

Welcome To The Created Family Of God!

In our last study we looked at three wonderful things that happen to us the moment we ask Jesus Christ to become our Saviour and Master.

- a) We experience God's forgiveness
- b) We receive new spiritual life
- c) Jesus Christ, God, comes to live within us

But this is not all that happens.

In this study we will look at three more wonderful things that happen to us the moment we commit our life to Jesus Christ.

God becomes our Spiritual Father

Romans 8:9-17 [NIV] *“You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you. Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation, but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because **those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.** 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.” **The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.** 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.”*

When we surrender our lives to Jesus Christ we are born again spiritually and enter into the created family of God.

At that moment our relationship with God changes, God becomes our Spiritual Father.

Before that moment God was our Creator, we called Him God, but **not** Father.

Only those who have received Jesus Christ into their lives can call themselves the children of God.

We can now talk to God as a child talks to their earthly father.

The Greek translated “*abba father*” is a very intimate title, expresses two things.

- a) The unquestioning trust that an infant has towards its parents
- b) The intelligent apprehension of an intimate relationship.

“*Abba father*” was a term forbidden to slaves when addressing the head of the family, only used by children born into the family or adopted by the head of the family.

Galatians 4:4-7 [NIV] *“But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. **Because you are***

sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba, Father.” So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.”

Under Roman law, an adopted child was guaranteed all legal rights to their father’s property, even if they had formerly been a slave.

They were **not** second-class children but equal to any children born in that family.

We may not have had an earthly father who was always good to us.

At times he may be angry, unkind or unfair in the way he treated us.

Our earthly father may have taken little interest in us, not been there when we needed him.

This is **not** what our Heavenly Father is like.

Human fathers are imperfect and may do wrong things.

Our Heavenly Father is perfect, right and loving in all the ways He deals with His children.

Psalms 103:8-14 [NIV] *“The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbour his anger for ever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.”*

We are fragile, but our Spiritual Father’s care is eternal.

Too often we focus on God the Father as Judge and Law Giver, ignoring His compassion and care for us.

When God our Spiritual Father examines our lives, He remembers our human condition.

Our weaknesses should never be used as an excuse for sin, but God takes everything into account.

God the Father deals with us compassionately, trust Him.

We become part of a new family

1 Corinthians 12:12-13 [NIV] *“The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptised by one Spirit into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free, and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.”*

When we are born into a human family we have blood relatives, those who are related to us by birth.

We may have other brothers and sisters who share the same father, the same source of life.

When we are born again, spiritually by the Holy Spirit into God’s created family, we become part of a much bigger and far more important family.

We now have “*blood*” brothers and sisters all over the world.

All who have been cleansed and made new by the blood of Jesus Christ our Saviour, and who have the same Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them as we have.

We are related to all these “spiritual” brothers and sisters in a very special way.

Ephesians 4:1-6 [NIV] *“As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. **There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called, one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.**”*

We all share and serve the same Lord, Jesus Christ, we all have the same Spiritual Father, we all have the same Holy Spirit dwelling in us.

We all share the same faith, and have the same hope.

Because of these things we have in common, nothing should divide us.

Language, colour of skin, sex, cultural background, educational level, or church denomination [the way we worship the same Saviour] should never cause divisions or lack of warmth in our fellowship.

Galatians 3:26-29 [NIV] *“**You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.**”*

No matter what the surface difference we are all one body in Jesus Christ.

Satan’s power has been broken

Hebrews 2:10, 14-15 [NIV] *“In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering.” ... “**Since the children have flesh and blood, he [Jesus Christ] too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.**”*

Jesus had to become human with flesh and blood, so that He could die and rise again in order to destroy the power that Satan has over all human beings.

Only then could those who live in the constant fear of death be freed to live for Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:50-56 [NIV] *“I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: **“Death has been swallowed up in victory.” “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?”** The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.”*

When we belong to Jesus Christ we need **not** fear death, because we know that physical death is only a doorway to real, eternal life.

