

Romans

Chapter 8

V. The Doctrine of Glorification - Part 1

Someone once said that if he had to choose only one book of the Bible he would choose Romans. Furthermore, if he had to choose one chapter, it would be Romans chapter 8. Romans 8 is one of the greatest chapters in the Bible in that it lays to rest forever the issue of security in salvation. Anyone who grasps the great truths of God from this chapter cannot but be overwhelmed with the glorious reality of our position in Christ.

The major theme of Romans 8 is glorification. This great doctrine refers to the ultimate realization of all the benefits of salvation of which we now only have a part. Once God begins the process of salvation by justification, he will bring it to completion in glorification.

Woven throughout Paul's discussion of this great doctrine is the person and work of the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit who assures and empowers us in the process of progressive sanctification while we live. Thus, we see two great themes in this chapter, the ultimate glorification of the believer, and the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer now. In our exegesis of this passage, we will follow the outline presented in John MacArthur's book, *Security In the Spirit*. The main points of this outline are 1) The Spirit frees us from sin, 2) the Spirit enables us to fulfill God's law, 3) the Spirit changes our nature, 4) the Spirit gives us victory, 5) the Spirit confirms our adoption, and 6) the Spirit guarantees our glory.

A. The Spirit Frees Us From Sin - Romans 8:1-3

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. 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 8:3 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:

Romans 8:1

Verse 1 gives us the transition between Paul's discussion of the struggle of the Christian life in Romans 7 and the glorious truth of security in Romans 8. At the end of Romans 7, we are left with the struggle of a person who desires to do good, but is hindered in the expression of that good by the flesh. The logical question is "does the sin committed by the Christian in Romans 7 cause him to stand condemned?." Paul's answer in Romans 8:1 is definitive, "**There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.**" We are not under bondage to the law, nor are we under the penalty prescribed by the law since Christ paid the death penalty for us. As far as God is concerned, we stand before Him as holy and righteous as Christ.

However, the last part of verse 1 seems to add a conditional requirement to the no condemnation status mentioned in the first part of the verse. It seems

to say that only those who walk after the Spirit have no condemnation while those who walk after the flesh have condemnation. Does this mean that a carnal Christian is under condemnation?

Textual Note: The last part of Romans 8:1 is not found in any of the Alexandrian texts and is therefore disputed as to being part of the original verse.

The answer to this dilemma is best understood by realizing that all Christians are in the Spirit while all unbelievers are in the flesh. In other words, it is not possible for a Christian to walk after the flesh in a continuous manner of life. This is not to say that it is not possible for a Christian to sin, or that it is not possible for a Christian to be characterized by the flesh. It is to say that there is a difference in the life of a Christian that makes it impossible for him to live totally in the flesh. 1 John 3:9 says “**Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.**” At first reading it seems that John is saying that anyone who is a Christian cannot sin. However, by studying the verb tenses, we find that John is really saying that a Christian does not live a life of sin in a continuous manner. There may be periods of disobedience, but in the long run a Christian is one who obeys God.

Romans 8:2-3

Verses 2 and 3 of Romans 8 pick up the thoughts of Paul at the end of Romans 7, specifically, Romans 7:23. In that verse we find Paul stating that he sees two laws, or principles, at operation in his life. The law of sin works in Paul's flesh to cause death while the law of the mind or spirit delights to do the law of God. In verse 2 of Romans 8 we find the statement that it is the law of the Spirit that has freed us from the law or principle of sin and death. This is really a reiteration of the truth mentioned in Romans 6, in which Paul taught that our justification has freed us from the requirements and penalties of the law.

Verse 3 answers the question, “**Why can't the law save?**” by revealing that it is impossible for the flesh to keep the perfect law of God. We all fall under the condemnation of the law because it is not possible for us, in our flesh, to keep the whole law. Christ told his disciples when he was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane “**the spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak.**” All of us as humans can attest to the validity and truthfulness of that statement. Paul himself attested to it in the last part of Romans 7. We may all intend to keep the law, but we cannot because of the flesh. However, the Spirit of God breaks the yoke of the law and delivers us from its penalty.

B. The Spirit Enables Us To Fulfill God's Law - Romans 8:4

8:4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Paul continues the contrast between the walk of the flesh and the walk of the Spirit by showing that it is only through the Spirit that we can fulfill the righteousness of the law. Simply stated, the righteousness of the law cannot be fulfilled by someone who walks after the flesh since it is not external actions that are the issue but internal attitudes. This is the problem unbelievers have. They

may be able to externally live a life of seeming morality and virtue, but they have no power to overcome the evil desires and ungodly attitudes they have on the inside. God's desire is that we fulfill the law by submitting to the power of the Spirit within us. It is only as we submit to his authority that the power of God is released in our life and victory over our attitudes is made possible.

