

Romans 8

THE WORKING OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD—THE “LAW” OF LIFE ASSURANCE OF ETERNAL LIFE IN OUR INHERITANCE [No Condemnation – No Separation]

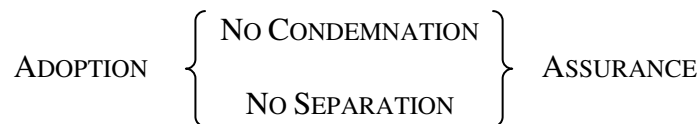
Overview:

Romans chapter 8 is basically about living a life in the Spirit. The word for “spirit” (Gk. *pneuma*) is used 21 times in this chapter and 19 of those times it refers to the Holy Spirit! This is a chapter describing what the Holy Spirit does in His work of glorifying Christ and revealing to us the sanctification, justification and ultimate glorification of every believer {v.30}.

Part of life in the Spirit is suffering for the sake of Christ. There are three grounds of encouragement which the apostle gives for the support and consolation of the children of God in the sufferings they are called upon to endure for Christ’s sake and as the necessary precondition for their glorification with Christ. The Biblical basis of *encouragement* that Paul gives in this chapter is:

- Future Glory Outweighs Present Suffering {vv.18-25}
- The Holy Spirit Intercedes for Us {vv.26-27}
- All Things Work Together for Good {vv. 28-32}

Since we are *adopted by God as sons* there is *no condemnation* and *no separation* from God – we have complete *assurance of eternal life!* {ref. vv.1, 15-23}. This fact is graphically illustrated below:



Verses 1-4 ➤ NO CONDEMNATION IN CHRIST JESUS

[1 *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*]

A person is made “in Christ” by through the process of ‘*spiritual adoption*’. When one trusts and believes in Jesus Christ as LORD and Savior and confesses He has been raised from the dead, that person is saved and becomes a ‘*child of God*’.

In v.1 Paul tells us point-blank that for those who are in Christ Jesus, that is, those who have repented of their pride and sin and believed in Him for salvation, there is *no condemnation*. This word is ‘*katakima*’ which means a sentence or verdict of condemnation. Only Paul uses this word here and also in **Rom. 5:16, 18**. Our sin-debt was paid for by the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ and believers have in effect been declared ‘not guilty’. This is wonderful and awesome good news—Hallelujah!

In these verses Paul also teaches us that the ‘*Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*’ and the ‘*Law of Sin & Death*’ are diametrically opposed.

The Law of Sin & Death began in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve:

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die".—**Gen. 2:16-17**

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.....and hid.....So all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years; and he died.— **Gen 3:6-7; 5:5**

And it was transferred from Adam to all people.

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—(For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law). Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. —**Rom. 5:12-14**

[“*For what the law could not do.....*”] Refer to **Rom. 3:20; Gal. 2:21; 3:21; Col. 2:13-17** and **Heb. 2:14-18**.

Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.—**Rom. 3:20**

“I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain”.....Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law.—**Gal. 2:21; 3:21**

And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.—**Col. 2:13-17**

Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.—**Heb. 2:14-18**

[“..... *in that it was weak through the flesh.....*”] The Law, actually any law, is diametrically opposed to a person’s nature. We naturally want to break laws or consider them not applying to us or perhaps choose to believe they are not serious and only are *suggestions*. Therefore, no law exists or can exist that would be able to save us and deliver us from God’s righteous judgment.

Therefore, God understanding this totally provided an alternate way which (a) can deliver us from eternal punishment and at the same time (b) satisfy God's righteous and just requirement of sin's judgment. He sent the Son, who was completely innocent, to die in our place so that our sin-debt is stamped; "Paid in Full".

Verses 5-8 ➤ **THE FLESH & DEATH CONTRASTED WITH THE SPIRIT & LIFE**

[5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. 8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.]

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE SINFUL NATURE & THE SPIRITUAL NATURE

God only recognizes two kinds of people: (a) those who are His 'enemies' and (b) those who are His 'children'. The two kinds think and behave in diametrically opposite ways. The former set their minds on the things of the flesh, while the latter set their minds on the Spirit of God.

The conflict between the flesh and the Spirit of God begin with the first sin against God in the Garden of Eden and has been plaguing man ever since. It is an "age old" problem. Even secular writers speak of the universality of this. Here are some quotes from a Roman historian and a poet:

"Luxury, like a wild beast, is irritated by its very bonds. The presumptuous human race obstinately rush into prohibited acts of wickedness." ~ LIVY¹, xxxiv. 4.

"What is lawful is insipid, the strongest propensity is excited toward that which is prohibited." ~ OVID², Amor. lib ii. Eleg. xix. verse 3.

"Vice is provoked by every strong restraint, sick men long most to drink who know they may not." ~ OVID, Amor, lib. iii. Eleg. iv. verse 17.

