



“Spirit-Dependent Warfare”¹

Romans 8:14-17

In the book of Romans, Paul has shown how God can take sinners like us and declare us right with God. Because of Jesus sacrificing himself and taking the punishment sinners deserved, on the cross, then all who trust Jesus are declared righteous with Jesus’ righteousness. This grace is astounding. But we’re still left with questions. Did God only declare us righteous but then leave us to live only in sin until we die? At the end of Romans 7, Paul highlights his own relationship with sin. He fails as we also fail against sin. Paul cries out, “Oh, wretched man that I am. Who will deliver me from this body of death?” Paul confesses, he needs more than forgiving grace. He also needs the grace to deliver him from the daily sins. And Paul’s confident that God, through Jesus, will rescue him even of these sins! God doesn’t leave us.

But our question is “How will God give us strength to fight against sin?” And that’s how we moved into Romans 8. Our Triune God not only planned to rescue people from sin and reconcile us back to him. God sent Jesus to take our punishment and guarantee eternal perfection someday. In the meantime, God the Spirit has come into all who trust Jesus. This Spirit guarantees growth in godliness. Therefore, Paul writes here, we must war! Romans 8:13-14 says, **“¹³ For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.”**²

Now, this text was part of Jonathan’s sermon last week, but I need to comment on these as we transition this morning. So, let me ask you a question: What is the difference between a **war mentality** and a **vacation mentality**? Of course, you can quickly come up with answers. In a vacation mentality, you think in terms of rest, relaxation, getting away from *everyday* life. For some, it’s enjoying the outdoors. For others, it’s enjoying a beach. Whatever it is, it’s getting away. It’s a seek for internal calm.

I’ve never heard of anyone who said, “Do you want to go on a great vacation? Jump into a warzone!” How well can you relax when bullets are buzzing by your ears? When you’re in a warzone, your senses are heightened. A man by the name of Ed Welch, in his book *A Banquet in the Grave*, commented on a wartime mentality by saying, **“There is something about war that sharpens the senses . . . You hear a twig snap or the rustling of leaves and you are in attack mode. Someone coughs and you are ready to pull the trigger. Even after days of little or no sleep, war keeps us vigilant.”**

When you’re on vacation, if you hear a twig snap, you’re probably going to think nothing of it. If you cough, ok. But war is different. Why? Because you realize the heightened significance of what’s going

¹ This manuscript is still in the rough draft phase. I recommend you utilize these notes in conjunction to the sermon to gain greater insight and clarity.

² [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ro 8:13–14.

on. People are out to kill you. And, you are seeking to protect others, and you might have to shoot, too. You're focused.

I bring this illustration out because I think Christians can often be confused as to what kind of life God has called them to live. Did Jesus save us to give us a vacation? If that's your viewpoint, then you're going to live a life of failure against sin. When the going gets tough, those people end up saying, "Enough! I'm done with Jesus." But for those of us who say that Jesus didn't die to give us a vacation, we have to admit that we tend to not want to believe that Jesus rose again to enlist us in war. Yet, in many passages of the New Testament, we're told that we are in a battle. We're told we're soldiers. We're told to fight. We're told to make war against sin. Romans 8 says we are to put to death. That means we are to have murderous intents with sin! Verse 14 says that the Spirit leads us. Don't miss that word. It's a term for ruling. If you are a Christian, the Spirit now *rules* you. Wherever you go, the Ruler is with you! And as the Ruler, he commands and empowers you to make war with sin. This is phenomenal because in earthly battle, we don't have direct access to the Ruler. But Christians have God with them everywhere. The One who rose Jesus from the dead is at work in us to fight and war! In addition, this word for "led" means that our growth in godliness is not ultimately dependent on us. It's dependent on the Spirit! Do you hear that? God isn't depending on you. We depend on God!

Yet, many times, I've had conversations with Christians who are absolutely shocked by the battle, not believing the Spirit's power. Maybe for a season, God gave them reprieve from intense battling against their own sinful passions. Then comes great difficulty. They feel challenged, and their eyes are opened to the reality of all-out war. Then, I've had people come to me, and in the conversations with them, they've practically admitted that they believe they couldn't possibly be a Christian if they're in a battle so intense. But, as I said about a month ago, does a soldier doubt he's a soldier when bullets whiz by? No! The bullets are proof that he's in the war.

