

ADDRESSES ON ROMANS

by

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CHAPTER SEVEN

RIGHTEOUSNESS REALIZED (Continued)

Romans 6:1-8:39

IV. OUR LIFE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT (8:1-39)

We will conclude the study of the fourth great division of the epistle, which we have presented in three lectures here, in order to dwell at length upon this important portion of the book—“Righteousness Realized.”

Let us remember, however, that chapters six, and eight are a unit; and that, in reality, they must not be separated, the one from the other. They comprise a progressive unfolding of this vital truth: How is the believer in Christ to experience the life of victory over sin?

Chapter eight of Romans gives us the complete answer, and is the climax of this division of the epistle, as well as the climax of the whole book. It is the mountain-top experience, about which we are to study today, one of the highest peaks in all the Word of God.

It tells us the way to victory over sin through the blessed Holy Spirit—our Deliverer, our Helper, our Intercessor, our Comforter, the One through whom our sinful lives may be transformed by the miracle of His grace.

No wonder Paul closes the chapter with these wonderful words: “**If God be for us, who can be against us?**”

Before he knew the operation of the Spirit of God within him, he felt as though he were the victim of an ancient tyrant, carrying a corpse on his back; thus he struggled against sin as he tried to keep the Mosaic Law. But his despair changed to assurance as he learned of the work of the Holy Spirit. He realized that the battle was not his, but the Lord's; and we, too, must learn that our part is to obey the instruction of the sixth chapter of Romans. When we yield our bodies, He makes known to us the operation of the Holy Spirit.

You remember the man with the withered arm to whom Christ said, “Stretch forth thy hand.”

How could the man obey? Was not the arm withered? But when he showed the will to do what Christ said, he was healed. He was given strength to follow the command.

Having given us, in chapter six, God's instructions concerning the path of victory, Paul shows us in chapter seven how this righteousness is not realized; in chapter eight, how it is made a positive, practical force in the life.

- In chapter seven the believer is harassed by his inability to keep the law;
- In chapter eight he finds strength and victory by the power of the risen Christ.

He finds more—he sees by faith the eternal glory which awaits him, when soul and body, together with the whole physical creation, shall be forever delivered from the very presence of sin.

- In chapter seven the Holy Spirit is not mentioned; sinful “I”—the carnal man—fills the scene;
- In chapter eight over and over again the Holy Spirit is named.

He floods the horizon with light and triumph over “the world, the flesh, and the devil.” Twenty-seven times He is mentioned or referred to, directly and indirectly in this one chapter. What a contrast between chapters seven and eight! From defeat to victory, from despair to hope, from impotence to power—this is the Holy Spirit's message to us today!

It is the message that enabled Martin Luther to face all the dignitaries of a powerful system, and proclaim: “Here I am. God helping me, I take my stand. I can do no other, so help me God.” And these words started the Protestant Reformation.

My friend, would you know the secret of the triumphant lives of Luther and all the Christian martyrs, of Wesley and Spurgeon and Moody? It is found in the eighth chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans.

Some people think that, while the unsaved have no power over sin, Christians do have. This is not true.

Christ says, “**All power is given unto me.**” This shows that we have no power of our own. He alone can actually deliver a believer from the power of sin. The moment we cease struggling, the Spirit begins to work in the life. How long it takes many of us to come to the end of human effort! We must reckon ourselves dead to sin, and dead to the law, so that the Spirit may work in us to give us victory.

Again, very young Christians have often grasped this truth. Have you heard of the little girl in Scotland who applied for membership in a church, appearing before a group of dignified elders who questioned her about her faith? One of them asked, “What are you trusting in for salvation?”

And the little girl replied, “I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, that He died for my sins and rose again for my justification.”

The elder stroked his whiskers and asked again, “You have been saved through the blood of Christ, but does the tempter ever knock at your door?”

The little girl, with a look of assurance, answered, “Yes, Satan knocks at my heart’s door; but when he does, I say to Christ—He lives in me, you know —’Lord, wilt Thou open the door?’ And when He goes to the door, and Satan sees Him, he always says, ‘Pardon me, but I knocked at the wrong door.’”

Why should that little girl have opened the door to the tempter? She knew the secret of the eighth chapter of Romans, that it is the Holy Spirit who gives victory. He controls the life.

(1) *“No Condemnation” (8:1)*

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

This verse means exactly what it says. It is in reality the conclusion of chapter seven, as we see from the connecting word **“therefore.”** It is the summing up of what Paul has set before us about the believer’s relationship to the law. When we remember that the text was not originally divided into chapters and verses by the apostle, we see plainly that here he was drawing the conclusion to what he had said in the preceding verses.

In other words, we have died to the first Adam, the old federal head of the race, to be united to the second Adam, our Lord Himself; we have died to sin, the old master, to be raised with Christ, our new Master; we have died to the old husband, the law, to **“be married to another,”** our heavenly Bridegroom.

And because of all the Lord has done for us, **“there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.”** Because we have been identified with Christ and are seated with Him **“in heavenly places”** (Ephesians 1:3; 2:6), we are beyond the reach of condemnation. God sees us identified with Him. And Christ is now at the right hand of the Father. Do you think condemnation could ever reach Him? He is alive forevermore! And because He lives, death shall never again have dominion over us. You and I may feel condemned at times but it is not how we feel; it is what God says that determine our condition. And this is His testimony.

When is it that we stand uncondemned before God? Is after we have struggled with sin for years? Is it after we die, or just at the moment of dissolution of body and spirit? No, my friend. **“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.”**

This is assurance of salvation.

I wonder if some doubting soul is reading these words, someone who is full of misgivings. If so, my friend, please look away from your weak frame; look away from your feelings; look to the risen Christ. See yourself in Him. He settled the sin question forever. If He had not, He would not now be seated in heaven. He settled the sin question according to divine satisfaction, and God sees you identified with Christ. What a relief this should be to your troubled soul!

One moment depressed by failures, self-condemned, bewildered, perplexed; then a look at your glorified Lord; and yet again, His reassuring Word: “**No condemnation.**” Look away, O doubting one, to Christ—far above the cross—risen—glorified. See yourself seated with him “**in heavenly places.**” And your soul will be at liberty to be occupied with pleasing Him, not with escaping judgment.

