

GOD'S GLORIOUS GOSPEL**Romans, chapter 8****The Gospel: Life in the Spirit****I | CONTEXT AND CONNECTIONS**

1 / We are calling this lesson **Life in the Spirit** because that is the over-arching message Paul is proclaiming. The **Spirit** will be named 21 times in **chapter 8**. Because the Spirit is the 'law,' the governing authority and power, and the very life that is now living in us—now that we are justified by faith in Christ and **united with Christ, in union with Christ**. He is **in us** and He **leads us**.

2 / So, as we go through **chapter 8**, we will—over and over—hear echoes and reverberations from **chapters 5, 6, and 7**. **Chapter 8** is the joyous, hopeful, and climactic conclusion of this section of Romans that Paul began in **chapter 5**. **Chapter 5** introduced the practical, personal, and present benefits we receive from **since we have been justified by faith**. The over-arching and all-inclusive benefit we have received is **we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ**. Formerly, in our natural-born human condition, we were **enemies, condemned, and sentenced to the wrath of God against our unrighteousness**. But now that we are justified—or 'righteous-fied,' declared and made to be righteous—we are now recipients of every blessing and promise of Grace that God gives to all those who are **in Christ**. **Chapters 6-7** focused on our **union with Christ**—every Grace we receive from God comes to us because we are **in Christ Jesus**. So, every Gospel truth that Paul proclaims here in **chapter 8** will find its connection in something Paul has already introduced in previous chapters, and is a follow-up to that truth. Of course, we won't have time to trace and connect each one, but we will attempt to connect the most primary words and themes that Paul will develop here in **chapter 8**.

3 / But, just keep in mind that Paul's primary purpose and burden here in **chapter 8** is to draw our attention to **the role of the Holy Spirit here in our present body and life**—as we live out the life of personal and practical obedience to God **in the life of the Spirit of Christ** who is in us!

II | vv 1-11 | Since the Spirit of Christ lives in us, and we live in the life of the Holy Spirit, we can no more be condemned than Christ can be condemned—because we are 'in Christ Jesus'!

1 / There are so many connections to be made here in these verses. The "**There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus**" takes us back to the end of **ch 5**. There, Paul expounds on the principle of the '*federal head*'—how both Adam and Christ stand in the place of all those who are '**in**' them. And, since Adam acted as the '*federal head*' of all those who would be born from him, after him, **therefore** we were all born in **condemnation** [see **ch 5.16, 18**]. But, Christ is also the '*federal head*' of all those who have faith in Him and His perfect obedience and righteousness. And so, if you are a believer in Christ—you have put your faith and trust in Him as your only hope of righteousness before God, and you have been **united with Him by faith** [**ch 6.1-11**]**—therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus!** Jesus Christ has borne all our **condemnation** and put it all away!

2 / And that is because, when God justifies us, *He also gives us the new birth—the Holy Spirit of Christ Himself lives in us!* And, when the Spirit of Christ lives in us, then He lives in us the life we are now living! "**Christ lives in me**" by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit becomes the 'law' by which we live. And that 'law,' or reigning government in our life is **the law of the Spirit of life**. And the Spirit **has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death**. Sin and death is no longer the 'law' by which we live.

3 / In truth, the governing 'law' of our lives is now the very life of Christ that He lived here among us—except that He is now **raised—who is at the right hand of God**: "**For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.**" THAT is so profound! Christ was born **under the law** [Galatians 4.4-5]—He submitted to the law of God and fulfilled its every requirement by His perfect obedience to it. And when we receive Him and are **in Christ**; and when we live our lives by **walking according to the Spirit**, we too **fulfill the righteous requirements of the law!**

4 / BUT, we don't do that by our own efforts or abilities—it is all by the Spirit of Christ who lives in us. **Those who are 'in the flesh' cannot please God [v 8]**—our merely-human nature and mind is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed it cannot [v 7]. **"You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you" [v 9].** The Spirit of God who dwells in you is the very Spirit of Christ—and Christ fulfills the righteousness of the law, and the Spirit is life because of righteousness [v 10]. And then, in v 11, Paul introduces *the promise of the final resurrection* for which we are sealed and destined—and he will carry us in the next verses to *that glorious destiny to which we have been saved*—final glorification, raised in the image and likeness of Christ...**'in Him'!**

III | vv 12-17 | We are not 'debtors' or obligated to 'live according to the flesh' any longer—either in the lifestyle and deeds of the flesh or attempting to live a life of obedience to God by the efforts of the flesh—because the Spirit of God makes us 'adopted sons' and children of God—in Christ and with Christ! We now live by a different life, 'law,' and allegiance!

1 / However, before Paul continues, he reinforces and presses upon us our responsibility to **live by the law of the Spirit** and not by the 'law' [under the dominion] of our former sin nature and the **deeds of the body [sin]** we lived in before we were justified and born again. We are no longer 'debtors' or under obligation to live like we used to before we were born again and indwelt by the Spirit. Since we are no longer controlled or under the dominion of sin, we yield our bodies, wills, and deeds to the Holy Spirit of Christ who now lives in us and rules over us—from within us. **"...but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live."** Our allegiance now belongs to Christ and not to our former sins.

