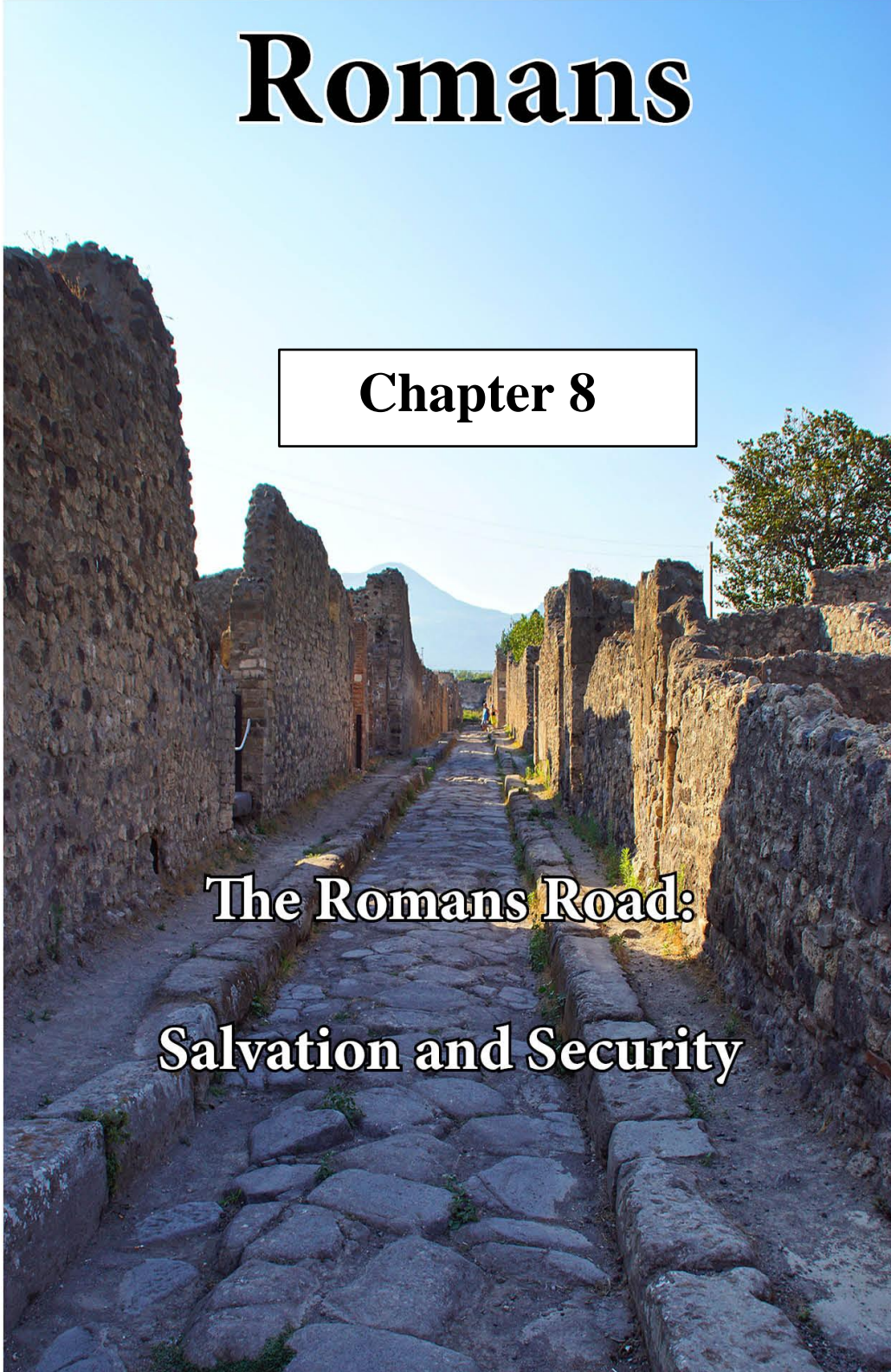


Journeys With God

Romans

Chapter 8

**The Romans Road:
Salvation and Security**



Romans

Chapter 8 Summary

Romans 8:1 - No Condemnation

Therefore, there is now no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus,

Truth to Learn

There is no condemnation declared against born-again Christians; instead, we are declared as righteous.

Behind the Words

This word “condemnation” is an interesting word. The Greek word is *katakrima*, which means, “the result of a legal judgment in which there is a condemnatory ruling against someone.”

Meaning Explained

In the last verse of chapter seven the Apostle Paul was thanking God for the fact that with his mind he serves the Law of God even though with the flesh he serves the law of sin. He has spent most of the past three chapters discussing the doctrine of justification by grace through faith and then describing the fact that sin has had dominion over us and describing the battle that exists between the sin nature and the intellect.

In this verse he proclaims the great truth about these past three chapters. Even though sin has dominion over us in the flesh, because we have been declared as righteous by God, “Therefore, there is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.” Even though our sin nature still causes us to fall and commit sin and, as Paul said back in **Romans 6:23**, “The wages of sin is death,” he also said in that same verse, “the gift of God is eternal life.” Because God declared us righteous and gave us eternal life, there is no condemnation on us.

Back in chapter four, Paul talked about the fact that righteousness was reckoned, or imputed, to us by grace. This reckoning, or crediting, is a legal term that means that righteousness is declared and placed in one’s account where righteousness did not exist before. Since we have been declared righteous, there can be no condemnatory ruling against us.

“Therefore, there is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.”

Some translations have “who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit” added to the end of this verse. This phrase is omitted in the best transcripts. It is possible that the scribe who copied this letter included this from the end of verse four. But, what if Paul did actually add this here as well as in verse four? If he did, then this is a statement of fact, not a condition. He is NOT saying that there is no condemnation to those “who are in Christ Jesus” on the condition that they “do not walk according to the flesh.” He is saying that a characteristic of those who are in Christ Jesus is the fact that they do not walk according to flesh but according to spirit. One of the signs of a true Christian is that they have a manner of life that is characterized by things of the spirit and one that is not characterized by fleshly things.

Application

I have had people ask me, “What do you think about Christians who get saved and then go back to living the same way they did before they got saved?” The only logical answer to this question, according to what Paul teaches us here and in verse four is, “They never really got saved!” Jesus, during his earthly ministry, taught his disciples, “**Even so every good tree brings forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruits, nor can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.**” **(Matthew 7:17, 18)**

What does your fruit say about you? Are you in Christ Jesus?

Romans 8:2 - His Faithful Spirit

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus set me free from the law of sin and death.

Truth to Learn

The Holy Spirit is continually working in Christians.

Behind the Words

This verse starts with “For,” a translation of the Greek article *gar*, which is “a causative particle expressing the reason for what has been before.” In other words, the expression that follows is an explanation as to why “there is now no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus.”

The word translated “in” is the Greek preposition *en*, which refers to “a fixed position in place or time,” but by implication here it means “instrumentality.” In other words, the law of the Spirit of life is brought about through the work of Christ.

“Set me free” is translated from *eleutheroō*, which means “to liberate from the power and punishment of a master.” It is expressed here in the aorist tense, indicating action that occurred at a point in time in the past. In other words, it was not a gradual act of liberation but one that occurred immediately. This liberation occurred the moment we accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Meaning Explained

Paul is explaining why there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. It is because, “the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus set me free from the law of sin and death.” The expression, “the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus,” refers not to a written law but a natural law as we discussed back in **Romans 7:21**. The Spirit of life mentioned in this verse refers to the Holy Spirit who brings life.

Paul is telling us that there is no condemnation against those of us who are saved because the natural law (supernatural law in this case) of the Holy Spirit, providing life through our faith in Jesus Christ, made us free from the control of sin and the death which results from that sin. We were set free from the law of sin and death at the moment we were saved.

It is because we believe God’s message about the saving work of Jesus Christ on the cross that God’s grace has been bestowed on us and the Holy Spirit has been given to us as a seal of our salvation. And it is the Holy Spirit who gives us both eternal life and the ability to overcome our own sin nature. Hence, we have free will to obey God or not. Before we were saved, we did not have this free will, we were slaves to sin.

Why, then was Paul so frustrated back in **Romans 7:15**? It is because having a free will does not mean that we always do what is right. It means that we have the choice to sin or not to sin, and when we choose to sin we are convicted by our conscience (and by the Holy Spirit) and we regret doing it. This sin that separates us from fellowship with God requires confession to restore that fellowship and to restore our peace. Unsaved people don’t have this free will; they are under the dominion of their sin nature without the ability to resist.

Application

It's easy to believe that because we have been declared righteous by God we can sin and not suffer the consequence of sin. However, the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin and prompts us to confess our sin. Thank you, Lord, for the freedom to obey and for the work of the Holy Spirit in us when we don't obey!

Romans 8:3 - Righteous Through Him

For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by having sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,

Truth to Learn

Jesus Christ perfectly kept the law, thus demonstrating His righteousness, and God grants us His righteousness through faith in His sacrificial death.

Behind the Words

The words “could not do” are translated from a single Greek word. It is *adunatos*, which is a compound word made up of the privative *a*, meaning “without” or “not” and *dunatos*, meaning “powerful, able, or capable.” Hence, *adunatos* means “without power” or “unable.”

“Weak” is from the verb *astheneō*, which is made up of the privative *a*, meaning “without” and *sthenos*, meaning “strength.” Thus, it means “to be without strength” or “to be weak.”

The Greek word *homoioōma* is translated here as “likeness.” This word is derived from *homos*, which means “one and the same.” *Homoioōma* means “having the same form.”

The word translated “condemned” is the Greek word *katakrino*, which is the verb form of a word we looked at just two verses back. It means “to proclaim a judgment of condemnation against someone or something.”

Meaning Explained

This is another potentially very confusing verse so let’s look at it one phrase at a time. “For what the Law could not do” is a reference to what Paul has said in the seventh chapter of this letter. The Law cannot produce righteousness in man. Why? “In that it was weak through the flesh” says that the reason the law could not produce righteousness is because man tried to produce righteousness through acts of the flesh. But the flesh is weak because of the sin nature and cannot satisfy the law; therefore, the law could not produce this righteousness.

But, what the Law could not do, Paul says God sent his son to do for us: “God did by having sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.” In other words, even though Christ took on human flesh, he did not take on sinful human flesh. He had the appearance of sinful flesh (that form which every member of the human race has), but He was not sinful human flesh. For emphasis, let me restate that this passage says that Christ took on human flesh, but he did not take on **sinful** human flesh.

God the Father sent Jesus in the **form** of sinful human flesh, “on account of sin;” that is, Christ came to earth and took on human flesh in order to deal with sin. He dealt with sin by living a sinless life that was then freely offered for sinful lives. Because he perfectly fulfilled the Law and committed no sin, He “condemned sin in the flesh.” In other words, in human flesh Jesus perfectly fulfilled the Law and therefore made a judgment of condemnation against sin.

Application

Paul has been teaching us that a person cannot be justified by trying to obey the law. We have a sin nature that causes us to sin, and with a single sin we lose the righteousness that perfectly keeping the law would have provided. As a result, God had to create a way for sinful man to receive His righteousness, which can only come by faith in the blood of Christ. Thank you, God, for giving me your righteousness through faith in the sacrifice of Your perfect Son.

Romans 8:4 - Fulfilled Through Him

that the righteous requirements of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Truth to Learn

The righteousness that God demands of us is fulfilled for us through the righteousness of Christ.

Behind the Words

The words “righteous requirements” are a translation of the Greek word *dikiōma*, which is from the verb *dikaioō*, meaning “to render as just, righteous, or innocent.” *Dikaiōma* refers to “an equitable deed” and by implication to “a decision or statute.”

“Fulfilled” is from the Greek word *plēroō*, which means “to fill-up completely” or “to make complete.” As it is used in this verse it means “to completely satisfy.”

The word “walk” is translated from *peripateō*, which is made up of *peri*, meaning “around” and *pateō*, meaning “to walk.” Hence, it literally means “to walk around.” Metaphorically, it refers to the manner in which we live our life.