The same is true for a Christians. Does the battle prove you're not a Christian? No. In fact, the battle for godliness is a sign that God has placed you in the battle. In fact, I might go so far as to say that if your life involves no fight against sin and no pursuit of godliness, you should ask, "Am I living in a dream-land?" In other words, "Am I a believer?"

As some hear this, you might become discouraged. You could think, "God saves you to make you miserable?" And to that, my answer is a resounding no! God saves you so that you would know his glory and battle against sin – experiencing the victory Jesus purchased and guaranteed on the cross! So, you're either on the side of defeat or the side of victory. In Christ, there is victory. And, in this battle that Christians are in, God has promised he is with us always.

Think back to Jonathan's illustration last week with David and Goliath. Jonathan asked, "Who took Goliath down?" We all said, "God did." But who threw the stone? David did! This is a wonderful illustration of the Christian life. By the Spirit, we put to death the deeds of the body! But even as you hear this phrase, you can say, "But what does it mean to make war by the Spirit?" Or, put differently, **What does it look like to war for godliness by dependence on the Spirit?** Paul says we must war. Paul says God will deliver us from this body of death. Sounds like God's responsible, but Paul also says we are! And in these few verses, Paul shows us the beauty of Spirit-dependent war.

Before we go any further, let's read verses 14-17 together. Before I read, let's pray:

¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” ¹⁶ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.³

What does it look like to war for godliness by dependence on the Spirit? The first truth we see in these verses is that you are to

1. Know your freedom (12a, 15a).

The beginning of verse 12 says, “¹² So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh. . . .”⁴ Then the beginning of verse 15 states, “¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear. . . .”⁵

I know verse 12 was in the sermon last week, but it’s connected with this text as well. Paul is again reminding us of our freedom. He uses two different illustrations. One with money. One with enslavement. First, the **debt** illustration. We are not debtors to the flesh. What does this mean? To be indebted to something means you owe something to that thing. The flesh references that part of us that is broken by sinfulness. It’s the headquarters of sin. As a Christians, it’s that part of us that still wants to defy God. But here, God says through Paul that we don’t owe the flesh anything.

We need to get this in our heads, Christians, because how often do we listen to our flesh. Our flesh says, “You want this.” Or, “You have to do this.” So, when temptation calls you, treat it like a telemarketer. Hang up! You owe nothing to the flesh! As Paul said in Romans 6, why would you go back to the things of which you were once ashamed? Instead, make war against the flesh. Put to death the deeds of the body.

This reminds me of what one former pastor named John Piper once preached. Commenting on Romans 8, he said, “I hear so many Christians murmuring about their imperfections and their failures and their addictions and their shortcomings — and I see so little war. Murmur, murmur, murmur. “Why am I this way?” Make war! If you wonder how to make war, go to the manual. Don’t just bellyache about your failures. Make war!” But what do we make war against? Do we make war against Muslims? Is it to make war against our neighbors who aren’t the same political party? Is it to make war against Buddhists? No. (see <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/declare-war-on-sin>)

Don’t pay back the flesh. Don’t treat it like it’s your master. Instead, make war against every impulse of the flesh. All of the sinful and enslaving lusts in yourself for money, attention, fame, sex, power, chocolate, pornography, fear of man, deceit, laziness, apathy for godliness. The war must be against *your own flesh!* But every time you treat the flesh like you’re in debt to it, you have spiritual amnesia. You’ve forgotten the freedom you have.

³ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ro 8:14–17.

⁴ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ro 8:12.

⁵ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ro 8:15.

Instead of being a debtors to the flesh, we are debtors to grace! Oh, to grace how great a debtor! Grace has abounded in our lives! Let's live like it. We live in freedom! When temptation says, "You owe me," we don't even need to listen! We don't owe the flesh. Know your freedom, Christian.

