

Because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.
¹⁵ **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.”** ¹⁶ **The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.** ¹⁷ **Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.** (NIV84)

Theme: The Triune God makes us fearless heirs.

1. The Holy Spirit has welcomed us into God’s family.
2. The Father has adopted us as his own
3. The Son has shared his inheritance with us

Today, of course is Holy Trinity Sunday. The doctrine of the Trinity is one that every true Christian staunchly defends. We insist that there is only one God, but there are three persons in that one God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We know this is true, even if it doesn’t make any sense, because it is what the Bible teaches. But how is the doctrine of the Trinity practical? What difference does it make for our everyday lives? Well, for starters, this teaching is practical because it is all about the only true God. But it is practical for many more reasons.

Today we see that the Triune God makes us fearless heirs. The Holy Spirit welcomes us into God’s family, the Father adopts us as his own, and the Son shares his inheritance with us.

Ever since the time of Adam and Eve the world has been full of sin. All of us were born in sin. In fact, from the time we were conceived we were sinners. By nature, everything we did was a sin. We could not obey God’s law. Even if we wanted to, we couldn’t do anything to please God. And because of our sin we deserve nothing but eternal damnation. We deserve to suffer for eternity because of who we are and what we do.

When we were born, we hated God and his Word. We wanted nothing to do with his Son. And we had no clue who the Holy Spirit is. We were God’s enemies. As Paul says just a few verses before our text, **the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God’s law,**

nor can it do so. By nature we are children of the devil. Not children of the Triune God.

It comes as no surprise then, that we often fail to obey God. At times, we don’t even obey him when we do what he says. That is because we may not do it with the proper motivation. We may act like a kid. A parent tells his son to clean his room. And at first the child whines and complains. We doesn’t want to do what he is told. So he doesn’t do it. But then the parent threatens to punish him if he doesn’t clean his room. So the child obeys—but he only does it out of fear of punishment.

That’s what the world does. They obey simply out of fear. They follow the laws of the land simply because they are afraid of what will happen to them if they don’t. Just think of what the world would be like if people knew that they wouldn’t be caught when doing something illegal. The numbers of murder, theft, and so on would go up. Fear of punishment is the only thing that motivates them to keep the law.

The same can be said for us, at times. Why do you obey God’s Word? Often, it may be because we are afraid of God. We obey God out of fear—that he would punish us if we fail to obey him. By nature, we are driven by fear. We are afraid of God’s wrath so we strive to earn his favor by obeying his law. Yet, we know that we fail many times. And so we live in fear of God’s punishment.

Like the world, we may fall into the sin of obeying without the proper motivation. But we are not the world. The Holy Spirit tells us so. Like Collin today, the Holy Spirit welcomed us into God’s family through the waters of baptism. When we were baptized in the name of the Triune God, our sins were forgiven and we were given everlasting life. Through the gospel in Word and the Sacrament of Holy Communion, the Holy Spirit strengthens our faith. Through them he also forgives our sins and assures us of eternal life. How great is it today, to hear the Word, see a baptism, and receive Christ’s body and blood all in the matter of one hour. That as you walk back after partaking of the very thing which Christ gave up to remove the guilt of your sins, you pass the font and are remembered when your sins were washed away through the waters of baptism. Through the faith that

the Holy Spirit gives and strengthens, he proves that we are his very own.

Through the means of grace the Holy Spirit not only makes us holy, but he also helps us live a God-pleasing life. He leads us in our lives of sanctification. He not only shows us what to do, he also helps us do it. He works faith in our hearts which leads us to want to live a God-pleasing life. Paul says in verse 14, **those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.** Our desire to follow God and obey his will is proof that we are God's children. For those that are not part of God's family do not care about following his Word. But you do. So your faith along with your desire to obey God is proof that the Holy Spirit has made you part of God's family. As Paul says in verse 16, **The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.**

Along with the Holy Spirit who welcomes us into God's family, the Father adopts us as his own.

And what is so amazing about this, of course, is that at one time we weren't part of God's family. Not only were we God's enemies by nature, but we also weren't part of God's chosen people. The Jews were chosen by God to be the nation of the Savior. And as far as I know, no one here is of Jewish origin. In no way then, are we part of God's family.

But through the work of the Holy Spirit, we are part of God's family. We are his own dear children. Not his natural born children. But we are his adopted children. And we aren't like the red headed-step child that someone was forced to adopt. No, God chose us, despite our sins, from the beginning of the world to be his own. He fully adopted us as his children. And he loves us as if we are his own.