Meaning Explained

In order to get the full impact of this verse we have to go back and join it with the second half of the previous:

For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by having sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirements of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

The reason that God sent His son was to fulfill the Law and to make a judgment against sin so that the righteousness of the Law might be completely satisfied in us.

But, how does Christ’s fulfilling the Law translate into the righteousness of the law being fulfilled in us? Back in **Romans 3:21-28** Paul talked about the righteousness that is imputed by grace upon all those who believe, and he concluded:

Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from works of law.

The only way that God can satisfy his own justice, which requires that sin be penalized (and we know that the wages of sin is death), is for someone who has perfectly fulfilled the righteousness of the Law to then offer His life as a substitution for ours. This is precisely what Christ did when he came in the “likeness of sinful flesh.” And, it is by faith that we receive the grace of God through which He credits Christ’s righteousness to our account. By faith we believe that Christ died to pay the penalty for our sins, and by grace God then imputes Christ’s righteousness to us. Hence, the righteousness of the Law is fulfilled in us.

The final phrase of this verse is a statement of fact, not a condition. It is a description of Christians, we who have received that grace and, therefore, walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Application

Let us demonstrate the righteousness that has been imputed unto us by living our lives characterized by things of the Spirit of God rather than the things of our flesh. After all, we have been bought with a price, the precious blood of the sinless Lamb of God!

Romans 8:5 - What Do You Think?

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.*

Truth to Learn

What we think about is demonstrated by our actions.

Behind the Words

The words “**who live**” come from a form of the Greek word *eimi*. This is the verb of existence or being (I am, you are, he or she is, etc.)

“**According to**” is the translation of the Greek word *kata*, which technically means “down” and is often used as an emphatic to intensify the meaning of another word. It is also used metaphorically, as it is here, to express the relation in which one thing stands with respect to another. In such a case it is translated as “in the manner of, according to, or characterized by.”

The phrase “**set their minds on**” is from *phroneō*, which means “to think, have a mindset, or be minded.” The activity represented by this word refers to our thought processes and it involves our will, our affections, and our conscience.

Meaning Explained

This verse is an explanation of the last part of the previous verse which said, “... **who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.**” That phrase is a repetition of what we saw in verse 1. In some of the oldest manuscripts, however, this phrase only exists in verse four and not in verse one, so some translations leave it out of verse one. It rightly belongs to verse four, however, and the current verse now explains it.

Paul said that we conduct our manner of life either “**according to our flesh**” or “**according to the Spirit.**” So, if we are “**walking according to the flesh,**” it means that we are walking through life in a manner that is characterized by the things of the flesh. If we are “**walking according to the Spirit,**” it means that we are walking through life in a manner that is characterized by things of the Spirit of God.

Notice, however, that Paul does not talk about “those who walk” in this verse, but “those who live.” A person’s **walk** is the outward evidence of how he or she **lives** his or her life. If we live according to the flesh, then we will walk according to the flesh. But, if we live a life controlled by the Spirit of God, then the way we act will also be controlled by the Spirit.

Now, by way of explaining that phrase further, Paul says that those who walk according to flesh “**set their minds on the things of flesh.**” That is, those who live according to flesh are continually thinking about fleshly things; their thoughts are about how to please self. Those who live according to the Spirit, however, are continually thinking about spiritual things; their thoughts are about how to please God.

Application

In what realm do you spend most of your time? Do you spend more time thinking about spiritual things and about how you can please God, or do you spend more time thinking about how you can please yourself? In other words, are you living according to the flesh or according to the Spirit? Ouch!

Let us all commit to spending more time thinking about spiritual things and less time thinking about our own desires!

Romans 8:6 - Guarding Our Peace

For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

Truth to Learn

Guarding our thoughts keeps us at peace with God.

Behind the Words

We saw in the previous verse that the verb translated “minds” is *phroneō*, which means “to think or have a mindset.” In the current verse Paul uses the word *phronema*, a noun form of the same word. Here it is translated “minded.” The Greek suffix *ma* on this word indicates that it is the result of one's thinking. Thus it refers to the condition of a person who is constantly thinking of such things.

The word translated “carnally” in the current verse is the same exact word (*sarx*) that was translated “flesh” in the previous verse. But, in the current verse it has the definite article, so it means, “the flesh.” Putting these two together we see that Paul is saying that “mindedness of the flesh is death.”

“Death” is from the Greek word *thanatos*, which is based on the verb *thaneskō*, meaning “to die.” *Thanatos* refers to physical death (the death of our physical bodies) as well as spiritual death (exclusion from the presence and favor of God). The base meaning of this word implies separation. Regarding physical death, it is the separation of the soul and spirit from the body. With respect to spiritual death is the separation of the soul and spirit from the presence and favor of God. In the current verse it indicates the separation of fellowship with God.

Meaning Explained

This verse is tightly coupled with the preceding and the following verses. Putting all three together we have:

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of flesh, but those *who live* according to the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace because the carnal mind is enmity toward God; for it is not submitted to the law of God, indeed it can't be.

What Paul is saying is that a mind that is constantly focused on the flesh, on self-gratification, the mind that is always “looking out for number one,” is dead. As we pointed out in “Behind the Words,” since death implies separation, the notion is that those who are fleshly minded are separated from God. But God has promised all believers, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you,” so what does Paul mean? The simplest way to understand this is to recognize that when we are acting fleshly we are separated from the fellowship of God who cannot tolerate the presence of sin, but we are not separated from the presence of God. Our fellowship is restored when we confess our sins.

The second half of this verse describes the state of the mind that is focused on the Spirit of God. He says “to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” In other words, the person who is focused on the things of God is characterized as not being separated from God, but in fellowship with Him and at peace. In the next verse Paul will explain why fleshly mindedness results in death.

Application

Let's all strive for fellowship with God and the peace that it produces by keeping our thoughts fixed on the things of God!

Romans 8:7 - Submission or Rebellion?

Because the carnal mind is enmity toward God; for it is not submitted to the law of God, indeed it can't be.

Truth to Learn

When we're controlled by our flesh, we're not submitted to God, we're in open rebellion to Him.

Behind the Words

This current verse starts off with the Greek word *dioti*, which is a compound word made up of *dia*, meaning "through" and *hoti*, meaning "that." So, literally it means, "through that" or "because of the fact that." In other words, this verse explains why it is true that "to be carnally minded is death."

The word translated "enmity" is the Greek word *echthra*, which means "the hatred and hostility openly displayed against one's enemy." It is most often translated as "enmity," although in **Galatians 5:20** it is translated as "hatred."

"Submitted" is from the Greek word *hupotassō*, which is made up of *hupo* (or *hypo*), meaning "under" and *tassō*, meaning "to arrange in an orderly manner" or "to rank." It is a military term meaning to place in rank under someone else's authority.

Meaning Explained

The current verse answers the first half of the previous verse:

For to be carnally minded is death

The reason, according to Paul, is:

Because the carnal mind is enmity toward God

The reason that being fleshly minded is death is because it is in open hostility to God. Therefore, it cannot be in submission to God or His law. When we place ourselves in a position of submission to another, we are by definition at peace with them and recognize their authority over us. When we refuse to be in submission, we rise up in revolt and are by definition in open hostility and rebellion against their authority. They are opposite ends of the spectrum and are mutually exclusive. That is, you can't be both in submission and in rebellion. You are either one or the other. In fact, Paul goes on to tell us that when we are being controlled by our flesh, we **cannot** place ourselves in submission to God. It's impossible!

When we are being carnally minded, when we are allowing our fleshly lusts to control our thoughts and actions, we are not being submissive to God and we are, in fact, in open rebellion to His will. When we are in open rebellion to God, we have separated ourselves from Him. This, by definition, means that we are dead to God; we have broken fellowship with Him and we are not at peace.

Application

Do you have those times when you feel lifeless and totally separated from God? That's the effect of sin. It breaks our fellowship with God. Were it not for the grace of God through the blood of Christ, we could never restore that fellowship. But because of what Christ did for us, we can come to the throne of grace, confessing our sins and having our fellowship restored because God has declared us righteous.

Do you feel lifeless and separated from God right now? Do you? Be honest with yourself!

If you do, get down on your knees and do something about it!

Romans 8:8 - Please God!

But those who are in the flesh are not able to please God.

Truth to Learn

Only those who are walking in the Spirit can please God.

Behind the Words

“Are not able” is translated from “*ou dounanti*.” *Ou* expresses absolute negation (there is a different word, *me*, which implies conditional or hypothetical negation). *Dounanti* is a form of *dounamai*, meaning “to be able” or “to have the power to do something.” In other words, those who are in the flesh do not have the ability or the power to please God.

The word “please” is from *areskō*, which is thought to be derived from an old verb *arō*, meaning “to fit, adapt, or please.” The notion of *areskō* is “to be content with” or “to soften one’s heart toward” someone else. Those who are in the flesh are not able to soften God’s heart toward themselves.

Meaning Explained

Paul now takes this argument one step further. He has just said that the person who is fleshly minded, the one who is preoccupied with and controlled by the desires of the flesh, is openly hostile toward God and is not subject to His laws. Therefore, He says, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Now we have to ask ourselves, “What does Paul mean by the expression, “in the flesh?” He is not talking about everyone who has a body of flesh. That would be all of us. He is talking about those who are fleshly minded. Their every waking moment is occupied with satisfying the desires and needs of the flesh. This is a description of unregenerate mankind, those who are not saved. We know this because in the following verse he will contrast them with the Roman Christians who are saved.

Paul is telling us that unsaved people, who are controlled by their own flesh, cannot possibly please God. It doesn’t matter how many “Hail Mary’s” they say, and it doesn’t matter how many good works they do “for God.” It doesn’t matter how often they pray or read their Bible. It doesn’t matter how many years they have been a member of a church or how regularly they attend the services. If they are not genuinely saved, it is not possible for them to please God, and they are, therefore, God’s enemies.

In the previous chapter Paul bemoaned the fact that he didn’t always do the things that please God. He told us that the law is spiritual but that he is carnal (fleshly). He then opened this chapter with:

Therefore, there is now no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus,

His point is that unsaved people are always controlled by their sin nature (their flesh) and are not able to please God. Those who are saved, however, can please God, but we don’t do it all the time. When we are walking “in the Spirit” we are pleasing to God, but when we are walking “in the flesh,” we are not pleasing to God.

Application

We should always strive to be pleasing to God, so our aim should be to walk in the spirit. Let's all recommit ourselves to spending more time walking in the Spirit and not in the flesh!

Romans 8:9 - Are You Sealed?

But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

Truth to Learn

If you are saved, you are sealed and your life should show it.

Behind the Words

“Dwells” is translated from the Greek verb *oikeō*, which means “to reside, to dwell, or to remain in a house.”

Meaning Explained

In verse eight Paul summarized the preceding three verses by stating, “those who are in the flesh cannot please God.” We mentioned in that verse that the expression, “those who are in the flesh,” refers to unregenerate people, that is, those who are unsaved; they are not Christians. Part of the reason for this conclusion is what Paul says in the current verse.

“But you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit.” This is a contrasting statement to the previous one indicating that those who are in the flesh cannot also be in the spirit. You are either one or the other. But how do we know who is in the flesh and who is in the spirit? Paul explains this in the next phrase. He says, “But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you.” Paul explains this in **Ephesians 1:13,14** where he says,

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.

Those who are saved are sealed with the Holy Spirit and He is our guarantee. This guarantee is a token given as a promise that a transaction will be completed. If for some reason the transaction is not completed, the guarantee is retained by the recipient. Hence, if God were not to grant us our inheritance at the end of the age as He promised, then He would have to leave the Holy Spirit (our guarantee) with us, thus causing light to be united with darkness, which He tells us in **2 Corinthians 6:14** cannot happen. Hence, once we are saved and have the Holy Spirit, we cannot lose that salvation! It is guaranteed!