2 / We are not just 'believers' by profession—it is a real **life in the Spirit...we are actually sons of God: "but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!'"** And the Holy Spirit gives us the assurance in our own hearts and spirits that we truly belong to God. And He gives us the assurance that, since we are **in Christ**, then what belongs to Christ belongs to us also! **"The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ..."** We need to stop and let that truth sink in—soak our souls in that truth! What belongs to us—and what we have been justified to receive—is not just stuff or things—it is **God Himself! We are 'heirs of God'!** We belong to God—and He belongs to us! But the reason we are **heirs of God** is because we are **in Christ**. And what Christ is heir of, we are **fellow heirs with Christ!**

3 / Now, Paul will introduce another inescapable **'fact of life'—and that is, this present life is full of all kinds of sufferings.** And, yes, all of these sufferings are the curse and consequences of sin—all of which will end in death. YET, Paul has already taught us back in **chapter 6**, and here in **ch 8.3**, that Christ suffered for our sin by His death on the Cross. And, **we have been united with Him in a death like His [6.5].** And so, since we have **suffered with Him** [by being united with Him in His death], then by that same faith God promises us **"in order that we may also be glorified with Him"** [in His resurrection]. And so, here, Paul introduces two more truths that he will elaborate on through the rest of this chapter: **sufferings and Glory [or 'glorified']—our final, ultimate, and eternal destined resurrected Glory!**

IV | vv 18-25 | Yes! we will 'suffer with Him [Christ]' here in this present time—but we are destined for Glory—the promised Glory of the resurrection and the New Creation!

1 / Now, since Paul has introduced **the sufferings of this present time**, he proceeds to put them in perspective with **the glory that is to be revealed to us—to conclude that there is no comparison!** We all know that **sufferings** of all sorts are a fact of this present life. And since **there is now no condemnation to those who are justified and in Christ Jesus**, then shouldn't that exempt us from sufferings? His answer, of course, is **No**. Because he has just told us in the last line of the previous paragraph that **we suffer with Christ—in union with His death**. So, Paul makes the comforting summary statement from his own understanding of our **union with Christ: "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us."** [see also 2 Cor. 4.16-18]

2 / Here are some truths we must always keep in consideration—even as we experience the inevitable **sufferings** we will experience here in our fallen, broken, sin-cursed earthly life—(not necessarily in the order in which Paul will develop them):

[1] All of **the sufferings of this present time** are the natural, mortal consequences of the same sin that brought our condemnation upon us [from which we have now been saved]. **For the creation was subjected to futility** when Adam sinned in the beginning of our human history [see **Genesis 3.17-19**]. **Futility** means ‘vanity, purposelessness, emptiness, brokenness, out of order, not working as it was originally intended to work.’ God created the world to be ‘very good.’ But then, when sin entered the world, **death** became the ultimate end, and all the sufferings of this present world are the precursors, or the dying process, of the ultimate end. We are living now in the **bondage to corruption**. Our sufferings are all the ‘rot’ and decay that set into our world as the curse and consequence of the reign of sin.

[2] But, even when God pronounced the curse of death, corruption, and sufferings on the earth, He also promised the Redeemer would come—the **seed of the woman**, who, of course, is Christ. God **subjected the creation to futility—BUT in the hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God**.

[3] The Promise is that Christ will come and redeem the creation back to God—restore it in the future promised New Creation. [see **Ephesians 1.9-10; Colossians 1.19-20; Revelation 21.1-5; et al**]

[4] And so, **the sufferings of this present world** are both the ‘death throes’ and agonizing pains of the eventual destruction that God will bring upon the present creation in the end—and they are also the **groanings, labor, and travail of childbirth**, or the birth of the New Creation [vv 22-23].

[5] That New Creation has been promised and given to us! In fact, Paul calls the New Creation **the revealing of the sons of God** [see **2 Corinthians 5.17**]. Jesus Christ Himself is the New Man, New Adam, and the Creator of the New Creation. There will be no sin, no suffering, no pain, no crying or tears, and no death in the New Creation. We’re not there yet—but God has promised it, and it is coming!

[6] That New Creation will be brought to pass by the power of the Holy Spirit, giving life in the final resurrection to Glory—the Spirit will raise us up in Glory just as He raised Jesus Christ in Glory [v 11]!