This chapter opens with “**no condemnation.**” Then the Spirit-filled believer climbs from height to height, until at the last he shouts in triumph: “**No separation**”—“**Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?**”

This is liberty, joy, and victory over indwelling sin!

(2) “*The Law of Sin and Death*” versus
“*The Law of the Spirit of Life*” (8:2-4)

In verses 2-4 we see the two laws in contrast: “**For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.**”

The Holy Spirit is called “**the Spirit of life**” because He is the One who creates in the sinner new life in Christ Jesus, and He is the One who gives deliverance from the power of sin. When Christ said to Nicodemus, “**Ye must be born again,**” He added these significant words: “**The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit**” (John 3:7, 8).

“**The Spirit of life**” is the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, the regenerating power of God. Then having quickened the sinner’s heart, having made him “*a new creation*” in Christ Jesus (II Corinthians 5:17), He indwells the believer, making him “**free from the law of sin and death.**”

Do you remember Paul’s agonizing prayer, “**O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?**”

Here is his answer. The Holy Spirit is the One who brings to an end the rule of sin in the believer’s life. Thus you see again what we stated in our study of chapter seven, that God’s way to victory is not eradication, and it is not suppression; it is counteraction. Therefore, those are wrong who teach that the new birth in Christ means taking the old nature out by the roots. I have yet to see the human being who in this life has reached sinless perfection. I wish such a state were possible. Nor are those right who teach the suppression of the old nature by the Mosaic Law. We have seen from chapter seven that Paul sought in vain to get victory by this method. It is not God’s way. His way is the counteraction of the old nature by the Holy Spirit — a higher Power. To quote Paul in Romans 8:3 again, “**The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.**”

I once had a good illustration of this.

I started to the hospital to call on a man, a member of our church. Every time I picked up my foot, I placed it down again. I looked at the blue sky, and thought to myself, "I should like to be up there!" But the law of gravitation kept me on the ground. When I arrived at the hospital, I asked where I should find my friend. On being told, I entered the elevator, pushed the button that was to take me to the sixth floor, and up I went.

The law of gravity was still working; but there was another, a greater law working now, the law of electricity. This law was stronger than that of gravitation. It overcame; it nullified; it counteracted the law of gravitation.

This is what happens when a man reckons himself to be dead to sin, but alive unto God. The Holy Spirit begins to operate, and thus counteracts the old rule of life.

I wish that Christian people might let this truth grip them.

As I was preaching at my church one Lord's Day, I gave the invitation for those wishing to accept Christ to come forward.

In response, a young man walked down the aisle. I asked him if he wanted to receive Christ.

"Yes," he said. But then he turned and walked back to the door. I followed him and asked him what was the matter. And to my question he replied, "I felt constrained to accept Christ, but there is no use. I have the whiskey habit, and I cannot quit. Why go on with this?"

The young man felt, as many do, that the Lord saves the soul, but that living the Christian life is the Christian's own battle. Romans 8:2 forever settles this question for the child of God.

It is not the guilt of sin that Paul is talking about here. That was borne by our Lord on Calvary; and Calvary is the basis of the Holy Spirit's operation in the life of the believer, as verse 3 clearly states. But Paul is talking here of the power over sin in the Christian experience.

On Calvary, Christ, our Sin-Bearer, bore our guilt; now the Holy Spirit enables us to live for God.

(3) *"The Things of the Flesh" versus
"The Things of the Spirit," (8:4-9)*

Now let us read verses 4-9, in which there is a striking contrast between "the flesh" and "the Spirit," the old nature and the new nature in Christ Jesus:

"THE FLESH"

"THE SPIRIT"

1. There is the **"walk after the flesh"** (v. 4)

1. And there is the **"walk . . . after the Spirit"**

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| <p>2. “They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh” (v. 5)</p> <p>3. “For to be carnally [fleshly] minded is death” (v. 6)</p> <p>4. “The carnal [fleshly] mind is enmity against God: it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (v. 7).</p> <p>5. “They that are in the flesh cannot please God” (v. 8).</p> | <p>(v. 4).</p> <p>2. “But they that are after the Spirit (do mind) the things of the Spirit” (v. 5).</p> <p>3. “But to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (v. 6).</p> <p>4. “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (v. 9).</p> <p>5. “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be (or ‘since’) that the Spirit of God dwell in you” (v. 9).</p> |
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The two spheres of life are set forth in these verses — that of the unregenerate soul, and that of the sinner saved by grace. The man **“in the flesh”** is the unconverted man; the man **“in the Spirit”** is the redeemed child of God. And what a contrast between the two!

The natural man is **“in the flesh.”** He walks **“after the flesh.”** He minds **“the things of the flesh.”** The principle of death is in his bosom. He is God’s enemy. In no wise can he please God.

These characteristics vary with different types of people. Some are sensual; their minds sink to low levels. Others are intellectual and cultured; but because they are **“in the flesh,”** they **“cannot please God.”**

In contrast with this dark picture, the yielded believer is not **“in the flesh,”** but **“in the Spirit.”**

Since he is born of the Spirit, the Spirit dwells in Him. Please note just here that the words **“if so be”** in verse 9 mean *“since.”* There is no doubt here; every born-again soul is indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God. Every Christian is not *yielded* fully to God, as he is exhorted to do in the sixth chapter of Romans; but every Christian *should* be yielded; and every Christian is empowered to yield himself wholly to God, because he has dwelling in him the Holy Spirit of power.

The man who thus yields his members as instruments of righteousness is described by the Holy Spirit as **“after the Spirit.”** His mind is controlled by the Spirit and he minds **“the things of the Spirit.”** He has life and peace. When we enter into the presence of God, we shall know these things in a richer and fuller measure; but it is our privilege and our responsibility to claim even now the power of the Spirit-filled life.

If you are controlled by the Spirit, my friend, you will mind **“the things of the Spirit.”**

Since you are **“risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God”** (Colossians 3:1-3).

In these words we see that the **“things of the Spirit”** relate to the risen Christ. While He was on earth, the Lord Jesus spoke of the Holy Spirit saying, **“He shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you”** (John 16:15).

Likewise, as he fills your mind with things pertaining to the risen Christ, you will more and more die to the flesh. But you cannot be occupied both with the Spirit and with the flesh.

I want to ask you, “Are you seeking a pure and holy mind? Do you desire to have your heart flooded with pure thoughts?”