Contrary to what many teach, we have not been saved to live as we like. We have been saved to live a life of obedience to God. When we rebel against the Spirit we are actually doing something that is against our nature. Ephesians 2:10 states "**For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.**" Titus 2:14 states that Christ "**gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.**" Good works and righteous behavior are not optional for a Christian. For someone to claim salvation and live a life of total disobedience to God is to invalidate their claim and expose them as unregenerate.

C. The Spirit Changes Our Nature - Romans 8:5-11

Not only does the Spirit free us from the requirements and penalty of the law and furthermore enables us to fulfill God's law, but he also completely changes our nature. This is one of the great truths of the Scripture. Many teach that a Christian has two separate natures, the old and the new, and these are constantly at war with each other. This is not true. The Christian has only one nature, the new nature. His battle is not with an old nature, but with the flesh.

Verse 5 of Chapter 8 states the basic difference between those who are characterized by the flesh and those who are characterized by the Spirit. Those who are after the flesh are interested in the things of the flesh, but those who are after the Spirit are interested in the things of the Spirit. We should note at this point that Paul is not drawing a contrast between carnal Christians and spiritual Christians, he is drawing a contrast between unbelievers and believers. In fact, he outlines several specific differences in these verses which are helpful to understand.

1. The Interests - Romans 8:5

8:5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

The first contrast is that those who are in the flesh pay attention to the things of the flesh while those in the Spirit pay attention to the things of the Spirit. When we look around us we see vast numbers of people whose only goal in life is the material. If you ask the average humanist what his goal is you will find that it is to gain more material benefits such as money, prestige, or power. We must realize that the person who has his sights set on eternal things is considered somewhat of a whacko to the average person on the street. Colossians 3:1 says we are to "**seek those things which are above.**" For a Christian to spend their life chasing the passing garbage of this life is a contradiction. Our citizenship is in heaven, not earth.

One sure fire way to separate believers from unbelievers is to ask "What are their primary interests?" One who is an unbeliever has absolutely no appetite for spiritual things. On the other hand, a believer does have a desire for spiritual things. Unfortunately, because of the cares of this life

and the carnality of many believers, this appetite is dulled. Unlike the physical desire for food which grows stronger and stronger until met, the spiritual desire for spiritual food grows less and less. In order to have a good spiritual appetite, we must spend significant time in the Word of God and prayer.

One thing we do need to note is that this is a “black and white” case that Paul is dealing with here. Of course we would all admit that we are not as spiritually-minded as we should be, but our direction is towards the things of the Spirit. It is just like the Christian life. We may not be perfectly obedient, but our desire is to be obedient. It is not the perfection of our life, but the direction that matters most.

2. The Wages - Romans 8:6

8:6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

The second contrast between the unbeliever and the Christian is the ultimate wages (see also Romans 6:21-22). Those whose lives are characterized by the flesh will receive the wages of death while those characterized by the Spirit will receive the wages of life and peace. The word translated “life” is the Greek word *zōa* and refers to the quality of life. It is different than the word *bios* which refers to physical life itself. What an affirmation! Even though the average unbeliever considers us whackos, it is we who will ultimately enjoy life at its fullest.

3. The Disposition of the Carnal Mind - Romans 8:7-8

8:7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8:8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

The third contrast is the disposition of the carnal mind and spiritual mind. In verses 7 and 8 we find that the disposition of the carnal mind is enmity with God. This enmity is founded on two principles. One, the carnal mind is not subject to the law of God. In fact, insubordination was the original sin of Satan in which he exalted himself above God. Two, not only is the mind not in subjection to God, but it cannot be. In fact, Paul states in verse 8 that anyone in the flesh cannot please God.

It is interesting to consider that the root of all sin is self. We must understand that it is only as we submit ourselves to God that we find the fulfillment that God created us to have. This is the crux of human existence. We have been created to express the character of God to those around us. When we refuse to do that, we violate the very reason for our existence. When man creates an object that becomes useless to him, he throws it on a garbage heap. In the same way, men that refuse to become what God intended them to be are thrown on God's garbage heap which is the Lake of Fire. Herein lies one of the paradoxes of the Christian life: to gain fulfillment, we lose ourselves. We need to realize that God Himself gave us a pattern for submission in Christ. Although Jesus Christ was fully God, He subjected Himself to his father and earthly parents in the perfect pattern of submission. By doing so,

He will one day be Lord of all. When we submit to God, we will one day inherit all that God has.

