



August 21, 2023 - September 23, 2023

ROMANS - Part 4

Welcome to Part 4 of our reading plan through the book of Romans!

Part 1 focused on the reality of our SIN, part 2 focused on our call to FAITH in Christ, part 3 unpacked the new reality of Christian LIFE in Christ (sin is not our master), and now in part 4 the Apostle Paul helps us understand the role of the SPIRIT in our hearts. This is one of the most cherished chapters in the Bible, as you work through this chapter over the next 35 days may the very Spirit that is promised to all who believe in Christ do a sanctifying work in your heart and mind!

AS YOU READ...DON'T FORGET TO BREATHE!



Breathe in...the Word of God

As you read through this week's text. Try not to get distracted by questions or ideas; just get a feel for the overall message of the text. As you breathe in the Word and finish the reading, ask yourself: **What is God speaking to me today through this text?**

Breathe out...your words to God

Don't forget to spend some time reflecting on the text and articulating how today's reading is moving you! If you are able, take some time to journal your prayer and talk to God about how you hope to apply his Word to your life!

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. - James 1:23 (NIV)

Today's Reading: Romans 8:1-8:13

Journal Notes:

August 21, 2023

Life In The Spirit / No Condemnation

Romans 8:1

Romans: 8:1 "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit."

NO CONDEMNATION – EVEN NOW!

As we move into the amazing, vastly rich, Chapter 8, Paul begins with this: "Therefore, now..." And so, we should ask, "What is it there for?"

In Chapter 7, Paul writes, "Oh wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death?"

He talks of doing what he shouldn't and of not doing what he should. This is a conflict; it's life's ongoing battle between the flesh (our sinful nature) and the Spirit. We have a problem – namely, this indwelling sin of self (our flesh), common to everyone; it wars within us. We sin, we fall, and then, we repent. Again & again this cycle repeats throughout our lives. Only by the grace of God do we grow and mature, experiencing snippets of victory over our flesh. But do we ever stop sinning?

1 John 1:8 says, *"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."*

Feeling condemned, anyone? Are we "saved," then sin? Are we "lost" and then repent and repeat this cycle? Answer: no! We are "IN" Jesus. We have been bought and paid for and can take comfort in the knowledge that we belong to Jesus. "There is therefore, now, no condemnation!" We are saved, even now, by hope, hope in Christ, and His atoning blood payment for us. On the cross, Jesus cried out, "IT IS FINISHED" and therefore, reconciled our deserved "condemnation" with the greatest gift/payment ever transacted: the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Our condemnation was paid for by the most precious, valuable thing in all of creation!

How can it be that You and I are worth that?!

Thanks be to God; we are shown mercy by Jesus purchasing our “pardon,” removing the punishment we deserve, so we can stand before Him as perfectly clean souls. From the cross, Jesus is saying, (oh wretched man), “It is my pleasure to die for YOU!” Wow.

He has paid our debt for us. What Amazing Love! Let us “walk not” according to the flesh, but walk with confidence, by the Spirit, according to the Spirit that is within us. The charge has not changed: We are found “guilty,” but the payment is marked “Paid in Full!” Jesus paid for it. There is no condemnation for us because Jesus Changes Everything!

Grace & Peace.

-Rick Ripley

Today's Reading: Romans 8:1, 1 John 1:8

Journal Notes:

August 22, 2023**Be Not Worldly Minded
Romans 8:2-4**

"If you're not hungry for the Word of God, then you're filling your Spirit with something else." --Lisa Bevere (See 1 Thessalonians 5:19.)

On my daily walks, I use the time to pray, worship, and sometimes, I will listen to a Christian podcast. Last week, I stumbled upon this quote, while listening to a podcast. It stuck with me as it related to Romans 8:2-4. I also want to add that to put the passage into perspective, I went back to Romans 8:1.

We are so blessed to have a heavenly Father who loved us enough to send His Son to become flesh and condemn (conquer) sin. We now have the power of the Holy Spirit to walk free from sin.

Paul made it very clear in this passage that we are to abstain from worldly-mindedness. Can we do this in our own power? Not likely. We need to rely on Christ's grace and call on the Holy Spirit's strength each and every day. God wants us to stay connected. We must stay connected in order to continue to walk in the Spirit.

John 14:15-18 (words of Jesus)

“15. If you love Me, keep My commandments. 16. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever-- 17. the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. 18. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.”

-Stacy Tennesen

Today's Reading: Romans 8:2-4, 1 Thessalonians 5:19

Journal Notes:

August 23, 2023**No Longer Slaves To Sin****Romans 8:5**

Today's passage offers a stark delineation between the mindset of the believer and the mindset of one who remains lost in trespasses and sin. Reformed theology teaches that prior to coming to Christ, we are spiritually lifeless, unable, on our own, to discern spiritual truth, unable to understand the mystery of God's love and plan for our lives. We are literally dead in spirit, with no hope of making ourselves alive. When our thinking and our value system are renewed and transformed by the Holy Spirit living in us (Romans 12:2), we are "reborn," becoming a completely different creation...to the extent of changing the very way we think, speak and act according to the Spirit that is now alive in us (2 Corinthians 5:17).