If so, the devil will turn a veritable battery of evil thoughts upon you. What a battle young people of today are having against this very thing! Pictures advertising the movies are suggestive. Magazines are filled with revolting stories and illustrations. Even so-called art is often degrading—both painting and sculpture. This is all Satan’s way of polluting the mind of man.

This is the business of the devil, and has been from the beginning. So it was in the days of Noah; for at that time “**every imagination of the thoughts**” of man’s “**heart was only evil continually**” (Genesis 6:5). And according to prophecy, those days will be repeated just prior to the return of the Lord. Surely it seems as if those days were upon us even now!

The devil seeks to draw the Christian away by polluting his mind, but it is possible to have a pure mind, even in days like these. To be spiritually minded, man must be controlled by the Spirit.

As we reckon ourselves dead to sin and yield our members to God, His Spirit pours into the life “**the things of Christ.**” The spirit of life is the Spirit of holiness. He is the only One who can give a spiritual mind. And He accomplishes this by the counteraction of all that is evil. However, if we are ever going to have that kind of mind, we must co-operate with the Spirit. If we continue to read newspapers filled with divorce and magazines filled with evil, if we continue to let Satan direct us in the things we look upon, the Spirit will not operate in our lives to give us spiritual minds. And how do we co-operate? Read Philippians 4:8 for the answer! “**Think on these things!**”

A young man said to me recently: “I am a child of God, but I have a mind that runs away with me, and constantly thinks of evil things. I want a pure mind. Tell me how to get it.”

I put before him the contents of these verses in the eighth chapter of Romans, and emphasized yielding to God. Then I gave him the illustration of the glass full of corks that I sometimes use as an object lesson for children.

The glass is full of corks, just as one’s mind is filled with evil thoughts. But as you pour water into the glass, the corks all come to the top and fall out. This is done by counteraction. Likewise, the Spirit can so fill the Christian’s mind that there is no room for Satan and “**the things of the flesh.**”

There is such a thing as having a mind controlled by the Spirit.

Thus He brings something to the Christian’s life, as well as life to the sinner. He brings the daily experience of joy and peace.

Bear in mind that the contrast here is not that of the two natures, as in chapter seven; it is, rather, a contrast between two classes of people. It is a contrast between the unsaved and the redeemed.

- The one has death in his bosom; he is the natural man.
- The other has eternal life; he is the spiritual man.

The mind of the flesh is enmity against God. What an awful statement concerning those in the flesh! Yet this is true of all who are without Christ. It is descriptive of man in the flesh. It is true of every unregenerate soul. But the spiritual man can please God, because his mind is controlled by the Spirit of God and holiness. This person has life and peace *here on earth*; he enters into the enjoyment of heaven on this side of the grave. He has the consciousness of having pleased God.

Would you, my friend, live a life that is pleasing to God? It is not difficult, as some would have us think. Just carry out the instruction of Romans six and eight. Do your part and God will do His. While you yield and let Him, he will operate in your whole being. Then you will please God.

You see, I am constantly connecting chapters six and eight. In six we have the believer's part; and in eight, the Holy Spirit's part in the life of victory. When the believer yields his members, the Spirit takes the yielded members and uses them as instruments of righteousness. He takes the believer's mind and heart, and uses them for the glory of God— to please Him.

*(4) Power Over Sin Now—Complete Deliverance in the
Resurrection, 8:10-13*

Verses 10-13 carry us forward to the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, when we shall know complete deliverance, even from the presence of sin; and they also exhort us, while we wait for the Lord from heaven, to please Him by letting His Holy Spirit control our lives. Let us read these verses carefully. They promise power over sin now and complete deliverance over sin in the resurrection.

“If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness” (v. 10).

In the Person of His Holy Spirit, Christ dwells in everyone who has received Him by faith.

The body is lifeless, so far as the ability to produce fruit is concerned. We need not expect any fruit to come from this mortal body. It is not dead as far as unrighteousness is concerned, but it cannot produce fruit unto God.

The only way for our bodies to produce fruit is by the Spirit operating in us. But thank God! This will not always be our state. In verse 11 Paul tells us:

“If the Spirit that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.”

In these words we are pointed on to that time when our bodies shall be quickened. The Holy Spirit raised Christ, and He will raise us. This quickening, my dear friends, does not refer to the present; it refers to the future. The Spirit who raised Christ will eventually raise us, and give us our new bodies. When Christ comes, our resurrection bodies will be like His.

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (I John 3:2).

Those who believe in extreme divine healing make verse 11 apply to the present. But this cannot be, following the statement of the previous verse. The body is judicially dead, not actually. A strong body does not necessarily mean a strong spiritual life; nor does a weak body necessarily mean a weak spiritual life. Our mortal bodies will be like this until Christ comes. Then **“mortality shall put on immortality, and corruption shall put on incorruption.”** There will be no more sickness, pain, or sorrow.

Our resurrection bodies will be like Christ’s; and let us remember that His resurrection body was real. I have a sermon entitled “The Risen Christ, the Foundation of All Church Truth.”

I not only believe in the empty tomb, but I believe also in the risen Christ. “Pastor” Russell believed in the empty tomb, but Russellism says that Christ’s body was dissolved in gases.

Scores of ministers during the Easter season will speak on the resurrection, yet during the other fifty-one weeks of the year will place a question mark about the reality of Christ’s bodily resurrection from the dead. If He did not literally rise from the dead, then we have no salvation to preach, no message of joy. But **“now is Christ risen from the dead”**; therefore, we know that our bodies are going to be changed by the Holy Spirit who indwells us. This is the meaning of Romans 8:11: **“If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.”**

“Therefore, brethren,” Paul continues—in view of this sure promise—**“we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh”** (v. 12).

Because the indwelling Holy Spirit gives power over sin in this life and because of what He will do in giving us resurrection glory—**“therefore”** we should not **“live after the flesh.”**

The man who says he must sin, the man who excuses himself by saying that he cannot help sinning, is not honest with himself or before God. Our Lord has made ample provision for the sinner at Calvary; for the saint, by giving the Holy Spirit to indwell and to set free from the law of sin and death. Do not say you have to sin, my brother. That is not so. If you are not having victory over sin, over habits and temper and pride, it is because you are not reckoning yourself dead to sin and dead to the law; it is because you are not yielding your members as instruments of righteousness, that the Holy Spirit may operate in you.