4. The Disposition of the Spiritual Mind - Romans 8:9

8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

This verse connects with the description of the carnal mind in verses 7 and 8. Paul begins this verses with a statement, “**ye are not in the flesh.**” This statement solidifies the concept that Paul is not talking about carnal vs. spiritual Christians, but unbelievers vs. believers. Note the characteristic of the spiritual mind, it is God's mind. The “if” states the obvious fact that only those who have the Spirit of God are in the Spirit.

What is the Spirit of God referring to specifically in this verse. It is probably best to understand it in distinction to the carnal mind in verses 7 and 8 where we find that the carnal mind is not subject to God. It is interesting to note that when we read of the Spirit in the Bible, we always find the Spirit in subjection to God and Christ. In fact, it is the Spirit's specific ministry to point men to Christ and to glorify Christ. This is in opposition to the myriad movements which seek to glorify the Spirit at the expense of Christ and God. Those who have the mind of the Spirit subject themselves to God.

As an aside, note the presence of the Trinity in this verse. In the first part of the verse we are told that the “Spirit of God” dwells in us, while in the last part it is the “Spirit of Christ.” Therefore, the “Spirit of God” and the “Spirit of Christ” must be the same person, and in fact, God and Christ are the same person. This verse does not conclusively prove the Trinity, but we do see its presence here.

5. The Destiny of the Body - Romans 8:10-11

8:10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 8:11 But 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.

Finally, Paul describes the destiny of our body. When we were saved by God, our soul and spirit were redeemed, our body was not. This is why we must die even though we have been declared righteous before God. Paul's great lament in Romans 7:24 is “**who shall deliver me from the body of this death?.**” Paul states in 1 Corinthians 15:50 that “**flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.**” It is our body that causes the sin in our lives and it is only the death of the body that will ultimately free us from sin (see Romans 7).

These two verses show that clearly. In verse 10 we see that the body is dead because of sin. God will not redeem our current body. He will provide us a new body, however, gloriously created to exist in heaven. The great theme of 1 Corinthians 15 is the truth of our future resurrection in a glorified body. Because we have the Spirit of God, we will one day receive a new body. This

same idea is reiterated by Paul in verse 23 where he longs for the ultimate fulfillment of salvation, the resurrection of the body.

D. The Spirit Gives Us Victory - Romans 8:12-13

8:12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. 8:13 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.

The fourth way the Spirit assures us of our no condemnation status before God is that He gives us the ability to overcome the flesh. In fact, without the power of the Holy Spirit there is no way we can have any kind of spiritual victory in our lives.

Verse 12 starts out with the word “therefore” which always refers back to what has just been stated, specifically in this passage, the fact that we do not have the mind of the flesh but the mind of the Spirit. Because of this new mind we are to walk differently. We were not redeemed to continue to live after the flesh.

How do we walk differently? The answer is stated in verse 13, we are to mortify the deeds or practices of the body. This is an essential element of obedience if we are to ever expect victory in our lives. We must also realize that we have been commanded to “put to death” the practices of our body but it is only through the power of the Spirit that we can do this. Put another way, the only path to victory over temptation is submission to the power of the Spirit in our lives coupled with old-fashioned obedience to what God commands us to do. Too often we expect to have victory without obedience or victory in our own strength. Both are unattainable. We need to obey God, submit to his power, and allow his Spirit to give us the victory.

Verse 13 is merely a statement of fact. In other words, Paul is not saying that if we, as Christians, walk after the flesh we will die. He is saying that any man who walks after the flesh, that is, all unbelievers will die. Conversely, if we walk after the Spirit and mortify the deeds of the body we will live. This is why the unregenerate man cannot please God. He has no Spirit to empower him to live in victory over the flesh.

E. The Spirit Confirms our Adoption - Romans 8:14-16

8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. 8:15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 8:16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

The fifth way the Spirit assures us of our justification is that He confirms our sonship in our hearts. The concept Paul uses to describe our new position in God’s family is the concept of adoption. An analysis of the concept reveals many wonderful realities of our new position in Christ. However, not only do we have a new standing and a new inheritance, but that inheritance is confirmed to us by the Holy Spirit. It is His assurance that allows us to experience the joy of salvation and the full reality of our no condemnation status before God.

The word “adoption” is used exclusively by the Apostle Paul in the New Testament. It is a word taken from the Roman legal system, *hiouthesia*, which means “to place a son.” Note the following definition:

Adoption is the legal act of God whereby he makes us a full member of his family, erases our past life, and makes us a full co-heir of all he has with Christ.