Now, the second illustration Paul gives relates to **slavery**. Verse 15 says we didn't receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear. The spirit of slavery into fear probably should remind us of Paul's arguments in chapter 6. We can either have sin as our master or God as our master. When sin is our master, we are enslaved to fear.

Again, we have to ask what this means. Are we free from *any* fear? Does this mean that if I stood face-to-face with a rabid dog that I wouldn't be afraid? Does this mean that if I saw my children playing in the road, I wouldn't have fear and run to their rescue? Is this verse to be used to say that I should now love heights because I'm a Christian? Or, at a minimum, should I confront my fear of heights and stand on the top of Mackinac Bridge like Ben Jacques did when he was a child? NO! This verse is not talking about this. Don't misapply this verse. When you do, you miss out on eternal glory here!

The term here has to be understood in the context of Romans. The fear is referencing fear of condemnation. I think I mentioned this a little while back, but I think it's still a helpful illustration. When I was a youth pastor, I asked the teens how they knew they were a Christian, and one teen said, "I feel bad when I do something wrong." And I immediately said, "That doesn't mean you're a Christian. Non-Christians feel bad when they do something bad." This verse would affirm that statement. If the only reason you obey is because you fear God's going to zap you with his wrath, are you really obeying? Yet, this is how people often motivate one another. We shame, and we say, "Well, I am going to really regret it." Or, "I don't want people to think negatively about me." All of these responses only focus on *you*. And none of that is motivated by the love of God for you in Christ. None of those summon you to trust God. You just have self-centered motivation. This is enslavement to fear. And fear will never lead to lasting obedience. Sure. Fear can last for a time, but not for eternity.

But Paul has shown Christians that we aren't slaves to fear! And in 8:1, we saw that there is therefore now *no* condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. We don't have fear of condemnation! And, if you say, "Well, then, what motivation do I have to obey?" Even despairing Christians can feel this way, and I'm concerned for you. You are not understanding love!

Think. Ponder! How tremendous is God's love for us that no matter what sins I commit, no matter what treason I pursue, God loves me still! Jesus' sacrifice is full and complete – securing me forever! Christian, this is true of you as well! Do you know your freedom? Those who know their freedom, will praise God for his love! Knowing your freedom actually will lead to living in that freedom. Christian, I hope you know your freedom. fear grips you, turn to Christ. Praise the Lord. Defy the fear and trust the Savior and what he's done for you! There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus! You are enslaved to God – not fear. And being enslaved to God is being bound to his eternal love and goodness! First step in depending on the Spirit is knowing your freedom.

And, by the way, this leads me to state one of my favorite mini-quotes. We Christians need to constantly preach the gospel to ourselves. Our freedom comes from Jesus. Ponder his greatness. Ponder his love. Ponder his sacrifice. Understand his purposes in what he did. If you do trust Jesus, then these truths will shape and change you to live the freedom you have! So, this is the first step. The next step is to

2. Understand your sonship (vv. 14b, 15b).

Verse 14 says, “¹⁴For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.”⁶ The end of verse 15 says, “but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’”⁷

Verse 14 says “all who are led.” Paul is very inclusive in this term. When he says all, he means all. And, I bring this out because some people might say that some Christians have the Spirit and others don’t, but Paul shows us in this chapter that all who trust in Jesus have the Spirit, and all who have the Spirit are sons of God!

Now, up to this point in the book of Romans, Paul’s been talking about doctrines like justification, imputation, sanctification, glorification. But right here, we get to the heart. One man named Sinclair Ferguson wrote, “**The notion that we are children of God, his own sons and daughters . . . is the mainspring of Christian living . . . Our sonship to God is the apex of creation and the goal of redemption**” (as quot. in Keller, p. 25).

I don’t say this to minimize justification or glorification. But here’s where Paul shows us what it means to be reconciled with God. I mean, you can say that you’re reconciled with someone, but that could just mean that you’re not at odds with the person. Or, that could mean you’re friends. But what does it mean to be reconciled with God? It means to be adopted into his family. And, that adoption leads to great closeness.