It is true that many professing Christians are not born again. How can they live a victorious life over sin when they are not dead to sin, when they do not have dwelling in them the all-powerful Spirit of God? To such as these Paul sounds a warning in verse 13:

“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”

Some people think these words disprove the truth of eternal security. They think this says to *Christians*, **“You shall die if you live after the flesh.”** But read verse 14: **“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”**

These words prove that verse 13 is a warning to mere professors. If a man is born of God, the Spirit leads him in the way of holiness. I do not care who the man is or what he believes, if he lives after the flesh, week in and week out, month in and month out, with no desire to please God, he only demonstrates that He is not led by the Spirit. He is in the flesh. He is not in the Spirit. He is not a child of God. Consequently he will die. If a man does not follow after the Spirit of holiness, if he follows after the things of the flesh, it is evident that he is an unregenerated man. This is a timely warning in verse 13.

(5) The Spirit of Sonship, 8:14-17

The Holy Spirit not only counteracts the power of sin in this life and guarantees complete deliverance for all eternity; He also leads us as **“the sons of God.”** He takes from our hearts all fear of God, teaching us how to address Him in prayer. He bears witness to our hearts that we are **“the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.”** What wonderful words are these!

“As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”

Please note that this leading by the Spirit of God does not make us sons. It is evidence that we are sons of God. And because we are sons, we know in a measure, at least, something of the leading of the Spirit.

Notice the progression in the marvelous work of the Holy Spirit, as we have seen it presented in this epistle.

- He sets us free from bondage to sin and the law.
- He enables the believer to **“mind . . . the things of the Spirit.”**
- He puts to death the deeds of the body.
- He leads the believer into an experimental knowledge of God.
- He bears witness **“to”** us in the Word of God.
- He bears witness **“with”** us in our hearts.

The very fact that he indwells us is witness that we are sons of God. Our God longs that we should enter into sonship.

Adoption is sonship.

“Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.”

There was a time when I was afraid of God. That is the natural attitude of the sinner. But when we know Christ, when the Spirit leads us into an experimental knowledge of God, all fear is done away. We learn to trust our heavenly Father even more than an earthly father. Is it not wonderful that we shall not be afraid of God in heaven when we see all His glory and majesty? We shall be at home in heaven; for heaven will be home to us.

Galatians 4:6 teaches the same thing. **“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”**

Is it not wonderful that God may be addressed as *“Papa”*? That is the meaning of **“Abba.”** He is the One by whom we are born, **“not of blood, nor the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God”** (John 1:13).

I once thought it would take me thousands of years to get accustomed to heaven. You know how you feel in a strange home. I visited in the home of the Governor of Iowa at one time, and I remember that I did not know how to adapt myself. It did not seem like home. I used to imagine myself walking down the streets of glory, and meeting God with fear and trembling. I thought I should be afraid of Him. But no; God does not want us to be afraid. We may address Him as **“Father.”** Is it not wonderful that the great God of the universe is **“our Father”**? And He is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son.

Someone has said that the word **“Abba”** is the baby’s word for *“Father.”* A baby calls his father *“Papa,”* while the more mature member of the family addresses him as *“Father.”* But here are the two words together. Young or old, we may address Him as **“Abba, Father.”** The Spirit leads us along the pathway of sonship. He gives us that sense of filial relation that is expressed in the words **“Abba, Father.”** The word **“we”** in verse 15 indicates also that Jews and Gentiles, the whole family of God, may call Him **“Father.”** In Christ Jesus **“the middle wall of partition”** between Jew and Gentile has been broken down (Ephesians 2:14).

I once heard of a father in Illinois who had a child who was deaf, and, therefore, had not learned how to speak. He took her to a school where they teach these children to speak as well as it is possible for those to do who cannot hear the inflection of the voice. He left her there, then he returned when they sent for him. The child was watching for him; and when she saw her father, she ran to meet him and embraced him saying, **“Abba,”** or *“Papa.”*

The man was so happy that he could not control his emotions. My Christian friend, God longs for us to realize our sonship. We cannot describe the joy that fills His heart when we speak to Him in praise and prayer, saying, **“Abba, Father.”** And this we can do because the Holy Spirit leads us and teaches us how to address Him.

“The Spirit itself [himself] beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Romans 8:16, 17).

When Paul utters the words, **“glorified together,”** he goes into heights of ecstasy. We are going to be **“glorified together”** with Christ. Think of that! **“Heirs of God!”**

I believe that the day of the coming of the Lord is rapidly approaching. If ever a believer had cause to lift up his head, it is now; for his redemption draweth nigh. Think of the restoration of the nation of Israel! If these things point to the return of Christ in glory, how much nearer is the sign of the translation of the church, because that even must necessarily take place before the visible, glorious coming of the Lord to reign. Paul here wings his way into **“the third heaven”** (II Corinthians 12:2) when he speaks of the coming glory.

(6) Suffering Now—Glory Forever, 8:18-25

When he thinks of the coming glory and contemplates the blessed truth that we are heirs of God, what does he say? Read verse 18: “I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” Are you saying that, my friend? Those of you who are confined to your beds in pain, are you saying the same thing that Paul says here? Those of you in hospitals, can you say that?

Now there is a difference between suffering with Christ and suffering for Christ. I dare say no man has suffered as Paul did for Christ. Turn to II Corinthians 11:23-33, and read of the sufferings of Paul.

Probably the most severe trials he endured were those administered by his brethren, the Jews. And besides all the physical anguish, besides all the heart-heaviness, he had the care of the many churches. My! What a suffering man Paul was!

In other portions of the Word he says that he was looked upon as **“the filth of the world, and . . . the offscouring of all things”** (I Corinthians 4:13).

Possibly no other person, except our Lord, has gone through more than did Paul. It would have made him discouraged if he had not kept in mind the coming glory. He was ever looking for the coming of the Lord. The horizon of his soul was filled with **“that blessed hope.”** It compensated for all the suffering he underwent.

He calculated in profit and loss, and the result was that these sufferings were not worthy to be mentioned in comparison with the glory that was to be revealed in him. And when this glory is revealed, the saints will be made glad with exceeding joy. Christians will share in the glory of the Lord.

I want to say a word to God’s “rest-a-whiles.”

