The Sonship of the Believer

Romans 8:14-22

Introduction:

In the first 13 verses of chapter 8 we were introduced to the new power in life for the believer.

I. Addition to the Family of God – 8:14-17

In this passage we will be faced by two expressions: (1) Children of God and, (2) Sons of God.

We become “children (τέκνα) of God” by faith,

John 1.12-13

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children (τέκνα) of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born (ἐγεννήθησαν), not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

“Sons of God” υἱοθεσίας - Adoption – “Son-placing”. This is more of a Roman concept than Jewish or Greek. A child in a Roman family may be elevated to the status of Son by the Father. He then has more privileges and less regulations on his life.

The Holy Spirit places the believer as an adult son in the Family of God. Three thoughts are stated concerning Sons:

A. They are Led by the Spirit – 8:14

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”

Leading is a two-way street: The Holy Spirit shows the way, but the “Son” must walk in it. He must cooperate with the Holy Spirit.

God delights in leading His people – In the wilderness He provided cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. But the leading must be followed. There needs to be a quiet time with God where we read and listen to His Word. There must be following of His instruction. Sons are also loved by the Father.

B. They are Loved by the Father – 8:15

“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 “sons of the Law” followed with fear of Almighty God. [The death sentence ran all the way through the law.]

Not so the “Sons of Grace” They call out with joy and love, “Abba, Father.” “Abba” is an Aramaic word meaning “Papa”, “Daddy”, “Pop, Pop”. Jesus used this expression “Abba, Father.” in Gethsemane when taking to His Father in Mark 14:36.

We have been brought into the closest intimacy with our heavenly Father, the kind of intimacy Jesus Himself enjoyed. (Phillips)

The word “Father” is one of intelligent trust. So, we have a word of love (Abba) and a word of trust (Father)

“The term spirit of adoption (v. 15) may not be a reference to the Holy Spirit. It could be the aspiration to share in the adoption like a young child aspires to adulthood. (Hodges)

C. They are Lauded with the Son – 8:16-17

1. We are Heirs as Saved Children – 8:16

“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God.”

The “witness of the Spirit” is found three times in the N.T.:

* Hebrews 10:15 - He witnesses to us.
* I John 5:10 - He witnesses in us.
* Here, in Romans 8:16 - He witnesses with us.

2. We are Joint Heirs as Suffering Sons – 8:17

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

The use of “children” and “sons” in this context helps in understanding verse 17. There seems to a distinction between being “heirs” and “joint-heirs”

* Children – all believers- are “heirs of God”. This is automatic for all believers.
* Sons – who suffer with Him will reign with Him and share His glory.

That fits with the tenor of Scriptures which indicates that there are rewards to be won (Gold silver, and precious stones). And there is loss of rewards: wood, hay and stubble (1 Cor. 3)

Believers who take up their cross and follow Him and live godly lives “will suffer persecution.” These are the joint-heirs who will rule and reign with Christ.

II. Adaptation for the Family of God – 8:18-22

A. The Groaning of Creation – 8:18

“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.”

The key to enduring suffering is not to look around you – but to look beyond yourself and your circumstances to the future as it is revealed in the Word; to the Glory that is certain to follow.

B. The Creation was Involved in the Fall – 8:19-20

1. The Vegetation was Involved - the tree

2. The Animal Kingdom - the snake.

(These were judged at the time. Gen 3)

God asked Adam: What did you do? Adam turned to his wife and said, “The woman You gave me.” Eve turned to the serpent and said, “The serpent deceived me”. And the Serpent didn’t have a leg to stand on.

3. Man, Adam, of course, succumbed to the temptation and caused the fall.

“For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.” (19)

Creation was made for man and the key for the future of creation is the future of man. When man is finally redeemed, the creation will be redeemed with Him.

“For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected *it* in hope;” (20)

Futility means that Creation “does does not measure up to that for which it was intended.

So it groans. The One Who subjected it was God; but the reason God did that was because man had sinned. So, man was responsible indirectly.

But creation was subjected “in hope”. The animals fight each other, weather turns ugly sometimes, meteors collide; we have earthquakes, landslides and sink holes. Some areas of the world are inhabitable.

Note:

Paul is not saying that the Mango tree is sitting there beside our window, thinking all of these things to its self. Like: “Here comes Ray with the clippers. One of these days that will all be over.” Paul has personified the creation in order to get his point across which follows in v. 21.

C. The Creation is Saved from the Fall – 8:21-22

“because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.” (21)

God is not going to redeem man and throw the rest of creation away.

“For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.” (22)

God is going to make a new creation “for the old creation has passed away”. (Rev. 21) No wonder, saved humans are a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17). God has a plan for each part of His creation. In the redemption, each part of creation will be perfected and designed to function forever. As God planned for it to do in the first place.

Conclusion: