

## The Spirit of Sonship Galatians 4:4-7

**4** But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, **5** to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. **6** And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” **7** So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

### Introduction

You can tell a lot about a person by the way they play sports. In my experience particularly true in pick up basketball. I would observe in others and myself different mentalities, the guy who was:

- Indifferent: there to be with friends, joking, oblivious to the score.
- Intentional: there to get exercise,
- Intense: they have something to prove; want to win as badly as they want to perform well

Same true in life. We all live out of a mentality. There is a spirit, a way of thinking, approach, a thrust, a bent, a trajectory, in all of us that determines our actions, goals, words and emotions. And often at the root of our problems.

If you want to be spiritually vital you need to know what spirit rules your heart. The Bible essentially says there are only two spirits/identities to live by:

- a. spirit of sonship
- b. spirit of orphanhood

Sonship: you're utterly amazed to be adopted into God's family

Orphanhood: you feel disconnected, fatherless in this world.

Sonship: -you live out of the reality of your new status, v.6 *you are sons*, you are reveling in all the rights and privileges of a son /daughter of God, full of assurance, confidence, rest, joy, nothing to prove or lose.

Orphanhood -feel lost, alone, condemned, needing desperately to find your security and significance. Sense you need to prove your value.

Nothing could be more important to spiritual vitality than this, so let's ask three simple questions.

- 1. What is it?**
- 2. How do you get it?**
- 3. What difference do it make in your life?**

### **1. What is it?**

The spirit of sonship is what you have through the Spirit of the Son. It is an attitude that flows out of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus, the third person of the trinity.

The NT attributes various names to the Holy Spirit, depicting aspects of his function in our lives: comfort, truth, conviction, glory, grace, intercession, and because he is the Spirit of Jesus the Son, by definition the Holy Spirit is also the Spirit of Sonship.

We see the intimate connection between the Son and the Spirit when he descended on Jesus at his baptism, Jesus heard the word of his Father, This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased. The Spirit confirmed Jesus in his sonship for the commencement of his ministry. There was nothing to do before his anointing with power by the Spirit. The same power is at work in any who know Jesus:

The son cried Abba, daddy, by the Spirit, so can we.

The son had power by the spirit entering the wilderness to withstand temptation, so do we.

The son testified about his father by the spirit, so do we.

The Son was assured by the Spirit of the fathers love, so are we.

The Son communed in prayer with the father by the Spirit, so do we.

The work of the Spirit is indispensable for true spirituality:

### **2. How do you get it?**

You get the spirit of sonship from the Spirit of the Son.

*God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.*

Paul says the mission of God in Christ is to adopt sons. That is the goal of your salvation, to be adopted into the family of God.

Many people today are fond of saying, we're all God's children. That's not really accurate. We certainly owe our existence to God; he is our creator. But being a child of God is the distinct blessing of redemption, being bought by the blood of Jesus Christ.

Adoption makes sense because in our natural state we are alienated from God, God is our Creator/judge not father. But if you know the son by faith, and thus are in union with him, then what is true of Jesus is true of you. God is his father; therefore, God is your father. But only if you are in union with Christ by faith, or to use the language of Paul here, redeemer from being under the law.

We labor under the law, meaning to know/ be accepted by God we must give him perfection. A hopeless and impossible situation. If you use the law to be right with God- try your best, offer your good efforts, you only end up pulling down an oppressive weight on yourself.

Jesus was born to earn that perfection for us, born of a woman- to represent all of us- born under the law, to keep it perfectly for us, to redeem us from the condemnation of our law breaking.

So to answer the question, how do you get the spirit of sonship, if you have Christ by faith you already have him. You can't earn it, Jesus did.

John 14:18 *I will not leave you as orphans.*

You receive the adoption as sons. What remains is the extent to which he controls you, you are under the influence of the Spirit of sonship. That's our third point:

### **3. What difference does it make in your life?**

Paul describes the difference the spirit of sonship makes in terms of freedom and slavery. V.7 so you are no longer a slave but a son.

Slave is synonym for orphan. Sons are free, orphans are slaves.

You are either a rich son who has everything guaranteed (an heir), living as if you are deeply cherished, will be provided for, having nothing to lose, and everything to give away or a slave to something to make you feel rich and secure.

So, now you have a test to discern whether your thinking is sonship or orphan thinking. The spirit ruling your heart is revealed when:

1. You don't get your way.

What are you like when you don't get your way?

Sons: keep things in perspective. They already have everything they truly need. My father loves me, cares for me, provides for me, protects me, approves of me. You have those riches through the gospel of Jesus. I'm free to not need anything.

Orphans live out of self, that's all they have. Consequently, you have something to prove. I'm valuable, loveable, significant. And when that is threatened, you get defensive, critical, judgmental, demanding.

You panic because your whole world depends on it, no wonder.  
Where you are feeling desperate is where you tell yourself your welfare depends on it.  
When you don't feel loved, self-pity drives you to false pleasures  
When you don't feel in control you freak out  
When you don't feel competent, you panic  
When you don't feel productive you compensate by working more.

2. When you are fearful.

What you fear exposes what you are a slave to.

Do you fear rejection? You're a slave to approval. You live to avoid criticism or rejection.  
Do you fear losing control? You're a slave to everything going your way.  
Do you fear looking incompetent? Then you're a slave to being right.

Look at your life: which spirit rules you: orphan or son?

Jesus came to set you free. He gives you more than you need in his gospel.  
He adopts you into his family. His daddy is yours.