This definition may be understood by examining the Roman concept of adoption. According to Roman law, a father had total control over the lives of his entire family. This was called “*pater potestis*” or the “power of the father.” In exercising this authority, a father may find that all of his own sons were unacceptable as his heirs. In that case, the father would be able to “adopt” a son which would take precedence over his own sons in regard to the inheritance, or make the adopted son a co-heir with his own sons. Therefore we see that the word “adoption” is not the taking of some waif off of the street, but a careful selecting and choosing of someone to be the inheritor of an estate. Once such a son was found, the following conditions applied to his adoption:

- 1) All of his past debts were canceled. His past life was erased to the extent that it appeared as if he had just been born.
- 2) Depending on the choice of the father, he would be made the sole heir of the estate, or a co-heir of the estate.
- 3) He would be given a new name and made a full member of the family with all of its privileges and responsibilities.
- 4) The contract was witnessed by seven men to insure that no later dispute would arise regarding the adoption. As we can see, this is a beautiful picture of what God has done for us. He has adopted us into his family, canceled our past debt of sin, and made us an eternal co-heir with Christ. The Holy Spirit is our witness.

1. The Theology of Adoption

The theology of adoption is found in three major passages in the New Testament, Romans 8:1-23, Galatians 4:1-7, and Ephesians 1:3-6. In each of these passages, we see a particular aspect of adoption as it relates to God's plan of salvation in our lives.

a. Election to Adoption

Ephesians 1:4-5 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.

In this passage we see adoption as it relates to our election in God. We were chosen in eternity past and predestined to become children of God. This is a great passage on eternal security as well. If we have been chosen by God, we were chosen to go the entire distance from salvation to ultimate adoption. See also Romans 8:29-30.

b. Redeemed to Adoption

Galatians 4:4-7 But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law. To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

In this passage we see adoption as it relates to our redemption. Before we could be adopted, we had to be redeemed. This cancels our past life of sin and gives us the promise of future adoption. We must note at this point, that we have not received ultimate adoption yet, this waits for a future fulfillment. However, we have received the full promise of adoption and the assurance of God's Spirit that we are his children.

c. Sanctified to Adoption

Romans 8:12-17 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit to mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself 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 might be also glorified together.

In this passage, we see adoption as it relates to our sanctification. If we have been truly redeemed and born again, we will show that by our progressive sanctification in this life. Note again, that although we have been adopted by God, we have not received the full privileges that adoption gives us. We see this in the next passage.

d. Adopted to Glorification

Romans 8:23 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 bodies.

This passage tells us when our adoption will be realized in its fullest sense, at the resurrection of our bodies. Although we have received the Spirit of adoption, and although the Spirit assures us that we are adopted, we cannot experience that adoption until our resurrection. At that point, the end of our salvation will be realized, that of glorification, and we will experience the full joy and privilege as adopted sons of God's family.

2. Adoption and Salvation

Adoption can be pictured in the time-line of our salvation as follows:

Eternity Past	Elected to adoption
Time of salvation	Redeemed and adopted by God
Present	Progressive Sanctification, our responsibility of adoption
Resurrection	Full realization of our adoption
Glorification	Ultimate realization of our adoption

The responsibilities of adoption:

Our progressive sanctification as we mortify the deed of the body.
Romans 8:13

Our allowing God to lead us by his Spirit. Romans 8:14

Our suffering with God. Romans 8:17

The privileges of adoption:

Power to overcome the flesh. Romans 8:12-13

Release from bondage. Romans 8:15

Leading by the Spirit. Romans 8:14

Assurance of the Spirit. Romans 8:16

Full heirs with Christ. Romans 8:17

Ultimate glorification with Christ. Romans 8:17

Resurrection of our bodies. Romans 8:23

F. The Spirit Guarantees our Glory - Romans 8:16-30

1. The Recipients of Glorification - Romans 8:16-17a

8:16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 8:17a And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; ...

Perhaps the greatest truth found in Romans chapter 8 is the promise of future glory for all who have placed their trust in Christ. Many Bible teachers and denominations teach that salvation is never certain since they assert that a Christian can lose their salvation due to sin in their lives. This is contrary to what Scripture teaches. We find Paul definitively support the doctrine of eternal security by proving the eternal nature of our salvation.

