

Pastor Daniel Waldschmidt
St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church
Burlington, WI
May 22, 2016

What do you believe about God? Today is Trinity Sunday. This summer we are going to be exploring what we believe about God with a sermon series on the Apostles' Creed. The word "Creed" comes from the Latin word "Credo" which means "I believe." The Bible teaches and we believe that there is only One God and yet there are three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I believe that there are three persons and yet only one God. The Bible also tells us about the love that this Triune God has for us and so today's sermon theme is "I believe in the Triune God's Love." The passage we are looking at is Romans 8:14-17 and in this passage we see three ways that the Triune God shows his love for us. I. He adopted us. II. He speaks to our spirit. III. He gives us an inheritance.

First, he adopted us. Our passage says, **"The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again" (Rom 8:15a)**. Notice that it says, "Live in fear again." That implies that we lived in fear before we became Christians. Before we became believers, we were slaves to sin. And because of our sin, we lived in fear of God's wrath.

Imagine that you lived as a slave to a very cruel master. Each day is more miserable than the last. But then one day a king sets you free. The king says, "I have adopted you to be my son." That is what God has done for us. **"The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship" (Rom 8:15a-b)**. The King of the universe has adopted you as his child.

Now you know that the adoption process can be difficult. Parents need to go through a long and difficult process to adopt a child. They need to fill out endless paperwork. They have to sit for many interviews. They have to spend thousands of dollars. But they do it gladly because they love their children. In the same way, God adopted you at great expense to himself. In order to adopt us God gave his own Son. God's Son left heaven and became a man. And he paid for your adoption not with money, but with his own blood. It says in Galatians chapter 4:3-5. **"So also we were in slavery under the elemental spiritual forces of the world . But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, so that we might receive the adoption to sonship." (Gal 4:3-5)**.

I believe in the Triune God's love. The Triune God showed his love for us by adopting us into his family. He also shows his love for us by speaking to our spirit. **"The Spirit himself testifies with our Spirit that we are God's children." (Rom 8:16)** The Holy Spirit speaks to you in God's Word and assures you that you are indeed God's child. The Holy Spirit also comes into your heart and establishes a deep inner connection between you and God the Father. **"By the Holy Spirit we cry, 'Abba, Father'" (Rom 8:15)**. "Abba" is an Aramaic word that means "Father." Now Paul is writing this letter in Greek. Why would he all of a sudden throw in an Aramaic word "Abba"? He uses the Aramaic word "Abba" because "Abba" is the word that Jesus used to address God the Father. In Mark 14:36 it tells us that Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane with these words: "Abba, Father, everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will." (Mark 14:36). When Paul says that we cry "Abba, Father," Paul is saying that just Jesus has an intimate inner connection with God as his Father, we also have an intimate inner connection with God as our Father. "Abba" expresses that deep inner connection of love between us and God our Father.

My son Luke wakes up every morning between 6:00-6:30. I'm usually sitting in the living room studying and reading. And Luke starts making noise to let me know that he's awake. And I open the door to his room and he's standing in his crib and when he sees me, he lifts up his hands and says, "Da!" That word "Da!" expresses the deep inner connection he has with me as his father.

When we say, "Abba. Father" we are expression the deep inner connection of love that we have with God our Father. Jesus said, **"When you pray, go into your room, close the door, and pray to your Father, who is unseen." (Matt 6:6)**. Our private prayer life is us holding up our hands and saying "Da!" When Luke does that he is showing that he believes in my love. He believes that I'm going to lift him out of his crib and feed him breakfast. Because we believe in the Triune God's love, we want to cultivate a private prayer life to expression our deep inner connection to God our Father.

So the Triune God shows his love for us by adopting us, by speaking to our spirits, and finally, by giving us an inheritance. **“Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ.” (Rom 8:17a)** Children get an inheritance from their parents. If you have really-really rich parents, then you get a really really big inheritance. Now your earthly parents might be very poor, but by telling you about Jesus, they have given you riches beyond your wildest imagination. God your Father is the King of the universe. That means the entire universe is yours. Paul said to the Corinthians, **“All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future – all are yours.” (1 Cor 3:21)** Jesus said that the meek will inherit the earth (Matt 5:5). The Bible says that God is going to create a new heavens and a new earth and give it to us as our inheritance. The promises that you have in Christ are more spectacular than you have ever imagined.

Our passage says that we are **“coheirs with Christ.” (Rom 8:17)** Christ is the Son of God and so the inheritance rightly belongs to him. But by his sacrifice Christ has made us children of God and shares his inheritance with us. We are co-heirs with Christ. We will enter in this inheritance when God raises us from the dead, gives us new resurrection bodies and gives us the new heavens and the new earth to enjoy for all of eternity.

The Triune God really does love us. We’ve seen today how each one of the members of the Trinity loves us. God the Father loves us in that he adopted us to be his children. God the Son loves us in that he paid the price for our adoption, his own blood on the cross and that he shares his inheritance with us. And God the Holy Spirit loves us in that he establishes that deep inner connection between us and God. By the Spirit we cry Abba Father. This part of the Bible Romans 8 is all about assurance. Later in this chapter it says that nothing in all creation can separate us from the love of God. The point of Romans 8 is to assure that God loves us. We have every reason to believe in the Triune God’s love. Amen.