"Of What Kingdom Do You Belong?"

Introduction: As you are turning to the 8th chapter of Romans, please listen to a story from the middle 1800's about the King of Persia, Frederick William IV.

In order to get to know some of His subjects just a little better, the King would go about visiting the various villages and village schools. You can just imagine how those kids must have felt, as standing before them was the monarch of Persia, the King.

During one of his dialogues with the students he pointed to the stone on his ring and asked, "Of what kingdom does that belong?" A student got up enough courage to say "of the mineral kingdom, sir."

He then pointed to a flower in his lapel and said, "Of what kingdom does that belong?" And another student answered, "Sir that belongs to the vegetable kingdom."

The king then pointed to a bird on the window still asking, "And of what kingdom does that bird belong?" Again usually a student said, "Sir, that bird belongs to the animal kingdom."

Then the king stood up in his royal splendor and asked, "Of what kingdom do I belong?" That my friend is the question I'm asking of you this evening "Of which kingdom do you belong, too."

That my friends is the question I’m asking of you, “Of what kingdom do you belong?” I believe we would agree that we are living in a society where so many are wrapped up in the pursuit of **PLEASURE** and **IMMORAL** living. We might think we belong to the animal kingdom, because of the way we let our passions have reign over us. Yet when we come to the book of Romans chapter 8, and start reading the 14th verse, we have a tremendous realization of what it means to belong to the kingdom of God.

Follow me as I read verses 14-17, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. (15) For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. (16) The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: (17) And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

Again please notice,

In verse 16 it says, "We are the children of God."

In verse 14 it says, "We are the sons of God."

In verse 17 it says, "We are the heirs of God."

**First:** Notice that last phrase of verse 16, "...that we are the children of God." Now at the outset of this message, let me lay to rest a false idea that has been passed on as Gospel truth. **WE ARE NOT ALL THE CHILDREN OF GOD.** This falsehood, propagated from the pit of hell, has come from the idea of "the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man." That is simply not a true statement. God is not the father of all mankind, nor are we all brothers.

Now then, what constitutes the children of God and what gives us the right to say "God is our Father?" There are many verses we could use, but time will allow just one verse found in John 1:12. "But as many as received Him (that is Jesus Christ) to them gave He the power to become the sons (the Greek word here for sons, Tekon, implies "the children of God") even to them who believe on His name." Only those who have said, "Lord Jesus, come into my life as personal Saviour, for I believe You died on Calvary's cross to save me from my sins." have the privilege of being the “children of God.”

Alright then, to whom do the others belong? Well, according to the Bible, they are the children of the devil. In fact, if you will remember, Jesus spoke to the religious leaders of His day and in John 8:44 said, "that ye are of your father the devil"
We don't like to hear that mankind outside of Jesus are the children of the Devil.
Nor do we like to hear that mankind outside of Jesus are on their way to a Christ-less hell.

But none the less, the Word of God teaches just that and my responsibility is to preach what the Word of God teaches. It is a basic truth of the Word of God that a person must be Born Again before he can be viewed as a Child of God?

Now going back to Romans 8:16, I want you to notice that in order to be a member of the kingdom of God, **ONE MUST BE A CHILD OF GOD.** Let me ask you "How do you know that right now you are a child of God?"

Notice again verse 16, **"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:"** Now if there is not that witness of the Spirit of God in you, then in all probably you are not a child of God. If you are a child of God, you don't have to say, "Will I think I am" or "I think I made a decision back some years ago." Or "I remember one time there was an evangelist and I came forward, and I believe that's where I got saved." Or "I feel like I am saved and on my way to heaven."

We must be careful that our religious senses do not deceive us, and that we do not trust in any sort of feeling, for it is possible for our feelings to deceive us. Without a doubt there are many folks in this world who are on the way to hell this very moment, without hope and without God, but who **FEEL** as if they are going to heaven. But with the child of God there is no such uncertainty, **A CHILD OF GOD KNOWS.**

If you are a child of God, then right now your human spirit bears witness with God's Spirit that you are a child of God. **It's as simple as that.** If you don't have that witness of the spirit of God it's a good indication you are not a child of God.

Notice again in verse 16 that The Holy Spirit bears witness **WITH** our Spirit. This is a joint testimony, our human spirit energized with His Spirit.

In Hebrews 10:15 the Holy Spirit witnesses **TO us.**
In I John 5:10 the Holy Spirit witnesses **IN us.**
In Romans 8:16 the Holy Spirit witnesses **WITH us.**

If you can not say "I know that I am a child of God because the Holy Spirit bears witness with my Spirit." then, my friend, I would encourage you right where you sit to bow your head and invite the Lord Jesus Christ into your life as your personal Saviour.