When we were dead, all we were able to think about is how life is happening to us, how the world relates to us, how to manipulate events and people to benefit us; we were totally self-absorbed and focused on our flesh, our money, our pride, our needs, our feelings, our past, present and future. This is such a dismal and sad way to walk through life!

The transformed life of a renewed spirit allows us to change the way we think in significant ways. No longer slaves to sin (John 8:34) and, through the redemption of Christ, having peace with God, we are now free to consider others' well-being as more important than our own (Philippians 2:3-4). The fruit that comes from the Spirit that is alive is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

In contrast, the mind mired in the things of the flesh results in works of sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy and worse (Galatians 5:19-21).

Have you seen any of these conditions exist in the world today? Who would *not* want to be set free from a focus on the flesh?

-Matt Harry

Today's Reading: Romans 8:5, Romans 12:2, 2 Corinthians 5:17, John 8:34, Philippians 2:3-4, Galatians 5:22-23, Galatians 5:19-21

Journal Notes:

August 24, 2023**What Is Your Mind Set On?****Romans 8:6-8**

The way a person thinks is an excellent indicator of the heart. If I love money, I will always think about it and do whatever I can to get more. In this section of scripture, Paul makes it clear that a person's mindset is an indicator of their heart and the spiritual path they're headed down.

Here are a few points to take away from these verses:

1. THE MIND SET ON THE FLESH IS SPIRITUALLY DEAD AND HEADED TOWARD ETERNAL SPIRITUAL DEATH (8:6a).

Romans 8:6a: "For the mind set on the flesh is death" The death spoken here is not just a physical death but also a spiritual one. To be spiritually dead means to be separated from God and eternal life given by Jesus. In Ephesians (2:1,5), Paul says that we all were dead in our sins before God graciously gave new life to us. And if we die in that state of spiritual death, we enter into what the Bible calls "the second death," eternal separation from God (Revelation 20:14,15).

2. THE MIND SET ON THE FLESH IS NOT SPIRITUALLY NEUTRAL BUT IS AN ENEMY OF GOD (8:7a)

Romans 8:7a: "Because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God." Paul uses the same word ("hostile") to describe a deed of the flesh (Galatians 5:20) and the constant hostility between Jews and Gentiles (Ephesians 2:14,16). This hostility is the opposite of love. Unbelievers do not love God; they hate Him. He is their enemy.

3. THE MIND SET ON THE FLESH DOES NOT SUBMIT TO GOD (8:7b).

Romans 8:7b: "For it does not subject itself to the law of God." God's law reveals who He is and how He commands us to live. While we're not under the law of Moses (Romans 6:14), we are under the law of Christ (1 Corinthians 9:21).

We are subject to the two great commandments, to love God with our entire being and to love our neighbor as ourselves (Matthew 22:37-40; Romans 3:9). The New Testament gives many specific commands about how we are to live as believers in Christ. But the unbelieving mind does not subject itself to God's Word. Its mindset is, "I love myself and its will first and most" (H. C. G. Moule, *The Epistle to the Romans* [Christian Literature Crusade], pp. 213-214).

4. THE MIND SET ON THE FLESH CANNOT SUBMIT TO GOD OR PLEASE HIM (8:7c-8).

Paul does not stop by saying that those in the flesh do not submit to God's law. He further says that they are not even able to do so, adding (8:8), "and those who are in the flesh cannot please God." Cannot is a word of inability. It goes back to the matter of a sinner's fallen nature in Adam, incapable of obeying God or pleasing Him. Just as a pig is free to act in line with its pig nature but not with human nature, so fallen sinners are free to act in line with the flesh but not with the Holy Spirit, whom they do not possess.

So what is your mind set on, God or the flesh?

-Justin Lopes

Steven J. Cole, 2011, Lesson 44: Understanding the Unbelieving Mind

[Bible.org, https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-44-understanding-unbelieving-mind-romans-86-8](https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-44-understanding-unbelieving-mind-romans-86-8)

Today's Reading: Romans 8:6-8, Ephesians 2:1, Ephesians 2:5, Revelation 20:14-15, Galatians 5:20, Ephesians 2:14, Ephesians 2:16

Journal Notes:

August 25, 2023**Life In The Spirit**
Romans 8:9-11

We are about to read one of the greatest chapters ever penned by a mortal. Romans 8 is the peak of the pass, the cream of the crop, the penthouse of panoramas. It doesn't get any better than this! Climbing out of the depths of sin, Paul gives us a fresh breath as he discusses life in the Spirit.

