

Trinity - 12 November 2017
Reading: Ro 8:18-30
'Vision Sunday: Conformed to the Son'

Introduction

- Ever had embarrassing moment when received something really nice, and thought just for you, but then realised that, though *was* for you, not mainly for your benefit? **Ill - Parents buy second hand car, and that lovely, but just as thinking just for you and how special, realise actually mainly so can now ferry around rest of siblings so parents don't have to. Get promotion at work, and that great, but then realise primarily so can have another person at rank in organisation so can take on particular task.** For moment, thought all about you, but then realised just part of something bigger. Ever had one of those moments?
- Second half of Ro 8 one of those moments for Christians. Last week, reminded that, if trust in Jesus, not just *justified* by God, or *sanctified* by, but *adopted* by, as one of children. Not just forgiven, or even given new purpose in life, but now brought into most intimate relationship can possibly have with: son or daughter to daddy. Great moment when realise that!
- But times in our Christianity - especially modern, western Christianity - joy of that intimacy can blind us to real reason for gospel. In individualism, can come to think that personal salvation - *my* salvation and salvation of *other people* - peak of God's achievement, that this really all came to do in gospel. But as today's passage makes clear, just not true. Although saving of people from sin great, not end goal of gospel, or even close to it. End goal of gospel not salvation of people, but nothing less than redemption of *whole creation, so son can honoured, and God can glorified*. If excited to be child of God, great! But God's vision for world much, much bigger. Also much, much *better*. That vision going to get into now as spend second of two wks thinking about own vision as church, and how might tap into God's big vision for world.

Revealed as sons

- Last week saw, because children of God, heirs with Christ + so share in glory: **8:17**.
- But now, learn don't share in it yet. 'Sons', but just because sons doesn't mean have all benefits of sonship now. 'Now-but-not-yet-ness' to status as God's children.
 - *Are* children of God: 8:14. And yet creation *still waiting in eager expectation for children of God to be revealed*: 8:19.
 - *Have been* adopted as sons: 8:15. But still *eagerly awaiting adoption as sons*: 8:23.
- See what saying? Tension in relationship to God as children. Have *some* benefits of sonship but not *all*. *What going on here?* What element of sonship not yet received?
- Answer in **8:23**. 'Redemption of bodies.' I.e., resurrection. **8:11**: '*If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he . . . will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit.*' That promise God gives to people: raise from dead. Glory will be revealed in (8:18). What creation eagerly expecting to see happen to (8:19). Glorious freedom children of God will inherit (8:20): glorious freedom from death. That what will make us fully children of God: resurrection of bodies. But until that happens, won't fully be sons.
- Why is that? Why our resurrection from dead so tightly linked to sonship? Because something irreducibly *physical* about life before God. When God made, made to be in relationship with. As saw last week, relationship of deepest possible closeness:

as child, someone whose relationship completely safe, permanent + intimate. And at spiritual level, now got that relationship back: in God's eyes, status now all those things. But God didn't just make *spiritual* beings meant only to relate to *spiritually*; made *physical* beings meant to relate to *physically*. So, if lose physicality - die - then lost key part of relationship with God. God wants *all of us* - body *and* soul - to be in relationship with. If one half of us dead - body - then can't be. Relationship not safe or intimate and certainly not permanent! Only when raised from dead - 'freed from bondage to decay' - can really be those things, and hence fully God's child. **Ill - Like child been adopted by parents but still living in orphanage. All papers signed and, in eyes of law, genuinely child. Parents love as child: pray for, talk with, give gifts to, cuddle. But until child actually released from orphanage + goes home with new mum and dad, not living full life of child. Not until freed from orphanage ('redeemed') fully become child.** Same with. God's children *now*, but not until been freed from death + raised to life will really be revealed as sons.

- **App - Why suffer now. Not fully 'sons' yet. Joel Osteen 'prosperity preacher'. Believes that, because become children of God, can expect best of everything in this life now. Listen how puts: 'I've come to expect to be treated differently. I've learned to expect people to want to help me. My attitude is: I'm child of the Most High God. My Father created the whole universe. He has crowned me with favor, therefore can expect preferential treatment. As God's children, were created to reign in this life and walk in victory.'** **According to Osteen, because children of God, can expect glory now. No, no, no. Suffering now, glory later - just like Jesus. And yet: 8:18. That hope of Christian: adoption as sons on day raised.**