If you ever get impatient, if the devil fills you with discouragement, if you are on beds of pain, where you have been for many years, read what Paul says about sufferings. Then you will be able to say, with him, **“I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us”** (v. 18).

In verses 19-23 we read further that the whole creation is waiting for the time when we shall be glorified with Christ. Paul not only tells us in these verses that the whole creation is waiting for this time of deliverance, but he tells us also how it became so topsy-turvy. This failure of the creation to accomplish the purpose for which it was called into existence was not caused by the Creator; nor did it fail of its own choice; *it failed because Adam, its first head, fell. When Adam fell, the whole creation fell with him.*

This world must have been beautiful when it first came from the hands of God. The sons of God must have sung in joy then, for our God is a God of beauty. There were no desert wastes then; there were no thorns and thistles. In Eden the animals were not kept in cages; they ate straw and not meat, for they were not ferocious. But when sin entered God’s beautiful world, man fell; and with him the whole earth was changed. That part of the creation, over which he had dominion, became **“subject to vanity,”** or decay. Because of Adam’s sin, the earth brought forth thorns and thistles (See Genesis 3:18). Even the animal kingdom was changed.

But when Christ died on Calvary, He purchased redemption for the whole creation, as well as for you and me. In His death He wore upon His brow the crown of thorns—the very symbol of creation’s curse, bearing it away. That is why Paul looked forward to the time when Eden shall be restored—with a plus, with sinners saved by grace as trophies of God’s undying love. That is why Paul wrote to the Roman Christians, saying:

“The earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation [unveiling] of the sons of God . . . Because the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body” (vv. 19, 21-23).

You see, my friend, the physical creation is waiting for the time when Christ shall return, not only to change our bodies of humiliation, fashioning them like unto His own glorious body (Philippians 3:21), but also to deliver **“the whole creation”** from **“the bondage of corruption.”**

And what a glorious deliverance that will be! Then there shall be no more curse.

“Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree” (Isaiah 55:13).

“The desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose” (Isaiah 35:1).

“The Lord shall . . . make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord” (Isaiah 51:3).

“The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock . . . They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord” (Isaiah 65:25).

“For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9).

Thus you see, my Christian friend, we are linked with the groaning creation, insofar as our bodies are concerned. They have not been redeemed, though our spirits are already redeemed. We are **“waiting for the redemption of our body”** (v. 23). That is why we have aches and pains and wrinkles and grey hairs. I know some people who have known no freedom from pain for months and years. It is because our bodies are not yet redeemed; we are waiting for that deliverance.

Some people think we may claim the redemption of our bodies now if we have faith enough. If that were so, why then should Paul say we are **“waiting for the redemption of our body”**?

No, my friend; we are waiting for the great emancipation that will be ours in the resurrection. Then we shall take our full places in the family of God. Then we shall come into the fullest realization of the sonship of God. Then **“this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ”** (I Corinthians 15:54-57).

Following the statement of this truth in verse 23, which we have just considered, Paul adds in verse 24: **“For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?”** Our spirits have been saved; and in that sense our salvation is a thing of the past. We are saved definitely and consciously, for time and for eternity. But we are hoping [anticipating] for the redemption of our bodies also; we are waiting for full salvation, when we shall be made like unto our glorified Lord. We are submissively waiting for His coming.

Do you get impatient, dear suffering soul? Do you long for the return of Christ? His promise is sure; His return, certain!

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Doth his successive journeys run.

And **“we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”**

However, the return of Christ to rule and reign is not primarily the **“blessed hope”** of the church. His return for His Bride, when **“the dead in Christ shall rise”** at the translation of the church—this is the Christian’s **“blessed hope.”** Then following the seventieth week of Daniel, He will return in glory, with the church, to establish his millennial kingdom.

Then it is that **“the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.”**

*(7) The Holy Spirit—The Pledge of the Redemption of
Our Bodies, 8:26, 27*

Even while **“we with patience wait”** for **“the glory which shall be revealed in us”** by the power of the Spirit of God, He helps us to wait patiently, in hope. By His indwelling presence, He assures us of the certainty of God’s promise; and meanwhile, He intercedes for us according to the will of God.

What comforting, reassuring words are these!

“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God” (vv. 26, 27).

Even while we are in this **“body of humiliation,”** we are not left alone. We can glorify God, even in these frail bodies; for the Spirit helps us. He is not only the pledge of our coming deliverance; he also holds us with a supporting hand. He does not always remove the thorns, but He does sympathize with us. The Spirit groans within us; that is sympathy. He teaches us how to pray; and He makes intercession for us. How ample is the provision God has made for us! Christ is at the Father’s right hand to intercede for us, while the Spirit intercedes within us.

This reminds us of Moses in the wilderness, when Israel fought against the Amalekites. He was so weary that he could not hold up his hands in prayer. Yet **“when Moses held up his hand . . . Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses’ hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword”** (Exodus 17:11-13).

We often grow weary in our Christian experience, but God has set our **“feet upon a rock,”** and that Rock is Christ. (See Psalm 40:2; Matthew 16:18).

He is the foundation Stone upon which we rest our all. Christ at the right hand of God and the Holy Spirit within our hearts intercede for us. As Aaron and Hur held up Moses’ hands, so our two all-powerful Intercessors will never fail us.

The work begun in us shall be completed; for **“he which hath begun a good work”** in us **“will perform it until the day of Christ”** (Philippians 1:6).

Moreover, our Lord Jesus and His Holy Spirit know how to make **“intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”**

(8) *“His Purpose” Foreknown—Predestined—Called—
Justified—Glorified, 8:28-30*

“We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (v. 28).

The Spirit has been dealing with our sonship and coming glory. Now He adds to our knowledge the blessed assurance of God’s watch-care over us.

It is sometimes difficult for people to understand and believe this, though often those who suffer much are most ready to accept it. I know a woman who has been in bed for twenty-eight years, yet her life is a blessing to all with whom she comes in contact. When I look at her, I think of Romans 8:28. Yet even when we accept this statement, we sometimes find it difficult to understand, this side of glory. Often we have to believe it—in faith.

One summer, as I was attending a Bible conference in Michigan, we were gathered around the breakfast table on a certain morning, discussing difficult passages of Scripture. Someone mentioned Romans 8:28. At the table was the woman who managed the hotel where we were staying. We were eating biscuits that she had made.