And as children of the Father we can go before him without fear. We can go before him like a little child goes up to his Dad. We know that we can ask him for anything. For he loves us. If he loves us enough to send his one and only Son to die for us, then he certainly loves us enough to give us all things. And he will give to us whatever we need to benefit us. Therefore we can approach God with confidence that he will hear and answer our prayers.

We have this sure hope and confidence because our Father is one who keeps his promises. He tells us the truth. And never lies to us. He guards and protects us as a Father would protect his own son. He never lets anything happen to us. He is our dear Father. He is our loving, compassionate, and gracious Father.

Because the Triune God has adopted us as his own, we more than happy to be his children. For the one true God is our Father. He ripped us from the house of Satan, and gathered into his arms. For this we love God. And because we love God we want to obey him. So we obey him not because of fear. We do what he says not because we are afraid of what will happen to us if we don't. Or because of guilt, or enticement. For we know that, through Christ, we don't have to fear God's punishment. We have no guilt, for God has declared us not guilty through the death and resurrection of the Son.

So we obey out of love. Out of love and thanks for everything our Triune God does for us we gladly obey his Word. For obeying God is how we show our love for him. It is a result of our faith—faith given to us by the Holy Spirit. He makes us children of the Father, who adopts us as his dear children. We show love to him as he showed love to us. It is not an obedience out of fear, but out of love. Like a little child who obeys his parents, simply because they are his parents and he wants to please them by doing what they want him to do. That is what the Holy Spirit has led us to do in relation to the Father. As Paul says, **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."**

As God's children, all of us are God's heirs—heirs together with God, the Son.

We can only be children of God through Christ. For he is the one who lived a perfect life in our place. Through his suffering and death the guilt of our sins has been removed. For he took them upon himself when he died on the cross. Because of Jesus, God does not look upon us as his enemies, but as his dear children. For when he sees believers, he sees the Son, who wrapped us in his righteousness. And three days after Jesus paid the price for our sins, he took all our sins upon himself, he rose from the dead. In his life and death, Jesus certainly is

true man, but through his resurrection he proved that he also is true God. So he is both true man and true God. And thus, he is also our Savior.

40 days after Jesus rose from the dead he ascended into heaven. It was then Jesus received his inheritance as God's Son. His inheritance is his glory as God in heaven. And we too will have this heavenly inheritance. For as God's sons, we too are his heirs. Jesus will come again to take us to live with him in heaven forever. We can be assured that because Jesus rose from the dead, our bodies will rise too. And they will join our souls with the Triune God. And this is given to us not because of who we are. But through the Holy Spirit who gave us faith and God adopted us into his family. And then the Son shared his inheritance with us that he won for us. As Paul says, **if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ.**

And like Christ, we may suffer on this earth. We face persecution of various kinds. We are attacked simply because of what we believe in. And those attacks may cause us to question what is right. Our sinful nature wants one thing, and God wants another. Do we deny ourselves what we want and what the world says is good and fine, or do we obey God? Do we show love to God by obeying him, or do we show love to ourselves? The crosses that we bear are results of being a Christian. It includes denying the things that you want but are contrary to God's Word.

Of course we also suffer because we live in a sin-filled world. We live in a world full of hate and crime. People have done some awful things to us in our lifetime. People betray us, leave us, spread rumors about us. We may suffer because of financial stress, health problems, or family issues. Perhaps a loved one has passed away, and now you are left without him. Maybe you are staring death in the face.

We may suffer like Christ. But we don't have to worry. For if we suffer like the Son, we will also have the same glory as the Son. As Paul tells us, **if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.** As Christians, we don't care about what happens in this life. We don't care how much we suffer. For we know that one day it will end. All our sufferings will be gone when we receive our eternal inheritance.

So it doesn't matter how horrible our life is. For our life in heaven will be so great, that it can't possibly be compared to our life here on earth. As Paul points out in the verse after our text, **I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.** Heaven is so great, what we suffer through no longer matters. Whatever problems come our way, we know the Triune God is with us. We know that we will join him in heaven forever. And there we will be free from problems, free from sorrows, and free from fear.

Do you notice how all three persons work together? God, the Holy Spirit brings us into the family of God through the means of grace, and enables to us to obey God, the Father out of Love. We love the Father because he adopted his enemies as his dear children. And as his children, God the Son shared his eternal inheritance with us—the inheritance that he won for us through his death and resurrection. This inheritance we receive by the faith that the Holy Spirit has worked in us. The doctrine of the Trinity may seem a little abstract because we can't wrap our minds around it. But it is practical. For there is only one God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Three-in-one. And he makes us his fearless heirs. Amen.