Paul begins this discussion by defining the recipients of glorification as being those who are led by the Spirit of God (v. 14), that is, all true believers in Christ. Because of the divine transaction of salvation, in which we have been adopted into God's family, we become heirs to all that God has. Just as a Roman father would adopt a son to become heir of all that he owned, God has adopted us to become heirs of all that He owns.

Note that we do not inherit a portion of God's kingdom. Instead, every Christian inherits all that God has. In heaven there is no private ownership of property or rewards. We all own everything. This wonderful truth is only made possible by realizing that we will be perfect and hence have none of the vices of humanness that would make this impossible, vices such as greed, lust, or envy. We can own everything without any conflict.

Our new position also makes us joint-heirs with Christ. In a sense, this means that we are on a common level with Christ. Not only have we been redeemed from the curse of the law and adopted into God's family, but we have been placed on a level with Christ. In fact, God sees us just as righteous as Christ. Hebrews 2:11 states **“For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.”**

2. The Requirement of Glorification - Romans 8:17b-18

8:17b if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. 8:18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Having defined the recipients of glorification as being true believers, Paul turns to the requirement of glorification, that is, suffering. The doctrine of suffering is probably one of the most abused and misunderstood doctrines in the modern church. Many would have us believe that it is against God's will for a Christian to suffer for any reason. They would have us believe that all suffering is a result of sin or lack of faith, and not as God's perfecting tool. In fact, in many circles, a person's spirituality is measured by the amount of success enjoyed by that person, and not the amount of holiness or godliness evident in their lives. This runs contrary to what Scripture teaches.

The Bible very clearly teaches that all who are true believers can expect only trials and tribulations in this life. Our “success” and “prosperity” is to be realized in eternity, not in the present. The Bible teaches that suffering is a requirement for future glory since it provides the means of refinement necessary to produce godliness and holiness in a person's life. In fact, the more we suffer in this life, the more we will glorify God in the next. The very thing that causes us the most grief and heartache now will produce the most glory in eternity.

A full treatment of the Bible's teaching on suffering is far beyond the scope of this study. However, it will be beneficial for us to look at some of the major points taught in the Bible regarding suffering to understand the context of these two verses.

a. **Suffering is a Normal Part of the Christian Life**

The first, and by far most misunderstood, point the Bible teaches about suffering is that it is a normal part of the Christian life. As we have mentioned in the above paragraphs, too many people try to teach that suffering for the Christian is abnormal. That somehow God wants every Christian to be healthy, wealthy, and wise. This is in direct opposition to the weight of Scripture. Christ taught that we should expect tribulation while we are in the world. He taught His disciples that the world would treat them no better than it treated Him. To expect otherwise is to ignore the clear teaching of Jesus. Note the following passages in support of this point:

John 16:18-20 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

John 16:33 These things have I spoken unto you that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

1 Peter 4:12-13 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings: that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

b. **Suffering is a Prerequisite for Glory**

The second major point taught about suffering is that it is a prerequisite for future glory. Many Christians look with anticipation regarding God's promise of coming glory but fail to realize that suffering must come first. In fact, the Bible teaches that the amount of glory we will experience in the next life is in direct proportion to the amount of suffering we experience in this life. The reason God has granted Christ the ultimate measure of glory is that Christ experienced the ultimate depths of suffering on the cross. Paul writes in Philippians 2 that God has given Christ a name above every other name because Christ humbled himself, became a servant, and died the worst death possible for sins he never committed. In the same manner we will be glorified in direct measure to the amount of suffering we endure now.

1 Peter 1:7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:10-11 Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time

the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

1 Peter 4:12-13 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings: that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

2 Corinthians 4:17-18 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory: While we look not at the things which are seen, but the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Hebrews 12:2 Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

c. Suffering is to be for God's Glory, Not as a Result of Sin

The third point we need to make regarding suffering is that it is to be for God's glory and not as a result of sin. When we sin as believers and incur divine chastisement or legal penalties, we cannot consider our suffering as bringing glory to God. Too often Christians live lives of excess and sin, find themselves paying the natural consequences of sin, and then try to make themselves feel better by rationalizing away their suffering as a result of their Christianity and not as a result of their sin. The kind of suffering that glorifies God is the suffering derived from a holy and godly lifestyle, not the suffering derived from the consequences of sin. Peter attacks this kind of thinking in 1 Peter as shown in the following verses:

1 Peter 2:20-23 For what glory is it, if when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow in his steps. Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.

1 Peter 3:14 But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled:

1 Peter 3:17 For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.

d. **Suffering is for This Life Only**

The final and most comforting point we will make regarding suffering is that it is for this life only. It is wonderful to know that there is no suffering in heaven. Revelations 21:4 says that **“there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.”** All of the suffering and sorrow we experience now will be a thing forgotten when we enter the eternal state.