"Being admonished, he becomes the more obstinate; and his fierceness is irritated by restraints. Prohibitions become incentives to greater acts of vice." ~ OVID, Metam, lib. iii. verse 566.

¹ **Livy**, pronounced Lihv-ee (59 BC – 17 AD), was one of the greatest Roman historians. His *Historiae ab Urbe Condita* (*History from the Founding of the City*) tells of Roman history from the founding of Rome until the death of Drusus in 9 BC. The work is also a valuable source of information about the social, cultural, and political attitudes of many Romans during the reign of Emperor Augustus (27 BC – 14 AD). Livy wrote the work in 142 books, but only 35 of them are still in existence. Livy spent more than 40 years working on his history, which became famous in ancient times and was widely quoted. The lengthy work became known chiefly through short summaries or abridgements of which many have survived.

² **Ovid**, pronounced Ahv-ihd (43 BC – 17? AD) was one of the greatest poets of ancient Rome. He became best known for his witty and sophisticated love poems; the most famous was *Odes*, a collection of short, songlike poems. Some are personal poems about love, friendship and natural beauty. Others express Horace's love for his country and his pagan religion, using myths and tales of national heroes. See also Horace (65 BC – 8 BC).

Although it is evident that the secular world understands the problem of sin; it thinks it can solve the problem through re-education, some five or seven-step program or provide the ‘proper environment’ (whatever that is). But until one realizes that the propensity to sin against law is an innate spiritual problem (whose origin is straight from the heart of a man) any attempt to solve the problem is powerless to change things and doomed to failure. Jesus put the futility of self-reformation this way:

“When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. Then he says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order³. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation”.

—**Matt. 12:43-45**

“*This wicked generation*” could easily describe our current society!

In **v.6** Paul is defines the jurisdiction and consequences of the ‘*Law of Sin & Death*’ and ‘*Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*’. The former governs a carnal mind; the latter governs a spiritual mind. The former leads to death, the latter leads to life and peace.

This passage is talking about the utter futility of an unbeliever trying to please God—Paul says it cannot happen. Why? Because the ‘carnal’ or unbelieving mind is at war with God. Heb. 11:6 says that, “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” Thus, the natural man is opposed to God, without faith and therefore an enemy of God!

Verses 9-11 ➤ **THE LIFE GIVING POWER OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD**

[9 *But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. 10 And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.*]

Paul is addressing believers who are ‘in the Spirit’ because they have been ‘born again’ from Heaven {**John 3:3-7**}. And he goes on to imply that the Spirit of God resides in a believer’s soul. Jesus said it would be like this:

“And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you”.—**John 14:16-18**

Furthermore, every believer has been baptized (spiritually) into Christ’s body by the Holy Spirit:

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.—**1 Cor. 12:13**

Matter of fact, a person without the Holy Spirit cannot be a child of God:

³ Without the aid of God by default is a description of self-reformation.

“He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned”.—**Mark 16:16**

“He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him”.—**John 3:36**

And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.
—**1 John 5:11-12**

Verses 12-17 ➤ **‘ADOPTED’ INTO GOD’S FAMILY & MADE JOINT HEIRS WITH CHRIST**

[12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father”. 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.]

HEIRS OF GOD & CO-HEIRS WITH CHRIST JESUS

So far in the epistle of Romans we have discovered that

- Union with Christ’s *Righteousness* leads to our *Justification*
- Union with Christ’s *Holiness* leads to our *Sanctification*

Now we will learn that

- Union with Christ’s *Sonship* leads to our *Inheritance—Glorification*

There are some Biblical examples of a change in familial relationships:

- *Moses—‘adopted’ into Pharaoh’s household {Exodus 2:1-10}*
- *Ruth—‘adopted’ into Naomi’s family {Ruth 1:16-17}*
- *Mephibosheth—‘adopted’ into David’s household {2 Sam. 9:1-13}*

Now Paul uses the analogy of adoption to describe a believer’s relationship with God.

ADOPTION: For some people today the concept of adoption carries the idea of second-class status in the family. In the Roman culture of Paul’s day however, an adopted child, especially an adopted son, sometimes had greater prestige and privilege than the natural children. A son adopted under Roman law could never be disinherited!

According to Roman law, a father’s rule over his children was absolute. If he was disappointed in his natural sons’ skill, character, or any other attribute, he would search diligently for a boy available for adoption who demonstrated the qualities he desired. If the boy proved himself worthy the father would take the necessary legal steps for adoption. At the death of the father, a favored adopted son would sometimes inherit the father’s title, the major part of the estate, and would be the primary progenitor of the family name.

Because of its obvious great importance, the process of Roman adoption involved several carefully prescribed legal procedures. The first step totally severed the boy's legal and social relationship to his natural family and the second step placed him permanently into his new family. In addition to that, all of his previous debts and other obligations were eradicated, as if they had never existed. For the transaction to become legally binding, it also required the presence of seven reputable witnesses, who could testify if necessary, to any challenge of the adoption after the father's death⁴.

