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The Family of God
Romans 8:14-17
May 15, 2016

Family Reunions are great to experience; they are times of fun, times of stress, and times of mourning. Reunions in the body of Christ are greater because we are not judged as being guilty yet pardoned by the blood of Jesus Christ. God knew we could not overcome sin on our own because of our weakness to it. So the Lord pardoned us in spite of us. That shouts me. We are free from the bondage of sin and free in the spirit of Christ Jesus. Paul then reminds us of the benefits of being in the family of the Lord.

1. We are apart of a great family.

Those who choose to live in the spirit are incorporated into the body of Christ. According to the letter to the Romans, when the Roman citizens received Jesus on the day of Pentecost, they returned to Rome and established the church of Jesus Christ because of their experience. The power of Pentecost gave those in attendance the power of Jesus Christ to witness to those who were gathered in Jerusalem.

It does not matter what our religious background is; when we are saved, we become a part of the family of God. When we are saved, we receive the spirit of adoption. Before we were saved we were strangers and aliens of God. But once saved we immediately became adopted into the body of Christ.

We are adopted into the family of God that cannot be limited by size, location, or ethnic background. We are a part of a great family because we have a great Father. We can cry out Abba Father, which means Father. So we can approach God and say Father, Father and God will receive us as part of the family.

2. We have a gracious inheritance.

We cannot earn, merit, or deserve our gracious inheritance; God gave it to us as a result of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Our inheritance was not released until Jesus died on the cross. Once released, we have the same benefits and privileges as everybody who have received him.

The man formally known as Prince, as great as he was, died and didn't think to leave a will to divide and disperse his wealth. But thank be to God that God put his will in writing for all to see and benefit from. We all have a fair and equitable share of what is to be inherited. We all stand on equal ground with every other member of the family. That shouts me. What shouts me even more is that our inheritance cancelled out previous debts and relationships. When I was adopted, everything I owed was cancelled. The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life. That's good news.

3. We are commanded to participate in his glorious suffering in three ways.
 - a. Circumstantial suffering - being a victim of suffering because of suffering for things such as hurricanes and tornadoes, earthquakes, etc. they are victims of circumstances.
 - b. Consequential suffering – when we suffer because of the hand of another. It's like being in a car wreck because someone was texting while driving.
 - c. Kingdom conscious suffering - Volunteering to suffer for the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We suffer because we are children of the King. We have the great example in Jesus Christ of what kingdom conscious suffering looks like. Jesus said "not my will but thy will be done." Suffering was necessary for God's plan of salvation to come to fruition. He suffered but then he was glorified.

When we become members of the family of God, we are united with that Great Cloud of Witnesses and we are able to enjoy benefits from God, both now and for eternity. This is what it means to be a part of the family of God.