With all the talk about the Law and sin, the key ingredient to the Christian life is now revealed: the person of the Holy Spirit. "Holy Spirit" or "spirit" is mentioned a total of 21 times in this chapter, the most times in any Pauline chapter. The great battle between the flesh and the Spirit is carried out in every believer. Doesn't it seem strange that the freedom of the Spirit and the repressive power of sin could be operating in the same person?

This is "the rub," as they say. As long as we live in this world, sin has a home field advantage. So, to live the abundant life, Jesus came to bring us a "helper." We must have a power source outside of this world. Enter the Spirit. An individual who attempts to live like Christ, without the Spirit's influence, faces certain doom. In fact, we read, "if we do not have the Spirit, we do not belong to Christ." Fact.

Paul is focused like a laser on the truth that Christian living is not accomplished because of effort or by working harder, but by yielding to the Spirit. The real power comes from the Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead. We all, as God's children, have access to this power. He is, literally, inside us! How do we know when we are yielding? When we see the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5) evident in our lives! So, dump the guilt and open up to the freedom the Spirit gives.

-Brian Mott

Today's Reading: Romans 8:9-11

Journal Notes:

August 26, 2023

Don't Settle

Romans 8:12-13

Christians, please do not settle for living a life as a Romans 7 Christian. Romans 7 is where Paul basically says, "I do what I do not want to do and I do not do what I want to do."

Romans 8:1-13 answers how you can overcome that state of living. *"There is therefore, now, no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, to those who do not walk according to the flesh, but, according to the Spirit."*

If you want to live a life free from condemnation, then you need to live 'in Christ.' In verse 5, Paul defines walking in the spirit as 'setting our minds.'

Romans 8:5 says: *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."*

"What are you setting your mind on?" Are you setting your mind on toxic thoughts: events that produce or re-live anger, resentment, lust, pride, addictions, co-dependence, etc.?

In the late 1980's - early 1990s, scientists used MRI technology to discover that the brain has an attribute called 'neuroplasticity.' They observed that certain physical neural pathways actually grew, the more we thought about something over and over. This means the brain can reinforce the thought habits of the soul, either for good or for bad. God designed the brain to help enforce His command in Romans 12:2: *"Be transformed by the renewing of your mind."* *If you are trying to destroy toxic thought patterns that lead you to 'walk after the flesh,' you will need discipline.*

Here is a question, **"What does the New Testament call a disciplined person?"**

Answer: **A disciple.**

A disciple, a disciplined person, can start off the day with prayer, 'setting their mind' on who they are in Christ, as revealed in the New Testament. Then, they use that identity during the day to confront the temptation toward toxic thought patterns. If they apply this discipline over time, even the toxic neural pathways of the brain will disintegrate and new neural pathways will be created to help reinforce their new identity in Christ. This is part of how we live according to the Spirit, as Romans 8:13 states, *"If by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live."*

In John 6:63, Jesus says His words are spirit and life. In prayer, and in disciplining our thought life, by replacing toxic thoughts with who we are in Christ, we can put to death the deeds of the body and break out of the Romans 7 mindset.

-Steve Burke

Today's Reading: Romans 8:12-13, Romans 8:5, Romans 12:2, Romans 8:13,
John 6:63

Journal Notes:

August 27, 2023

BREATHING THE GOSPEL

Romans 8:14-17

Before digging into this week's text, start the week off with a simple reading and reflection on the text we are covering this week.

Breathe in...the Word of God

As you read through this week's text. Try not to get distracted by questions or ideas; just get a feel for the overall message of the text. As you breathe in the Word and finish the reading, ask yourself: **What is God speaking to me today through this text?**

Breathe out...your words to God

Don't forget to spend some time reflecting on the text and articulating how today's reading is moving you! If you are able, take some time to journal your prayer and talk to God about how you hope to apply his Word to your life!

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. - James 1:23 (NIV)

Today's Reading: Romans 8:14-17

Journal Notes:

August 28, 2023

Who Leads You?

Romans 8:14

Each day we wake up experiencing new mercies from our Heavenly Father. He holds the earth at a precise distance from the sun. He calls forth rain and changing seasons. He holds back the ferocious power of the sea. He rotates the earth at the exact revolutions needed to sustain life, including ours. When we consider the bigger picture, looking outside ourselves, we remove the "horse blinders," the narrow vision that causes us to see only what affects us, in our current circumstances. When we receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and believe in His name, we are given the right to become children of God. This act of faith removes the "blinders," giving us His sight; we see as He wills. He provides EVERYTHING, so why do we push God out of the driver seat of our lives, and try to control our circumstances ourselves?

The answer lies in the initial question, **"Who Leads You?"**

God never changes; we are the ones who change. We are either changing through the hand of Christ or through the hand of the world. Those who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit are changed; we have signed up for a lifetime of change! As the Holy Spirit convicts our hearts, we repent; we change! We allow God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit to mature us, to sanctify us.