Keep in mind that Paul is speaking about adoption from a first century perspective, and I think it’s important to realize what this would mean for us. More than likely, Paul is highlighting adoption from a Roman perspective. In that culture, a wealthy person would adopt a son when he had no heir. Upon adoption, the following things would happen: 1) debts and legal obligations were paid, 2) the son immediately became an heir of all the father had, 3) the father became liable for all the son did, 4) the son had new obligations to honor the father (see Keller, p. 25).

I think all these ideas come into play when we read of Paul saying we’re adopted as sons. But, let’s press this a little more. Some people might not like the apostle Paul using the word “sons” in this text. Some people might want to change this translation to say “children” of God or “sons and daughters.” And, in our American mindset, I can understand why you might want to say this. However, in a Roman setting, to say “sons” means something specific. The son was the heir. And, Paul applies this term to men and women! Paul is actually raising the status of women in the 1st century and saying that all of God’s children are God’s sons!

Do you see the beauty of this? We don’t have the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear. Instead, we have the Spirit of adoption as sons. Our relationship with God has changed dramatically. He relates to us as dearly loved sons. But right here, I think we can miss what it means to have the Spirit of adoption instead of the spirit of slavery to fear. We can think, “I’m a son of God! I have all the rights and privileges! That means I don’t need any help anymore.” And, when you feel the weight of your sin or brokenness in the world, you ignore it. You sweep it under the rug and say, “I’m a child of the King!” That’s not the full picture that’s painted here in Romans 8. You are a child of the King, and yet, as a child of the King, you cry! This word for cry refers to a *loud cry*. This is deep emotion that is then expressed in crying out to our God!

⁶ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ro 8:13–14.

⁷ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ro 8:15.

Why would this be the case, though? If we're sons of God, then isn't everything all ok? Shouldn't we not be in deep distress? Are we really desperately dependent on God? Yes! We're still in a battle and we are always dependent on God! You see, God didn't save us so we could be self-reliant. He saved us so that we would be reliant on Him always!

Having the Spirit of adoption means we cry out for the Lord! If you know you're God's son, you will say "Wretched man that I am. But you will also say, "Abba!" Who will deliver you from this body of death? Not you! God through Christ by the power of the Spirit! And the Spirit empowers you to cry out *Abba!*

I have to press this more. A few weeks ago, I was talking with Jeff Lindell about this, and he was expressing to me a personal story related to the word "Abba." If you know their family, all the children refer to Jeff as Abba. And, there's a reason for this. In the ancient world, "abba" was the personal, relational term for a father. The English term "Father" is too formal. If I were to say, "Hello Father," you might say, "You have a very formal relationship with your dad." "Abba" is not the formal term. It's somewhat like our English word for "daddy." So, as I was talking with Jeff, he was telling me when Ruby was still in her crib, and he was teaching his children to call him "abba," and one night, Ruby was crying out. And as she was crying, she was saying "Abba! Abba!" That reached Jeff's ears and brought a response from him.

Scripturally, this term "Abba!" is used in situations of desperation. Jesus is recorded to cry out to Abba. Then Paul brings this up in Galatians. All the situations reveal that the person speaking is speaking from weakness to the only One who can answer – the God of all power. Ventura, ponder this a little more. We are sons of God. And we are completely dependent on God, and instead of God being annoyed with this, he loves this! He calls us to cry to him. And not simply say, "Hello Father!" But he says, "Call me Abba!" What Jesus calls God the Father, we can call God the Father! "Oh, what a wretched man I am. Who will deliver me? ABBA!! Help! Abba! I need you!" And the Creator of the galaxies, the sustainer of all Life responds to our cry. He hears our cry like a good father hears and responds to the cry of the child.

Right here, some people might say, "I don't want to be disrespectful in calling God 'daddy,'" and I get that. We are to have ultimate respect for God. And yet, why do we think saying "daddy" is disrespectful? Years ago, I recall hearing a preacher speak of his father who had recently died. As this preacher, who was about 70 years old, was talking about his father, he always referred to him as his daddy. Never once did I think, "My, does that guy disrespect his father!" Even in my own life, I think of my children and how I've always loved that they call me "daddy." As they grow up, they've changed to just saying "dad." But some of them still call me daddy. There's something sweet, innocent and refreshing about that phrase.