What Paul tells us in today’s verse is that the one who has the Holy Spirit dwelling in him (or her) is not in the flesh; he (or she) is in the Spirit. Now, just to make sure he is understood, Paul then says, “Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.” In other words, if you don’t have the guarantee, you are not saved and do not belong to Christ.

Those who aren’t saved don’t have the Spirit of God and, therefore, are in the flesh. They are controlled by their sinful fleshly desires. However, those who are saved have the Holy Spirit living in them and should not be controlled by the flesh. Notice I said “should not.” As we have said before, Christians have a free will to obey God or not. Sometimes we let our flesh control us, causing us to sin. We have a choice: to be controlled by our flesh or to be submitted to God. The unsaved can’t make this choice. They do not

have a free will; they are bound by the law of sin to obey their sinful desires because they are “in the flesh.”

Challenge

So, I ask you again, are you in the flesh or are you in the Spirit? What would the people who know you best say? Would they say that there is clear evidence that you are “in the Spirit?”

Romans 8:10 - A Spirit of Righteousness

And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

Truth to Learn

Because we have been declared righteous, we are alive with a life that will last eternally.

Behind the Words

In order to fully understand the current verse we have to look at a Greek grammatical construction known as “Correlative (or paired) Conjunctions.” That is, a pair of conjunctions that have a correlation between each other. The conjunctions are *men* and *de*. They are used in the following manner, “*men* (followed by the first phrase) ... *de* (followed by the second phrase).” The effect of this construction is to say, “on the one hand (first phrase), but on the other hand (second phrase).” In today’s verse *men* is used before the phrase “the body *is* dead because of sin” and *de* is used before the phrase “the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness.”

The word translated “because of” is *dia*, which means “through.” As in English, this word has two meanings. The first is a preposition of motion; it implies motion through a place. The other is a preposition of instrumentality; it implies the instrument or cause of something. In this situation it can be translated as “by reason of” or “because of.” In today’s verse *dia* is used instrumentally.

As we have mentioned before, in Biblical Greek there are three types of conditional clauses. The first class condition assumes the condition to be true and can sometimes be translated as “since,” although not always. In today’s verse Paul is speaking to Christians and is assuming “Christ is in you.”

Meaning Explained

What Paul says in this verse is “**And if Christ is in you**, (assumed to be true) *on the one hand the body is dead because of sin, but on the other hand the spirit is alive because of righteousness.*” In other words, if Christ is in you, that is, if you are saved, then your body is technically dead because of your sinfulness, but because you have accepted Christ as Savior, through the grace of God (who has declared you to be righteousness), your spirit is alive and you will spend eternity in the presence of God because of that righteousness.

In the next verse Paul will explain further what he means when he says that our Spirit is alive.

What he doesn’t say, but clearly implies, is that if you aren’t saved (if you don’t have the Spirit of Christ dwelling in you) then your body is still dead because of sin. But, because you are a sinner and have not been declared righteous, you have no hope of spiritual life. You will have to pay the penalty for your own sins and you will enter the presence of the Almighty as an unrighteous sinner; you are spiritually dead (now and forever).

Application

If you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, then praise be to God that your entrance into His presence will not be just as a cleansed former sinner, but as an adopted son (or daughter) whom God has declared “righteous.”

This salvation that we hold so dear is not just our “get out of Hell free” card. It’s not just our “ticket into Heaven.” It is the undeserved privilege and honor of standing before our Holy God as one who has fulfilled all righteousness and one who possesses His life giving Spirit for all eternity.

Romans 8:11 - God's Irrevocable Promise

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.

Truth to Learn

God promises all Christians that they will be raised from the dead and given an immortal body.

Behind the Words

The word “raised” is from *egeirō*, which means “to rouse from sleep” or “to awaken.” In its usage here it refers to awakening from the dead.

“Give life” is from the Greek word *dzōopoieō*, which is made up of *dzōon*, meaning “a living thing” and *poieō*, meaning “to make.” Hence, *dzōopoieō* means “to make a living thing” or “to make alive.”

The word “mortal” is from *thnētos*, which is from *thnēskō*, meaning “to die.” *Thnētos* refers to something that is dead or subject to death.

Meaning Explained

This verse contains one of the great promises in the Bible. Paul starts off with, “But if the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you.” The first question we have to ask is, “Who raised Jesus from the dead?” Did He raise Himself, or did someone else do it, and if so, who was it? To answer this question let’s look at a few verses.

Having raised up His son Jesus, God sent Him first to you, blessing you in turning every one of you away from his iniquities. (**Acts 3:26**)

Paul, an apostle (not from men, nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead), (**Galatians 1:1**)

and to wait for His Son from the heavens (whom He raised from the dead), Jesus, who is delivering us from the wrath to come. (**1Thessalonians 1:10**)

It is obvious from these verses that it is God the Father who raised Jesus from the dead. Therefore, in the current verse Paul is talking about the Spirit of God the Father, who is none other than the Holy Spirit, the third person of the trinity. And Paul says that if the Holy Spirit dwells in you (remember that He has been given by God as a pledge, as a seal of the promise of redemption to all who are saved), then God the Father will also make your mortal body alive by this same Spirit who dwells in you. In other words, for all of us who are saved by His grace, God the Father has promised that just as He raised up Jesus, He will also make our dead bodies alive by his Holy Spirit.

For those of us who are alive when Jesus returns at the rapture, this means that our dead body will be changed “in a moment, in a twinkling of the eye” into an immortal body. If we have already passed from this earthly life, it means that our dead body will be awakened and made alive as an immortal body.

Application

If you believe you are a sinner and that Jesus died to pay the penalty of your sin, God promises that He will give you the same kind of immortal body that Jesus has right now! That's an eternal promise that can't be undone. Since the Spirit is our seal and our promise, we can't lose it no matter what we do. We have the Spirit of God and His promise of eternal life.

That's eternal security!

Romans 8:12 - Indebted to Whom?

Therefore, brothers, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.

Truth to Learn

We owe a debt, but not to our sin nature.

Behind the Words

“Therefore” is translated from the two Greek words, *ara oun*. The word *ara* is an inferential conjunction which indicates that the following phrase is an inference, a conclusion, drawn from the preceding thoughts. It is most often translated “therefore.” The other Greek word, *oun*, is also an inferential conjunction, but it is also used as a transitional conjunction, indicating that a new train of thought is on the way. It is sometimes translated as “then” or “now.” We could translate these two words as “So now” or “Therefore then.” The effect is to introduce a strong conclusion that the writer is emphasizing.

The word translated “brothers” is the plural form of *adelphos*. This is made up of *a*, indicating unity and *delphus*, meaning “the womb.” So, this word indicates someone who has come from the same mother. The word is used metaphorically throughout the New Testament to indicate those who have the same Heavenly Father. Paul uses this term in reference to Christians and Jews alike.

“Debtors” is from *opheiletēs*, which comes from the verb *opheilō*, meaning “to owe something to someone else.” Hence, *opheiletēs* refers to someone who owes something to someone else, that is, a debtor.

Meaning Explained

In the previous verse we talked how God promises those of us who are truly saved that He will give us the same kind of immortal body that Jesus Christ has right now. That’s part of eternal life, having an eternal body. It will be a body that will not know pain and will not grow old; a body far superior to the one that we now possess.

Now, he makes a very strong conclusion: since we will receive an immortal body, we have no reason to live as debtors to this mortal body. In other words, we should not treat this body as if we owe it anything. We should not satisfy the desires and cravings of this body because not only does it not own us, but it will be replaced by a much better body some day.

We should not live *kata sarka* or “according to the flesh.” You will remember that we talked a number of verses back about the fact that *kata*, means “according to” or “with respect to.” We should not conduct our lives in such a manner as to cater to our fleshly desires. We should, in fact, act as if we were dead when it comes to satisfying the desires of our flesh. That’s what Paul will tell us in the next verse.

Application

The next time one of those sinful fleshly desires begins to get you into trouble, remember that you are not required to obey it; you don’t owe it anything! In fact, we are debtors to someone else. We owe God a

great debt, our lives. We owed Him the penalty for our sins (death), but Jesus Christ paid that debt for us so we now have eternal life. Therefore, we owe Him a debt of gratitude for rescuing us. We owe Him our life!

How are you paying off that debt?

Romans 8:13 - Evidence of Faith

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.

Truth to Learn

Your actions indicate whether you are spiritually dead or alive.

Behind the Words

The words “**you will**” are from the Greek word *mellō*, which usually means “it is about to happen.” It is normally followed by a verb in the future infinitive form. However, in this verse it is followed by a verb in the present infinitive form. This makes the expression stronger than a future verb. It indicates a necessary consequence. Hence, we could translate this as “you are at the point of death” or “you **are** going to die.”

“**Put to death**” is from the verb *thanatoō*, meaning “to kill,” that is, “to take an active part in causing the death of something.” Paul is telling us that a person who habitually satisfies their sin nature will cause their own death.

The word “**deeds**” is from the Greek noun *praxis*, which is from the verb *prassō*, meaning “to practice,” that is, to perform an action over and over. Therefore, we see that the word “**deeds**” refers to habitual, repeated actions.

“**Body**” is from *sōma*, which refers to our physical body.

Meaning Explained

Let’s look at this one phrase at a time. Paul starts out with, “**For if you live according to the flesh.**” We have already talked about “**according to the flesh,**” meaning “satisfying the desires of the sin nature.” The end of this phrase is, “**you will die.**” It’s not a matter that you may die, but that you definitely will die. This is another indication that Paul is now talking about someone who is not saved. One of the characteristics of an unsaved person is that their actions are dictated by self, not by the Spirit of God, and he or she will suffer eternal death.

The second half of this verse is, “**but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.**” In other words, if we personally take an active part in putting to death the deeds of our body, we will have life. This is a characteristic of a Christian. As born again Christians, we live by the power of the Holy Spirit, and we will actively fight against and put to death the selfish deeds of our sin nature.

Remember back in verse ten Paul said that if Christ is in you, the body is dead but the spirit is alive. He is now saying that one way for you to tell if Christ is in you (if you are truly saved) is that you will not continually be living to satisfy your sin nature because the Holy Spirit is living in you. Through the Holy Spirit we are continually working to kill the fleshly practices that our body (influenced by our sin nature) wants to do. But, those who are not saved are continually letting their body and its fleshly desires have their way. As a result, they are destined to die and be eternally separated from God. That’s precisely what James meant when he wrote:

Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. (**James 2:18b**)

Application

So where do your actions say you will spend eternity? Do they say that you are destined to die eternally or that you will live eternally in God's presence as His adopted son or daughter?

Romans 8:14 - Heavenly Guide Service

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

Truth to Learn

The Spirit of God is our “life coach” and guide.

Behind the Words

The word translated “led” is *agō*, which means “to lead” or “to bring.” This is expressed here in the present tense and indicative mood. This can mean a single, one-time action in the present, but more often it refers to current, continual action. This is the sense in which it is used here. It is also expressed here in the passive voice indicating action that is being done to someone.

Meaning Explained

In chapter eight Paul talked about how a person who tries to obtain righteousness by obeying laws and rules will never achieve his or her objective. This is because the law actually causes us to sin. He then went on to proclaim his own frustration with the fact that even though he wants to do what is right all the time, he doesn’t always do it. He even proclaimed:

For the good that I determine to do, I do not do; but the evil I determine to not do, that I continually do. (**Romans 7:19**)

This tendency in all mankind is the result of our sin nature. Paul starts off the current chapter with the proclamation, “Therefore, there is now no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus,” And, in verse four, he describes a characteristic of those who are in Christ Jesus: “who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.” We who have been saved by the grace of God have been declared as righteous in God’s record book, so we are free from the penalty of our sin. We also have been given the Holy Spirit of God as our guarantee and as our guide. If we are saved, then we should be walking “according to the Spirit.”

In the current verse Paul says something very similar: “For as many (of us) as are being continually led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” We see, then, that this is another characteristic of a true child of God. If you are a son (or daughter) of God, then you are continually, every day, in the present, being led by His Spirit. The picture is of a guide who is leading the way through a wilderness, showing the proper paths to take so that the follower won’t get lost.