2 Corinthians 4:17-18 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory: While we look not at the things which are seen, but the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

3. **The Groaning of Creation - Romans 8:19-22**

8:19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. 8:20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected [the same] in hope, 8:21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 8:22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

The promise of future glory promises deliverance to more than just the believer as these three verses show. In fact, we find three sources of groaning in this part of Romans 8, creation in verses 19-22, believers in verses 23-25, and the Holy Spirit in verses 26-27.

When God created Adam and placed him in the Garden of Eden, He gave him dominion over all of creation. However, when sin entered into the world, Adam lost his exalted position over creation and has been in the process of trying to once again become master of his original inheritance. Because of sin, the entire creation has fallen prey to Satan and the curse of God. Eve was cursed in childbearing and Adam was cursed by being required to struggle against nature the rest of his life for his daily sustenance. From that point on, man has been in a life and death struggle with nature just to survive. It is only in relatively modern times that man has been able to regain some of the control that he once had.

Even with many of the modern advances in technology, it is interesting to note that the Bible teaches that man's actual control over the earth is becoming more and more tenuous. In fact, when we look at the events of the tribulation just prior to the second coming of Christ, we see nature being to unravel. We find stars falling from heaven, meteor showers, water turning bitter, the sun going nova and burning men, trees being burned up, and in general a total rebellion of nature. The reason for this is simply the fact that God has created the universe on a moral foundation. When that foundation is destroyed because of sin, the universe falls as well. It is only during the millennial kingdom that man's dominion is restored and the earth once again becomes the paradise it was.

The word “creature” in this passage is the Greek word *ktisis* which means creation, not creature. Paul is not talking about animals, he is talking about God's created order. What exactly does the creation desire? The manifestation of the Sons of God. The word “manifestation” carries the idea of unveiling or revelation. True Christians have not yet been fully manifested in the sense that we have yet to realize our own glorification. When that happens, the curse upon nature is reversed.

Verse 20 gives us the source of this curse, namely, God himself. The word translated “vanity” is *mataiotes* which means “aimlessness” or “futility.” The verb “was made” is in the aorist tense which refers to a specific point in past time. In other words, the creation did not progressively become subject to vanity but was made subject to vanity in a moment in time. That moment was when God pronounced the curse on the earth due to man's sin. Just as nature was subjected in a moment's time, it will be restored as well during the millennial kingdom and then made new for eternity to come. Verse 21 looks forward to the day when nature will be restored. 2 Peter 3:13 states that “**we are to look for a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.**” We need to realize that the sin of man has stained the entire universe. The only way for that stain to be permanently removed is to have the universe recreated by God.

4. The Groaning of the Believer - Romans 8:23-25

8:23 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. 8:24 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? 8:25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

Not only does nature groan in anticipation of future glory, but we as believers do as well. In fact, it is the hope of future glory that enables us to put up with the heartaches and grief of this life. Paul states in 1 Corinthians 15:19 that “**if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.**” Hebrews 12:2 states that it was for the joy that was set before him that Christ endured the cross. The promise and anticipation of future glory makes the grief of this life bearable.

What is hope? As we have seen in previous lessons, “hope” in the New Testament, *elpidos*, is not anticipation for something that is unsure, it is anticipation for something that is sure. Our hope is not that we may be glorified, or that we have a good chance of being glorified, our hope is that we will be glorified. It is a sure thing.

What event signals the realization of this glorification that we hope for? It is the resurrection of our bodies. While we live in the world we sometimes have the idea that the most significant change in our life is yet to come. Not so. The most significant change occurred at conversion where we were made fit to enjoy all that God has. Our death is less of a change for us than our conversion. All death does is to free us to enjoy what God has prepared for us and the resurrection of our body fully enables us to enjoy all that God has. Our glorification is based on the resurrection of our body. That is why Paul so vehemently supports the doctrine of the resurrection of the believer in 1

Corinthians 15 since it is our resurrection that is the ultimate end of our salvation and the ultimate proof of God's acceptance of us as His children.

5. **The Groaning of the Spirit - Romans 8:26-27**

8:26 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. 8:27 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.

Not only does the creation and the believer groan in anticipation of future glory, but the Holy Spirit does as well. This is a most comforting thought since in it we have the assurance that God is on our side. Not only do we long for future glory, but God longs for us to share in that glory with Him.

