

Romans 8

From the valley of despair of chapter 7 comes what triumphant shout (v. 1)? We are not condemned, we will not be condemned, and we cannot ever be condemned. Believers receive this glorious declaration from God's court. The judge's gavel comes crashing down and the verdict of "Not Guilty" resounds throughout the courtroom. We will never face any part of eternity separated from God. No one can ever bring charges against us that will stick.

Why are we not condemned (v. 2)? Because through faith in Christ, the law of the Spirit of life (the controlling power of the Holy Spirit) has set us free from the law of sin and death (the controlling power of sin which produces death). We are free! We are no longer in bondage to sin. Romans 8:1 tells us we are free from the *guilt* of sin. Romans 8:2 tells us we are free from the *power* of sin.

What problem did the Old Testament law have (v. 3)? It was rendered powerless because it was weakened by man's sinful nature. The law urged us to obey but it provided no power to obey. The law was not weak in and of itself; it was good (7:12). But because man was weak due to his sinful nature, the law could not deliver from sin.

Jesus Christ came to solve the problem the law could not solve. **How did He come (v. 3)?** In the "likeness" of sinful man. **What does that mean?** He was a human being like us but He was sinless. **How did He condemn sin in sinful man?** By being our sin offering, giving His life for ours. At the Cross He defeated sin legally by paying the debt of sin that we owed.

How do we live lives according to the Spirit (v. 5)? By setting our mind on the things of the (Holy) Spirit (Colossians 3:2). Which means that the course, the direction, the progress of one's life are directed by the Holy Spirit to whom we must yield. The mind is the strategic battlefield where the flesh and the Holy Spirit wage war.

How does man, controlled by the sinful mind, relate to God and His law (v. 7-8)? Hostile and *unable* to submit to God's law. By ourselves, we are totally unable to please God even if we do religious and good things that are admired by men (1 Corinthians 2:14). A classic example of this hostility is clearly seen in those who crucified Jesus.

What is our condition if we do not have the Holy Spirit living in us (v. 9)? We do not belong to Christ. A fish lives in water, a man lives in air, but a believer lives in the Spirit and the Spirit lives in him.

Who else lives in us (v. 10)? Christ dwells in believers by his Spirit. **What is the consequence of Christ and God's Spirit dwelling in us (vv. 10-11)?** A Spirit filled life now and assurance that our resurrection is certain.

What consequence follows if we live according to the sinful nature (v. 13)? We will die – spiritually. In other words, we will be disconnected from God because of unconfessed sin. Our fellowship with God will be interrupted. A believer living according to the sinful nature will not enjoy a rich spiritual life. **To what are we then obligated (v. 13)?** To live each day in the control and power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. We have no obligation to oblige or pamper the old nature.

What is necessary to be children of God (v. 14)? We become children of God through faith in Jesus. We then live under the direction of the Holy Spirit which is the hallmark of this relationship.

As sons of God, what did we receive (v. 15)? The Spirit of sonship or adoption. A child parent relationship. We can approach the Creator of the universe and address him with the intimate name of "Daddy" (Abba Father).

What testimony does the Spirit bear (v. 16)? The Spirit assures us that we are legitimate children of God. We have a measure of confidence in our hearts that we are His children and the Spirit validates that conviction.

What blessing do children of God have (v. 17)? An inheritance (1 Peter 1:3-4). Future glory at the end of our lives. As co-heirs we have already inherited all the spiritual blessings there are (Ephesians 1:3).

What price must we pay? "If we share in His suffering" is a statement of fact as if to say, "since we share in His suffering." Our relationship with God is not conditional upon anything including suffering. As far as God is concerned, our sharing in the suffering of Christ is all part of the package of adoption.

What is the creation waiting for (vv. 19-21)? Because of God's curse on His creation after the fall (Genesis 3:14-19), all of nature, animate and inanimate (excluding human beings -- v. 23), is waiting on tiptoe for the liberation of

the creation from its bondage to decay. This will occur when Jesus returns to reign and we return with Him at the second coming.

To what does Paul compare the groaning of creation (v. 22)? Childbirth. **Why is creation groaning?** Like a mother giving birth, because of the curse, we live in a painful suffering world and long for redemption and restoration....a return to the idyllic conditions that existed in Eden. The groaning will end at delivery.

Who else groans within themselves (v. 23)? We do. **Why are we groaning?** Through the Holy Spirit we have tasted the freedom from the effects of sin and death as we are made more like Christ and we long for the fulfillment of the promises of God.....the final stage of our adoption as sons....the redemption of our bodies which will occur at the Rapture when we will be raised and transformed with glorious bodies (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

What should motivate us to persevere (vv. 24-25)? Hope. A confident expectation of what God has promised namely our bodily redemption (Galatians 5:5). Since our "hope" is secure, we can wait with patience knowing the outcome. We look forward to the full and final deliverance from sin, suffering, disease and death.

What help does the Spirit provide (v. 26)? When we are weak, and do not know exactly how we should pray, God Himself (through the Holy Spirit) helps by interceding for us. The idea is simply of communication beyond our ability to express. **How does He intercede?** Like creation and like believers, the Holy Spirit groans but in harmony with the will of God. Even though His words are not expressed the Father knows exactly what the spirit is thinking.

What promise does God give (v. 28)? Whatever God wills or ordains to come into the lives of those He has called, even tragedies, will be used by God to conform us to the image of His Son. The things themselves may not be good but God harmonizes them together for the believer's ultimate good. He is too loving to be unkind and too wise to err.

How does Paul explain God's calling in terms of His foreknowledge and predestination (v. 29)? It is a mistake to conclude that God knew beforehand who would believe in His Son and then predestined those individuals for salvation. Foreknowledge is a term that specifically describes God's decision to elect, to choose to bless someone (Romans 9; 1 Peter 1:20).¹ His purpose was that the chosen, who are made (predestined) to be Christ-like, would constitute the family of God with His Son holding the preeminent (first born) position in the family.

What is the answer to the first of seven questions (v. 31)? The answer to each is a resounding, "No one!"

How did God prove His desire to bless us richly (v. 32)? He gave up His Son, His heart's richest Treasure, for us.

What assurance does this give? If He made the great sacrifice of giving up His Son to save us, He will certainly give us whatever we need for our sanctification. He will not abandon us in the middle of the process.

What is the point of v. 33? No charge can be brought against the Christian because God has already delivered a verdict of not guilty. **Why can no one condemn us (v. 34)?** Because Christ died for us removing our guilt; He arose, He is alive and He is seated at the right hand of God interceding for us.

Can any adverse experience separate us from the love of God (v. 35)? No! Suffering has always been part of the experience of God's righteous people (v. 36) because of their identification with Christ. If we could have been separated from the love of Christ, it would have happened long ago. We are not just conquerors; we are *more than conquerors* because of the cross where our sin problem was conquered once and for all (v. 37).

How does Paul conclude the discussion (vv. 38-39)? He scours the universe for something that might separate us from God's love and then dismisses the possibilities one by one. It is impossible to get beyond God's loving reach. Nothing in all creation can drive a wedge between the loving God and His redeemed people. Not even the redeemed can remove themselves from God's love, which Christ Jesus has secured for them!²

¹ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Romans, 2017 Edition (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), p. 132

² Ibid. p. 137