Refer also to *Appendix A: Roman Adoption Process*.

A Christian has been adopted by God as a son, with all the rights and privileges. Therefore, a believer becomes an *heir of God* and *joint-heir with Christ Jesus*. Listen to what the Word of God has to say about spiritual adoption (it's pretty amazing):

Galatians 4:5-7 ~ to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Ephesians 1:5-6 ~ having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.

Ephesians 1:11-14 ~ In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

The cry, "Abba, Father," is very interesting. W. E. Vine tells us that "'Abba' is like the cry of an infant, the simple, helpless utterance of unreasoning trust, the effect of feeling, rather than knowledge. It is an Aramaic word (cf. English 'papa'). It was a form of address forbidden among the Jews to be used by a slave to the head of the family.

"'Father' is not a translation of 'Abba.' Rather, it is another mode of address. It is relationship consciously realized by the one who utters it, a word of filial confidence, communion and obedience, answering to, and expressing, the enjoyment of the complacent love of God the Father. The two expressions together indicate the love and intelligent trust of the child." In Gethsemane the Lord Jesus used this identical expression, "Abba, Father" (**Mark 14:36**).

Through the miracle of regeneration, we have been brought into the closest intimacy with our heavenly Father, the kind of intimacy Jesus Himself enjoyed. The "witness of the Spirit" in this connection is significant. This function of the Spirit of God is mentioned three times in the New Testament. He witnesses to us (**Heb. 10:15**), in us (**1 John 5:10**), and with us (**Rom. 8:16**). Fact, faith, and feelings are successively in view in these three references⁵. Here, of course, it is feeling, for the witness of the Spirit of God with our spirit gives rise to the joyful cry, "Abba, Father".

⁴ *MacArthur New Testament Commentary; Romans 1:8.*

⁵ *Exploring Romans: An Expository Commentary; John Phillips Commentary Series.*

[“If children, then heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ”] Adoption into God’s family as a co-heir with Christ gives us **sonship** and we receive an **inheritance**.

Note what this inheritance is NOT based on:

- Does not follow from *ordinary creation* {**Genesis 1:24-27**}
“If his creatures, then heirs”
- Does not follow from *natural descent* {**John 1: 12,13; Romans 9:7-13**}
“If children of Abraham, then heirs”
- Does not come from *self effort* or *meritorious service* {**Galatians 2:15,16; 3:3-5; 4:30**}
“If his servants, then heirs”
- Does not come from keeping the *Law of God* {**Galatians 2:21; 3:21**}
“If Law keepers, then heirs”
- Does not come from *ceremonial observances* {**Philippians 3:3-9; Colossians 2:13-17**}
“If circumcised and/or baptized, then heirs”
- Does not come from *winning a contest*
“If you come in first, then heirs”

No, we are heirs of God and co-heirs of Christ because we are children (of God) through adoption! The Bible makes it perfectly clear who the heirs of Christ are:

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. ~ **John 1:12-13**.

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. ~ **Romans 8:14**.

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ~ **Galatians 3:26**.

And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” ~ **Galatians 4:6**.

In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory. ~ **Ephesians 1:13,14**.

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. ~ **1 John 3:1,2**.

All of this because believers have been adopted into God’s family through the Spirit of God {v.15}.

Verses 18-25 ➤ CHRISTIAN SUFFERINGS PALES IN COMPARISON TO THE GLORY TO BE REVEALED—PRESENT CHRISTIAN SUFFERING CONTRASTED WITH FUTURE GLORY

[18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. 19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; 21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. 23 Not only that, but we also who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. 24 For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.]

CREATION GROANS UNDER SIN – OUR FUTURE BODILY RESURRECTION

First Reason for Encouragement—Future Glory Outweighs Present Suffering

But Present sufferings fade into insignificance when compared with the glory to be revealed in the future.

Then to Adam He said, “Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return”.—**Gen. 3:17-19**

Verses 26-27 ➤ THE HOLY SPIRIT’S PRAYER MINISTRY

[26 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.]

OUR INTERCESSOR – THE SPIRIT OF GOD

Second Reason for Encouragement—The Holy Spirit Intercedes for Us

Infirmity—comprehensive term covering the whole range of weaknesses that characterize us in this life.

2 Intercessors—**Christ** in the court of heaven. **The Holy Spirit** in the human heart.

Groanings—the concrete ways in which the intercession of the Spirit comes into expression within the hearts of believers. The Spirit is the author of these groanings. Whether we render the Greek word “unutterable” or “unuttered”, we must note that the groanings are not expressed in articulate speech. They transcend articulated formulation. Verse 27 indicates that the groanings take place within the human heart.