For the good of creation

- God made us children, but won't be until raised from dead will come into full glory of what means. But does our adoption just have consequences for? Or is something bigger going on than just our glory?
- Much bigger. As about to see, God makes us children, but not just for our good. For good of whole creation. **8:19.** Creation waiting - lit. 'craning forward, standing on tiptoes' - to see resurrection. Why? Because not just pleased for us - for new future resurrection gives us - but for new future our resurrection will give it.
- **8:20-21.**
 - When humans sinned, took rest of creation down with. Ge 3:17: because of Adam's sin, "Cursed is the ground because of you." Humans were heads of creation, meant to rule and care for it as God's regents. But when didn't and sinned, God punished with death; and not just, but whole creation. As such, day fell terrible not just for but for whole creation: 'subjected to frustration' (8:20). No longer able to fulfil purpose - thriving submission to kind rulers - because rulers abandoned posts. Ever since, been aimless and in decay.
 - But hope. Because once rulers freed from bondage to decay, so will creation be! (8:21). God's plans for creation will be back on track, so will be no more need to subject to frustration any more. Instead, live in 'glorious freedom.'
- So much more to salvation than just what happens to humans. Affects all creation! **Ill - Imagine CEO of company gone bad. Abandoned duties, embezzled funds, and just generally gone A.W.O.L on job. Caused huge damage to company and to reputation of board. But then imagine, rather than fire CEO, board decides to forgive + reinstate to position. More than that: decides to rehabilitate him, sending to counselling as well as countless courses on corporate governance**

so will never make same mistake again. Now, that pretty good break for CEO! Would be pretty grateful for that kind of mercy! Taken from position of utter ruin and put back in one of utter security. Relationship totally restored with board. Fantastic! Board delighted CEO so pleased. But that only reason board bailed out? To save CEO? No! Also did it to save company, of whom CEO head! Knew without rescuing CEO, company would die. Not what board wants for: loves too much. So, saves CEO, both because loves CEO but also because loves company put there to lead. What happens with. God saves, but saves so can lead creation as always meant to, not into decay, but glorious freedom of endless life.

For the honour of Jesus

- But believe or not, even greater reason for adopting us as children, i.e. raising from dead on last day. Not just so can be saved or even so can get back on track with job always meant to be doing - leading thriving creation - but so all creation can glorify Jesus. Because that job of 'company' of creation: glorify Jesus. 'Jesus, Inc.'
- Know God has purpose for lives and good one. **8:28**. But what is purpose? What is ultimate 'good' for us as humans? To be conformed to likeness of Son, Jesus: **8:29a**. God's aim for your life: to look more like Jesus. What God wants rulers of his world to look like: more like Jesus. *Adopted as children so could be conformed to Son*. Real reason for gospel: for honour of Jesus.
- What mean to be 'conformed to likeness of Christ?'
 - Being conformed *now* to likeness in character. **2 Co 3:18** *'And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever increasing glory.'* Sanctification; God making more + more into Jesus-shaped version of self. **III - Robert E. Lee**.
 - Being conformed *then* in his likeness in body. Just as Jesus been raised from dead, so wants *our* bodies to conform to *his* body in that will raise them too. **Php 3:20b-21** *'We eagerly await a saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.'*
- God wants every son and daughter adopts to look like Son, Jesus, both in character and in body. But why? Why God so keen to make adopted children look like natural son? **8:29b**. Of all children, wants Jesus to be 'firstborn', preeminent. Puts another way in **Col 1:18** *'He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.'* On day when raises us from dead, God wants all to share in honour of ruling world, as always meant to do: Jesus firstborn 'among many brothers and sisters.' But *firstborn* among those brothers and sisters and no one can take that position from; if humanity meant to be at head of creation, Jesus at head of humanity. Who humanity rules creation meant to look like? Jesus.
- What God's goal in salvation? Not just to put humanity back on throne of creation, but ultimate human, Jesus. Adopts as sons, for good of creation + honour of Jesus.

To the glory of God

- But one reason even more for salvation: glory of God. Saw that two weeks ago: **Ro 11:36** *'For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.'* 'All things' - everything talking about - serve one aim: glorify God.

So now . . .

- Feeling pretty small now? Like your salvation, as good as is, not only thing on God's mind when adopted as child? Hope do, but in good way; in way makes actually feel safe + excited rather than insignificant + lost. No better motivation for us as church to strive for vision than what just heard: caught up in something marvellous, huge, and utterly not all about us, but about glory of God. When get that, adds such depth and colour to what want to do as church.
- **App -**
 - ***Make disciples.*** See what this now means. Not just saving people so can stand around with lots other people in completely white, empty space for eternity, like endless cocktail party. No, actually doing something for good of creation, so can be regenerated. When sharing gospel with friend at café, birds in tree above egging on: 'Keep going! Can't wait to see guys as really should be, deathless + leading. So keep going, so can be freed from bondage to death and brought into same freedom you'll come into one day - and hopefully this guy, too!' Of course, don't *really* think birds think that! But get point. Eternity won't just be room full of humans. Whole new creation with humans at head. Can play role in bringing that on, by making disciples of Jesus.
 - ***Mature disciples.*** Not just people follow Jesus, but people transformed into likeness of Jesus. What doing when sit down with someone + read *Colossians*. Making look more like Jesus. Makes act of discipling more appealing, doesn't? Not just some bland moral improvement exercise. Actually helping fulfil purpose in life: to look more like Christ, and so honour him as one who rules world and with whom will one day rule, too. Get to do that right now! By maturing disciples of Jesus.
 - ***Multipling disciples.*** Want to do all this so sons of God can be revealed sooner and creation be put back on track quicker, with Christ at head, to glory of God.
- All that sound like life worth living? If think so, let's pray to God behind all now.