

The Litmus Test Romans 8:12-17

A litmus is a test that uses a single indicator to prompt the validity of something. There is something within our lives that allows us to be assured and secure of the salvation that we have in and through Jesus. It in fact prompts us to live out these lives that God has called us to live.

Our Obligation (verses 12-13)

v12 So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.

- This **so then** is very similar to the typically used "therefore" and really has in mind what has been discussed the past 2 chapters.
- We see a familial term used: **brothers**. Our reminder here is that we are of the same family.
- After that, we are given almost an unfinished thought: **we are debtors, not to the flesh**, to live according to the flesh. The focus has to be on what we are no longer debtors of because we know that we ARE **debtors** (ὀφειλέτης)...to Christ, to righteousness.

v13 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.

- Someone who lives **according to the flesh** is an unregenerate person and the end result 100% of the time is death.
- If we are living **by the Spirit** there is an obligation for us to take action. This action is to **put to death the deeds** of the body (to render extinct, to kill - θανατώ - the business - προάξις - of the flesh). If our lives are represented by complete Spirit-involvement we will live.

Our Adoption (verses 14-17)

v14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

- Here we are introduced to the idea of adoption. We are all called **sons of God**--those who are **led by the Spirit**.
- Those of us who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God and only those who are sons of God will be led by the Spirit.
- What does it mean to be **led by the Spirit of God**? The word **led** (ἄγω) means to bring to the point of destination. Since the context of this passage is sanctification we see how this leading is played out in relation to our lives.

v15 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!"

- Being in bondage to the law, flesh, sin and death produces **fear** (φόβος - terror). This is what a faulty view of grace brings about.
- We have now received the **Spirit of adoption**. This is who the Spirit is. He has produced an awareness in us that we have been **adopted** (υιοθεσία - to make sons).
- This is why we can proclaim, "**Abba! Father!**" We see both the Aramaic and the Greek term for father.

v16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

- Have you doubted your salvation?
- 3 components point to the security of a believer: 1. Scripture gives us promises of assurance (John 10:28 "I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand."); 2. Assurance comes from the fruit of our obedience (1 John); 3. The Holy Spirit is an inner witness to our assurance (the Spirit bears witness (συμμαρτυρῶ) TO our Spirit that we are children of God).

v17 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.

- So what are we **heirs** of? We are heirs of God himself (Lam 3:24 "'The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."), eternal salvation (1 Peter 1:4 "to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,") and glory (Rom 5:2 "Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.).
- The word **children** (τέκνον) is different than the word sons (υιοθεσία). Children literally is translated "offspring" whereas sons is more of a general term. Offspring receive the inheritance. That is how it has always worked. Those who are closest of kin are who receive the portion.
- As **fellow heirs with Christ** we reap the same benefits and share the same qualities (righteous, resurrected, glorified)...and **suffering**. The end result is that we will be **glorified with him**. We will one day get to experience eternal life in all of its glory.

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