The reason we groan is because we have experienced “*the firstfruits of the Spirit*,” a foretaste of the glory to come. Just as the nation of Israel tasted the firstfruits of Canaan when the spies returned {**Num. 13:23-27**}, so we Christians have tasted of the blessings of heaven through the ministry of the Spirit. This makes us want to see the Lord, receive a new body, and live with Him and serve Him forever.

We are waiting for “the adoption,” which is the redemption of the body—the resurrection, when Christ returns {**Phil. 3:20-21**}. This is the thrilling climax to “the adoption” that took place at conversion when “the Spirit of adoption” gave us an adult standing in God’s family. When Christ returns, we shall enter into our full inheritance.

Meanwhile, we wait and hope. “*For we are saved by that hope*” {**Rom. 8:24**, literal translation)}. What hope? “*That blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ*” {**Titus 2:13**}. The best is yet to come!

The believer does not get frustrated as he sees and experiences suffering and pain in this world. He knows that the temporary suffering will one day give way to eternal glory⁶.

God is concerned about the trials of His people. When He was ministering on earth, Jesus groaned when He saw what sin was doing to mankind {**Mark 7:34; John 11:33, 38**}.

Today the Holy Spirit groans with us and feels the burdens of our weaknesses and suffering. But the Spirit does more than groan. He prays for us in His groaning so that we might be led into the will of God. We do not always know God’s will. We do not always know how to pray, but the Spirit intercedes so that we might live in the will of God in spite of suffering⁷.

The Spirit “*shares the burden*.” The believer never need faint in times of suffering and trial because he knows that God is at work in the world {**Rom. 8:28**}, and that He has a perfect plan (**Rom. 8:29**).

God has two purposes in that plan: our good and His glory. Ultimately, He will make us like Jesus Christ!

Best of all, God’s plan is going to succeed! It started in eternity past when He chose us in Christ {**Eph. 1:4-5**}. He predetermined that one day we would be like His Son. Predestination applies only to saved people.

Nowhere are we taught that God predestines people to be eternally condemned. If they are condemned, it is because of their refusal to trust Christ (**John 3:18-21**). Those whom He chose, He called {see **2 Thess. 2:13-14**}; when they responded to His call, He justified them, and He also glorified them.

This means that the believer has already been glorified in Christ (**John 17:22**); the revelation (or realization) of this glory awaits the coming of the Lord (**Rom. 8:21-23**).

How can we Christians ever be discouraged and frustrated when we already share the glory of God? Our suffering today only guarantees that much more glory when Jesus Christ returns!

⁶ *The Bible Exposition Commentary*; New Testament, Volume 1.

⁷ *The Bible Exposition Commentary*; New Testament, Volume 1.

Verses 28-32 ➤ **ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD FOR LOVERS OF GOD**

[28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. 29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. 31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?]

THE WONDERFUL SALVATION OF CHRIST JESUS – IT IS SPECIAL & PERMANENT

Third Reason for Encouragement—All Things Work Together for Good

Here is the third ground of encouragement for the support of the children of God in the sufferings they are called upon to endure in this life. It consists of the consolation and assurance to be derived from the fact that all things work together for their good.

Paul is not saying that ‘things’ have in-and-of-themselves any virtue or power to work in concert for good. ‘Things’ are inanimate. But in the sovereign wisdom and mercy of God things are made to converge to a goal, the goal of God’s purpose for good.

GOD’S PLAN.....CALLED.....JUSTIFIED.....GLORIFIED

Here is summarized the process of JUSTIFICATION, SANCTIFICATION and GLORIFICATION.

This is all wrapped up in the FOREKNOWLEDGE of God and His PLAN for His children.

This verse glorifies the Sovereignty Of God: There are NO “Accidents with God”.

“Those who love God”—the believer’s subjective attitude toward God

“Who are called”—refers to God’s actions exclusively

The action of God is the guarantee that good will be the result of all things

Dr. R. A. Torrey called this verse, “a soft pillow for the heart”.

We know⁸

- Charles Spurgeon used to say, “I do not need anyone to tell me how honey tastes; *I know!*”
- J. Vernon McGee says; “I know God loves me. I don’t need to argue that point, I know it!”
- “We know” is used five times in Romans and the word “know” is used thirteen times.
- John uses this phrase in relationship to our salvation: “*These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God (i.e., love God), that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God. (1 John 5:13)*”

⁸ **know** [1492 *eido* (i'-do)] Properly, “to see” (literally or figuratively); by implication, “to know”, “be aware”, perceive, understand.

- Paul says in **Romans 10:2**; “*For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.*”
- We are told that God is to be worshipped in “spirit and truth”, with the heart and mind. We are to know why we are worshipping God – He is Creator & Savior!

All things good, bad; bright and dark; sweet and bitter; easy and hard; happy and sad; prosperity and poverty; health and sickness, calm and storm; comfort and suffering; life and death.

Love God a select or set-apart (sanctified) group of individuals who love God and who do not “*....love their lives to the death*” **Rev. 12:11.**

Called people who have received God’s invitation of salvation and **accepted** it! They have not only a theoretical knowledge, but an experiential knowledge of God.

