

May 31, 2015 (TRINITY Sunday B)

**Romans 8:14-17**

***“Children of the TRIUNE God”***

*By Pastor Wayne Halldorson*

It’s not a compliment if someone thinks you were raised by wolves. People notice wild, unruly, uncivilized, unpredictable behaviour . . . and they don’t want to be around that. Of course, we all have unique DNA / genetic mixtures that we inherited from our parents – going back to Adam and Eve. We can’t do much about our physical makeup. We also inherited a **sinful nature** – and, managing that is an ongoing struggle for each one of us. Our behaviour, on the other hand – our attitudes / temperament / priorities / words and actions – are strongly **shaped, moulded, and influenced** by FAMILY and upbringing. If you want to truly know a person better – spend time with their family and get to know *them*. Family – the role of those closest personal relationships you have, is *beyond important* as to WHO you are as a person.

At our **baptisms**, we all have been adopted into a NEW family that we will be with forever. We have become children of **God** Himself. Before we go any further, we need to answer a question of vital importance: *Who is “God”?* People say all religions worship the same “god” in different ways. Others say the whole concept of “god” is just a human invention to explain things that are beyond us and our understanding.

We know better. We know the One Triune God. The True Christian Faith has God’s Rock Solid Word of Truth. Due to all the confusion down through history, God’s sons and daughters have had to stand up to define and defend WHO the true God is . . . among all the imposters out there. When **Jesus** showed up, the question was: *Is this GOD in human flesh?* He was – and is. He proved it by fulfilling prophecy, by His miracles, by His death and glorious resurrection. Following Pentecost the first major test God’s people (as a whole) faced was the concept of the **TRINITY**.

To defend and define the Faith and the God we follow – they carefully drafted the creeds: The **Apostles Creed** is a brief definition of the Christian Faith. The **Nicene Creed** defends the dual nature of Jesus as both eternal God and true man. The **Athanasian Creed** carefully defends and defines the Triune Nature of the One True God.

If a person wants to be saved from sin and hell, and live forever in God’s heavenly home – the Triune God of Holy Scripture is the only way and Jesus is the only Saviour there is.

As false teachings and false teachers multiply in abundance – it has been necessary for God’s Church to keep returning to Scripture, to defend and define the one true Faith, and to confess that truth in unity before the world. That’s why we are called **“Confessional Lutherans”** – we stand on Scripture alone and teach only those doctrines that adhere perfectly with what God’s Holy Word teaches. The truth of God’s Word is what bonds us together as a spiritual FAMILY – and what bonds us to God as His sons and daughters. We are HIS children – and, the text before us today describes that powerful influence God has upon His family of believers: **Romans 8:14–17 (NIV 11)**

I. First of all – we are **instructed by God the Spirit**: verse 14 **“For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. 15 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.”** *How does the Spirit lead and instruct us?* He leads us right back to Christ and God’s Word! Jesus Himself taught us that: **“I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. . . He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you. (John 16:12–15) – and, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.” (John 14:23–26) – and, “You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me.” (John 5:39).** In Scripture we find out about sin and grace / forgiveness and salvation in the blood of Jesus / strength and power in Word and Sacrament – this is not “dry doctrine” but

intimately practical – God’s Spirit leads us in Scripture to see: we are no longer slaves of sin and death – living meaningless lives of loneliness and despair with no future ahead of us . . . we are CHILDREN of GOD – forgiven, redeemed, adopted, set apart, living lives of meaning and purpose as we wait to be gathered into our Father’s home. God’s Spirit leads us to that blessed certainty, and to the *comfort only God the Heavenly Father can provide:*

2. **Verse 15b: “And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’ 16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.”**

We have that status. We have protection / forgiveness / guidance . . . and a blessed home waiting for us that’s more glorious than we can ever imagine. But . . . we’re not there yet. And so, we need some help and *encouragement* along the way – that which only *God the Son* can provide:

3. **Verse 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.”** The “if” in this verse (both instances) should be translated “SINCE” – there is no hint of doubt implied; this is a natural result of the FACT that we are God’s children. Heaven is our home. We have that inheritance. But – as people connected to Christ by faith . . . suffering is part of the package here in this world. Glory is waiting for us *there* on the other side. Jesus said, since this world hated Him, it will hate us too. We all know this life is filled with suffering right up to our last breath – but, we also know for certain that our eternity is safe with our family in God’s own glorious home.

Let’s get back to THIS life for a moment here – *have you ever heard of a child that came from a good solid Christian home . . . yet their life went horribly awry?* It happens. It’s tragic. Sometimes they break all ties with family and want nothing to do with them or their Heavenly Father. Have you ever considered WHY it happens? Good family and God’s family is not the only influence upon us human beings! Friends, family members, neighbours, peers, teachers, professors, music, media, celebrities – pretty much ANYBODY could be used by our enemy to try and lure us away from God. We know what Satan’s deadly plans are: 1) To yank us away from God’s heavenly family. 2) To yank apart and destroy our earthly families. Have you ever noticed, for example, on TV how modern shows

portray characters with very little or no influence from their family – and – certainly no influence from church family, God, or Scripture? How does this impact our thinking and lives? How about children and the next generation? Our enemy wants us all to live as selfish and self-centered individuals with no family entanglements, no religious burdens, and no need for God. That darkness, loneliness, and emptiness creeps into our hearts and families too.

Run – *don’t walk* – RUN back to God! The Spirit **leads** you in God’s Word to the cross / to forgiveness. The Father **comforts** us troubled sinners and reminds us we are His children. Christ **encourages** us and sustains us through the darkness, to glory. Our priorities get straightened out as we gather as a family in God’s House, are led by the Spirit, and gather our families together around our Triune God. Spend TIME together, and together with Him, in His Word, in His house, in prayer, in service to those whom God has put in your family (both in a physical and spiritual sense).

He instructs and leads, moulds and fashions us into people of honour, truth, love, dignity, stability, people who work hard, who sacrifice, who give, who are generous, who are family orientated, people who are certain of our place in God’s family and certain of our future in God’s home.

People will notice that. They likely won’t say, “*It seems like you have been raised by the Triune God!*” But – they will see the difference God is making in your life, and they might want to meet your family / meet your spiritual family / find out about your Heavenly Father. We are here to make a difference, and through us – God’s family will continue to grow, and we all know that nothing is more important than that!

*Prayer: O God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – we are so thankful that you have made us part of your family through faith, by grace, in the power of holy baptism. Keep us always safe in your arms, and let no one ever tear us away from you. Continue to forgive, lead, shape, mould and fashion us by your Holy Word. Bless our church family, and the family you have placed us into here – help us show your love and truth to all those around us, and bless our efforts to build and grow Your eternal family. All to the glory of our Triune God – Amen.*