

Dr. Joe Jursa's Sermon

[Led by the Spirit of God](#) - Romans 8:14-17

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

This is the kind of day the church exists for! We do not exist primarily for UMM or UMW or even youth groups. We do not exist primarily to teach Sunday school or support staff. We do not exist primarily for socials, social action or anything other than bringing persons to the place where they accept Jesus Christ as their personal savior and Lord.

Today as we change our whole routine and cancel services except for this one where we receive the confirmation class into full membership we are being reminded of our reason for existence. The Church of Jesus Christ exists primarily to bring people into redemptive relationship with Jesus. When people come to this altar and accept Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and savior, we have done our job as the church of Jesus Christ. Today these eight have stood here and declared that Jesus is their Lord and Savior, and you the church sitting there, you who in days past declared your own allegiance to Christ have now seen the fruit of your work. Some of you may have served as their mentor's; some may have been their Sunday school teachers, or youth councilors. You may have been the one who first invited their family to visit our church or the one who visited the family in their time of need and peaked their interest in St. Paul. You may be the parents who have faithfully brought them and encouraged them to be involved in your church. But today church, we are seeing the fruit of our combined labor as eight new persons have joined our ranks as believers in Jesus Christ.

"All who are lead by the Spirit of God are the children of God." What distinguishes a child of God of all the other children on the earth? Are they being led by the Spirit of God? It is not about our cultural upbringing. It is not a racial question or about the color of our skin. It is not a mater of education or financial status. It is not about if we have been "good or bad." The mark of a child of God is always are they being led by the Spirit of God.

Do you remember the WWJD bracelets of a few years ago? They were supposed to remind us to ask in everything, "What would Jesus do?" That is if the spirit of the son of God were here this minute what would he lead me to do? Someone who asks that question of each and everything they do within their lives will find that they are becoming steadily more and more like the Son of God. They will find they are becoming more like Jesus.

The mark of every child of God is that they are lead by the spirit of God. How often in the life of Jesus do we see words that tell us he was lead by the Holy Spirit? Why does Jesus go into the wilderness after his baptism? Because he was lead by the Spirit. Why does Jesus set his face to go to Jerusalem on that Palm Sunday? Because he was lead by the Spirit. Why on numerous occasions does Jesus withdraw from the crowd and go to a time of prayer? Because he was lead by the Spirit.

The mark of the child of God is not age or maturity. It is not about education or sound theological doctrine. The child of God is the one who is lead by the Spirit of God.

So how do I get to the place where I am lead by the Spirit of God? You learn to listen. And you learn to listen by asking questions that get God to answer and you learn to listen for God's response.

There is a story in scripture about a woman who cries out for justice to an unrighteous judge. Now you really do not expect to get a just answer, but the story also tells us that because the woman came often, finally the judge gave her a just answer just to get rid of her. The judge did not care about her, he did not care about justice for her, he was not looking to right some evil, he gave her justice just to shut her up. Do you think that the God who loves you will ignore you? The unrighteous judge grants justice just for personal peace of mind, how much more quickly will the God who has been seeking after you answer when we ask?

Ask God for everything and learn to listen. Peggy was a quirky and perky girl who attended college with me. She would actually pray for parking places and for lights to turn green and she would brag about it. When I kidded her about it, she reminded me she also thanked God for green lights and parking places and that sometimes she could hear him answer as she chose her routes through town or isle in the parking lots based on the spirit of God leading.

When our children grow up parents we leave more and more things to them and their experience and right decisions up to that point in life. But do you remember the early days. When they pulled themselves up on the couch and looked ready to take those tentative steps, your hands immediately reached out to help support and encourage them. When they looked ready to feed themselves, you showed them how to hold the fork or spoon, even over and over again until they got it right and became successful at feeding themselves.

God wants you to get life right. The minute you ask or even look like you would be willing to accept God's help, God's hands reach out and the voice of encouragement can be heard as God calls you on.

Ask God about everything and then learn to listen. The voice of God is heard in the wisdom of teachers or the friendship of another. The Spirit of God moves in our families as they encourage us, it moves in odd circumstances that cause us to question is that your voice God, maybe I have never consider it before, but the voice of God seems to be speaking there. God speaks through dreams and through prayers. Ask God questions and then be intentional about looking and listening for answers. When the answer comes, the Spirit of God has lead.

In 1 Kings 19 there is a wonderful story of the prophet Elijah asking God a question. Every prophet of God had been slain, the people were following other gods and now they were even looking for Elijah, the last of the prophets of God to put him to death. He wants to know why and what he is to do. God says go to the mountain of God and listen for God will pass by.

Now the mountain of God might be an actual place but what was meant was to God to the place you usually petition God and listen for his response. So Elijah does his part, he goes to the mountain and listens. At first there is a mighty wind, but the voice of God is not in the wind. Next there is an earthquake, but the voice of God is not in the earthquake. Then comes a great fire, but the voice of God is not there. And then the scripture says there is a small still voice, if you will a whisper. And Elijah goes out to listen to the sound of the voice of God.

I tell you why I love that story, that image. The man of God is not confounded by any of the sounds of the world around, Elijah is so accustomed to the sound of the voice of God, even when it is whispered Elijah knows.

"All who are lead by the Spirit of God are the children of God." It is the sound of the voice of the spirit of God that we need to tune our ears to hear.

The story is told of a hillbilly who comes to New York City at the request of a wealthy family member. He is shown the sights of the city. Sees the traffic, listens to the taxi horns, the sounds of the city traffic. He hears thousands of people marching by hurrying here and there. There are flashing neo signs, builders taller than some of the hills back home. The sound of his shot gun going off would not be as loud as the sounds of the street around him. But then the hillbilly stops.

The wealthy New Yorker wants to know what has caught his attention. He tells him a cricket. It takes the hillbilly a couple of minutes but he finally locates the cricket under an old cracker box.

The New Yorker is utterly amazed and asks his friend how did he do that to which the man replied, "It was the first sound from home, how could I have missed it."

Are your ears tuned to hear the voice of the Spirit of God? "All who are lead by the Spirit of God are the children of God." Can you hear the Spirit?