These two verses give us a glimpse into one of the mysteries of God's character, namely, intertrinitarian fellowship. Because man cannot grasp the triune character of God we sometimes misunderstand some of the great truths of Scripture. This passage teaches one of those great truths, specifically, the Holy Spirit intercedes before God on our behalf. In fact, if it were not for the continual intercession of the Spirit and Christ, our salvation would be lost and we would stand condemned before God.

Perhaps no Scripture teaches this concept better than Luke 22:31 in which Jesus tells Peter that Satan desired to have him, but He (Jesus) would pray to the Father for Peter that Peter's faith would not fail. Although salvation is eternal, it is accomplished only by the continual intercessory work of Christ and the Spirit. In fact, the last part of Romans 8 reveals this to exactly be the case. We cannot understand it, but somehow there is a communion in the Trinity in which we as believers are upheld by the intercessory work of the Spirit and Christ.

What exactly is the Spirit's role in this communion? It is representing us before the Father. Since all too often we are under sin and have an imperfect view of things, we are apt to pray for the wrong things. The Spirit does not have that problem. For example, we may not understand the full reason we are going through a specific trial in our life and as a result we lack the ability to intelligently pray about it. Since the Spirit knows the mind of God and also knows our heart (v. 27), He can pray for us according to God's will. Sometimes we need to be honest with God and tell Him that we do not know what to pray for and ask the Spirit to intercede for us. It is a comforting thought to know that God gets our message even though we may lack the ability to communicate it effectively or even correctly.

6. **The Guarantee of Glory - Romans 8:28-30**

8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 8:29 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. 8:30 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.

The pinnacle of Paul's treatise on glorification is found in these three verses. It is amazing that anyone can read these verses and come to the conclusion that our future glorification is an iffy thing. Perhaps no other passage in the Bible more definitively declares the certainty of glorification.

The first statement regarding the certainty of glorification is that everything that happens to the believer is part of God's divine plan. By stating this, however, we need to understand that although there are certain things that are not part of God's perfect will for us, for example, sin, God still uses everything in our lives for our ultimate good. The key concept here is "work together."

Although sin is not part of God's plan for his children, he uses the chastisement for sin as a perfecting agent. Put another way, nothing we do as believers or nothing Satan can do to us can ultimately thwart God's plan for us.

It is too easy to lose sight of the fact that we are children of God and inheritors of all that He possesses when we are facing severe trials and testings in this life. We need to keep in mind that our "**light afflictions which are but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.**" We must realize that the suffering and trials we face now only prepare us for greater glory later. The worst possible thing that could happen to Christ, humanly speaking, accomplished the greatest good for men, namely His death on the cross. It is only as we rest in the assurance that we are in God's hand no matter what happens that we find the peace and comfort available to God's children. Jesus Himself stated in John 16:33 that "**in the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.**" For the believer, the best is yet to come.

Verses 29 and 30 continue on in this same thought by extending the concept of security from eternity past to eternity future. It is important to understand that God's plan of salvation for a believer does not start at conversion, it started in eternity past. Ephesians 1:4 states that we were "**chosen before the foundation of the world.**" How that concept meshes with the doctrine of the responsibility of man is beyond our comprehension, nevertheless Scripture teaches both. The most powerful argument for eternal security is that fact that it was based in eternity past without our involvement. When God made that choice, He determined to carry it to its ultimate end, glorification.

God's predestination is based on His foreknowledge. Some teach that since God is omniscient, that is He knows everything, that He knew who would respond to His offer of salvation and based on that knowledge He predestinated men. This is not so. The word "foreknowledge" is *proginosko* and has the meaning of intimate knowledge. God did not just have an intellectual knowledge of us prior to the foundation of the world, He had an intimate knowledge. He knew us as individuals. It is the basis of this intimate knowledge that caused Him to predestinate us to be conformed to Christ. That is God's plan. Philippians 1:6 states that "**he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.**" Nobody gets lost between God's foreknowledge and glorification.

The word "firstborn" is interesting in verse 29. It comes from the Greek word *prototokos* which does not carry the meaning of firstborn in time, but firstborn in preeminence. In other words, although we as believers all share equally in Christ's inheritance, He is more preeminent than us. This same word is found in Colossians 1:18 where Christ is called the "**firstborn from among the dead.**" It does not mean that Christ was the first to rise from the dead. It just means that of all that have risen from the dead, Christ is the most preeminent. Verse 30 shows the progression of salvation. We were predestinated in eternity past and as a result we have been called. The calling Paul is talking about is not the general call of salvation, but the effectual call. In other words, when God called us to salvation, that calling was effectual, that is, it accomplished our salvation. Now that we have been called, we have been justified. Those justified are then glorified. There is no loss in this progression. Since our salvation was not initiated by us in eternity past, it cannot be terminated by us now or in eternity future.