[7] And, even now, as we suffer, we are eagerly expecting, anticipating, and waiting for that promised Glory—when we will inherit and enter into that New Creation Glory along with the redeemed creation: **“And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies** [our final resurrection in Glory].” [see **2 Peter 3.11-13**]

3 / And so, all of this promised prospect of the future Glory that will be given to us in that Day becomes our comfort and encouragement to endure our present sufferings—with rejoicing—with **hope** [this takes us back again to ch 5.1-5]. **“For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience** [endurance with rejoicing—knowing that we will receive it!]. **REMEMBER** how we have defined Bible ‘hope’—it is not an iffy, wishful thinking kind of hope. ***Bible hope is the certain assurance and confident expectation that God will do what He has promised to do in His Word!***

V | vv 26-30 | And, in the meantime, the same Spirit that will raise our mortal bodies in the resurrection at the Last Day is also helping us in our weakness right now in this present life of suffering—and He is working all things together for our good as He accomplishes God’s purpose to bring us safely and securely to His promised Glory!

1 / **Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness.** This is such a loaded promise!

[1] **Likewise** [at the same time—in the same way]...in addition to our considerations of the Glory that awaits us. We are not alone in our sufferings. Because even as we suffer, **likewise** the Spirit is strengthening us by the life He gives us and the assurances of the promised Glory of God.

[2] **Likewise**, not only will the Spirit resurrect and raise us up in the Last Day, but He is also presently helping us in **the sufferings of this present time**. The very Presence and life of the Holy Spirit in us now is **the firstfruits** of the our resurrection life in Glory. ***We now live by the life that will resurrect us then!***

[3] **Likewise** the Spirit is not only indwelling us, but He is also **helping us in our weakness** by **bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God** and heirs of all the Glory God has promised to give us in that Day. The Spirit continuously reminds us of our inheritance in the Glory that is to come!

2 / The primary means of grace that God gives us to help us endure our present sufferings with rejoicing is **prayer**. By praying, we surrender, yield, and trust ourselves to God's love and will. We pray so we will remain faithful and obedient to God's will and purposes in our sufferings. BUT, as it is often the case, in the confusion, extremity, and weakness that we experience in our suffering, **we do not know what to pray for as we ought**. We get discouraged. We wonder how we will survive. We don't know what to do. We wonder whether our present sufferings will even destroy us. But, **the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words**. Even when we cannot even think straight or keep our faith in perspective—when we cannot 'draw equal marks' between our present sufferings and our hope of the Glory of God, when we cannot articulate and express even what we are thinking and feeling, **the Holy Spirit prays for us**. The Spirit takes our inarticulate 'blubberings' before God and **intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words**—words and language that is in 'the language of God.' The Holy Spirit is God, and He shares the mind, will, and purposes of God. **And He who searches hearts [God] knows what is the mind of the Spirit [as He intercedes for us], because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.**

3 / And, in this intercession of the Spirit with God on our behalf, **the will of God is perfectly synced, accomplished, and fulfilled according to God's purpose** even in every experience and circumstance of our sufferings. **We know that! We are sure of that! God has promised that! "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose."** And what is God's purpose? It is many-fold, but it is all summed up in the next words of promise and God's purpose—and that is **to conform us to the image and likeness of Jesus Christ and ultimately bring us to His promised Glory! NOTE how this 'chain of Grace' ends in GLORY!**

[1] God **foreknew** us—that is, He set His love on us from before the creation of the world and **chose us in Christ** to belong to Him and be with Him in His Glory. [see John 17]

[2] God **predestined us to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers**. [see Hebrews 2.10-18]

[3] God **called us to faith, to believe in Christ** here in our earthly lifetime.

[4] God **justified us**—which is the over-arching message of this letter...

[5] And God **glorified us**. This is the Glory to which God purposed, chosen, predestinated, called, and justified us—and the Glory He has promised to share with us in the New Creation. And, even though, now in **the sufferings of this present time**, sometimes we can't see or even envision how such a Glory could ever come out of the brokenness and pain of our present experience, in **purpose of God**, it is already accomplished! It is as good as done!

VI | How then shall we respond to our present sufferings as we consider them through the lens and prism of God's sovereign purpose, promise, and love? We 'rejoice in the hope of the Glory of God'! [see chapter 5.1-5]

1 / So, how should we respond to **the sufferings of this present time** ... especially as we **consider** them in light of all of God's revealed **purpose** and promises? **What shall we say to these things?** If you count them, Paul gives us a rapid-fire series of six questions we may often ask. Read them and mark them. But, the sum of them all will take us to the heart of **the love of God—the love of Christ** [see ch 5.5, 8]. **"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"** The resounding answer is **"No one—nothing!"** Our experience is the constant baptism, immersion in all kinds of overwhelming sufferings: **"As it is written [Psalm 44.22], 'For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.'"** Verses 35-39 are all various experiences of **"the sufferings of this present time"** [v 18].

2 / And yet, **"NO! In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us!"** I'm not quite certainly sure what Paul means by **'more than conquerors'** unless he means for us to know and rejoice in the **hope** that, not only will we win all the battles in our **sufferings of this present age**, but we will also certainly, surely, rejoicingly **receive and enjoy all the promised joys of the Glory we will share with God 'in Christ'!** **"For I am sure that...nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord!"** *And you and I can be just as sure!*