

Ron and Val Berrus

...Laboring for the Laborers

Just Checking In #114 Life changed by the Gospel

September 1, 2011

Psalm 39:12 "Hear my prayer, O Lord... for I am a 'pilgrim' with You..."

Romans 8

I am in the middle of a preaching series on the book of Romans. (If you want to hear the messages, you can go to the Bible Baptist website at www.bbcpa.org and click on the sermons link – some are video, some are audio.) It has been a blessing to my own soul as I have spent many hours meditating on the gospel and its application to both the sinner and the saint, the lost and the found, the Jew and the Gentile. These last few weeks I have been dwelling on change the gospel brings into our lives.

**Romans 8 Saints, Servants, Sons Changed by the
Gospel**

More and More Amazed By Grace!

As I've been preaching through the book of Romans, I am becoming more and more amazed at the grace of God lavished on us in Christ.

Grace is not merely "getting what we don't deserve." Grace is far greater than that. Grace is "getting the exact opposite of what we deserve." Let me illustrate. I enjoy my freedom as a citizen of the USA. I don't deserve it, since others sacrificed for me to have it. But I would stand amazed, stunned, struck speechless if after purposefully trying to destroy the USA and deserving only incarceration and execution for my high crimes of treason, I were allowed to regain such freedom. But grace is greater than that! What if I then were promoted to the highest office in the land, then given the Congressional Medal of Honor, then made wealthy beyond measure by the public treasury and then given the guarantee of lifelong immunity from all future prosecution. This is more, much more, than "getting what I don't deserve." It is "getting the exact opposite of what I deserve!" Now, before you express your outrage against such incredible, inexplicable, seemingly insane treatment of a guilty criminal, look in the mirror and see there the face of such a sinner treated with infinitely more compassion than the one described above. And the One who has treated you so is the Sovereign Judge of sinners who chose to bestow this grace upon you at the cost of the death of His only, beloved Son.

Paul's letter to the Romans is all about the righteousness of God. He describes

God's righteousness as a righteousness expressed in wrath against the sinner, as satisfied in the death of His Son, and as bestowed on the believing sinner allowing God to be "just and the justifier of the one who believes in Jesus." (3:26)

UNRIGHTEOUS, ENSLAVED, AND ALIENATED

NOW

JUSTIFIED, FREED, ADOPTED

Paul describes mankind as unrighteous in our sin, enslaved to our sin, and alienated by our sin. These three aspects of our ruined and unrecoverable state are delineated verse by verse as we walk the pages of Romans 1:17-3:18. Sin defiles by making us unrighteous, dominates by making us slaves, and divides by separating us from God.

JUSTIFIED SAINTS (3:19-5:20),

**Justified Saints 8:1 "No condemnation..." Righteousness No
Condemnation Justification**

This first section of Romans (1:18-5:21) focuses first on our former unrighteousness. The remedy for which is justification (3:19-5:20.) God imputes our sin to Christ and Christ's righteousness to us, making us holy in His sight. Hence the first title Paul gives to the believers in Rome is "saints!" (1:7) He focuses on our former unrighteousness and then our present righteous standing before God. We have been changed from unrighteous to righteous, from unjust to justified.

FREED SERVANTS (6-7)

**Freed Servants 8:2 "Set me free..." Freedom No Obligation
Emancipation**

Then Paul labors to illustrate the sinner as enslaved to sin's domination. The remedy for which is freedom. God has, by the law of the Spirit of life, set us free from the power of sin and death. *Just as the law was powerless to set us right, so it was powerless to set us free.* In chapters 6-7 Paul focuses on the former bondage and the present freedom. We were enslaved to serve sin, now we are emancipated, free to serve righteousness.