This isn't a one-time event; it is a continual process, which means we will always need help from above! All thanks be to God, for He did not give us a Spirit of fear, or slavery; He gave us the Spirit of adoption! We belong to Him; we are His children and He made us His heirs; we are fellow heirs with Christ!

Do you want to live your life as if this is the only truth that matters? YES! Then each day that you are blessed with the gift of life, accept the new mercies of your Heavenly Father. Open the door within your heart and invite God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit in!

Surrender your will each day; say it out loud! Proclaim it, live it, and love others because of it. Invite Father, Son, and Spirit in each morning; don't leave Him in the foyer of your heart; step aside and ask Him to remodel your space and see the Master Carpenter bring you to new life!

-Ardena Hamill

Today's Reading: Romans 8:14, Lamentations 3:22-23, Malachi 3:6, James 1:17, Psalm 119:89-93, Galatians 5:18, John 1:12-13

Journal Notes:

August 29, 2023**Faith Over Fear**
Romans 8:15

The last 3 years have been an example to me of how easy it might be to react to a situation in fear. The Lord has given us a natural human response to fearful experiences; He provides the human body with a healthy "fight or flight" stress response. But, there is an unhealthy way we can respond when we are not trusting Christ, when we, instead, fear man and what man can do to us. I remember being in a place, before following Christ, when all I did was worry and fear about almost anything. I don't miss that place! I now truly have the peace that can only be found in Jesus Christ.

As David put it so well, *"The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: What can man do unto me?"* Psalms 118:6

I just wanted to encourage those who are reading this, that ultimately, Christmas victorious on the cross and as He stated, "It is finished."

"O death where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" 1 Corinthians 15:55

-Daniel McDermott

As a final thought I wanted to encourage you to check out the song that inspired the title and focus for this devotional.

"Faith Over Fear" by Jimmy Levy- [Hi-Rez & Jimmy Levy - Faith Over Fear \(Official Music Video\)](#)

Today's Reading: Romans 8:15, Psalm 118:6, 1 Corinthians 15:55

Journal Notes:

August 30, 2023**Adoption****Romans 8:16**

Adoption can be a wonderful, fulfilling event. Those adopted (primarily children) feel blessed and experience personal bonding. My father lived in an orphanage from the time he was two years old until he was six years old, then he was “farmed out” to a local farm family to become their physical slave. He lived, ate, and slept in the barn with the animals. He was required to do all types of physical labor on the farm, including working in the fields and taking care of the animals. If he did not do the labor correctly, he was punished by whipping. One time, when he did not close the gate correctly, a horse got out onto another farmer’s property. His punishment was having his arm severely cut by an ax.

When my father was nine years old, a young woman came by the farm and called to him while he was working in the field. He talked with her and discovered that she was his older sister. The farmer came by and threatened her, and she told him not to touch her brother again because he was going to be adopted by their uncle. The next day, my father’s sister and uncle came and took him from that place and his uncle and aunt adopted him into their family. He was no longer a slave or a servant. He was their son and heir.

The verse for today testifies that we are God’s children; we are no longer slaves to fear; we are His sons and daughters. Paul also shares, in Galatians 4:7, that we are no longer slaves, but sons and daughters, as well as heirs. We are rescued from a fatherless life, much like my father experienced when adopted, freed from a life of servitude to sin to a life of fellowship with God.

-Libby Cross

Today's Reading: Romans 8:16, Galatians 4:7

Journal Notes:

August 31, 2023**Heirs Of God
Romans 8:17**

“... and if children, heirs also ...” Romans 8:17a

In our minds, the idea of being heirs always means that someone (usually an older family member) has died before someone else receives the inheritance. I wondered how that could fit with verse 17 of Romans 8, since God is eternal, and will never die. Paul was the right person to write this epistle to the Romans, being a Roman himself and very knowledgeable about their laws and practices. So, I found it fascinating to discover that for the Romans, it was not looked at that way. Unger's Bible Dictionary quotes Sir Henry Maine, who says, “The notion (among the Romans) was that though the physical person of the deceased had perished, his legal personality had survived and descended, unimpaired to his heirs or co-heirs, in whom his identity ... was continued. (He) lived on in his heir or in the group of his co-heirs.” Sound similar to what Jesus told His disciples as He left them? He promised His Holy Spirit would come to live in them, not just live with them.

Another interesting point in Roman law was that the moment a child was born he was his father's heir. There was already a kind of co-partnership in regard to his inheritance. (“Already, not yet” as our pastor likes to say about the Kingdom!) Quoting Unger again, “The heir has not to wait for the moment of his father's decease. In and through his father he is already a participator in the family possessions. The father does not die but lives on forever in the family. Physically absent, he is spiritually present, not with so much as in his children. The phrase, ‘the heirs of God’ vividly describes the intimate and eternal union between the believer and God. The faithful soul possesses the kingdom of God immediately, not in anticipation of the kingdom of God on earth and in heaven.”

Wow! I don't know about you, but this makes me want to spend some serious quiet time thinking about all that is mine – right now! – as a child and therefore an heir of God!