How much more for us as God's children? When I say "Abba," I'm not disrespecting dad. Instead, I'm highlighting that I'm utterly dependent on him always and that he loves me dearly and eternally. I'm confessing he's my only hope, and I want him to hold me always and forever!

Paul shows us here that part of warring against sin is understanding our sonship, and if we understand our sonship, that means our first step is not turning to ourselves and our power. Instead, knowing our sonship means we cry to our daddy! We realize we're never going to fight sin in our own strength. We trust our Abba to give the strength that's needed.

So, we need to know our freedom. We need to understand our sonship and cry out to our Abba! Then we need to listen to the Spirit's witness.

3. Listen to the Spirit's witness (v. 16).

Verse 16 says, "¹⁶The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. . . ."⁸

Notice that Paul is giving *no* commands in these verses. He's stating reality. So, even as I'm giving you these points on how to fight sin, I'm stating them more in the sense of saying that we need to recognize reality. We need to know our freedom. We need to believe our sonship. And, if we do, then we'll know we can't deliver us. We cry out to Abba. Now, we come to another statement of reality that we must listen to.

Paul says the Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit. This text has been a cause of much confusion, and it was a verse that actually stripped me of a lot of my assurance. In our day, I think we interpret the word "Spirit" as being a feeling. So, when we get to Romans 8, we think what Paul is saying is that God's Spirit will tell our feelings to feel like we're God's children.

When I was in Romans 7 seasons, I'd think, "Ok Spirit, confirm to my spirit that I'm a believer!" And, what I was really doing was saying, "Tell my feelings to feel better." But that's not what the verse says here. The Spirit is not a force or a feeling that tells our feelings to feel better. Paul says the Spirit *witnesses* with our spirit. The word "witness" should cause us to think about a courtroom. And this text says the Spirit and our spirit witnesses to us that we are children of God. Meaning, we have a belief that we are God's children – even evidenced by the fact that we cry out to God! But in Romans 7 seasons or after we've fallen again, our spirit is weak in belief. And then Paul says the Spirit comes in to witness to our sonship! Here's my question, how does the Spirit witness to us? I think the Spirit speaks to us primarily through the Word of God! And the Spirit's main role is to point people to Jesus.

So, how does the Spirit witness to me that I'm God's child? Pointing me to the gospel. And, as I read the Word, I'm reminded of the power and majesty of God, his love and his grace in Jesus. Then I'm reminded of who I am in Christ. I'm elect, I'm beloved, I'm holy. The Spirit is telling me this! By the way, this is what the Spirit would do to the churches in the New Testament. Think of how Paul begins his letters with those churches! He tells them all that God has done for them!

This is what I call the objective witness of the Spirit. The Spirit gives me assurance based in Jesus and what he has done! But the Spirit also can witness to us that we are God's children by also pointing out the work that he's done through us. Like what Jonathan said last week, "Has the Spirit ever worked in your life?" Then we look and see how God has been at work. This is what I call the subjective witness of the Spirit.

Now, put this together. If you just look at your actions and feelings for assurance, you're just looking at you, and you'll always find reasons why you may not be a Christian because you still fall short of the glory of God. But, if the Spirit points you to Jesus and reminds you of all that God has done for you, then you have steadfast assurance! Then you can look at things in your life – even the seemingly little things – and say, "PRAISE GOD that he's changing me!!!! I couldn't have done that without my Abba!"

⁸ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ro 8:16.

So, again, this emphasizes the need for us to listen to and preach to ourselves the gospel. Are you preaching to your spirit all that God is for you in Christ Jesus? Are you listening to the Spirit or are you listening to your flesh? Yes, the devil accuses us day and night, but we owe him nothing! Instead, we have the Triune Eternal God who has secured us and loves us! And he wants us to know our glorious privileges.

And this leads to the final point. We must

4. Realize your inheritance (v. 17a).

The beginning of verse 17 says, “¹⁷and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ. . .”⁹ In Romans 8, Paul says that if we are in Christ, then we have the Spirit, and if we have the Spirit, then we are children of God. And, if we are children of God, we are heirs. EVERY blessing comes together. There is no child that is loved less by Abba! We are all loved with an everlasting love.