When this verse was spoken of, she said: “The meaning of Romans 8:28 can be illustrated by one of these biscuits. There is nothing in this biscuit good to eat in itself. None of us would eat any of the ingredients alone— flour or shortening, soda or salt. But when these things are combined, the result is appetizing and palatable. After the dough has been exposed to the action of heat, which is in itself unpleasant, all of the ingredients **‘work together’** to make good biscuits.”

Sometimes in our Christian experience we meet with trials and difficulties which, at the time, seem contrary to all that makes for profit and happiness; but in later years, as we look back over the road we have traveled, we see how God was guiding all the while, burning up the dross, refining the gold, making us vessels **“unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use”** (II Timothy 2:21).

Many of God’s people think that everything is against them. Joseph down in Egypt must have felt like this. His brothers had sold him into slavery. Then he was falsely accused and thrown into prison, where he spent two long years. But later he saw the purpose of God in these severe trials, and he gave God the glory. To his brothers, who feared for their lives, he said:

“As for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive” (Genesis 50:20).

“Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life” (See Genesis 45:5-8).

Joseph’s family was given the most fertile land in Egypt, and there he cared for them. Then he thanked God for what he had suffered. He saw the unfolding of God’s plan, even though he had doubtless thought everything was against him during the days of his many trials.

My dear suffering saint, the One who saved you from sin has given you His Holy Spirit. You may not understand the tears and heartaches and sorrow now. But you will understand in heaven all God's dealings with His child.

Note the words: “. . . **to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.**”

This applies to every child of God. Every believer is “**called.**” Then having mentioned God's “**purpose**” Paul enlarges upon the subject. He unfolds this majestic statement.

When we studied “*God's Plan of the Ages,*” I pointed out the fact that there are four eternal truths, without beginning or ending. They are: The eternal God, the eternal Son, the eternal Spirit, and God's eternal purpose. We read in the first chapter of Ephesians how you and I are “**called according to his purpose.**” And that is the eternal purpose to which Paul refers in Romans 8:28—“**that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ**” (Ephesians 1:12).

Having referred to God's “**purpose**” in calling us to be His children, then in verses 29 and 30 our Comforter, the Holy Spirit, leads us into a knowledge of the family secrets, the things connected with God's eternal purpose for His own.

I want us to see what a wonderful God we have, and what a marvelous salvation! Then read these next two verses: “**For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified**” (vv. 29 and 30).

The word “**for**” links these words with what preceded in verse 28. Now these wonderful words puzzle many children of God; but God did not cause them to be penned in order to confuse His children. He gave them to us in order that we might enjoy assurance of salvation.

He unfolds here His plan for the redeemed.

The reason why people are puzzled is because they do not bear in mind the context here. Paul does not mention predestination and election until he reaches the eighth chapter of Romans. And here in this marvelous chapter the Spirit is leading us, as sons of God, into the secrets of the family. These words are intended only for “**the household of faith.**”

No unsaved person can understand them. “**The natural man,**” that is, the unregenerated man, “**receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned**” (I Corinthians 2:14).

My brother, if you do not understand the first seven chapters of Romans, you will never understand chapter eight. The Holy Spirit here tells how the child of God is led by Him. He shows how He leads His own into the privileges of sonship, into the secrets of the family of God.

When I was about seventeen or eighteen years of age, my father led me into his office and unfolded to me his plans and purposes for me. He did not tell me these secrets the first few years of my life; but when he thought I was old enough, he let me share the secrets and plans and purposes of the family.

In Romans 8:29, 30 we enter into the secrets of the family of God; and they form a chain of blessing that links the past eternity with the future eternity. Foreknown, predestined, called, justified, glorified—all these blessings come from Christ.

In the past eternity God saw you and me, and predestined us to be His. Then we were linked to the eternal purpose of God.

Foreknowledge and predestination take us back to the past eternity; calling and justification have to do with this present life; and glorification takes us on to the future eternity.

Let us consider each of these words separately.

1. *“Foreknown”*

“Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren” (v. 29).

Foreknowledge belongs to God alone and refers to the sovereign choice to life. We may sing:

O happy day that fixed my choice
On Thee, my Saviour and my God.

But God chose us before we gave our hearts to Him. To the disciples He said, **“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you”** (John 15:16).

Likewise, Peter in addressing Christians called them the **“elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ”** (I Peter 1:2).

Foreknowledge comes first; then, foreknowing that some would accept His salvation, God then predestined that they should inherit eternal life.

You see, my friend, how this takes us back to the past eternity, even as our Lord was **“delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God”** to be crucified for a sinful world (Acts 2:23). He was **“the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world”** (Revelation 13:8).

And the God who planned to die for us knew all things from all eternity. He foreknew which ones of His creatures would accept His gift of eternal life.

2. "Predestined"

"Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (v. 29).

Predestination also takes us back to the past eternity. It refers to the marking out beforehand to the high destiny of sonship. The work of being conformed to the image of Christ was begun at regeneration; it continues through this earthly life; and will be perfected when Christ comes again. The object of predestination, therefore, is that we be conformed to the image of Christ. That was God's plan in the past eternity. It will be fulfilled when we see Him. Then **"we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."**

Let us remember that these words were not penned until after Paul had shown that the Spirit leads believers into sonship. There is no mention of these words in the first seven chapters. But now that Paul has talked of sonship, he goes on to lead the believer into the secrets of the family of God.

Therefore, these words have nothing to do with unconverted people; such people do not have the privilege of hearing God's purpose set forth. However, God does not predestine anyone to be lost. Let us remember that. Peter says that our God **"is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance"** (II Peter 3:9). We know that **"whosoever will"** may **"take the water of life freely"** (Revelation 22:17). That is the message we preach to the godless.

But when you become a member of the family of God, my brother, you find that before you chose God, He chose you. You were **"chosen . . . in him before the foundation of the world"** (Ephesians 1:4).

This should make us get on our knees and thank God that He is such a wonderful God, and that He thought of us long ago. Is that not wonderful?