What has He already granted to me that I am not taking advantage of, and why don't I? Don't let the enemy deceive you today. You are God's precious child, and there is much He has for you ... today. "His kingdom come, His will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." Amen?

-Wendy York

Today's Reading: Romans 8:17, Matthew 6:10, John 15:26-27, John 16:5-33, John 17:20-21

Journal Notes:

September 1, 2023

Hope And Glory
Romans 8:17

Romans 8 is one of my favorite scripture passages. Right in the middle of the book, Paul writes his climactic point. After showing that all have sinned and that the Law cannot save, after declaring that even our own desire to do good is not enough because we still do the things we don't want to, he boldly declares, **"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death."**

This IS glorious Good News! My sins are gone! I've been set free! And Paul continues; we are not just positionally changed into a right relationship with God, but are now relationally changed into His children--sons and daughters who can cry out to Him, "Abba, Father"-- Daddy.

Most of us would be satisfied to merely be saved from hell, to be given a quiet corner of heaven in which to spend eternity. Instead, God has made anyone who trusts in Jesus an heir to all the glories of God's kingdom in this world and in the next. Can you see why I love this passage so much?

But, I never noticed this one little clause tucked into verse 17. Perhaps I was too busy reveling in the goodness of God, in His grace and love, to notice the conditional clause. In verse 17b. Paul slips in something totally unexpected: **"provided we suffer with him." (ESV)**

What? Who among us enjoys suffering? Not me!

So, what does it mean to suffer with Christ? It may mean that, as Christians, we can expect to be persecuted (John 15:20). It may also mean that we die to sin on a spiritual level (Romans 6:5–8).

Or perhaps, this suffering is the suffering that Jesus experienced in daily life in a sin-ravaged world, something that every person lives through. Paul will describe this universal "groaning" of existence later, in verses 22–23. But, this we do know, that whatever our suffering is, may it be big or little, those in Christ will be glorified with Him, once this life has ended. For Christians, suffering is never meaningless (Romans 5:3–5), nor are we ever alone in our suffering.

Suffering, too, is part of Christian living, but our hope remains, as we anticipate the glory we will also share with Him.

-Jen Hooker

Today's Reading: Romans 8:17, John 15:20, Romans 6:5-8, Romans 5:3-5

Journal Notes:

September 2, 2023**An Heir Of The Master
Romans 8:17**

If you are a slave, you fear him. But if you are a son of the Master you are loved by Him, and you love Him.

How can you become a son of the Master?

You are brought into the Master's family by adoption. When you receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior, the Holy Spirit brings about your adoption into the Master's family. Then, we can call the Master "Abba," "Daddy," and "Father."

Did you stop and think? If I am the Master's child, then I am an heir! I share the great riches of the Master! Not only that, but I am a co-heir with Christ! We share all things with Jesus. We share His sufferings in order that we may also share in His glory.

Think of the great riches you can share with Jesus, the Master. He forgave our sins. He carries our burdens. After years of PTSD from the Vietnam War, I asked Jesus to take it away. I gave it to Him and He carries that burden for me and I no longer have nightmares of Vietnam.

-Frank Cross

Today's Reading: Romans 8:17, John 1:12

Journal Notes:

September 3, 2023**BREATHING THE GOSPEL****Romans 8:18-27**

Before digging into this week's text, start the week off with a simple reading and reflection on the text we are covering this week.

Breathe in...the Word of God

As you read through this week's text. Try not to get distracted by questions or ideas; just get a feel for the overall message of the text. As you breathe in the Word and finish the reading, ask yourself: **What is God speaking to me today through this text?**

Breathe out...your words to God

Don't forget to spend some time reflecting on the text and articulating how today's reading is moving you! If you are able, take some time to journal your prayer and talk to God about how you hope to apply his Word to your life!

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. - James 1:23 (NIV)

Today's Reading: Romans 8:18-27

Journal Notes:

September 4, 2023**You Ain't Seen Nothin' Yet**
Romans 8:18

Romans 8:18 “ *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.*”

When asked to do this devotional, I was grateful for the small verse...but WHOA...I was wrong! (once again). This verse is so packed; so, let's start unpacking!

It begins with the preposition “for,” which means there is going to be an explanation of the verse before! In verse 17, it introduces the “heirs with Christ” (believers) to suffering and glory. The Christian will not have one without the other! I really like the glory part, but not the suffering part, to be honest! And then, Paul had to add an “s” to the word suffering! It is not a one-time deal for us! (shucks!) The “sufferings” Paul is speaking of are not only physical things, but also things believers suffer because we are followers of Jesus. This suffering is for our entire life, which Paul describes as “this present time.” This suffering is real and painful. In 2 Timothy 3:12, Paul tells Timothy, “*Everyone who wants to live a Godly life in Christ Jesus WILL suffer persecution.*” Paul knew this first hand; he was beaten, shipwrecked, stoned, chained, imprisoned, robbed, starved, hungry, naked and cold, along with experiencing the daily pressure of concern for the churches. ALL for a higher purpose. But why??