ADOPTED SONS (8:14-39)

Adopted Sons 8:14 Are sons of God... Love No Apprehension

Anticipation

In Romans 8:1-14 Paul begins a glorious review of our transformed condition as believers by highlighting the first two realities... we are justified saints (no condemnation 8:1) and freed servants (set me free 8:2) with a new nature with new desires and mindset, a new power and a new fight to put sin to death in our bodies. Lest we misunderstand, Paul now takes us to a new height to view yet more of God's exalted grace by telling us that our position is ***even more than justified saints and freed and fighting servants, but actually also adopted and beloved sons.*** *"For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, <"Abba,> Father."*

Many years ago I studied Hebrew with a Rabbi in Wilkes-Barre named Mordecai Fuchs. He had a delightful little five year old daughter. She spoke flawless English, Yiddish and Hebrew. Mordecai was born in Romania, lived in Israel since age 3, and came to America to study voice at Julliard. He was the Cantor at Temple Israel in Wilkes-Barre. One day, as Mordecai and I were studying in an empty classroom in the Synagogue, a group of children tramped down the hallway past our open door. All of a sudden, his little girl ran into the room excitedly crying "Abba, Abba, Abba..." and threw herself into his arms and gave him a big hug. He hugged her tightly, kissed her cheek, and then sent her running back to catch up to her class. I shall never forget the clearest lesson Mordecai ever taught me.... the glorious reality of what "crying Abba" means. It is a loud, passionate, delighted shout of acclamation. No shame, no fear, no hesitation... just a heart filled with love and anticipation in the certainty of our Father's delight in us, and we in Him.

We have been chosen by the Father, by love taken into His family, made His sons, and given the very Spirit of sonship, so that we exclaim with all the love and delight of a little child running into the arms of his father crying "Abba!" There is *no apprehension* or fear in this love. There is only *eager anticipation* of what He holds in store for us because of His great love in making us His own sons and daughters.

God has poured this love into our hearts by His Spirit, as Paul first declared in Romans 5:5. We have the righteousness of Christ, the freedom of the Spirit, and the love of the Father guaranteeing our everlasting delight as saints, servants

and sons of the living, life transforming God.

Paul is taking us to the dizzying heights of grace as He reminds us that we are *righteous saints in Christ, freed servants in the Spirit* and *beloved sons of the Father*. The rest of Romans 8 serves to expand and explain the multifaceted realities of our adoption as sons. We will save this for the next JCI, if God allows.

Phillips, Craig and Dean wrote... WHAT KIND OF LOVE IS THIS?

What kind of love is this

That climbs the hill

That bears the cross

That takes the nails

What kind of love is this

That takes my place

That gives His life

And clears my name

Oh, I want to know

What kind of love is this

What kind of love is this

That cries alone

That tastes of death

To bring me home

Oh, I want to know

What kind of love this is

What kind of love is this

That fills my soul

That lifts me up

And makes me whole

What kind of love is this

That gives me hope

That dries my tears

And brings me joy

Oh, I want to know

What kind of love this is

Self Check:

1. Does grace amaze my soul and fill me with grateful wonder, or am I so consumed with present burdens that I have lost my delight in the gospel?

2. Ingratitude is a consequence of believing you deserve better than what you are receiving. List what you really deserve in view of your sin and the justice of God.
3. How does being a saint, servant and son of God address and transform your guilt, obligations and fears?

For Further Study:

Read Galatians 4-5 and Ephesians 1 and review the glory of God's grace in making you His own as Father, Son and Spirit all participate in transforming your state, character and relationship eternally.

O Abba Father, I am declared righteous by the justifying work of Your Son, freed by the sanctifying work of Your Spirit, and adopted by Thee, made co-heir with Christ of all things eternal and holy. How can this be? There are no words to express my wonder or define the greatness of Thy grace towards me. Blessed Father, there is no fear of rejection in view of thy Thy love. Blessed Christ, there is no shame in view of Thy blood. Blessed Spirit, there is no bondage to my old life in view of Thy indwelling. Glorify Thy name in my justification, emancipation and adoption as You create me anew in the image of Your Son. Have your way in me, O God, now and forevermore. In Christ's saving name I pray, Amen"

Remember, you are very special to us and we pray for you.

Living with leaving in view.... Jn 9:4 Ron & Val

Seeing The Invisible, embracing The Unapproachable, declaring The Unexplainable, changed by The Immutable,
running after The Irresistible with inexhaustible joy in our inexpressible sorrows,
spending our time on eternity, owning nothing yet possessing everything that matters and lasts.

We are Pilgrims in Paradox. Welcome to THE JOURNEY.

©2011 Ron and Val Berrus

You received this email because rsb@abwe.org is subscribed to our list.

You can *instantly* unsubscribe from these emails by clicking here.