

Sermon Text for August 31, 2025

By Guest Minister - Rev. Dr. Michael Wilson

Title: "You Are An Heir of God"

Scripture Text: 1 Chronicles 13: 10-18; Romans 8: 14-17

Romans 8:14-17

New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

¹⁴For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. ¹⁵For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba!^[a] Father!" ¹⁶it is that very Spirit bearing witness^[b] with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, then heirs: heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if we in fact suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

1 Chronicles 29: 10-13

¹⁰Then David blessed the Lord in the presence of all the assembly; David said, "Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our ancestor Israel, forever and ever. ¹¹Yours, O Lord, are the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and on the earth is yours; yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all. ¹²Riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and it is in your hand to make great and to give strength to all. ¹³And now, our God, we give thanks to you and praise your glorious name.

¹⁴"But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to make this freewill offering? For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you. ¹⁵For we are aliens and transients before you, as were all our ancestors; our days on the earth are like a shadow, and there is no hope. ¹⁶O Lord our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a house for your holy name comes from your hand and is all your own. ¹⁷I know, my God, that you search the heart and take pleasure in uprightness; in the uprightness of my heart I have freely offered all these things, and now I have seen your people who are present here offering freely and joyously to you. ¹⁸O Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our ancestors, keep forever such purposes and thoughts in the hearts of your people, and direct their hearts toward you.

Often – in church we talk about dealing with the failures of the past and the anxieties of the future. As we should! But what about the good stuff? What about possibilities? And things going well? What do we do then?

Will you pray with me?

Children change the world. I'm not just talking about the world of young parents. A friend who remembers when his oldest was born. In the hospital, so joyful. So much help. Strapped the car seat in. The nurse said, "Hey. You'll do great." And he was so shocked I said, "Wait, you're not coming with us?" She laughed and said "You are on your own!" Not just that. Children change the every world they enter. They show up. In our lives. In a room. Bright and happy. So much possibility. The world is going to be different because of them.

Childhood memory – share with one another.

Turn to a neighbor – share a childhood memory. Not everyone something you want to share comes to mind. You can pass. Just say, "I pass. The weather's pretty nice today." I'm serious – it's fine.

Anyone want to share one?

Crabapple tree – lots of fun climbing it. Dodge Duster – Slant 6 engine. Great car. I spent a lot of time outside. Still love it.

4th grade, 5th grade – not so much. There are some memories there – I'll pass.

When we hear Paul tell us that we are children of God – there is no way around that it will remind us of our own childhoods. For some of us – this is great news – we had wonderful childhoods. And to be reminded of it – a great thing.

Others of us – think about childhood and go – wow. No way.

And for many of us – mixed. Parts of it great. Other parts of it – not so great.

Tempted to say to you – set it aside, learn from this.

But it is more likely that the reason that Paul chooses this image for our relationship with God is so that we can engage those memories – and so that they can be drawn into what God is doing in our lives.

In Paul's time –

Could be a great thing –

No physical labor!

Physical labour was unheard of: the sons of the Roman elite could expect to stay in full-time formal education well into their mid-teens, studying the civil arts of grammar and rhetoric. “If you don't enjoy reading Cicero”, reads a graffito in a schoolroom at Pompeii, “you'll get a hiding”. The ability to read Cicero with pleasure, then as now, demanded leisure that only a very few could afford.

Some of us – glad we didn't have to learn Cicero. Would have liked to avoid some physical labor!

Also – some things don't change

author Minucius Felix, who describes walking along the seashore at Ostia with two friends, Octavius and Caecilius. As they passed along the rows of little boats drawn up on their blocks, We saw some small boys fiercely competing at a game of throwing shells into the sea. The game is to pick a shell from the shore which has been rubbed smooth by the beating of the waves. You hold the shell flat with your fingers, and stooping at an angle and low to the ground, you spin it over the waves as hard as possible, so that it may either swim and glide smoothly across the sea's surface, or flash and leap as it skips again and again along the tips of the waves. The winner is the boy whose shell travels furthest, and skips the most times.

Some things do not change!

So – what might it mean to be a child of God..

Imagine the Future

You are led by the Spirit of God – which means you are looking ahead. Spirit of God – looking forward, leading.

As age – spend more time looking back, less time looking forward.

I'm officiating at a wedding this afternoon – talking with the grandfather of the bride yesterday – and, unsoliciting – This is great – they are looking ahead. I spend a lot of time dwelling on the past – but them! The future.

Children – all they have is the future.

People come to talk to pastors about their past and their future –

Paul begins this chapter – no condemnation – letting go of the past and of guilt and shame. Best thing that most of us adults can do – let go of the past.

If we say we trust in Jesus Christ – we look forward to eternity. And think about how we can participate in it...

Great gift you can give yourself and others around you – look towards the future with possibility.

You are children of God, says Paul. Imagine what could happen!.

A couple of weeks ago, talking with Pastor Bob and a person who is part of our church – about the kinds of things people come to talk to pastors about. I think – we pastors sometimes send the message – come to talk with us about the hurts of life – your griefs and your sin and your hurts. And do that!

But what about this – the times of possibility! Imagine that.