“*..... just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,*” (**Eph. 1:4**).

Purpose⁹

- * J. Vernon McGee translates this verse as: *But we know (with divine knowledge) that for those who love God, all things are working together for good, even to them who are called-ones according to His purpose.*
- * One of God’s primary purposes for us is found in **Ephesians 2:10**; “*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*”
- * We can trust God that he will be faithful to us for in **Philippians 1:6** we have the promise “*..... being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ ...*” And Psalms 138:8 puts it this way: “*The LORD will perfect that which concerns me; your mercy, O LORD, endures forever; do not forsake the works of Your hands.*”
- * Those who are called according to His purpose does not destroy individual responsibility. Salvation is for “*.....whomsoever calls upon the name of the Lord*”. Henry Ward Beecher puts it this way: “The elect are the whosoever wills and the non-elect are the whomsoever won’ts”.
- * A person is “saved” or “lost” because he chooses it that way.

⁹ **purpose** [4286 *prothesis* (proth'-es-is)] a **setting forth of a thing, placing of it in view**, i.e. (figuratively) proposal (intention); specifically, the show-bread (in the Temple) as exposed before God: the showbread, twelve loaves of wheaten bread, corresponding to the number of the tribes of Israel, which loaves were offered to God every Sabbath, and separated into two rows, lying for seven days upon a table placed in the sanctuary or front portion of the tabernacle, and afterward of the Temple.

v.28 Example:

Cliff Barrows has served as Billy Graham's lifelong associate and crusade song leader. In 1945, before he met Billy Graham, Barrows and his fiancée, Billie, had scraped together enough funds for a simple wedding and two train tickets to a city with a resort hotel. On arrival, however, they found the hotel shut down. Stranded in an unfamiliar city with little money, they thumbed a ride. A sympathetic driver took them to a grocery store owned by a woman he knew. The newlyweds spent their first night in a room above the store. The next day, when the lady overheard Cliff playing Christian songs on his trombone, she arranged for them to spend the rest of their honeymoon at a friend's house. Several days later the host invited them to attend a youth rally where a young evangelist was speaking. The song leader that night was sick, and Cliff was asked to take charge of the music for the service. The young evangelist, of course, was Billy Graham. The two have been partners ever since.

Now note the progression in **vv.29-30**:

Foreknown ➔ *predestined* ➔ *called* ➔ *justified* ➔ *glorified*

Foreknow¹⁰ this simply speaks of God knowing all things.

Foreknowledge—“to know beforehand” basically equivalent in this verse to “foreloved” or “loved from eternity with distinguishing affection and delight.” The idea of intimacy is contained in the word. See **Jer. 1:5** and **1 Cor. 13:12**. Foreknowledge means that God purposed from eternity to love and redeem humanity through Christ (**John 3:16** etc.) The recipient of God's foreknowledge or forelove is stated in the plural and therefore refers to the corporate body of Christ and includes individuals only as they identify with this body.

This word has two usages

- (1) General and popular usage—*passive foresight*
- (2) Biblically and etymologically.

‘prognosko’ - pro = before & gnosko = a personal involvement or relationship, contact, activity. Not a passive, neutral foreseeing, but an aggressive bringing about. *Foreknowledge* is closely connected with *foreordination*, when used of God. Used of God's foreknowledge in N.T. five times:

- **1 Pet 1:2**
- **1 Pet 1:20**
- **Rom 8:29**
- **Rom 11:2**
- **Acts 2:23**

¹⁰ **foreknow** [4267 *proginosko* (prog-in-ocē'-ko)] from 4253 and 1097; to know beforehand, i.e. foresee: (1) to have knowledge beforehand; (2) to foreknow; used of those whom God elected to salvation; (3) to predestinate

The Greek word is *'prognosis'* which denotes an active involvement. A doctor's prognosis isn't just merely a prediction of a future condition; it indicates an intimate knowledge and usually involvement on the part of the physician. This *'knowledge'* is intimate, just like Adam *'knew'* his wife. In the Christian's case, before he (or she) was born, God "knew," was intimate, with him (or her) and "knew" of his (or her) ultimate fellowship with Him. He didn't just look down the corridor of time at something I would do apart from him. He was involved.

In **1 Peter** chapter 1, "foreknowledge" is used twice. First, the elect are "foreknown". Then, it speaks of the Father 'foreknowing' the death of Christ for the Church's behalf. Did God just look down the corridors of time and passively observe something Christ would do? Or, was He involved, working out a plan for the future?

Predestined¹¹ this refers only to the select group, "the called" or "elect" who have accepted the invitation, repented and believed in Jesus as Christ (Savior).

- NOTE: Predestination never has reference to the lost. It means that when God saves you, He is going to see you through because He has a plan for your life.