Now beyond this certainty there is something else, and it is found at the end of verse 15. "...you have also received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba Father." Now, what does "Abba Father" mean?

Someone said, "Abba is like the cry of an infant, the simple helpless utterance of unreasoning trust..." Another way you could translate this word would be by the word "Daddy."

Over the years, you have heard it in your home, as I have in mine. The children would come and say Daddy buy me this, Daddy I want that. Go to Daddy, he has all the answers to our problems. And in some cases, Daddy would seem almost like God.

**HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!** Men, that's why it's important that you "bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." So when the day comes, and believe me it will, they can easily transfer that confidence from you, their earthly father, to God their heavenly Father. That's why there is tragedy in a home where a son or daughter has no confidence in their earthly father. When it comes time to put their confidence in God, they can't, because they see God as they see their own father.
We ought to be able to come to our heavenly Father with the confidence to cry out Daddy, Father. Now there is a counter part to this found in I John 5:14-15 where we read, “And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: (15) And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.” What is this confidence? I can cry, “Abba Father.” Listen. We have the RIGHT to go to God as our Father, those of us who are CHILDREN OF GOD, and lay out our petition at his feet and expect an answer.

Second: Notice in verse 14 the words “Sons of God.” Here we find its one thing to be born into God's family through the miracle of regeneration; it is something else to become an adult son. Now a "son of God" is not the same as a "child of God." found in verse 16. The Greek words are different. The word "Children" in verse 16 is the translation of the Greek word (Tekon) and it refers to “little children.” And you become a child of God or children of God by being born again.

But when you became a "son of God" it is through a different process. The Greek word for "son" here is (Huios) referring to a mature adult rather than an immature minor child. We become the ‘sons of God’ through the process of adoption. Notice again verse 15, “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.”

When we talk about adoption today, we think of it as one family taking a child from another family and bringing that child into the new family by adoption. It's like an outsider that is brought into the family. He or she comes into the family and soon you treat that child like a son or a daughter. That is the concept of adoption in the Western mind. But that is not the concept of adoption in the Eastern mind.

The Greek word for "adoption" is "Huiothesia," the root "Huios" is the common name for an adult son. The other root word "thesia," means "to place, the idea is that of setting a person in place."

So the whole Greek word means not so much adoption as that of placing a son. Here is how this placement occurred in Roman times:

When a young man in a family would become of age, the father would take him to the town square and there in a public ceremony declare that son an adult by presenting him with a white toga. It is here the father would declare his son rightful heir to all that the father had.

This was a proud moment for both the father and the son. This was an impressive ceremony by which the son was introduced into manhood. It was a high moment for the son, a proud moment for the father. Now the son having been introduced into full Roman citizenship was expected to act like a man.

Even though we have the right to declare ourselves "Sons of God." for Galatians 6:23 says, "for ye are all the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus." There is coming a day, yet future, in heaven where there is going to be a PUBLIC CEREMONY. Here God shall present us to the entire universe and He shall say, "these are my heirs. These are joint heirs with Jesus Christ." That will be one of the most magnificent moments of all eternity.

As children of God we can go to our heavenly Father and cry "Daddy, Abba Father this is my need this is my petition." But there is coming a day where God shall before the universe present us as an adult son. Nowdays people think we are a little strange.

We don't go to the places they go to.
We don't participate in the things the world participates in.
We live by different standards, convictions, and principles.
We don't give into our passions as they who live by the flesh do.
So the world looks at us and says, "What a square. What a nut. Get a life and live a little. What's the matter with you?"

Listen. There isn't a thing wrong with me, nothing. You see, I belong to another kingdom and so do you, if you have been born again. My friend, the world outside of Jesus Christ can laugh all they want. But one day, while you and I are being presented to the universe as a joint heir of Jesus Christ, they without Jesus will be crying in hell.

Now the Bible says in verse 23, "We groan within ourselves waiting for the adoption, that is the redemption of the body." What are we groaning about? What is our soul and spirit groaning about? We are waiting for the adoption ceremony.

But even though we have not yet experienced that PUBLIC MOMENT, this spirit of adoption, or let me use another word this spirit of maturity, ought to characterize us NOW. Notice in verse 15, "For ye have received the spirit of adoption..." The ceremony hasn't taken place yet but already the spirit of maturity ought to be characteristic of us.

What is the Spirit of Maturity? It is feeding upon God's Word daily. You show me a believer who doesn't feed on God's Word daily and I'll show you an immature carnal Christian.