God has a purpose for our suffering. We suffer so we can be identified with Christ. How can we identify with Christ if our lives are filled with ease? Christ was beaten, mocked, spit on, rejected, hated, He took on all our pain, and bore all our sins. To truly know Christ, we must experience suffering. We share in Christ's suffering so we can share in His life. But how??

Suffering keeps our focus off this world and helps us to focus on the Glory that lies ahead. It's part of our sanctification process. (I'd kinda like to skip that part?) In suffering, I ask, “Why me? Why now? It's not fair! What for? I didn't deserve this!” But, in reality, why not me? And why do I question God who is Holy and True in ALL His ways and knows EXACTLY what He is doing in my life?

My focus is all wrong; suffering points me to my human limitation; it drops me to my knees in prayer and dependence on God. Through suffering, believers can encourage others, and in that way, we can point others to Christ, as the source of healing and salvation.

We face resistance every day in our Christian life; we live in a fallen, crazy, insane world. We have sickness, death, troubles, flies that buzz around in the house; the list could go on and on. That is why Paul addresses the reality of suffering. He doesn't pull any punches; suffering is certain, but, it will be used by God for positive purposes in our lives. He gives us the supernatural grace that will carry us through with Him! But one day.....it will end!

So.... enough about the suffering, because it is not even worthy to compare with what's waiting for us! Let's get to the "Glory which is to be revealed to us!"

What is that?? It is Heaven, and it is eternal. We can't see into it yet, but we do have a few glimpses in the Bible, small visions that tell us about this Glory. And as Paul writes, one day it will be revealed to us! We will be face to face with Jesus, who knew suffering more than any and didn't deserve one bit of it...no wonder we cannot compare our suffering with this Glory! This is not because we have earned it or because of anything we have done, but because He chose us out of this world to be with Him forever. What a "GLORY-US" day!!! The bottom line is: we are here on earth, and we can take a quick peek at sufferings, but we need to gaze on our future GLORY! What a prize is waiting for us!

-Touché Brunner

Today's Reading: Romans 8:18

Journal Notes:

September 5, 2023**Glorious Freedom
Romans 8:19-21**

The captain announced to the passengers, all immigrants, that they would soon be approaching New York harbor and all rushed to the bow of the ship to get their first glimpse of their new homeland. Each person stood craning their neck, eager to catch sight of the harbor and the famous Lady Liberty. In their longing gaze was hope, as they anxiously, but patiently, awaited arrival in a country offering peace and freedom.

Paul uses creation as a picture of the believers' patient endurance. Similar to the waiting immigrants, we eagerly anticipate the hope set before us, much like creation (nature) anxiously longs for an end to its sentence. What sentence is that? When Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden, God pronounced a curse on the ground, putting the earth and all of creation under a sentence of bondage and decay (Genesis 3:17 and Romans 8:21).

Creation is groaning under this curse and longs to be released. Verse 18 gives us the context for these verses: We can consider our present sufferings as nothing because we anticipate "the glory that is to be revealed in us." Paul is talking about the end times when the sons of man will be revealed. The word 'revealed' is the Greek word apocalypse, meaning "all things will be made known." Hope and expectation are tied together in the revelation.

So, just what is Paul's message in these verses?

In chapter 8, he has been writing about the war between our natures, and yes, we have a new Spirit-led nature, but the battle continues. Paul wants us to have the assurance that there is a set time when the war will be over and we will receive our inheritance. Even creation has been promised a new start. At this time, the children of God will be revealed, meaning "fully made known." We are children of God now, (see verses 15-17), but we are nothing like what we shall be when we are gathered together for eternity.

John wrote, “Now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” 1 John 3:2

Paul wrote about this time of liberation and freedom for our bodies in 1 Corinthians 15:35-58 and Philippians 3:21. He describes a body raised in glory, free from the shackles of sin and decay. In Revelation 21:1, John writes of a new heaven and a new earth; all things will be made new. Creation will be set free, even as we are free. Paul is encouraging us to keep our eyes on the prize while we patiently endure the dangers, toils, and snares of this present age.

- Jinet Troost

Today's Reading: Romans 8:19-21, Genesis 3:17, Romans 8:21, 1 Corinthians 15:35-58, 1 John 3:2, Philippians 3:21, Revelation 1:1

Journal Notes:

September 6, 2023**Longing For The New Creation
Romans 8:22-23**

In the Apostles' Creed, we acknowledge that we believe in "the resurrection of the dead, and the life everlasting."

Why does it say that we believe in "the resurrection of the dead," rather than saying something like "the soul going to heaven?"