Predestined = predetermined. Those who God foreknew, he also *predetermined* that they would be like Christ. Note that predestination has to do with outcomes. God predetermines outcomes. He has predetermined that his people as a whole will be conformed to the image of his Son. We determine whether or not we join God's family. God does not predetermine who will and who will not be saved.

Conformed: Believers bodies will be morphed into a resurrected glorified body like Christ

Firstborn—refers to the priority and supremacy of Christ, but this position is among a whole family of believers

Called¹² This refers to those who have been *'invited'* or *'summoned'*; to those who have received a "new name" and whom God knows personally.....refers to people who have received God's invitation of salvation and **accepted** it! They have not only a theoretical knowledge, but an *experiential* knowledge of God.

Justified¹³ this refers to us being acquitted, declared righteous, pronounced innocent because Jesus Christ paid the penalty of sin, death. This is the grace of God.

¹¹ **predestined** [4309 *proorizo* (pro-or-id'-zo)] from 4253 and 3724; to limit in advance, i.e. (figuratively) predetermine:

- 1) to predetermine, to decide beforehand
- 2) in the New Testament, used of God decreeing from eternity
- 3) to foreordain, to appoint beforehand

¹² **called** [2564 *kaleo* (kal-eh'-o)] to "call"; properly, to call aloud, but used in a variety of applications.

¹³ **justified** [1344 *dikaioo* (dik-ah-yo'-o)] to render (i.e. show or regard as) just or innocent: to acquit, to be declared righteous.

Glorified¹⁴ This refers to the transfiguration that takes place when we become a “child of God”, a “new creature” through faith in Jesus Christ. It also refers the believer’s future glory clothed in a resurrected body in which they will co-reign as joint-heirs with Christ.

Sanctification of the believer through Christ follows the logical progression:

- The process of being “set-apart” for God’s use is summarized in this verse
- Whom God foreknew – He predestined
- Whom He predestined – He called
- Whom He called – He justified
- Whom He justified – He glorified

Verses 33-37 ➤ **BELIEVERS ARE MORE THAN CONQUERORS THROUGH CHRIST’S LOVE**

[33 *Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.* 34 *Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.* 35 *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?* 36 *As it is written: “For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter”.* 37 *Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.*]

Now Paul is going to ask several more rhetorical questions in rapid-fire succession and gives answers to all of them. The purpose of this is demonstrate that believers are more than conquerors over sin, death, the world and Satan through Jesus Christ—the One who loves us!

First he asks, “*Who will bring a charge against God’s elect?*” That is, who in Heaven or on earth will have a legitimate accusation against a child of God, one who has been ‘born again’ and who are the object of God’s special concern and favor? He answers simply by reminding us that it’s God who justifies us. That is, the ultimate Judge of the Universe has declared us ‘righteous’ and ‘forgiven’ in Jesus Christ therefore there could never be another authority or power ANYWHERE that could possibly bring a legitimate complaint against us.

Second he asks, “*Who is he who condemns?*” That is, who is there to condemn us? He answers this by reminding us that because God so loved us, Jesus Christ has died {a blood sacrifice} to purchase our salvation. And more than that, this same Jesus has risen from the dead as ‘proof’ that we are forgiven and justified! He now sits on the right hand of God and is our Heavenly ‘advocate general’ with the Father. Since Jesus Christ is forever interceding for us; and He is the only One who could condemn us, then there must be no one in Heaven or earth to condemn us.

¹⁴ **glorified** [1392 **doxazo** (dox-ad'-zo)] to render (or esteem) glorious (in a wide application).

Third he asks, “*Who [or ‘What’] shall separate us from the love of Christ?*” and to answer that question he asks another question in the ‘negative’ by listing some things that could possibly separate us from the love of Christ but can’t.

Notice the seven categories of things that CANNOT separate us from Christ’s love:

- *Tribulation*—pressure with the idea of crowding; feeling of being squeezed or crushed, a feeling of there is ‘no way out’, afflicted by external forces.
- *Distress*—narrow space; not much room to move.
- *Persecution*—to be chased or harassed; feeling relentless pursuit.
- *Famine*—scarcity of food; lacking in food.
- *Nakedness*—uncovered, lacking clothes.
- *Peril*—endangered; exposed to a dangerous, life-threatening condition.
- *Sword*—small sword the Romans used which was easily concealed.

NONE OF THESE THINGS WILL SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST!

In quoting **Psalms 44:22** Paul is reminding believers that the persecution and death of those who choose to faithfully follow the LORD is nothing new. That condition is to be expected.

However, although believers are despised and killed, ‘counted as sheep for the slaughter’, Paul concludes by saying believers are ‘*more than conquerors through Him [Jesus Christ] who loves us*’.

The picture here is of the Roman army coming back victoriously from a military campaign and parading the spoils of war; the treasures and slaves, through the main street in the city in public display for all to see. The army would parade through the city in ‘pomp and circumstance’ showing off all that had been conquered.