Note, though, that it is difficult to lead someone who won’t follow. And, it is difficult to follow someone with whom you have very little communication. In fact, the closer the relationship you have to the guide, the easier it is for the guide to direct you and the easier it is for you to hear and trust the advice of the guide. Sometimes the choices of paths are obvious and sometimes they aren’t. Sometimes, what appears to be the obvious path is not the way to go at all. That’s why we need a guide.

Application

We have a Guide who knows all, and He wants to lead us in the paths that will bring Him the most glory and praise.

Are you willing to follow your Guide? Do you talk to your Guide? Do you listen to Him and obey Him when He talks to you?

Are you daily being led by the Holy Spirit of God?

Romans 8:15 - Blessed Adoption

For you did not receive a spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received a Spirit of adoption by which we cry, "Abba, Father."

Truth to Learn

Christians have been adopted into God's loving family forever!

Behind the Words

"Bondage" is from the Greek word *douleia*, which is derived from the verb *douleuō*, meaning "to be a slave" or "to serve." This, in turn, is derived from the noun *doulos*, meaning "a slave, one who is in a permanent relation of servitude to another, his will being altogether consumed in the will of the owner." So, *douleia* refers to the condition of being a slave, or being in bondage.

The word "abba" is a transliteration; it is brought over from the original language letter for letter, or sound for sound. This is an Aramaic word that means, "father" as a term of endearment, similar to how we might call our earthly father "dad," "daddy," or "papa."

"Adoption" is from *huiothesia*, which is made up of *huios*, meaning "a son" and a form of *tithēmi*, meaning "to place." Hence, *huiothesia* refers to a son who has been placed in another family. According to the Jewish laws, an adopted child could not be disinherited; it was a permanent placement.

Meaning Explained

In the previous two chapters Paul spent considerable time showing that before we were saved, we were slaves to sin and the condemnation of the Law. In this chapter he has been showing us that we are free from the bondage of the Law and slavery to sin. We who are saved have a free will to sin or not to sin. In other words, we are not forced to sin due to our being ruled by our sin nature. Instead, we are free to resist that temptation to sin. The reason for this freedom is shown to us in the current verse. The Spirit that we have dwelling in us (according to verse 11) is the Spirit of God. What Paul now tells us is that this Spirit is not a Spirit of bondage. Paul has been showing us throughout this letter that there are two states of being: bondage and submission. Bondage implies a condition that is forced on us, whereas submission is a condition we choose. If we are not saved, we walk according to the flesh and we are under bondage to sin. If, on the other hand, we walk according to the Spirit it is because we are saved and have chosen to submit ourselves to God. The Holy Spirit does not hold us in bondage against our will; we received the Spirit because we willingly submitted ourselves to God.

Now for another of the most precious truths of the New Testament! The Spirit that we have received, the Holy Spirit of God, is one of adoption. In other words, when we accepted the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as payment for our sins, we also willingly submitted ourselves to His Lordship (He is our master now, our sin nature is no longer our master). In response to this we were adopted by God as His child. And, as a seal of that adoption He gave us the Holy Spirit. Once God has adopted us, He cannot un-adopt us because of that sealing Spirit. He is our Spirit of adoption and because of this we can refer to God as our Father, and we can call him papa or daddy.

One of the primary benefits of our adoption by God is that we now can have a close personal relationship with our Heavenly Father because He has chosen to adopt us.

Application

Do you experience that close personal relationship with your Heavenly Father? Do you converse with Him regularly? Do you share your deepest desires and fears with Him? Do you listen to his wise advice? Or ... is He more of a stranger than “daddy?”

Romans 8:16 - The Holy Witness

The Spirit Himself witnesses together with our spirit that we are children of God,

Truth to Learn

The Holy Spirit is the true witness of our salvation.

Behind the Words

The words “witnesses together” is from *summartureō*, which is made up of *sun*, meaning “together” or “with” and *martureō*, which means “to testify” or “to give witness.” Hence *summartureō* means “to testify jointly” or “to give witness together.”

Meaning Explained

In the previous verse we were told that we who are saved have the Spirit of adoption and because of this adoption we can call God the Father our “Daddy.” In the secular world today it is often said that we are all brothers and sisters because all people are God’s children. According to the Bible this is not true. Also, there are many supposed Christians who claim that God is their father when He is not. This was also true in Jesus’ day. As He taught in the temple, this is what He had to say to those who claimed to be believing Jews:

Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I came forth from God; for I have not come of Myself, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to hear My word. You are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father you want to do. (John 8:42-44a)

So, if there were so many deceived ones then, and many today who think that God is their Father, how can we tell for sure that we are saved and God is our Father? The current verse tells us how. We know that we are saved, that we have been adopted by God the Father, because He has given the Holy Spirit exclusively to His children. The Spirit is not only our seal and the guarantee of our inheritance; He is also the only true witness of our salvation and adoption by God. That’s what the current verse says.

So exactly how does the Holy Spirit “witness together with our spirit?” The Holy Spirit witness together with our spirit in those still, quiet moments, when we sense the peace that only He can give. A peace that passes all understanding, a peace that exists in the midst of trials and tribulation. It is that calm assurance that we have submitted to the Father and we have committed to do His will above our own. We have accepted His grace in the form of the blood of Christ because we believe that Jesus died to pay for our sins, and He rose again from the grave. It’s that assurance that we are saved! It’s the Spirit’s witness.

Application

Do you know for sure that you are saved? Have you experienced the Holy Spirit bearing witness with your spirit?

If so, you are a genuine, guaranteed child of God. If not, then perhaps it's time to fall on your knees before the God of all creation, confessing your sinfulness, and asking Him for salvation, submitting yourself to your Lord and Savior:

Because if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth one confesses unto salvation. (**Romans 10:9, 10**)

Romans 8:17 - Suffering Heirs

and if children, also heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer together with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together.

Truth to Learn

We are God's heirs and we will suffer for it.

Behind the Words

The word translated “heirs” is the Greek word *klēronomos*, which means “one who is receiving an inheritance.”

“if indeed” is translated from the Greek word *eiper*, which carries with it the notion of “if it is so, and it probably is.” By implication it means “since.” So, Paul is saying “since we suffer together ...”

The word translated “glorified together” is *sundoxadzō*, which is made up of *sun*, meaning “together” and *doxadzō*, meaning “to give honor” or “to make glorious.” It is expressed in the passive voice indicating that it will be done to us.

Meaning Explained

In the previous verse we saw that it is the Spirit of God who gives witness to our spirit that we are the children of God (if we have been saved). Now Paul goes on to say that if we are children of God (as confirmed by the Holy Spirit of God living in us), then we are heirs.

Note here that only legitimate children can be heirs, and under the Jewish laws of the times adopted children were legitimate children. In fact, an adopted child could not be disowned or dis-inherited the way a natural born child could be. So the fact that we are adopted children means that our inheritance is guaranteed!

So what are we inheriting? Some say we are inheriting heaven, but that's not all we will inherit. This verse says we are heirs (inheritors) of God himself. That is not to say that we will become gods as some religions believe. It simply means that we are heirs of the eternity of God. Just as Jesus (the man) received an eternal body and shares in eternal fellowship with God the Father, we also will receive an eternal body as God's heirs and will share eternal fellowship with Him.

Paul now throws a bit of a wrinkle in here. He says “since we suffer together with Him, we also may be glorified together (with him).” This should be both a challenge and an encouragement to us all. It says that we will suffer as Christians! But it also says that Jesus Christ suffers with us when we suffer. Here is another verse from Paul's second letter to Timothy that talks about that suffering:

Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. (2Timothy 3:12)

We should be prepared to suffer because we will if we are His children and we are pursuing a godly life. But when we do, He is right there with us. He knows the most intimate details of the trials that we're going through because He is suffering with us.

Application

If you are a Christian then you have been legally adopted into God's family, and you are an heir to all that God has to offer. Because you are in His family, however, his enemies will hate you like they hate Him and you will suffer for it. Are you ready for that? Consider this: He suffered to pay for your sins. Are you willing to suffer for Him?

Romans 8:18 - Suffering for Glory

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory about to be revealed in us.

Truth to Learn

Our future glory is far greater than our current suffering.

Behind the Words

The expression “I consider” is from the Greek word *logizomai*, meaning “to count, to impute, to estimate, or to reckon.”

“Sufferings” is translated from *pathēma*, a noun form of the verb *paschō*, meaning “to feel strong emotion or sensation, to suffer, or to experience.” It is most often used to refer to painful suffering either physically or emotionally.

The words “not worthy” are translated from *ouk axia*. As we have discussed before, *ouk* refers to the absolute negative. The word *axia* is a form of *axios* which is a reference to two items placed on a balance scales which are of comparable weight, causing the scales to balance perfectly. This perfect balance indicates the relative worth of one of the items on the scales. Hence, the word has come to refer to the comparable worth of an item.

The word “revealed” is from *apokaluptō*. This is a compound word made up of *apo*, meaning “from or away from” and *kaluptō*, meaning “to cover” or “to conceal.” Thus, we see that *apokaluptō* means “to uncover” or “to reveal.” This is the word that is translated “Revelation” as the name of the last book in the New Testament.

Meaning Explained

In the previous verse Paul told us that since we are joint heirs with Christ, as members of God’s family, we can also expect to suffer with Him. Whenever we suffer because of being Christians, we are suffering with Christ. We are sharing in the pain of rejection, misunderstanding, betrayal, false accusation, persecution, and physical torture that Christ knew before and during his crucifixion.

But Paul now gives us a glimmer of hope that we can hang on to whenever we are going through those times of suffering. He starts off with the expression, “For I consider.” It is Paul’s belief that whatever sufferings we might have to go through in this life, they are of little value or consequence when compared with the incredible glory that we will receive in Heaven.

In verse seventeen Paul said that if we suffer with Christ, we may also be glorified with Him. Well, now Paul says that the present suffering that we are going through for Christ’s sake is in no way comparable to that glory that we are going to share with and from Christ. This is something that we should all hold dear to our hearts.

Application

The next time you feel like you are being persecuted, mistreated, or attacked because you are a witness for Christ, remember that you are suffering for His sake, and some day you will be glorified with Him and for His sake. No matter how much physical pain or mental anguish you may have to endure now, it is temporary and insignificant compared to the glory He will give to you for eternity.

It just makes the suffering a little more bearable now, doesn't it?

Romans 8:19 - Eagerly Anticipated Revelation

For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.

Truth to Learn

All of God's physical creation is anticipating the glory that we will receive one day from our Heavenly Father.

Behind the Words

The words translated, “earnest expectation” are translated from the Greek word *apokaradokia*. This is a double compound word made up of *apo*, meaning “from” or “before,” *kara*, meaning “the head,” and a form of *dokeō*, meaning “to think, suppose, or watch.” Putting these all together we see that it literally means “to watch or look forward with the head.” Thus we can see why this word has the meaning of “intense anticipation” as one would strain the neck forward looking intently into the distance expecting to see something very soon.

“Creation” is a translation of the Greek word *ktisis*. This word means “a thing created,” but it can be taken to mean a single created thing (creature) or the singular collection of all created things (creation).

The word translated “revealing” is *apokalupsis*. This is a noun form of *apokaluptō*, which we looked at in yesterday's verse. It refers to that thing which is “uncovered” or “revealed.”

Meaning Explained

Here, once again, we have a verse of Scripture that has been highly debated for centuries. The controversy revolves primarily around the word translated “creation.” Without going into an extensive exposition of this word, let me simply state that I'm in the camp of those who believe it refers to all of creation (apart from mankind and angelic creatures). Others who believe that it refers to Christians as “a created thing” (for we are a “new creation” according to **2Corinthians 5:17** and **Galatians 6:15**) have a valid a reason to believe that as the correct interpretation. However, Paul uses this word repeatedly in this and the following few verses, and in verse twenty-two he refers to “the whole creation,” literally “all the creation (singular).” Therefore, since he uses the same word throughout and makes no obvious distinction, it is reasonable to assume that he uses the term the same in all of these verses.