Isn't the Christian hope that some disembodied part of ourselves goes to heaven when we die, and we then spend eternity with God there? Not so! The Christian hope is in our embodied resurrection from the dead. The excellent world God made will be redeemed, not escaped from. Though when we die, those who are in Christ will be with Him, our ultimate hope is in the resurrection of our bodies. Like Christ was raised on the third day, we too will be raised when heaven and earth become one and all of creation is fully reconciled to God. Until then, we have received the "first fruits" of the Holy Spirit. As Christians, God has already begun the work of reconciling us to Himself through the Spirit, but we will continue to wait, to see the whole world reconciled to Him as well. This anticipation of the new heavens and new earth should create in us a sense of longing for the glory of the Kingdom of God to become fully realized. This is what Paul is talking about in today's reading when he says that we, "groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies."

Longing for "what is yet to be" can be painful, but it can also be good. N.T. Wright put it well when he wrote:

"The whole creation is in labour, longing for God's new world to be born. The church is called to share that pain and that hope. The church is not to be apart from the pain of the world; it is to be in prayer at precisely the place where the world is in pain. That is part of our calling, our high but strange role within God's purposes for new creation."

Because we know that all creation will one day be redeemed, we know that God loves it. Because we know it isn't as it ought to be, we can long for the better things God has in store for it. Because we have been given the Spirit, we can be agents of healing and redemption in this world, as we long for the world to come.

-Wesley Viau

Today's Reading: Romans 8:22-23

Journal Notes:

September 7, 2023**Hope****Romans 8:24-25**

Hope... is a small word with powerful strength and meaning. And yet, as it is often used today, it has a paper-thin meaning. For example, “ I hope the movie is good,” or “ I hope you like it,” or, “ I hope this all works out.” This “hope so,” “perchance,” and “maybe, if it happens” kind of hope is based on whimsy, on fleeting feelings. Paul, however, is speaking of a better kind of hope, one that is deeply rooted and grounded, one that we can be confident in and in which we have full assurance and trust. This hope, our hope, is in and of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the assurance, the Rock on which the foundation of our faith and hope stands.

Trust in the LORD forever, For in God the LORD, we have an everlasting Rock. Isaiah 26:4.

There is an expectancy, a longing, to hope, whether based on whimsy or grounded in truth. In either case, the outcome is not yet realized. Paul asks, “Who hopes for what he already has?”

As believers in Christ, we eagerly await the completion of our redemption. We have the assurance that the promise of our salvation has been sealed in us by the Holy Spirit, the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead. And so, we wait in confidence, in knowledge, and in truth.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance

that is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 1 Peter 1:3-5

-Laurie Harry

Today's Reading: Romans 8:24-25, Isaiah 26:4

Journal Notes:

September 8, 2023**Help In Our Weakness****Romans 8:26**

Romans 8:22 states that the whole creation groans. Verse 23 also says that we who have the first fruits of the Spirit also groan within ourselves. These groans are not complaints, but rather they are the sighs of one who longs for glory. Now, as we come to 8:26, we see that the Spirit makes intercession (defined as rescuing someone in trouble) for us, with groaning, that cannot be uttered.

We tend to try to avoid any signs of weakness and thus, we have the false assumption that we are pretty much self-sufficient. That is until God allows trials in our lives that drive us to seek Him out in times of desperation, need, loss, sickness, and the like. And it is often in times of these predicaments that we are at a loss for words as we approach our Father in prayer.

Ah, but God does not leave us wallowing in our despair. Just as Jesus told Peter that Satan had asked to sift him as wheat, Jesus told Peter that He prayed that his faith would not fail. As Paul boasted in his weakness, so we should follow his example, as difficult as it seems.

What a comfort it is to know that we have Jesus interceding for us in heaven and the Holy Spirit doing the same in our hearts, with groanings that our Father in heaven knows full well.

Romans 8:26 says:

“Likewise 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 us with groaning's which cannot be uttered.”

-Marty DeJager

Today's Reading: Romans 8:26, Romans 8:22-23

Journal Notes:

September 9, 2023**Loss For Words****Romans 8:27**

I love the song, “Word of God Speak” by Mercy Me. The song is about wanting to hear from God through His Word. As I read chapter 8 in Romans, this song resonates with me because the first line and the last lines declare, “Finding myself at a loss for words and the funny thing is, it’s okay...”. It is this phrase that sums up the great chasm between my spiritual knowledge and God’s.

In Romans chapter 8, Paul compares the futility of following the law (which brings sin and death) to being set free by the law of the Spirit of life, which came through Christ Jesus and His sacrifice. Following the old law is futile because we continue to struggle with the sinful nature as long as we are not fully submitted to the control of Christ Jesus.

When we submit our lives to Christ, God is glorified. This has been the plan since creation. The gift of life that Christ gives brings us to a place of communion with the Almighty! If we have accepted Christ as our Lord and Savior, we can now come into His presence and speak directly to Him through prayer, even before we are with Him in heaven. What an amazing and awesome thought! In the presence of God, we find ourselves inexperienced, vulnerable, and unable to express all that we think and feel. It is common to be dumbfounded in the presence of someone great. The feeling of being with the Almighty God can be compared to the feeling we have when we lack the ability to speak the same language as someone else.