We cannot go wrong—from earth’s perspective believers are ‘losers’. But from Heaven’s perspective [which is what ultimately counts] we are the victors, we are actually ‘*more than conquerors*’.

Why? We need to be reminded that Paul tells us that Jesus Christ already has conquered sin and death, He has won that victory and His victory is our victory! The sign of that victory is the empty tomb and Jesus’ resurrected body.

And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.—**Col. 2:13-15**

Verses 38-39 ➤ NOTHING IS ABLE TO SEPARATE A BELIEVER FROM THE LOVE OF GOD

[38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.]

THE WONDERFUL SALVATION OF CHRIST JESUS – IT IS SPECIAL & PERMANENT

In v.35 Paul listed possible *conditions* or *situations* that cannot separate us from Christ's love. Now Paul gives a list of *created things* or entities that one might suspect could separate a believer from God's love which is in Christ Jesus and declares even these things cannot separate a believer from that love.

Here is a summary of Paul's list of things in the created universe that are unable to separate us from God's love, which is in Christ Jesus, along with a reason why this is the case:

- *Death*—a believer's soul and spirit go to be with God in Heaven.
- *Life*—God is sovereign over all human affairs and natural events.
- *Angels*—are less powerful than God and follow His orders.
- *Principalities*—heavenly rulers are subservient to God.
- *Powers*—God is infinitely more powerful than anything He created.
- *Present things*—God is sovereign over all current affairs and events.
- *Future things*—God knows what the future will bring and is sovereign over future events and is able to change things for His glory.
- *Height*—God is higher than the highest created place or thing.
- *Depth*—God is deeper than the deepest created place or thing.
- *Any other thing*—all other things not specifically mentioned, which makes this an all-inclusive list.

Paul confidently declares that NONE of these things will separate us from the Love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord! Hallelujah—Amen!

Why is the “love of God” so powerful? God is *jealous* over us with an unselfish love and He wants us to return that love to Him. Note that one of the attributes of the LORD is that He is “jealous”.

“You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me,” ~ **Exodus 20:3-5**.

One of the names for God is “Jealous”!

“But you shall destroy their altars, break their sacred pillars, and cut down their wooden images 'for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is **Jealous**, is a jealous God), 'lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they play the harlot with their gods and make sacrifice to their gods, and one of them invites you and you eat of his sacrifice”, ~ **Exodus 34:13-15**.

He sacrificed Himself for us that we might have a *marriage relationship* with Him.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. ~ **Ephesians 5:25-27**.

Oh, that you would bear with me in a little folly-- and indeed you do bear with me. For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. ~ **2 Corinthians 11:1-2**.

And when someone attacks or persecutes us, Jesus Christ takes it personally:

Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. And as he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" And the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads." ~ **Acts 9:1-5**.

Here is what Charles Spurgeon said about God's jealous love:

Believer, your Lord is jealous of your love. Did He choose you? He cannot bear that you would choose another. Did He buy you with His own blood? He cannot endure that you would think you are your own, or that you belong to this world. He loved you with such a love that He would not stop in heaven without you. He would sooner die than you should perish. He cannot endure anything standing between your heart's love and Him.

He is jealous of your trust. He will not permit you to trust in an arm of flesh. He cannot bear that you should dig out broken cisterns, which hold no water, and forsake the *fountain of living waters* (**Jeremiah 2:13**).

When we lean on Him, He is glad. But when we transfer our dependence to another, when we rely on our wisdom or that of a friend, or worst of all, when we trust in any works of our own, He is displeased and will chasten us to bring us back to Him.

He is also jealous of our company. There should be no one with whom we converse so much as with Jesus. To abide in Him only, this is true love. To commune with the world, to find sufficient solace in our carnal comforts, this is grievous to our jealous Lord. He wants us to abide in Him and enjoy His constant fellowship. Many of the trials He sends are to wean our hearts from the creature and fix them more closely on Him.

Let this jealousy, which should keep us near Christ, also comfort us. If He loves so much as to care about our love, we may be sure that nothing will harm us, for He will protect us from all our enemies.

May we have grace today to keep our hearts in sacred purity for our Beloved alone. May we with sacred jealousy shut our eyes to all the fascinations of the world!

“LORD, make me to know my end, and what is the measure of my days, that I may know how frail I am. Indeed, You have made my days as handbreadths, and my age is as nothing before You; certainly every man at his best state is but vapor. Selah Surely every man walks about like a shadow; surely they busy themselves in vain; he heaps up riches, and does not know who will gather them. And now, Lord, what do I wait for? My hope is in You.”
~ **Psalms 39:4-7.**

WHAT A SAVIOR!!!