Someone has likened predestination to a man in a boat, away out on the ocean. A storm was tossing the boat so furiously that the man looked this way and that for a harbor. Away in the distance he saw one. As he passed into the harbor, through the gate, he saw the words: **"Whosoever will may come."** But after he had gone inside to safety, he saw yet other words: **"Chosen . . . in him before the foundation of the world."**

When we enter heaven's gates, we do so at God's invitation to the world; but when we walk the streets of the New Jerusalem, we shall see also: **"Chosen in him."**

My friends, do not ask me to harmonize the free will of man with predestination. We shall be able to do that in glory. But God had these great words recorded in order that His children might enjoy eternal security now, in this life. We had a part in God's eternal purpose before we were ever born. You and I chose Him; but He chose us first. Let us get down on our knees and thank Him for this wonderful fact.

3. “Called”

“Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate . . . Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called” (vv. 29, 30).

Of the links in this chain of blessing, the first two take us back to the past eternity. We had no part in them. But the calling of God has to do with the exercise of our God-given wills. In other words, the calling of God refers to the operation of God’s grace in the life of the believer.

Through the reading and the preaching of His Word, the Holy Spirit convicts the sinner of his need of a Saviour, and shows how that need has been met in Christ. We may reject the gospel message. Some have rejected it. But I trust, my dear friends that you have not turned away from it. God wants **“all to come to repentance”** and to be **“conformed to the image of his Son.”**

4. “Justified”

To be justified means to be set free from a charge, as we have seen in preceding chapters. *It means to be declared not only guiltless but positively righteous.*

We have dwelt so fully on this wonderful truth in our former study of this epistle that we need not repeat here what we have already said. But throughout the endless ages we shall be finding out new treasures from **“the riches of his grace,”** who bore our penalty on the accursed tree and vindicated us before the court of heaven. **“While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”** and justified us freely by His grace! Nothing that we could say can add to these reassuring words.

5. “Glorified”

“Whom he justified, them he also glorified.”

Again, this word, **“glorified,”** takes us back to verses 18-25 of this chapter, which we have already considered. And they point on to the future eternity, when we shall be forever with Christ— and like Him! The word of God is filled with precious promises of coming glory for the redeemed; and the last two chapters of Revelation give us a glimpse of **“the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”**

Let us notice that all these words are in the past tense. When God wants to put before us something that is certain to come to pass, He usually puts it in the past tense, as if it had already happened.

In the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, for example, He speaks as though the Lamb of God had already died; but this was really prophecy given in the past tense.

He does this to show that the devices of man can never keep the plan and purpose of God from fulfillment. The devil and all his demons cannot interfere with God’s eternal purpose. Even the days that characterize the reign of the Antichrist cannot interfere with God’s purpose for his own.

In the second Psalm we see the same thing. We read that the heathen nations are trying to form a conspiracy, in order to dethrone the Lord. Then in the second verse the God of heaven has them “**in derision.**” And yet further, we see the Lord seated on the right hand of God. This is all told as if it had already taken place; yet it is a prophecy. Likewise, here in the eighth chapter of Romans, God links the past eternity with the future eternity.

Do you think this is enough to give us assurance of salvation, my friend? God does not want your mind to be filled with doubts and fears; He wants you to enjoy assurance of eternal life. Even if you doubt the eternal security of the believer, you are secure, whether you believe it or not. When you put your trust in Christ as your Saviour, God says you are eternally sure of heaven and His glorious presence. Therefore, if you still doubt this reassuring truth, your controversy is not with man; it is with the Word of God.

Christians who doubt the inspired teaching on this subject remind me of the man who wanted to cross the Mississippi River when it was frozen over, without walking a mile to the bridge. He decided, instead, to walk across on the ice. As he approached the middle of the river, he became fearful lest the ice give way under him. Every little noise frightened him, and he even thought of turning back. Finally he decided to lie down, thereby distributing his weight over the ice. As he pulled himself along, inch by inch, the perspiration rolled down his face.

Suddenly he heard a loud noise. He was sure the ice was breaking under him. But he looked up to see a man in a wagon loaded with pig iron and pulled by a mule. Then the once fearful man said to himself: “What a fool I am! If this ice can support that load, surely it can support me.”

He immediately got up, and whistled as he crossed to the other side, even as he heard the man in the wagon doing.

Many people are saved and are resting on the Rock of Ages; but they are afraid the Rock will not hold out. Every believer on the Lord Jesus Christ should be able to sing, “Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine.” No wonder Paul followed verses 28-29 with the challenging words, “**If God be for us, who can be against us?**”

“**According to his purpose,**” our God has given us proof upon proof that we are forever His by faith in His Son, our Saviour; for we are foreknown, predestined, called, justified, glorified.

(9) “If God Be for Us, Who can Be Against Us?” 8:31-34

From verse 31 to the end of the chapter Paul asks and answers a series of questions—a veritable shout of triumph and paean of praise. In view of the revelation of the sovereign grace of God, he asks:

“**What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?**”

And the questions which follow but enlarge upon this challenge to men and angels and demons.

“If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”

My Christian friends; God wants you to know that He is **“for you.”** How few people, even Christians, believe that!

Some who do not know Christ go so far as to think of God as an enemy. But when we study Romans, we change our minds, if we ever believed such a thing. When we see ourselves in the court room pronounced guilty, then immediately afterwards pronounced righteous, the Judge Himself taking the penalty, we know that our God is **“for us.”**

When we realize that He vindicates us, we love Him. We have a different view altogether concerning Him. We no longer see Him as a person with whom we desire no dealings. And with Charles Wesley, we then can sing,

My God is reconciled;
His pardoning voice I hear.

If you are a Christian, my brother, God is **“for you.”** And He wants to be **“for”** every unconverted man. How do we know? Because of what He has done for us. He **“spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.”**

Paul portrays God as having surveyed all the resources of heaven, saying, “How can I help that poor lost soul?”

- He made the sun, the moon, and the stars to shine for us, that we might know Him.
- He even gave His only Son, who died an ignominious death that we might live.

The fact that Jesus came at all is evidence that God is **“for us.”** And because Christ died, He withholds nothing from us.

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17).

I believe there is no reserve in that statement, and that it refers to material things, as well as to spiritual things. Every comfort and joy in the life of a Christian is evidence of God’s love. It seems as though God had said, **“I am going to lavish my loving-kindness on that person so he will know that I, the great God of the universe, am for him.”**

My friend, let me ask you a question: If God be for you who can be against you? Name someone who can be against you. If God calls you to witness for Him, what does it matter if you incur the wrath of man? There is no power that can hinder a Christian. Paul challenges the devil to do his utmost; and the devil would most certainly claim us if God did not interpose. I believe that our lives would not be safe, even here in this free country, if we were not in God’s hands. But our loving God is **“for us.”** Who, then, **“can be against us”**?