One could reasonably ask why this would refer to all of creation apart from mankind and angelic creatures rather than all of creation including mankind and angelic beings. Much of mankind (those who are not saved) clearly is not eagerly waiting for the revealing of the sons of God, and angelic beings were not subjected to futility as declared in the next verse.

In the previous verse Paul stated that our present sufferings are nothing compared to the glory that will be revealed in us some day (when our salvation is consummated and we receive our glorified bodies). In this verse I believe he is saying that all of physical creation is eagerly anticipating this revealing of the true sons of God in our revealed glory.

Application

If all of creation is figuratively straining its neck in eager anticipation of the revelation of the glorified sons of God, how much more should we be eagerly anticipating it, we who will receive that glory. When we Christians suffer for our witness, we need to keep in mind that we will receive such marvelous glory from our Heavenly Father that the revelation of that glory is eagerly anticipated by all of creation. That's something to think about!

Romans 8:20 - Imperishable Expectation

For the creation was not voluntarily subjected to futility, but because of Him who subjected it in hope;

Truth to Learn

We live within perishable bodies in a dying and decaying world, but some day God will make all things imperishable.

Behind the Words

The word translated “subjected” is the Greek word *hupotassō*, which we have looked at before. It is a military term meaning to place in order (or rank) under another. It is often translated as “submit.”

“Futility” is translated from the Greek word *mataiotēs*, which is a form of *mataios*, meaning “without purpose, fruitless, aimless or empty.” It refers to “labor which is done with no purpose in mind” or, as is probably the meaning that Paul intended here, “a perishable and decaying condition.”

The word translated “voluntarily” is *hekōn*, which means “voluntarily, willingly, or without coercion.”

“Hope” is another word which we looked at back in chapter five. It comes from the Greek word *elpis*, which means “hope” or “anticipation.” In English when we think of “hope,” we think of desiring something but not really expecting it to happen, or at best, thinking that there is a chance of it happening. This Greek word, however, means, “the desire of something with the full expectation that it **will** happen.” It is more than just simple hope, it is expectant hope. For this reason, this word is often translated as “faith.”

Meaning Explained

When Paul says that creation was “not voluntarily subjected to futility” he is saying that it was placed in a state or condition where it is perishable and decaying, and that this condition was imposed on creation; it wasn’t voluntary. The subjection of all creation to a state of perishableness and continual decay was imposed by the only one who could impose it: God. This very likely is referring to the curse that God placed on the ground when Adam and Eve sinned:

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. (**Genesis 3:17-18**)

This subjection of all of creation as a result of Adam’s sin was done by God with the promise that someday there would be a Redeemer who would conquer death and sin and who would restore all of creation to its former condition. I believe that is what Paul is referring to in the second half of this verse.

Paul will continue this thought in the next verse.

Application

The beauty of this verse is the promise of hope. No matter what happens to us, we always have the hope of God's eventual triumph over evil, and we will share in that triumph with Him! And, even though we now exist in a perishable body in a dying and decaying world, we have expectant hope that God will honor his faithful children with a glorious body and a glorious creation, neither of which will ever decay or perish again.

Romans 8:21 - Curse Begone

Because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption unto the glorious freedom of the children of God.

Truth to Learn

The curse on God's creation will be lifted when we are glorified as the children of God.

Behind the Words

“Delivered” is translated from *eleutheroō*, which is the verb form of the noun *eleutheros*, meaning “free to move about, unrestrained, or independent.”

The word “corruption” is from *phthora*, which refers to “decay” or “spoiling.”

“Into” is from the Greek word *eis*. This preposition is most often translated “into” but it can have a lot of nuance translations as well. When this word is used in relation to time, it can be translated as “unto” or as “in expectation of.” This is very likely the use of the word in today's verse.

Meaning Explained

We recently learned that the whole of creation was placed in a state or condition where it is not fully useful; it is perishable, and it is decaying. We also learned that God subjected creation in hope. This hope is explained in today's verse.

Paul tells us that the reason creation was subjected “in hope” is because creation will be set free from this bondage of decay at the glorious freedom of the children of God. In other words, when God completes the final judgment and we who are saved are all given our eternal bodies, all of creation will also be freed from the bondage of corruption and it will be re-created. Here's how the Apostle John described it in the book of Revelation:

Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." (**Revelation 21:1-5a**)

I am eagerly looking forward to that day when all sin and all sinners will have been judged and the current heavens and earth are no more, when the new heavens and the new earth have been created and we will spend eternity in peace and joy (in **Matthew 25:21, 23** it's called *the joy of the Lord*). There, in God's new creation which will have been freed from the bondage of decay, we will be serving and praising God eternally, for He is worthy!

Application

When you see corruption and decay all around, don't despair. Some day in the not too distant future God will give His children glorified bodies, and He will recreate the heavens and earth as a perfect place for us to serve Him!

Romans 8:22 - Wait For It ...

For we know that the whole creation groans together and is in pain together until now.

Truth to Learn

All of creation eagerly awaits the end of time when they will be made anew.

Behind the Words

The word translated “groans together” is *sustenadzō*, which is a compound word made up of “*sun*” meaning “together” and *stenadzō*, which means “to groan or to sigh.” Thus we see it means “to groan together” or “to sigh together.”

“Is in pain together” is also from a single Greek word, *sunōdinō*. This is also a compound word. It is made up of *sun*, meaning “together” and a form of *ōdinō*, which means “to be in pain as a woman who is in the process of giving birth.” Therefore, this word means “to be in intense pain together.”

This is the only place in the entire New Testament that these two words appear. Notice that both of these verbs contain *sun*. Hence, we could translate this verse as, “For we know that all creation groans together and is in labor pains together until now.”

Meaning Explained

Back in verse nineteen we talked about whether *ktisis* referred to a single creature or to creation as a single collection of created things. The current verse gives us evidence that it refers to all of the visible creation. First, the entire flow of these few verses makes sense if the word *ktisis* is referring to the same thing or collection of things throughout. Secondly, the fact that both of the verbs we talked about above are in the third person singular and yet are done “together” implies that *ktisis* refers to a collection of created things rather than a single created thing.

With that under our belt, we can see that Paul is probably talking metaphorically about how all of the visible creation is waiting to be delivered from the bondage of corruption as we talked about in the previous verse. And why do I think Paul is being metaphorical? Because, just as I started out this paragraph with a metaphor (none of us really put the first two paragraphs under our belt), I believe that creation doesn't really feel pain, nor is it about to give birth. However, it is quite possible that all of creation is groaning, or sighing.

Paul is saying that all of creation is eagerly anticipating the revelation of the sons of God because it (creation) has been placed in a condition where it is not fully useful and is decaying due to the sin of man. In verse twenty-one Paul told us that creation will be set free from the bondage of decay and corruption. All creation is now in a state of travail or painful waiting until sin is dealt with and all is recreated in the new heavens and the new earth. The new heavens and new earth will be free from decay and will no longer be groaning or sighing.

Application

The next time you hear a tree creak from the wind blowing through it or hear of an earthquake, a massive storm, or a tidal wave, remember that all of creation is groaning and in pain until the consummation of time, waiting for our salvation to be completed and for all things to be made perfectly new.

Romans 8:23 - Groaning in Anticipation

And, not only *that*, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly expecting adoption, the redemption of our body.

Truth to Learn

We also groan, waiting for our redemption and adoption.

Behind the Words

The Greek word translated “firstfruits” is *aparchē*, which is made up of *apo*, meaning “from” and a form of *archomai*, meaning “to begin.” This word refers to the first ripe fruit of the season.

“Redemption” is from the Greek word *apolutrōsis*, which is made up of *apo*, meaning “from” and *lutroō*, meaning “to bring forward a ransom.” Thus, *apolutrōsis* means “to release a captive upon receipt of a ransom.”

Meaning Explained

Going back once again to our discussion in verse 19 about the Greek word *ktisis*, which is translated either as “creature” or “creation,” we mentioned that some believe it refers to Christians as a whole, since the Bible in **2Corinthians 5:17** refers to us as “a new creation.” The current verse is one reason why this may not be the intended interpretation. Paul has just said that “all of creation” or “the whole creation” groans and is in pain. In the current verse, Paul now says “Not only that, but we also ... we ourselves groan within ourselves.” He even clarifies the “we” by saying that we are the ones “who have the firstfruits of the Spirit... waiting for the adoption...” This expression clearly refers to saved Christians. But, if *ktisis* was referring to saved Christians, then Paul would not say that we Christians **also** groan ... Hence, it appears that *ktisis* in the previous verse refers to all of the visible creation apart from mankind.

Next we have to ask ourselves, “What does Paul mean by, “we who have the firstfruits the Spirit?” There are those who believe that since Paul is talking to members of the early church, he means that they were the first ones who received the Holy Spirit; they had received “the firstfruits of the Spirit.” However, if you look at passages in the Old Testament that refer to the “firstfruits” offerings (**Deuteronomy 26:2; Exodus 23:19; and Numbers 18:13**, for example) you will see that the firstfruits were a pledge of what was to come later. Thus, they were a sacrifice that required faith to offer, believing that the full harvest would come later. That is precisely one of the images we have of the Holy Spirit in our lives. He is a pledge that the fullness of salvation, our adoption into God’s family, the redemption and recreation of our bodies, will come to us at the consummation of the last days.

Application

We born again Christians also groan within ourselves because we are eagerly awaiting the full adoption and the completion of our salvation. In other words, we are eagerly awaiting our redemption, our final

release from the bondage of sin which will end all the pain and suffering which we endure in this earthly life. Next time you groan as a result of the physical or mental pain of being a Christian, remember the day of our redemption is coming soon.

Romans 8:24 - Safe and Secure

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?

Truth to Learn

Your salvation is as secure as God's promise.

Behind the Words

The word translated “**saved**” is *sōdzō*, which means, “to save, deliver, or make whole, or to preserve safe from danger, loss, or destruction.” This verb is expressed in the aorist tense which implies past, punctiliar action, that is, action that took place at a single point in time in the past, not continuous action. This tells us that salvation is not a process, but a single event.

“**Hope**” is translated from the word *elpis*, which means, “an earnest desire, and the expectation of obtaining the object of that desire.” It is not an uncertainty that we hope will come to pass, it is with a clear expectation that it will happen.

Meaning Explained

As we mentioned in the previous verse, the Holy Spirit was given to us as a kind of “**firstfruits**” offering. That is, He is God's promise that our salvation and our adoption will be consummated. Paul now adds some explanation to that idea. He says that we are saved in hope. There are two possible interpretations of this. These two interpretations revolve around the word translated “**saved**” which we talked about above in **Behind the Words**. If you interpret the word to mean “to preserve from danger,” then the beginning of this verse could be interpreted to mean that we are being preserved from danger by our hope of our future glory. That's how some interpret this verse.

The other interpretation, which is more fully supported by the Greek text, is that we were saved (at a single point in time in the past) in light of an earnest desire and expectation that this salvation will be consummated at some time in the future.

The point is this; Paul has been talking about all of creation groaning in pain in anticipation of our adoption as sons by God and the final redemption of our body. He is now saying that our salvation, which legally has already taken place, is really an event in the future to which we look with longing, fully expecting it to happen.

Now let me say that Paul is NOT saying that we are unsure of our salvation and “hope” that it will happen. That use of the word “hope” is contrary to the meaning of the Greek word. When we were saved (at a single point in time in the past) we were given the Holy Spirit as a seal and a promise (**Ephesians 1:13, 14**) that God will consummate that salvation at some point in time in the future. In other words, we cannot get un-saved! It is not possible because we couldn't give God His Holy Spirit back even if we wanted to. The giving of the Holy Spirit is an action initiated by God, not by you or me. Since He did the giving, only He could do the taking and that would mean God's promise is worthless.

Application

Do you live in fear that you might lose your salvation if you're not careful? Paul makes it pretty clear that it can't happen. Your salvation is as secure as God's promise and there's nothing more secure than that!

