

Life Group Lesson - March 6, 2011

"In Christ – A Son and an Heir"

Illustration

One day a man approached Watchman Nee and said, "No matter how much I pray, no matter how hard I try, I simply cannot seem to be faithful to my Lord. I think I'm losing my salvation." Nee said, "Do you see this dog here? He is my dog. He is house-trained; he never makes a mess; he is obedient; he is a pure delight to me. Out in the kitchen I have a son, a baby son. He makes a mess, he throws his food around, he fouls his clothes, he is a total mess. But who is going to inherit my kingdom? Not my dog; my son is my heir. You are Jesus Christ's heir because it is for you that He died." We are Christ's heirs, not through our perfection but by means of His grace.

Scripture and Questions

Read John 1:12

- What does Jesus give us the power to become?
- To whom does Jesus give this?
- Do you see yourself as a child of God?

Read Matthew 12:46-50

- Who did Jesus stretch his hand out towards? (v. 49)
- If you do the will of the Father in heaven, what are you to Jesus?
- How does it make you feel that those in Christ who do His will are considered God's family?

Read Romans 8:14-18

- For as many as are led by the _____ are considered to be what?
- What did we receive according to verse 15?

There is no English word that can correctly convey the true meaning of the word "Abba". It conveys a close intimacy that is reserved for parents and children. "Dad" is close, but still does it injustice. Through Christ, we have been adopted and are no longer just "children" but "sons and daughters". He is no longer a formal "Father" but an intimate "Daddy".

- What is the difference between approaching your "Father" and your "Daddy"?
- Adoption conveys the choosing – the special selection of children. How does it make you feel that God has specially chosen you to be His son or daughter, making Him your "Daddy"?
- "The Spirit of Adoption" means that we know that we are His children. He changes our identity to that of His own and we now attain the rights and privileges of a member of His family. We are privileged to come before God as our beloved Father at any time. What emotions and actions does the term "adoption" fill your mind with?
- In verse 16, the Spirit bears witness that we are what? (Also read John 8:35)

The seal of the Spirit in our life testifies or bears witness that we are of God – in Christ. The sons of God have got something within their hearts which tells them there is a relationship between themselves and God. They feel something which tells them that old things have passed away and all things have become new (2 Corinthians 5:17): that guilt is gone, that peace is restored, that heaven's door is open, and hell's door is shut. They have, in short, what the children of the world do not—a felt, positive, and reasonable hope. They have what Paul calls the "seal" and "deposit" of the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13)

With some it is a loud, clear, ringing, distinct testimony of conscience: "I am Christ's, and Christ is mine." With others it is a little, feeble, stammering whisper, which the devil and the flesh often prevent from being heard. Some of the children of God race on their course

towards heaven with full assurance. Others are tossed back and forth on their voyage, and will scarcely believe they have got faith. But take the person who considers himself the least and lowest of the sons of God: ask him if he will give up the little bit of religious hope which he has attained? Ask him if he will exchange his heart, with all its doubts and conflicts, its wars and fears—ask him if he will exchange that heart for the heart of the downright worldly and careless man? Ask him if he would be content to turn around and throw down the things he has got hold of, and go back to the world? Who can doubt what the answer would be? "I cannot do that," he would reply. "I do not know whether I have faith, and I do not feel sure I have got grace; but I have got something within me I would not like to part with." And what is that "*something*"? I will tell you—it is the witness of the Spirit. None of us are the least and the lowest sons of God – we are children and heirs of God and co-heirs with Jesus. Believe and live that!

- If we are children (first), then we are what as well (2 things)?
- What does the title "heir" and "co-heir" convey about us?
- What kind of inheritance do we receive as an heir and a co-heir? How does this compare with material/earthly inheritances?

Faith marries you to the beloved Son of God, and entitles you to be counted among the sons. Faith gives you fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. (1 John 1:3) Faith grafts you into the Father's family, and opens up to you a room in the Father's house. Faith gives you life instead of death, and makes you a son, instead of being a servant. The sons of God are a people who feel towards God in a way that the children of the world cannot. God's children no longer feel a cringing fear of God. Their feelings towards Him are as a reconciled parent.

- What is the condition of being heirs and co-heirs at the end of verse 17?

Most people quote this verse, but never finish it. The sons of God have a cross to carry. Sons and heirs have trials, troubles, and afflictions to go through for the Gospel's sake. Sons have trials from this world, the flesh and from the devil. Some suffer more and some less, but all must suffer for the Lord. We must take up our cross and follow Him (Luke 9:23) – using our suffering and trials as means to bring Him glory and spread His Gospel (James 1:2-4).

Paul reminds us in verse 18 that the sufferings of this present world do not compare to the glory that will be revealed in us. What we endure in this world is a small price to pay for the gracious benefits we receive. Verse 19 says all of creation earnestly awaits this revelation in the sons of God. 1 Peter 5 (says we should be, "firm in our faith knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world." Suffering for Christ is seen in numerous scriptures (2 Corinthians 1:6-7; Hebrews 2:10; Matthew 5:10-12; John 15:18-20; 2 Corinthians 4:8-11; 2 Corinthians 12:10; 2 Timothy 3:12; 1 Peter 4:12-14, 16).

- Are the trials and sufferings in your life revealing your sonship and heir/co-heir status?
- Our suffering comes from men and our glory comes from God. Our suffering is earthly and our glory is heavenly. Our suffering is short and our glory is eternal. Our suffering is trivial and our glory is limitless. Our suffering is in our mortal and corrupted bodies, whereas our glory will be in our perfected and imperishable bodies.
- How can you use your suffering and trials for the Lord?
- Is your pursuit of Christ and efforts in preaching the Gospel and making disciples causing you discomfort and sacrifice or are you laid-back and comfortable in your walk with the Lord? (this is the picture of a lazy, spoiled, rich-kid who abuses and takes advantage of his position in the family)

Read Philippians 2:15

- We are to become what kind of children of God? The opposite would be spoiled brats who abuse their inheritance and position in the family.
- What kind of world are we as children placed into?
- For what reasons are we placed into it?