But ponder this more. One commentator I read this past week, wrote this, “. . .the heir got the lion’s share of the parent’s wealth. Paul is saying that what is in store for us is so grand and glorious that it will be, and will feel, as though we each had alone gotten most of the glory of God. . .” (Keller, p. 32). It’s important to note what the inheritance is. According to Scripture, the inheritance God promises is God himself in a perfect creation – no more sin, sorrow. Only fulfillment, joy, peace forever! No more warfare for all eternity. And, it’s not merely rest in the arms of God. But someday, we who believe on Christ will finally rest in the arms of our Abba! And, in that day when I see my Daddy, I will run and my cry will be different! I will cry “Abba! There you are! Abba! I love you. Abba! Thank you. Abba, don’t ever let go.

Do we deserve this? In no way do we deserve this. And in this thought, we are humbled and should also want to love God more and hate sin. Because what did sin do for us? What does the flesh give you? You get momentary pleasure and then shame and death. What has God done for us? He’s given us all. He has given himself. Glory Himself has given himself completely for us!

How can we choose to live in sin when God has promised himself to us? Temptations lose their allure when we ponder the infinite glory of God himself. We no longer want cheap substitutes when we know we have the Real One!

And so, in this knowledge, Paul then writes at the end of verse 17: provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.¹⁰

Some people don’t like this phrase because they think it takes away from all the assurance here. We’re heirs *if* we suffer? This word for suffer, I believe, includes all the difficulties in this life that seek to turn us from Christ. These are the wretched man battles of Romans 7 that cause us to groan. These are the turbulent trials of pain, of rejection for loving Jesus, of being tested in the deep waters. But keep in mind, the point is “suffer with him.” That means, our suffering is for God’s glory. While suffering, we’re depending on the Lord to give us endurance.

⁹ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ro 8:17.

¹⁰ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ro 8:17.

Now, this shouldn't take away our assurance. Instead, this should give us greater assurance, Christian. If God is as loving as he says here in these verses, and if the only way we'll endure is by the Spirit in our lives, will we endure through trials in our own strength? NO!

This is Paul's bigger point. We will suffer. Jesus said in this world will be tribulations. However, listen carefully; however! . . . We will not give up and give in. God promises we will see him someday. We will be glorified with Christ someday. Therefore, we will suffer.

And, this is actually love. Our Abba has designed for us to be like the Son, Jesus. And as Jesus suffered; so, we will suffer and God won't waste that suffering. We will become more like Jesus. The Spirit will see to that.

So, getting the context of Romans 8, Paul is telling his readers that God has planned for his children to obey him. I pray you trust Jesus. I pray you've come to God in your sins and trusted God to be the one to rescue you from your sins. If you remain in your sins, you only have death to look forward to. But do you see the love and mercy of God? Are you melted and moved by the cross of Jesus Christ? If you have any questions about what it means to trust Jesus, please talk to someone today and know the amazing God.

If you are a believer in Christ, then I need to emphasize something in closing. God has given us the Spirit to do follow God in our daily lives. And Paul doesn't merely write technical details of how this is going to happen. We read the tenderness and love of God. We read of God's patience and endurance for us. How are we going to endure? How do we know we'll obey? How do I know I'll still be a Christian next year or 30 years from now or 10,000 years from now? I have the most amazing Daddy!

From eternity past, he planned to save us. In time, the Son came in the flesh and took the punishment we deserved so that we could be forgiven and reconciled to God. The Spirit came to give us the power to obey. And, we've been adopted. Our God loves us, and now our hearts beat for him!

We cry out "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of death?" And the Spirit impels us to cry out "Abba!" Our Savior has accomplished all through his life, death and resurrection to give us steadfast security and immeasurable love in God himself. **How do we war sin by the Spirit? We rehearse, focus on, remember, rejoice in all the glorious privileges we have as sons. We live the privilege through desperate, dependent crying to our Abba. We persevere in the strength he supplies by the Spirit.**

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