolted, and next to me is my son. He’s supposed to be in school. “What are you doing here?” “Dad, I’m hungry.” [laughter] He had walked down the street with his friend, plopped himself in the middle of the prayer meeting, “There’s gotta be something here to eat. What are you guys doing anyway?” Audacious! Absolutely ridiculous! Isn’t that great? You do realize, though, that this is the access you have to your Father. Why wouldn’t you climb up on his knee and “I’m hungry.” It doesn’t matter what’s going on in the world, just jump up there. By him we cry, “Abba, Father.”



And the third one is that we're heirs. This is perhaps the best, right, the capstone to all of it. Romans 8:17,

“Now if we are children, then we are heirs— heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ...”

I want you to imagine for a minute that I come to you after the service and I say to you, “Listen, I heard this week from your great, great, great, great Uncle Joe and he contacted the church because he wanted me to let you know that you are in line for an inheritance. The inheritance he wants to give you is his remaining yearly subscription to Rods and Guns magazine.” [laughter] And you're like, “Oh, thanks Joe. I don't know him, but thank you.” And you go along your merry way. Now Imagine, though, that maybe I come to you after church and, instead of saying that about Rods and Guns magazine, I come to you and I say, “Actually, your Uncle Joe he contacted us and he has left you three billion dollars.” Now, which one of those is going to control your thinking and acting in the next few minutes. Now, of course, the answer is the second, and here's why. Here's the rule: The more you stand to inherit, the greater it transforms your thinking and living. We agreed on that? The more to stand to inherit, the greater it transforms your thinking and living. Okay, so Christian, what do you stand to inherit? You are an heir of God. The earth is His and everything in it, you will reign forever with Him. How should that knowledge transform your thinking and acting in the present time? Shouldn't it have some sort of effect of the way you view suffering? Paul himself, in the next few verses, is going to say, “I don't consider the present suffering worthy to be compared with the glory that is going to be revealed in us.” The inheritance is so great that it colours everything I'm facing now. Just wait. Just wait. And doesn't it colour they way you think of others' opinions of you. “Well, they don't like me because of this or that or whatever..” You are a child of the King! Princesses and princes don't shrink back. They are bold in their joy. They are bold in their proclamation. They are bold in their confidence that their father loves them. You do not know who you are. If you did, you'd dance a lot more. Be who you are, children of the King.

Let me pray for us:

Lord, I love this passage of scripture. It reverberates in my heart and mind and I pray that that would be the case here, Lord. It's filled with indicatives of grace, filled with truths about us that have influence over the way that we live. So, I'm going to trust your Spirit and ask you, Father, by the power of your Spirit, to now make these truths work themselves out in the way we think and act. And we trust, Father, that you will do that in our time. We thank you. It's all of grace. We thank you. In Jesus' name, Amen.