III. Questions

- God is able to turn every circumstance around for our long-range (possibly eternal) good.
 1. Does God always work things out according to our wishes?
 2. How is working for our benefit different than working as we would like?
- This promise is not for everybody. It can be claimed only by those who love God and are called according to his purpose—that is Christian believers.
 3. What is God’s ultimate goal for those who have accepted Christ as Savior?
 4. Does God know who will accept Christ as Savior?
 5. Does God fail to invite anyone that is willing to accept his Son? (Romans 1:16 and John 6:35-40)

Appendix A: Roman Adoption Process from Barclay's Daily Study Bible (NT)

In **Rom. 8:15** Paul is introducing us to another of the great metaphors in which he describes the new relationship of the Christian to God. He speaks of the Christian being adopted into the family of God. It is only when we understand how serious and complicated a step Roman adoption was that we really understand the depth of meaning in this passage.

Roman adoption was always rendered more serious and more difficult by the Roman *patria potestas*. This was the father's power over his family; it was the power of absolute disposal and control, and in the early days was actually the power of life and death. In regard to his father, a Roman son never came of age. No matter how old he was, he was still under the *patria potestas*, in the absolute possession and under the absolute control, of his father. Obviously this made adoption into another family a very difficult and serious step.

In adoption a person had to pass from one *patria potestas* to another. There were two steps.

The first was known as *mancipatio*, and was carried out by a symbolic sale, in which copper and scales were symbolically used. Three times the symbolism of sale was carried out. Twice the father symbolically sold his son, and twice he bought him back; but the third time he did not buy him back and thus the *patria potestas* was held to be broken.

There followed a ceremony called *vindicatio*. The adopting father went to the praetor, one of the Roman magistrates, and presented a legal case for the transference of the person to be adopted into his *patria potestas*. When all this was completed, the adoption was complete.

Clearly this was a serious and an impressive step. But it is the consequences of adoption which are most significant for the picture that is in Paul's mind.

There were four main ones:

- (i) The adopted person lost all rights in his old family and gained all the rights of a legitimate son in his new family. In the most binding legal way, he got a new father and was "reborn" into a new family.
- (ii) It followed that he became heir to his new father's estate. Even if other sons were afterwards born, it did not affect his rights. He was inalienably co-heir with them.
- (iii) In law, the old life of the adopted person was completely wiped out; for instance, all debts were cancelled. He was regarded as a new person entering into a new life with which the past had nothing to do.
- (iv) In the eyes of the law he was absolutely the son of his new father¹⁵.

That is what Paul is thinking of when he is using the term 'adoption'.

¹⁵ Roman history provides an outstanding case of how completely this was held to be true. The Emperor Claudius adopted Nero in order that he might succeed him on the throne; they were not in any sense blood relations. Claudius already had a daughter, Octavia. To cement the alliance Nero wished to marry her. Nero and Octavia were in no sense blood relations; yet, in the eyes of the law, they were brother and sister; and before they could marry, the Roman senate had to pass special legislation.

He uses still another picture from Roman adoption. He says that God's spirit witnesses with our spirit that we really are his children. The adoption ceremony was carried out in the presence of seven witnesses.

Now, suppose the adopting father died and there was some dispute about the right of the adopted son to inherit, one or more of the seven witnesses stepped forward and swore that the adoption was genuine. Thus the right of the adopted person was guaranteed and he entered into his inheritance.

So, Paul is saying, it is the Holy Spirit himself who is the witness to our adoption into the family of God. Note then that in **Rev 5:6** we are told that

".....in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth."

These seven eyes symbolize God's complete knowledge of what is happening on earth and represent the Holy Spirit's complete power to testify of Truth. {See also **2 Chron. 16:9; Zech. 4:10; Rev. 1:4; 3:1**}.

We see then that every step of Roman adoption was meaningful in the mind of Paul when he transferred the concept to our adoption into the family of God. Once we were in the absolute control of our own sinful human nature; but God, in his mercy, has brought us into his absolute possession.

The old life has no more rights over us; God now has the absolute right. The past is cancelled and its debts are wiped out; we begin a new life with God and become heirs of all his riches {**Col. 2:13-14; Eph. 1:18**}.

We are born from above into a new family—the family of God {**John 3:3-7; Eph. 2:19; 1 John 3:1**}. We are clothed in the garments of a son of God through faith—the righteousness of Jesus Christ {**Isaiah 61:10; Gal. 3:27**}. And we are created in Christ Jesus a 'new creature'—all things are new in our relationship to God {**2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10**}.

If that is so, we become joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, God's own Son {**Rom. 8:17; Eph. 1:11-14; 3:6**}. That which Christ inherits, we also inherit. If Christ had to suffer, we also inherit that suffering; but if Christ was raised to life and glory, we also inherit that life and glory.

It was Paul's picture that when a man became a Christian he entered into the very family of God. He did nothing to deserve it; God, the great Father, in his amazing love and mercy, has taken the lost, helpless, poverty-stricken, debt-laden sinner and adopted him into his own family, so that the debts are cancelled and the glory inherited.