Enlarging upon this subject, Paul asks another question, **“Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?”**

He looks around the universe to find his answer. In view of the fact that God’s eternal purpose included you and me; in view of the fact that He foreknew, predestined, called, and justified us, that we might be conformed to His glorious image; in view of the fact that He will one day glorify us—in view of all these wonderful facts, the inspired writer asks, **“Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?”**

Paul had his enemies. Probably the legalists were his greatest foes. They were like a pack of wolves, licking their lips in unholy glee as they said, “We shall lay this to the charge of Paul.” But Paul knew they could do him no harm.

He answers his own question in the words that follow, **“It is God that justifieth.”** And even to the end of the chapter he goes on to show that God’s redeemed child is forever safe from harm.

These wonderful words include the depression; they include the loss of home, loved ones, friends. Do you have anyone laying a charge against you? Paul did. He was called **“a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition . . . and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes”** (Acts 24:5). But Paul was unafraid and unashamed. He knew the **“Judge of all the earth”** who ever vindicates the sinner saved by grace. He knew that his acquittal had been written in the court of heaven.

Against the righteous judgment of God there can be no appeal. My friends, when the Word of God says, **“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life,”** it means exactly what it says (See John 3:36).

Suppose the Supreme Court of the United States should hand down a verdict on a murder case. Then suppose new evidence were given which proved that the Supreme Court had rendered a wrong verdict. Then the Judge could reverse the verdict. Such action would reveal that the court was not infallible. But this could never be the case with the Almighty God, our Saviour. He is all-wise. He could never render a wrong verdict. And He it is who justifieth!

“Who is he that condemneth?” Paul asks further, enlarging upon this theme. And his answer is, **“It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us”** (v. 34).

God has taken His law into consideration. Against our deficit there is written all the atoning work of Christ. Jesus took our place, and that is why He is mentioned here. Do you see? He paid our debt. And God cannot condemn a man whose sins have been punished, a man whose debt has been paid.

Moreover, the One who paid the debt has risen to witness to that fact. He is **“even at the right hand of God.”** Why? To make **“intercession for us.”**

There He is witnessing to the fact that every sin we have committed was punished when He hung on the cross. Are you not beginning to feel secure, my Christian friend? There is nothing that can be said against that.

(10) No Separation, 8:35-39

Having settled this matter, Paul turns to the whole universe and says, ***“Is there any person or anything in this universe that can separate us from the love of Christ?”***

Then he throws out the challenge in verse 35: **“Shall tribulation or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?”** At a glance we note that all these things belong to the temporal realm. Can they separate us from the love of Christ? They seem to sometimes.

I do not wonder that some people sneer at Christians. Prompted by Satan, our enemies can stoop to any falsehood or trick. To quote the inspired writer further, **“For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter”** (v. 36). But what our enemies say does not alter the fact that **“in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us”** (v. 37).

Take, for example, the case of Latimer and Ridley, the martyrs in England during the Reformation. As they were tied to the stake and the flames leaped higher and higher, they encouraged each other. And one of them said to his fellow-sufferer, “Be of good cheer; we shall light such a candle of God’s grace in England that it shall never go out.” When we seem to lose most, we are victorious. **“We are more than conquerors.”**

“For I am persuaded,” Paul continues, **“that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord”** (vv. 38, 39).

“. . . neither death.”

What is death? It is a messenger to call us home. I heard once of a little girl in a boarding school in England, who at the Christmas season was waiting for her parents to send for her. As she stood by and watched several of her friends leave, presently a black carriage driven by black horses came up to the door. A man dressed in black livery held the horses’ reins. It was a somber equipage. But the little girl called out joyfully, “It is time for me to go home.” Her friends said, “Surely you are not going in that carriage.” And her prompt reply was this: “Of course I am. This is my father’s coach; these are his horses; this is his coachman. He has come to drive me home.” She climbed into the seat and said to the coachman, “Drive me home.” And away she went.

Can death do any harm to me? No; it is my Father’s coachman. He will drive me home, if Christ tarries and I die before He returns. I know there is nothing beautiful about death. He is a monster; he is man’s enemy. But God has chained him, and causes him to drive us home, up that shining pathway that admits us into the presence of God.

“ . . . **nor life.**”

“I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life . . . shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

What about life? Sometimes it is easier to die than to live. Life is full of problems and perplexities. But if you are a Christian and live according to chapters six and eight of Romans, my friend, there is neither man nor demon that can harm you.

“ . . . **nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers**”—not all the hosts of darkness can separate us from the love of God.

Paul knew well enough the power of Satan and his wicked angels; for he wrote to the Ephesians, saying, **“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand”** (Ephesians 6:12, 13). But Paul also knew that no demon can ever touch a child of God who is living by Romans six and eight.

“ . . . **nor things present.**”

What is there before you now, dear troubled soul? Is the rent due? Do you face problems? No matter what they may be—family cares or daily temptations—they cannot harm you. They cannot separate you from the love of God.

“ . . . **nor things to come.**”

There are some who say, “It is what confronts me in the future that I fear.” Paul says that **“things to come”** cannot touch you. I do not know what tomorrow holds, or what the years may bring; but I am not afraid if I live according to Romans six and eight.

“ . . . **nor height.**”

A man gets into danger when he reaches the heights. Lloyd George once said, “I was not in danger before I became Prime Minister of England, but then I was in danger of getting puffed up.” The greatest men of God are the first to confess that they have nothing in which to boast, save **“in the cross of Christ”**—our God.

“ . . . **nor depths.**”

If the depths mean sorrow or pain or poverty or heartache, my brother, Paul says that these things cannot separate us from the love of God.

“ . . . **nor any other creature.**”

As if he might have omitted someone or something, Paul looks out over the whole universe, and says that nothing “**shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**”

The Holy Spirit opens this chapter with the words, “**No condemnation**”; and He closes with the shout of victory, “**No separation.**”

This is His message to our hearts today, written by His servant Paul. It is God’s message to His children, His “**sons,**” who are saved by His grace and on the way to “The Promised Land.”

This is “**the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**”

~ end of chapter 7 ~

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