Satan seemed to be victorious in the Garden of Eden with the first human beings and also at the cross of Jesus Christ the Saviour of all human beings.

But God turned Satan’s apparent victory into defeat when Jesus Christ rose from the dead.

Revelation 12:9-11 [NIV] *“The great dragon was hurled down, that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. **They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.**”*

We are to continue to overcome the powerful influence that Satan has over human beings, through the fear of death and other deceptions.

How?

By using the blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, and our witness of His resurrection as He lives and works in and through us.

Revelation 12:12 [NIV] *“Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! **But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short.**”*

Satan is angry because by the sacrifice and resurrection of our Saviour Jesus Christ we have been taken out of his power.

Satan will try to get back at us.

Satan will try to accuse us of our past sins and failures.

Satan will try to tell us that nothing has really happened to us.

Satan will put doubts in our minds.

Satan will tell us that we are not good enough to be accepted by God.

Satan may even use our friends and family to accuse us, and try to pull us away from our new-found faith in Jesus Christ.

But with Christ living in us we don't have to be afraid.

1 John 4:4 [NIV] *“You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because **the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.**”*

The Spirit of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit in us, is far greater than Satan who is now not in us directing our lives.

1 Peter 5:6-9 [NIV] *“Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. Be self-controlled and alert. **Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.**”*

Lions attack sick, young or stragglers animals, they choose their victims who are alone or not alert.

Peter warns us to watch out for Satan's attack when we are suffering or being persecuted.

Feeling alone, weak, helpless or cut off from other believers, and so focussed on our personal troubles we become vulnerable to Satan's attack.

During times of trouble seek other Christians for support and keep our eyes on Jesus Christ our Saviour.

James 4:7-8 [NIV] *“Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.”*

Drawing near to God will cause Satan to flee from us.

Ephesians 6:10-17 [NIV] *“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the **belt of truth** buckled round your waist, with the **breastplate of righteousness** in place, and with your **feet fitted with** the readiness that comes from the **gospel of peace**. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the **helmet of salvation** and the **sword of the Spirit**, which is the word of God.”*

As Christians we are in a battle against the evil in this world, both physical and spiritual.

We all need this protecting spiritual armour that God makes available to each Christian.

Truth

John 14:6 [NIV] *“Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me.”*

Jesus Christ is the truth, and it was the wide belt that held all the soldiers armour in place.

Righteousness

Romans 4:18, 21-24 [NIV] *“Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” ... “being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why “it was credited to him as righteousness.” The words “it was credited to him” were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness, for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.”*

Our faith in what God has done for us in Jesus Christ is rewarded by our having the righteousness of Jesus Christ being credited to us. A great defence against Satan.

Gospel Message

Romans 10:13-15 [NIV] *“for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”*

We need to be comfortable bringing the Good News of what Jesus Christ has done for all humanity, wherever we walk in life.

Faith

Hebrews 11:6 [NIV] *“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”*

We must always have faith to please God.

2 Corinthians 5:7 [NIV] *“We live by faith, not by sight.”*

Faith in Jesus Christ must be our constant guard against Satan’s attack.

Salvation

Ephesians 2:8-9 [NIV] *“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no-one can boast.”*

The knowledge that we are saved by faith in what Jesus Christ has done for us can protect our mind from any doubts that Satan can try to put in our mind.

Word of God

Hebrews 4:12 [NIV] *“For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”*

The Word of God as found in the Handbook For Life, the Christian Bible, is to be used to protect us from the deception of Satan and attack the lies that he seeks to spread in society.

Clothed in this spiritual armour we are safe from all that Satan may do.

Prayer

Ephesians 6:18 [NIV] *“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.”*

Any soldier knows that instant communication with Headquarters is essential for any successful battle.

We need to involve God in every part of our lives by talking to Him about every situation we face.

Memory Verse:

Romans 8:15 [NIV] *“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.”*

In the next study we will find out how we can overcome any doubts we may have as to whether we are a child of God, a Christian.