Romans 8:25 - Patience and Perseverance

But if we hope for what we do not see, through patience we eagerly wait for it.

Truth to Learn

We patiently endure our trials through faith in God's promise.

Behind the Words

The words “eagerly wait for” are translated from the Greek word *apekdechomai*. This is a double compound word made up of *apo*, meaning “from” but used here as an intensifier, *ek* which means “out” or “out of,” and *dechomai*, which means “to receive.” Hence, *apokdechomai* means “to eagerly or earnestly expect that something is going to be received.”

“Patience” is from *hupomonē*, which is made up of *hupo* (or *hypo*), meaning “under or beneath” and a form of *menō*, which means “to stay or to remain.” It is a picture of a beast of burden who, when loaded with a heavy burden, remains under the load. That is, he perseveres under the load with patience.

Meaning Explained

In yesterday's verse we spoke about the word “hope” being not just an earnest desire but also the expectation that the object of the desire will come to pass. Paul said that our salvation, which in God's record book has already taken place, is manifest to us with the full expectation that it will be consummated at the end of these last times. But he also makes another statement about this salvation in hope. It is not seen and it is not fully obtained now. If we have something that we can see and touch, then there is no hope, or expectation of it because it is already here.

Now allow me to open up the word *elpis* a little more. It is often translated as “hope,” but it is also frequently translated as “faith.” In the first part of the previous verse Paul said that “we are saved by (or in) faith (hope).” In **Ephesians 2:8** Paul said “For by grace you are saved through faith.” It is this faith, this hope, this belief that God will do what he promised He would do at the end of the age that allows us to persevere. Faith is the instrument as well as evidence of our salvation.

We have to accept God's promise on faith alone, because we don't have visible, concrete proof of it right now. All we have is the promise and the seal of that promise in the form of the Holy Spirit living in us, and even He (the Holy Spirit) is unseen and untouchable for now.

In today's verse Paul says that if we have faith (hope) in God's promise, then we can eagerly wait for it with patience, knowing in our innermost parts that God will do for us just as He promised. There are some today who insist on concrete proof for everything. They will never be saved because we are saved through faith, not through proof. That's why we as Christians often say that “believing is seeing,” not “seeing is believing.”

Application

In verse eighteen Paul said our current sufferings are not even worthy of comparison to the glory that will be revealed in us. Now he has shown us that through genuine faith we can endure these sufferings because we have faith that it will be over some day and we will receive the richest blessings of God when our salvation is consummated. I think it's time for a prayer of thanksgiving, don't you?

Romans 8:26 - Our Prayer Partner

In the same way the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Truth to Learn

The Holy Spirit knows when we don't know what or how to pray and takes over for us, praying to the Father on our behalf.

Behind the Words

The Greek word translated “helps” is *sunantilambanomai*, which is a double compound word made up of *sun*, meaning “together,” *anti*, meaning “against” or “mutually,” and a form of *lambanō*, which means “to take, or to hold.” Literally, this means “to take hold of another mutually as by the hand,” that is “to grasp hands with someone so as to keep them from falling.”

The word translated “weaknesses” is *astheneia*, which literally means “without strength” but by application means “weakness or sickness.” In the context of these verses we would have to conclude that it refers to weakness rather than sickness.

“Intercession” is the Greek word *huperentugchanō*, which is made up of “*huper*” meaning “over” or “on behalf of” and *entugchanō* meaning “to turn to” or “to appeal.” This is a legal term used to express what an attorney does when speaking in behalf of the client. As a legal representative, the attorney speaks in place of and with the authority of the client. The attorney, in fact, becomes the legal voice of his or her client.

Meaning Explained

You will recall that we're talking about Christians enduring suffering during this lifetime. Paul has just said that it is our faith, the hope of future glory, which makes it possible for us to endure these sufferings. He also told us back in verse nine that the Holy Spirit dwells in us and he said that we should live by and be led by the Spirit.

We have all suffered at times because of our faith. Sometimes this suffering is so deep that we don't know how we will ever recover. And often in those times of suffering we don't even have the strength of faith to be able to pray or we don't know how to pray about the situation. We may be so deep in the pit of despair that all we can do is cry out to God, “Help me, God, please!” Paul tells us that in those times of weakness, whether it is physical or spiritual, the Holy Spirit of God helps us.

He starts off this verse with, “In the same way.” Now we have to ask ourselves, “In the same way as what?” In order to answer this question we have to go back to verse twenty-three. There Paul was talking about those of us who have the Spirit of God in us groaning under our suffering until we receive our adoption and the redemption of our bodies.

Now he is telling us that in those times of suffering when we are too weak to pray (physically or spiritually), or when we are in such depression or dejection that we don't know how to pray, the Holy Spirit steps in, taking our hand, and speaks to the Father for us in a manner that is unspeakable or

unutterable for us. When we are groaning in weakness not knowing what to do the Spirit groans and speaks for us.

Application

What a blessed promise! Have you had those times when you didn't know what or how to pray? When we are in that pit of doubt and despair, without us even asking Him, the Holy Spirit steps-in and takes over for us. Who could ask for a better prayer partner when we need it the most?

Romans 8:27 - Holy Intercessor

Now He who is searching the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to *the will of God*.

Truth to Learn

The Holy Spirit knows what to say and how to say it when He prays to the Father for us.

Behind the Words

The word translated “**searching**” is the Greek verb *ereunaō*, which means “to investigate, explore, or make inquiry.”

“**Mind**” is translated from *phronema*, a derivative of the verb *phroneō*, meaning “to think or to have a mind set.” Hence, *phronema* means “*the thinking or mindset*” that is to say “*the tendency or inclination of the mind*.”

“Intercedes” is translated from the Greek word *enthugchanō*. We looked at a form of this word in yesterday’s verse. It is a compound word made up of *en*, meaning “in” and *thugchanō*, which literally means “to strike an opponent with a weapon.” When these two words are combined, however, the word has the meaning of “to fall in with or in behalf of another” or “to make a defense or appeal with another person.”

The word translated “**saints**” is the Greek word *hagios*, which means “a holy one” or “sanctified (set-apart) one.” Contrary to the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, you don’t have to be canonized in order to be a saint. Anyone who has accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior has been justified and cleansed of all sins, has been set-apart (sanctified) by God as His own, and is referred to as a “saint” in the New Testament.

Meaning Explained

In the previous verse Paul told us that the Spirit of God within us prays for us when we are spiritually or physically weak. There are many who believe that this verse applies to us any time we are praying since, compared to God, we are always weak. But whether it is in those times when we think we are weak or at all times since we are spiritually weak compared to Him, the Holy Spirit is our perfect prayer partner.

Notice that the words “the will of” are in italics in our translation. We have inserted these words to make more sense to us; there are no equivalent words in the Greek text. A more literal translation of the last phrase of the current verse would be: “**because He makes intercession for the saints according to God.**” That is to say, the intercessory work of the Holy Spirit is according to what God has determined, not according to our wants or desires.

When we put this all together we see why the Holy Spirit is such a perfect prayer partner. It is because He (God, who is the one who searches our hearts and knows us even better than we know ourselves) also knows what His own thinking is and, therefore, can speak directly to the Father for us in the most effective way and in perfect keeping with the will and purpose of God the Father.

Application

I have heard Christians say, “I’m not very good at praying.” What Paul is telling us is that we don’t have to be. In **Phillipians 4:6** he tells us, “let your requests be made known to God.” We don’t have to use a lot of theological words, with an occasional “Thee” and “Thou” sprinkled in. We simply have to open our hearts and talk directly to God. Then, the Holy Spirit will be our interpreter, our representative, our legal mouthpiece to the Father.

Romans 8:28 - Called for Goodness Sake

And we know that to the ones loving God all things work together for good, to those who are the called ones according to *His* purpose.

Truth to Learn

God is producing goodness in Christians because He has decided to do so.

Behind the Words

The words “all things” are from *pas*, meaning “all” or “every.” It is expressed here as a neuter plural noun, thus “all things.”

The Greek verb *sunergeō* is translated “work together.” It is made up of *sun*, meaning “together with” and *ergō*, meaning “to work.” It is expressed as a third person singular verb so it could be translated as “He (God) works all things together.”

“Good” is from *agathos*, meaning “good and benevolent” or “useful.” There is another Greek word translated “good.” It is the word *kalos*, meaning “inherently good without necessarily being benevolent” or “beauty as a harmonious completeness.” An easy way to distinguish the two is to think of *kalos* as specific goodness or beauty and *agathos* as general goodness.

The word translated “called” is from *klētos*, meaning “one who is called, invited, or appointed.” It is a noun, not a verb.

Meaning Explained

What does Paul mean by “all things work together for good?” The key is the word translated “good,” meaning “general goodness.” Paul is saying that even though some of the things that happen to us don’t necessarily seem very good, all things work together for our general goodness.

As we mentioned above, the verb “work together” is a singular, third-person verb. The subject for this verb is not “all things.” How do we know? The word translated “all things” is a plural subject. In Greek, as in English, the number of a verb (singular or plural) must always agree with the number of its subject, so the subject of this verb must be singular. As it turns out, the subject is not stated but simply implied. That’s why some translators render the first part of this verse as, “And we know that God works all things together for good.”

Who are those people for whom He works together all things? Paul says they are “those who love God.” Only we who have recognized our own sinfulness and need for salvation can fully appreciate the sacrifice that God made to have our sins paid for. And only we can really love God for having done it for us.

He also says it is “those who are the called ones according to His purpose.” As we noted above, the word “called” is not a passive verb, but a plural noun (as in, those who are the called ones). Those for whom God works all things together for good are those who are the called ones according to His (God’s) purpose. Paul is saying clearly that our being called to Christ and salvation is not of our own doing. It is wholly God’s doing and it is according to His purpose. We don’t know why God called us to salvation but we do know, according to Paul, that He is purposeful in calling us.

Application

When we are in the midst of trials we should be encouraged for two reasons. The first is that the Holy Spirit is our prayer partner and the second is that no matter how bad things seem, God is going to use whatever is happening to us ultimately to produce good in us, and that brings the glory back to Him.

Romans 8:29 - Who Chose Whom?

Because whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers.

Truth to Learn

God chose us to be Christ-like before He created anything.

Behind the Words

The word “foreknew” is the Greek word *proginōskō*, which is a compound word made up of *pro*, meaning “before, in place or time” and *ginōskō*, meaning “to know in a completed sense, that is, to have full knowledge of.”

This word translated “predestined” is the Greek word, *prooridzō*, which is made up of *pro*, meaning “before, in place or time” and *horidzo*, meaning “to mark out, appoint, or determine.” Thus we see that *prooridzō* means “to predetermine” or “to decree beforehand.”

Meaning Explained

Entire chapters of theological books have been written on the subject matter of this verse, but I will attempt to give the meat of the meaning as clearly and concisely as I can. The controversy of this verse revolves around a single Greek word. It’s meaning and proper interpretation, though much debated, is very clear and uncontestable, and yet there are still many Bible-believing Christians who choose not to accept it. The word I’m talking about is *proginōskō*, translated “foreknew.” Foreknowledge means that God had full, intimate knowledge of us before we were born. In **Ephesians 1:3-5** Paul tells us:

Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, for us to be holy and without blemish before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

God’s foreknowledge and choosing of us as his adopted children actually happened before the world was created.

I have heard competent, sound, fundamental Christians say to this, “Yes, of course. God foreknew who would accept Christ as Savior and chose them.” In fact, if this were true, then it would also be true that He foreknew who would not accept Christ as Savior, and according to the current verse in Romans He would have to predestinate them to be conformed to the image of His son as well (**whom He foreknew, He also predestined**). Hence, everyone would be saved. But this simply isn’t true. This faulty type of reasoning speaks of God’s foresight, not His foreknowledge. Also, if God chose us based on our decision to accept Christ as Savior, then in reality we chose Him, and He had **no choice** in the matter. That’s a big man, little god theology, which simply isn’t true.