G. The Song of Security - Romans 8:31-39

Paul, having put forth the doctrine of glorification in the first part of this chapter, can no longer hold back and breaks out in a song of security. He shows that because of our position in Christ we are assured of salvation. In these verses we find that our security is based on 1) God's acceptance of the believer, 2) the lack of any accuser, and 3) the inability of the believer to be separated from the love of Christ or God.

1. Security is Based on God's Acceptance - Romans 8:31-32

8:31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 8:32 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?

Paul's song breaks out in a great exclamation of security, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Since God is the most powerful being in the universe, who can stand against us if God is on our side? Verse 31 refers back to all that Paul has previously stated in the book of Romans. On the basis of our justification by faith through God's grace we are on God's side. Verse 32 continues by referring back to Paul's argument from the greater to the lesser that we find in Romans 5:10. If God was willing to save us when we were sinners and enemies, why would he ever abandon us now that we are His friends? If God would not spare His own Son, would He spare giving us all things?

2. Security is Based on No Accuser - Romans 8:33-34

8:33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 8:34 Who is he that condemneth? 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.

The second main element of our security is that there is no accuser that can condemn us before God. The only way someone who has been justified can be condemned again is if some accusation can be made that will stick. Because of the continuous intercessory work of Christ on our behalf, there is no way any sin can accumulate. 1 John 2:2 states that "**we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.**" Christ is in heaven presenting our case

before the Father. Verse 33 states a rhetorical question with an assumed negative answer. Who can condemn us when God has declared us righteous? Satan may be able to accuse us before the Father but cannot make the accusation stick because of the intercession of Christ on our behalf. These two verses also tell us that God will not condemn us since he justified us, and Christ will not condemn us since he died and rose again for us and even now represents us before the Father. It is a comforting thought to know that the two most powerful beings in the universe are on our side. As someone once said, "who can drown when you have your head that high above water?"

3. Security is Based on Christ's Love for Us - Romans 8:35-39

8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 8:36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 8:37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 8:38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 8:39 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.

The final great source of security for the believer mentioned by Paul is the inseparable love of Christ for us. When we are in the depths of trials or temptations it is easy to feel that God is a million miles away. Satan uses these feelings to drive us to greater despondency and depression even to the point of denying God's love for us. To understand these verses we need to lay hold of the idea that God's love for us is not a giddy feeling on His part. By the same token, it is not a giddy feeling on our part. In other words, we do not have to feel the presence of God to know that God is with us. To often, we base our spirituality and assurance of God's presence on emotions rather than the facts that God has revealed. These verses serve to show us that there is nothing in existence that can separate the believer from God. Paul begins this section by asking another rhetorical question with an assumed negative answer. In his list of possible things that can separate us from the love of God, he names all of the things that Satan tries to use to destroy us.

Tribulation (*thlipsis*) refers to being squeezed by circumstances. Distress (*stenochoria*) refers to being in a narrow confined space and is best understood as referring to the distress of temptations. Persecution refers to mental or physical suffering because of Christ. Famine refers to being without proper nourishment. Nakedness refers to being without proper clothing or shelter. Peril refers to being exposed to treachery. Sword (*maikaios*) refers to losing one's life because of Christ. It is interesting to note that every items listed in this verse was personally experienced by Paul.

2 Corinthians 11:23-27 Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false

brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

Not only can these things not separate us from the love of Christ, but we become superconquerors through them. The severest trials and tests of this life will become mere memories in eternity. Paul finishes this section by also showing that just as nothing separates us from Christ's love, so nothing separates us from God's love.

Death, the great enemy of man cannot separate us from God's love. All it does is free us to be with him in glory. Life cannot separate us from God. Although while we are in the flesh we are absent from Christ, He is still with us. We are safe in the arms of God. Angels, the second most powerful race of being in the universe, cannot separate us from God. Satan's demons, which are only fallen angels, cannot do one thing to us because of God's protection. Principalities and Powers, the more powerful demonic forces, cannot touch us.

Satan, the most powerful demon of all has no power over the believer. Things present nor things to come cannot separate us from God. This lays forever to rest the idea that we are safe now, but someday may not be. Height nor depth refers to a star's highest position in the sky and its lowest. Paul is saying that there is nothing from one end of heaven to another that can separate us from God. Any other creature cannot separate us from God. Since God is the most powerful being in the universe, who can hope to overcome his love for us. We are forever secure.