You get a raise. Or have the possibility of a new job. You start dating someone. Or are thinking about starting a family. You inherit money. Or are doing really well.

Here is what Paul says – as a child of God – looking forward! Imagine the possibilities.

Going to God – talking to your pastor. What might happen here? What do I need to think about. How can I influence the world for good?

You are a child of God, led by the Spirit, looking forward – imagine the possibilities!

And let me push this one step further – Paul goes on to talk about “heirs” and “glory.” Both of those are references to lifting our eyes up out of just this life. Heirs of Christ is the resurrected Christ. Glory is eternity. Sense here not just of what’s going to happen in the next ten years of my life. Or 20 or 30 or 40. What about the impact of your life in 100 years. And what about a view of your life that goes beyond this world. That’s where the ability to sacrifice now comes in – because eternity awaits.

As a child of God – look far....

Close eyes – think of something good that you would like to happen this week.
Not the lottery. Something over which you have, as we say, some agency.

Imagine the future!

Safety – no fear

Then Paul says – We do not fall back into fear.

When is fear good? Let's name some times – a mountain lion comes through the door. A fire starts up in the pulpit..

Otto Scharmer – one of the voices that hold us back is the voice of fear – I can't do it. – 90% of the time – doesn't happen.

Mark Twain is probably the most quoted (and misquoted) person in history. I have heard two variations of a similar statement attributed to him: 'I am an old man and have known a great many troubles, but most of them never happened.' OR 'I have been through some terrible things in my life, some which actually happened.'

Parenting – helping children differentiate – what to be afraid of? What not to be afraid of. Most of us pass on anxieties that hold our children back.

Safety in being a child of God that allows you to move forward in life. Not a slave. Not afraid. In a safe place

Go through fear – suffering or death. Or condemnation – which is why Paul says that to be baptized is to rise from the dead.

For some of you – if you lost your fear of failure – your life would change

Alex Warren – You're Gonna Be All Right, Kid

Imagine safety – act from there.

Say to the person next to you – You're Gonna be All Right, Kid.

Wonder and play – crying “abba, Father” – it is the cry of wonder We say “Wow!”

Bob and his golf tournament – hoping he could bring up the trophy and we would get to say “Wow!” Next time – we hope!

A couple of weeks ago – at a retreat for the Board of Pensions. Through a variety of factors, I spent the afternoon fishing with a 9 year old. Some of you know me well enough to know that this is, um, not at the top of my skill sets. They called me in because the line was really tangled and they literally thought, “This is a big mess. Michael takes care of messes. Let’s see what he can do.” At one point, I found a bucket and was laying down on the dock trying to simultaneously keep my clothes clean and catch minnows using fried chicken fingers that we can pulled apart and put into the bottom of the bucket. It worked, by the way, but this isn’t what you would describe as a highly excellent and expert operation. But – it didn’t matter. Had a blast. Lots of wonder!

Look at God with wonder – and then look at life the same way.

Imagine if you got up out of bed tomorrow, stretched, and said “Wow!” (For some of us, a very surprised spouse!) For all of us – great way to start the day.

Sit up – “Wow!” Just wow!

Future – heirs....

In the Greco-Roman world the adopted child was deliberately chosen by the parent to bear the name and inherit the estate. The adoptive son was in every way equal to any natural sons. We are no longer just servants of God, but adopted as children of God.

Pathway – suffering? Really – that doesn’t seem very fair! But yes—the place where the stories comes together

Suffer so that we might be glorified.

Imagining the future, No Fear – Your’ Going to Be All Right, and a sense of wonder – then those parts of the past where we have experienced hardship – they don’t make you bitter. They form you to want to help others.

You'll Be Alright, Kid

Song by Alex Warren • 2024

[Overview](#)[Lyrics](#)

Lyrics

I wish I had the number to my younger self
I'd pick up the phone and say, "You're only 12
And you've lost more than most people do
You don't know it now, but there's still more to lose"

'Cause friends move away, and people get older
Your heart's gonna break over and over
You're not to blame, so don't blame yourself
I hope this helps

You're gonna ask, "Why?"
You're gonna want answers
Gonna feel like no one ever understands you
You're gonna think twice before you start praying
And wonder when the walls will stop caving
I hate to be the one to tell you this
But you'll be alright, kid

I wish you knew the feeling wasn't permanent
I wish you knew your brother would come back again
And time does heal, but don't heal everything
If you knew it now, who you were gonna be

You might care less about what they think
Stop trying to impress the people who leave
It scares you to death, but don't take it hard
'Cause I know you are

You're gonna ask, "Why?"
You're gonna want answers
Gonna feel like no one ever understands you
You're gonna think twice before you start praying
And wonder when the walls will stop caving
I hate to be the one to tell you this
But you'll be alright

Growing up's not easy
But it's gonna get better
Growing up's not easy
Alone

You're gonna ask, "Why?"
You're gonna want answers
Gonna feel like no one ever understands you
You're gonna think twice before you start praying
You'll wonder when the walls will stop caving
I hate to be the one to tell you this
I hate to be the one to tell you this
But you'll be alright, kid

Source: [Musixmatch](#)