God’s foreknowledge and His choosing flow directly from one another. According to the current verse, as a result of His foreknowledge of us He predestined us to be like His son Jesus.

Application

It is hard for us to accept the fact that God chose us for salvation while He allowed others, as a result of their sins, to suffer in Hell for eternity. However, that's exactly what the Bible teaches. So, instead of fighting against God (a futile activity, at best) let us praise Him for having chosen us to be conformed to the image of Christ and to be adopted as His children!

Romans 8:30 - Righteous & Glorious

And whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

Truth to Learn

All Christians have been called, justified, and glorified!

Behind the Words

The word translated “justified” is *dikaioō*, which means “to regard as just, innocent, or righteous.”

“Glorified” is from *doxadzo*, meaning “to consider or to make glorious” or “to give honor to someone.”

Meaning Explained

Paul told us that all things work together for good to those “who are the called according to *His* purpose.” And, those whom God foreknew He predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ. Now he tells us those whom He foreknew and predestined, He also called, justified, and glorified. Let’s look at each of these three things. All of these verbs (foreknew, predestined, called, justified, and glorified) are expressed in the Greek aorist tense indicating that all these things were done at a point in time in the past.

What does it mean to be “called” by God? There are two senses of this word. The first is often referred to as the “external call.” This is a simple invitation to action. In Matthew chapter 22, Christ referred to a man who was present at a wedding without a wedding garment. The master of the wedding had asked his servants to invite as many as they could find to the wedding and this man may have heard the invitation. But, this man did not have the wedding garment, which was a sign of true invitation. As a result, the master of the wedding commanded that this man be cast into outer darkness, stating that “many are called but few are chosen.” This man heard the external call. The other sense of the word is referred to as the “internal call.” Going back to Christ’s parable, the guests who had the official wedding garment were ones who received the internal call. They were the true guests; they were chosen.

Now, Paul makes it very clear that those who are foreknown, predestinated, and called are truly saved Christians. How do we know that? Paul tells us that they were also justified. Remember that Paul started out this letter teaching us that justification does not come from obeying the Law; rather, it comes by the grace of God through faith. He says it was not earned because if it was earned, then it was not of grace. It is the gift of God. That’s also what he says in Ephesians:

For by grace you are saved through faith, and this not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God. (**Ephesians 2:8**)

It is because of this gift, this calling, this predestination, that we are also justified, that is, in God’s record book we are marked as having the righteousness of Christ, not because we have done anything, but because God chose us. That’s grace!

Finally, Paul tells us that because God has justified us, He has also glorified us. Even though from our perspective this hasn’t yet happened, from God’s perspective He has already glorified us. He has already given us our glorified bodies and made us in all ways like Christ.

Application

The Bible teaches us that we have been chosen by God; therefore, let's submit to His will and commit to serving Him and glorifying Him with every fiber of our being. And, let's give all the praise to God!

Romans 8:31 - Powerful Loving Father

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?

Truth to Learn

God is powerful and is watching over us, His children.

Behind the Words

“For” is translated from *hyper*, which primarily means “over” or “above.” Figuratively, however, it means “for” in the sense of protection, care, or favor.

The word “against” is from *kata*, primarily meaning “down upon.” So, I suppose we could translate the second half of this verse as, “If God is over us, who can come down on us?”

Meaning Explained

Before we go on, take a few minutes and read through the entire eighth chapter of Romans up to this verse. This chapter is like a trip up the side of a volcano in which the sides get steeper (as the theology gets more personal) until we reach the rim of the volcano in verse thirty-one. Between this and the remainder of this chapter, we see an eruption of the glorious benefits of being an adopted child of God. God’s love and God’s blessings to us just burst forth in these remaining verses.

Paul starts off this eruption with a couple of rhetorical questions. The first is, “**What then shall we say to these things?**” In this question Paul is challenging all of us to take stock of what he has been telling us in this chapter, namely:

- There is no condemnation to those of us who are in Christ Jesus. We have been given the righteousness of Christ.
- The Holy Spirit of God lives within us and gives spiritual life to our mortal bodies.
- This Spirit has freed us from the bondage of sin and we have been adopted by God. We are now His children.
- We are heirs of God Almighty.
- But, as joint heirs with Jesus Christ, we will also suffer in this world just as He did.
- However, this suffering can’t even be compared to the glory that will be revealed in us at the end of this age.
- All creation groans under the curse of sin, expectantly waiting for the end of the age when we will be glorified.
- The knowledge that this glorious future awaits us enables us to endure our present suffering.
- In the midst of this suffering, the Holy Spirit is our prayer partner, praying for us in ways we can’t even comprehend.
- In spite of our suffering, we know that God will produce good in us through this suffering.
- God completely knows us.
- God has chosen us as His adopted children.
- God has already declared us to be as righteous as Christ.
- God will give us glory like Christ has.

The second rhetorical question is, “If God is for us, who is against us?” The answer obviously is, “No one!”

Application

In light of all of these wonderful things, it is obvious that God loves each one of us and is a loving father to all of us. And just like a neighbor kid claiming that his dad is bigger, or stronger, or smarter than yours, Paul knows that our Father is greater than anyone or anything that may stand against us. Therefore, be courageous because “If God is for us, who is against us?”

And this is just the beginning of Paul’s exciting volcanic eruption.

Romans 8:32 - All Things Given

Indeed, He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not also with Him freely give us all things?

Truth to Learn

God has freely given us the payment for our sins and has also freely given us everything we need to be godly people.

Behind the Words

The word “**spare**” is translated from *pheidomai*, which means “to spare” or “to treat leniently.” God was not lenient toward His Son, but gave Him to suffer for you and me.

“**Delivered**” is translated from *paradidōmi*, which is made up of *para*, meaning “beside, to the side of, or over to” and *didōmi*, meaning “to give.” Hence, it means “to give over to” or “to surrender to.”

The word translated “**freely give**” is *charidzomai*, which means “to willingly bestow an undeserved favor.” This same word is translated “having forgiven you” in **Colossians 2:13**.

Meaning Explained

Paul has just declared, “**If God is for us, who is against us?**” We know from other passages of Scripture that God is Almighty, that is, All Powerful. No one is more powerful than God (our father is stronger than their father). But, just because He can do anything to protect us and defend us doesn’t mean that He will make our lives one of ease and prosperity. In fact, because He is an all-knowing God, He knows what things will make us most Christ-like. He knows that times of trial and difficulties in our lives will make us stronger. That’s precisely the issue that Paul is addressing in this verse.

God the Father, did not spare His only Son, Jesus. In fact, God the Father, sent His only Son to live a perfect life and then freely offered that life as a substitutionary sacrifice to pay for your sins and mine. He permitted His precious Son to be subjected to one of the most cruel and painful tortures ever invented by the sin-sick minds of man. Then, once our sins were paid for, He then declared us to be righteous and adopted us as His children. That has been His plan since before time began and nothing can alter that plan.

So, Paul’s point in this verse is very simple; if God is willing to offer up His only Son so that He could adopt us as His children as well, He must really love us. And if He loves us this much, surely He will freely give us all that we need, or as Paul put it; “**how shall He not also with Him freely give us all things?**”

But what does Paul mean by “all things?” The Apostle Peter gives us the answer to that question in his second general epistle to the church:

His divine power has given us everything pertaining to life and godliness through the full knowledge of him who called us through glory and worthiness. **(2Peter 1:3)**

Thus we see that in addition to giving the life of His Son to pay the penalty that we can't pay ourselves, God gives us everything we need to live full lives as godly people.

Application

Not only is our Father the strongest around, He loves us more than we can comprehend! And, now that you know that you have everything you need to live a godly life, what are you going to do about it?

Romans 8:33 - Chosen to be Sinless

Who will bring a charge against God's chosen ones? God is the one who justifies.

Truth to Learn

God declares His chosen ones to be completely righteous.

Behind the Words

“Bring a charge” is from *engkaleō*, which is a compound word made up of *en*, meaning “in” and *kaleō*, meaning “to call.” So, literally this word means “to call in.” Originally it was used with regard to a debt that was “called-in” when it was due. In general usage it has come to mean “to bring a charge against or to accuse someone.”

The word translated “chosen.” It is the Greek word *eklektos*, from the verb *eklegō*, which is made up of *ek*, meaning “out” and *legō*, meaning “to select or choose through thoughtful deliberation.” Hence, *eklektos* refers to someone or something that has been chosen or selected out of a larger group.

Meaning Explained

Paul now continues with his volcanic eruption regarding the benefits of being God’s children. The first thing we learned is that God is Almighty and will do all to protect us and bless us because we are His adopted children. In other words, we are safe from any evil force. But, if our enemy can’t get to us by force, he will try to get to us by subtlety. He will accuse us of unrighteousness, which makes us feel unworthy to be God’s children. That’s what Paul is addressing in the current verse. Notice Paul’s play on words here. He says “Who will bring a charge (*engkaleō* – call in) against God's chosen ones (*eklektos* – chosen out ones)?”

Now here is where those who don’t believe in God’s election have a problem. Paul is asking, “Who shall make an accusation against those whom God has chosen?” Now if you don’t believe in election (which says you have believed the gospel message and are saved because God chose you, not because you chose to believe) then this verse doesn’t make sense.

Paul, on the other hand, very much believes in election and teaches it throughout his letters. In fact, the first few chapters of this letter to the Roman Christians were spent explaining how justification comes by grace through faith, not as the result of anything that we have done. And, because God is the one who has declared us righteous (nowhere in the Bible does it teach that God ever removes that righteousness from our account) then it doesn’t matter who brings a charge against us. God’s response is that we are righteous according to His records; therefore the charge will not stand because, “God has declared us righteous.”

Thus we see that according to this verse, it doesn’t matter how bad a sin we commit, it has already been paid for by Christ’s blood, and in God’s eyes we are free from sin because we have been given the righteousness of Christ. We don’t deserve this righteousness, we deserve eternity in Hell, but we are righteous because God has chosen us and declared us to be righteous.

Application

Now, just because we have been declared righteous doesn't mean we are free to sin all we want. The One who declared us righteous also tells us that if we love Him, we will obey Him. And we should love Him gratefully because of what He has done for us. Thank you God, for the gift that I don't deserve! And, thank you God, for not giving me what I do deserve!

Do I hear an "Amen"?

Romans 8:34 - Our Defense Attorney

Who is he who that is condemning? Christ is He who died, and furthermore was also raised, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

Truth to Learn

We are represented by the greatest defense attorney of all.

Behind the Words

The words “and furthermore” are from the Greek words *mallon de*. The word *de* is a conjunction that is most often translated as either “but” or “and.” It is always “post-positive,” that is, it always comes as the second word in a phrase although we translate it in English as the first word. The word *mallon* is an adverbial comparative which means “more than that.”

“Intercession” is from *entugchanō*, which means “to confer with,” but by extension it means “to speak in behalf of.”

Meaning Explained

Paul now makes a somewhat startling declaration. He has just told us that no one can bring anything to the charge of God’s chosen people because God has already justified us. That is, He has declared that we are righteous. Now Paul asks another of his rhetorical questions, “Who is he that is condemning?” And his answer is that Christ is the only one who can get away with condemning because he has paid for our righteousness with his blood. In fact, what Paul says regarding the only one who can get away with condemning is, “Christ is He who died.” That is Christ, the Anointed One, the Messiah, the Perfect One who died to pay for the sins of the whole world.

Christ’s death is significant for sure, but Paul adds, “and furthermore was also risen.” Christ’s resurrection is of even greater significance than His death because it is His resurrection that demonstrates that He is the Anointed One, the Christ. He is not a dead Savior, He is alive!

Paul continues with his description of Jesus as the only one who can legally condemn by saying that Christ is now “at the right hand of God,” He has already assumed the position of power over all of creation and is the One in the position of judgment. Only He can judge; only He can condemn!