What is the Spirit of Maturity?
- It is one who is communing with God in prayer regularly.
- It is one who is attending the house of God consistently.
- It is one who is applying the Word of God to his or her life.
- It is one who is resisting the WORLD, the FLESH and the DEVIL in the power of the Spirit of God.
- It is one who is living moment by moment in the will of God.

What is the Spirit of Maturity? A mature believer is not blown about by every wind of Doctrine. I am amazed how often believers get carried away into cults and religious moments that don't co-inside with this Book, the Bible. This is not just among the weak believers in the faith, there are many so called strong believers who are blown in this direction and blown in that direction. They don't have a solid footing in the Word of God. Often I hear believers you would have thought were mature confess that they don't know the Word of God like they ought to.

What is the Spirit of Maturity? A mature believer is able to get along with others in the family of God. He is not easily offended. I read this recently,

"The nearer I grow to Christ the more I wish to have the fellowship with all those who truly believe in Him, in His person and in His work. I am a son of God, in the singular, but we are sons of God in the plural. We were not meant to live isolated lives. Like must seek like. I must find myself drawn to those who also love the Lord and wish to honor Him. Our text in Romans says that all who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God. Then, what hinders our oneness here on earth? I am forced to the conclusion that it is a lack of the love of Christ controlling our beings. If we were dominated by the love of Christ, why are there so many differences between us? These differences are there because we are not willing to obey such commands as,

in Romans 12:10, "In honor preferring one another," and
in Philippians 2:3, "...each esteeming other better than himself."

It is because we allow our lives to be lived so far away from the Lordship of Christ that we mutilate the body of Christ.

Let me ask you in light of this, "What then is your Spirit of Maturity level?"

Third: Now I want you to notice one more thing found in verse 17. Notice again the phrase, 'heirs with God and joint heirs with Christ.' You know it's a wonderful thing to be a member of God's family. I know you have heard this song before,

You will notice we say 'brothers and sister' 'round here.
It's because we're a family and these folks are so near;
When one has a heart ache we all share the tears,
And rejoice in each victory in this family so dear.
I'm so glad I'm a part of the family of God.
I've been washed in the fountain, cleansed by His blood!
Joint heirs with Jesus as we travel this sod,
For I'm part of the family of God.

Did you catch that stanza "I've been washed in the fountain, cleansed by His blood! Joint heirs with Jesus as we travel this sod."? Here is the icing on the cake, to be heirs of God.

Most of you by now have heard of and perhaps by now have read the book, "Pilgrim's Progress" written by John Bunyan. There are many interesting stories found there in, but one of the most heart searching is the one in which Mr. Feeble-minded speaks of his hope of the heavenly home. He said this, "But I am resolved to run where I can, to walk where I cannot run and to creep where I cannot walk, my mind is beyond the river that hath no bridge."

You know, sometimes the greatest inspiration for living as we ought comes only when our mind is beyond the river that has no bridge, when our mind is on the city of God - heaven.

Do you ever think of your home beyond the river of death? Have you ever just closed your eyes for a while and said:

"Lord just let me think of that day when I am in your presence.  
No more tears,  No more sorrow,  
No more pain,  No more problems.  
All these things that are ill will be past, and then in glory, I can't do it now but there, I'll be able to sing with a voice like the flow of a river."

Oh to stop everything and to realize you will be an heir to all those wonderful things God has prepared for you and me. Now the "if" in verse 17 in the Greek is a conditional clause of actual fact. Perhaps to better understand we could use the word since. "And SINCE children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ..."

If you ask me right now of what kingdom am I, I'll assure you by saying:

Since I am a CHILD OF GOD by faith in the finished work of the Christ of Calvary, and  
Since I am a SON OF GOD, maturing now but waiting for that heavenly public ceremony, and  
Since I am a joint heir of God,

I know I am saved, on my way to heaven. Beyond a shadow of doubt I can say I am of the kingdom of God. May I ask you a question "OF WHAT KINGDOM ARE YOU?"

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If God has spoken to your heart after reading the sermon on "Of What Kingdom are You?" then right now talk to God about what He has spoken to you.

Do you have the assurance that one day you will go to heaven? If you have no assurance that you know Jesus Christ, then I trust you will decide to accept Him as your personal Savior. The Bible tells us in

Acts 16:31, "...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved...”  
Romans 10:13, “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

This prayer is here for those who need to ask Jesus to be their personal Savior: "I do want to go to Heaven. I know I am a sinner, and I do believe Jesus Christ died for me. I realize I cannot buy this great salvation, nor can I earn it. Knowing Jesus died on the cross and arose from the grave to pay my sin debt and to purchase my salvation, I do now trust Him as my Savior, and from this moment on I am completely depending on Him for my salvation.”

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