But we Christians cannot be charged with any offense since God has already declared us as righteous and Paul has shown that the only one who can condemn is Christ himself (who will not condemn those of us whom the Father has already declared as righteous). But, there are some whom Christ does condemn: those who refuse his offer of salvation.

Paul now makes one final statement regarding our living Savior who is at the right hand of God. He says that Christ is the one “who also makes intercession for us.” Not only has the Father declared us righteous, but Christ is there at the heavenly court as our defense attorney making all of the legal arguments in our defense when the enemy accuses us.

However, that doesn’t mean we can sin all we want just because we’re already forgiven. If we are truly saved then we don’t want to sin and, in fact, we want to keep His commandments. That’s what John said:

And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commands. (**1 John 2:3**)

Application

Thank you Lord for saving me, for declaring me as righteous, and for defending my righteousness when I need it most!

Romans 8:35 - Faithful Loving God

What will separate us from the love of Christ, tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Truth to Learn

No matter what happens to you, remember that God loves you!

Behind the Words

“**What**” is from the Greek interrogative pronoun *tis*, meaning “who, which, or what.” In light of the remainder of this verse, I think the best translation here is “what.”

The verb “**separate**” is translated from the Greek word *chōridzō*, which is based on the adverb *chōris*, which means “separately, by itself, apart from.” Hence, *chōridzō* means “to put distance between” or “to make things separate from one another.”

“**Love**” is from the Greek word *agapē*, which refers to a self-sacrificing love in which the lover is focused on the ultimate goodness and benefit of the loved one.

Paul now gives us a number of descriptions of things that can’t separate us from the love of Christ. They are:

- *thlipsis*, meaning “pressure, anguish, tribulation, trouble, or affliction.” It refers to troubles pressing from the outside.
- *stenochōria*, literally meaning “narrow space.” It is different from *thlipsis* in that it refers to internal distress or “anguish.”
- *diōgmos*, which is derived from the verb *diōkō*, meaning “to relentlessly pursue or persecute.”
- *limos* refers to “a scarcity of food.” It is most often translated as “hunger or famine.”
- *gumnotēs*, meaning “nudity or nakedness.”
- *kindunos*, meaning “peril or danger.” It refers to someone who is constantly moving because of imminent danger.
- *machaira*, meaning “a sword used for warfare and slaughter.”

Meaning Explained

Paul has already made several declarations about those of us who are the chosen ones of God including:

- If God is for us, who can possibly be against us.
- He who gave His Son for our salvation will freely give us all things that we need for life and peace.
- No one can get away with charging us with any wrong, and if they do (that is, when Satan does) we have Christ as our defense attorney interceding for us.

Now Paul begins the final declaration of this chapter (although it will take several verses to finish the idea). He starts this verse off with, “**What will separate us from the love of Christ?**”

The answer to this question doesn't appear until verses thirty-eight and thirty-nine, but a number of candidates are offered by Paul in this verse. Though he never does directly answer this question, the ultimate answer is, "None of these things can separate us from the love of Christ."

He will go on to provide an ever greater example of how strong Christ's love for us is in a few verses.

Application

No matter what happens to us, God will always love us as His children (those whom He has chosen, redeemed, and justified).

Always!

Romans 8:36 - His Targeted Children

As it is written: "For your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered."

Truth to Learn

The reason that faithful Christians suffer in this life is not because of disobedience, but because of family lineage.

Behind the Words

The word translated "it is written" is the Greek verb *graphō*, which literally means "to engrave." By modern application it means "to write." It is expressed in the Greek perfect tense, which implies past completed action with an ongoing effect, but the emphasis is on the effect.

Meaning Explained

Paul has just asked the rhetorical question, "What shall separate us from the love of Christ?" He then listed a number of afflictions that can occur to man. He now seems to abruptly change thought and quotes a passage from the Old Testament (**Psalms 44:22**). If you read through the 44th Psalm, however, you will see that it is neither abrupt nor a change of thought.

In **Psalms 44** the writer is recounting first the way that GOD has fought for the Israelites and how their enemies have been scattered. In the second part of this Psalm, he recounts the shame suffered by the Israelites when God apparently abandoned them. The third portion of this Psalm is the author's commitment to GOD in spite of the calamities that have overtaken them. At that point the writer proclaimed:

"Surely, for Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered."
(**Psalms 44:22**)

The reason for the afflictions of the Jewish people was (and is) not because of sin; rather, it is because they are the chosen people of GOD.

That's the point that Paul is making here and the reason that he quotes this Old Testament passage. In the previous verse he recited a number of afflictions that befall Christians today. He is saying now that the reason for these afflictions is not because of disobedience or sin, it is because we are obedient, and we are the children of God. That's the reason we are (and will be) attacked by our enemy.

Keep in mind what Christ told His disciples in John's gospel:

"If the world hates you, know that it hated Me before *it hated* you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. But because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you ..." (**John 15:18-20**)

Application

We **will** suffer in this life because we are Christians! In fact, the greater our testimony, the more likely it is that we will suffer. Paul, however, is about to offer a word of encouragement and a glorious truth for us all to know when we are in the midst of those trials.

The key to understanding Christian persecution and suffering is not to focus on what we have done, but what He has done – and what He will always do.

Romans 8:37 - Victorious Suffering!

But in all these things we more than conquer through Him who loved us.

Truth to Learn

Though we suffer for Him, we conquer through Him.

Behind the Words

Paul starts off this verse with the Greek word *alla*, which is a contrastive conjunction. In other words, he is contrasting this thought with the one(s) just expressed.

The Greek verb translated, “more than conquer” is *hupernikaō*, which is a compound word made up of *hyper* (or *hyper*) meaning “over or above in position or degree” and *nikaō*, which means “to be victorious or to win a battle.” In other words, we are not simply victorious; we are hyper-victorious or super-victorious! That is, we gain a decisive victory!

Meaning Explained

Although this verse is short, it is packed with meaning. Paul just quoted a passage from the Book of Psalms saying:

Surely, for Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.
(Psalms 44:22)

His purpose in quoting this passage is to point out the fact that we are being persecuted, and we are suffering because we are identified with Him.

But (*alla*) – Paul is now making a contrasting point. Even though we are being treated like slaughter-house sheep, we are suffering for Him, and some of us are even dying for Him; “we more than conquer.” Notice that these four words are translated from a verb, not a noun. It is not so much a state of being (we are conquerors), although our translation makes it sound like that, as it is a description of our action (we hyper-conquer through Him). Even though we may suffer, or even die for our faith, we are conquering!

And what is the source of the victory power that we have? It is “Him who loved us.” We are victorious through the One who foreknew us, who choose us, who sanctified us, who justified us, who adopted us as His own children, and who loved us with a self-sacrificing agape love! We are victorious through the One who suffered in our place, who shed His blood on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins, who rose from the dead, and is alive forever more. We are victorious through the One with whom we are sealed, who is the guarantee of our salvation, who is our teacher, and who is our comforter in the midst of trials.

Yes, we are in a spiritual war. We did not choose this war, but we are in it nonetheless. Not only do we conquer our spiritual enemy when we endure our sufferings in the name of Christ, but ultimately we conquer the final enemy, death. On the other side of our physical death, we will sing a victory song standing in the presence of the One who purchased that victory for us.

Application

Have you suffered for your faith or your testimony? Are you suffering now because you are known as one of God's chosen children (the world calls us "religious people" or "holy rollers")? Remember that right now you are more than conquering and one day soon you will sing the victory song and receive the victor's crown! Praise God for your suffering! He will receive the glory!

Romans 8:38 - No One and Nothing

For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,

Truth to Learn

Our salvation is secure!

Behind the Words

The word translated “**persuaded**” is the Greek word *peithō*, meaning “to persuade or convince someone.” This word is in the perfect tense implying past completed action with a continuing result, but with the emphasis on the result. So, Paul is not saying that this may be true, or that he thinks it is possible, rather he is saying that he has been persuaded and he is now absolutely convinced that this is true.

“**Death**” is from the Greek word *thanatos*. It can refer to physical death (the death of our physical bodies) or spiritual death (exclusion from the presence and favor of God). The base meaning of this word implies separation. Regarding physical death, it is the separation of the soul and spirit from the body. With respect to spiritual death is the separation of the soul and spirit from the presence and favor of God.

The word “**life**” is from *dzoē*, which refers to “human life.” It can refer to our physical life or to eternal life.

“**Angels**” is a transliteration of *angelos*, meaning “messenger.” It is used in reference to any of God’s created spirit beings.

The word “**principalities**” is from *archē*, which literally refers to “the beginning point.” Metaphorically, it is used to refer to the highest in position or power of the angelic beings.

“**Powers**” is from *dunamis* (from which we get our English word dynamite), meaning “a powerful force.” It is used here as a reference to other powerful angels.

The word translated “**things present**” is *enistēmi*, meaning “something that exists now.” And “**things to come**” is from *mellō*, meaning “something that is about to be or to happen.”

Meaning Explained

Back in verse thirty-five Paul asked the question, “**What will separate us from the love of Christ, tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?**” We told you at that time that Paul would answer the question in a few verses. Well, here it is. This is the final explosion in his volcanic eruption of the glorious benefits of being an adopted child of God; in fact, there is so much here that it is spread out over two verses.

Paul starts out this verse with “**For I am persuaded.**” And what is it that he is absolutely convinced is true? That nothing can separate us from the love of God! You will notice that this list starts out with life and death. We cannot be separated by life or by death. The three words *angelos*, *archē*, and *dunamis* represent all of the angelic host, including faithful angels as well as fallen angels. It even includes Satan. Hence, no

angelic being can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus. The list includes things that exist as well as things that have not yet come into being but shall exist some day.

Application

We are saved by God and by God alone, and once we have been declared righteous (saved) by God, it **cannot** be undone!

Romans 8:39 – Eternally Secure

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.

Truth to Learn

There is nothing that can cause us to lose our salvation. Nothing!

Behind the Words

The word translated “height” is *hupsōma*, which is the noun form of *hupsoō*, meaning “to elevate, to lift up, or to exalt.” This word refers to a place that is elevated or high up. As used here it is most likely a reference to the heavenly places (both physical and spiritual).

“Depth” is from *bathos*, which is derived from *bathus*, meaning deep. *Bathos* refers to that which is deep. Most scholars agree that this is a reference to Hell which is deep in the heart of the earth.

The words “created thing” are from the Greek word *ktisis*, which is the noun form of the verb *ktidzō*, meaning “to create, form, or found.” Earlier in this chapter we discussed whether *ktisis* referred to a single created thing or to all of creation. The use here is clearly a reference to “any other created thing.”

“Separate” is from *coridzō*, which we looked at back in verse thirty-five. It means “to put distance between” or “to make things separate from one another.”

Meaning Explained

We are reading about the answer to the question, “What shall separate us from the love of Christ?” In yesterday’s verse Paul gave us a list of things, and in today’s verse he completes the list. This list is a delineation of those things which can’t separate us from God’s love.

In this verse we are told that height and depth are included in the list. Paul uses these words as metonyms (where the name of one object is used to represent some related thing or things) to represent all the inhabitants of Heaven and Hell. In the first part of this verse he is saying that there is nothing in the heavens above or in Hell below or any other created thing that can separate us from God’s love.

You will recall that Paul is talking about those of us who have been adopted as God’s children, that is, those who are born-again Christians. Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. This is a very clear reference to the fact that we cannot get un-saved. We cannot even un-save ourselves according to this verse. If we are saved we cannot “renounce” our salvation, because no created thing can separate us from God’s love in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Some may try to argue against this and say, “But God loves all people; isn’t that what **John 3:16** says?” Unfortunately, the answer to that is “No.” As we will see in the next chapter, particularly in verse thirteen where it is said of God, “As it is written, ‘Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.’”

Application

This verse highlights one of the greatest facts about our adoption by God. We don't have to worry about losing something we didn't earn and we don't deserve. God did it entirely himself out of His love for us. He will never lose that love and there is nothing that can separate us from that love. Nothing! That means we are completely and eternally secure in our salvation! That's something to think about. More than that, that's something to praise God about!