I can tell you how humbling it is when I am trying to help my students and my translation sounds like I am 3 years old. It is in this state that our Loving Father reaches out once again and provides a way for us to communicate beyond our ability.

He allows the Holy Spirit, our Comforter, to translate for us so that even our groanings, which have no words, can be shared with Him. In a time when we may sound to Him like an infant, spiritually, the Holy Spirit continues to guide and make a way for our awkward communication.

To be okay in the presence of the One is beyond all we can ask or think. He gives us the opportunity to come boldly to Him because He makes it possible.

-Gaylyn Mott

Today's Reading: Romans 8:27

Journal Notes:

September 10, 2023

BREATHING THE GOSPEL

Romans 8:28-30

Before digging into this week's text, start the week off with a simple reading and reflection on the text we are covering this week.

Breathe in...the Word of God

As you read through this week's text. Try not to get distracted by questions or ideas; just get a feel for the overall message of the text. As you breathe in the Word and finish the reading, ask yourself: **What is God speaking to me today through this text?**

Breathe out...your words to God

Don't forget to spend some time reflecting on the text and articulating how today's reading is moving you! If you are able, take some time to journal your prayer and talk to God about how you hope to apply his Word to your life!

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. - James 1:23 (NIV)

Today's Reading: Romans 8:28-30

Journal Notes:

September 11, 2023

Life: Pleasure And Pain

Romans 8:28

Romans 8:28 says:

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.”

Every pleasure and pain in our lives will work together for good. How can it be?

Paul is declaring with certainty and authority that ALL THINGS in our lives will work together for our good as we live embracing God, our unwavering, immovable foundation. He is our rock and our fortress. Paul further describes WHO the people are that will receive this tremendous promise.

“Those who love God” will receive this assurance. As Jesus says, “Love God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.” Matthew 22:37

“What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived” – the things God has prepared for those who love him?” 1 Corinthians 2:9

God’s blessing and goodness are upon those who love Him.

Next, Paul details who are the beneficiaries of this promise: those who are “called according to His purpose.” It is God who calls us from darkness to light. From death to life. God loved us first and then planted love in our hearts, so we would love Him back. God pursues us. He reached down, found us, and grafted us into His family of God.

So, we are back to the beginning question, “Can every pleasure and pain work together for our good?” Paul sums it up in 2 Corinthians 3:18: **We are all going “from glory to glory.” “But we all with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.”**

As we move from salvation to sanctification, God is progressively transforming us. What is the good that all things are working together for? It is to become like Jesus, to be conformed to the image of God's Son. There is no higher purpose than to be like our Lord Jesus Christ.

Philippians 1:6 says, "For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus."

-Lisa Drainville

Today's Reading: Romans 8:28, Matthew 22:37, 1 Corinthians 2:9, 2 Corinthians 3:18, Philippians 1:6

Journal Notes:

September 12, 2023**God Has Taken Hold of You
Romans 8:29**

Predestination has been a difficult concept for many to accept, including Luther, Calvin, and Edwards. However, being yoked to the authority of the Word, each eventually realized the folly of their doubting; they could not escape what is widely embedded throughout Scripture. So, eventually, not only did they embrace the concept, but each became profound proponents of this mighty doctrine.

But, alas, this doctrine flies in the face of a most-cherished American ideal – freedom! Truth is: God is so mighty that He is able to work His sovereign will over our lives without violating our free will. Yet, for many, that is not a satisfactory answer; they still question this concept of predestination.

Theologian W. Robert Godfrey asserts that “Paul wanted people to see that predestination is the answer, not the question, and that it is the comfort, not the doubt or worry. The doctrine of predestination says, ‘God has taken hold of you, and He’ll never let go.’

The real requirement, then, is to help people see how comforting it is.” Consider how Jesus promotes predestination with these comforting words: “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.” John 10: 27-29

**“For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.”
Romans 8:29**

-Drek Beardsley

Today's Reading: Romans 8:29, John 10:27-29

Journal Notes:

September 13, 2023**Predestination****Romans 8:30**

Have you ever heard or said the phrases, “Everything happens for a reason,” or “It was meant to be?” Believers and unbelievers alike use these phrases. Why? Because when we observe the world around us, it appears there is some sort of plan in place.

As Bible-believing Christians, when we are reading Scripture, we will come across the word “predestined.” The question is not IF God predestines. The Bible is clear He does. The question is HOW He predestined. There are brothers and sisters in Christ with different views on this doctrine. Some say that because God knows the future and sees how people will behave in particular circumstances He has predestined His plan. Others believe that God predestined or foreordained all events, regardless of our choices, by the counsel of His divine wisdom within the Godhead. A powerful passage in Acts 4 in regards to Jesus’s own death on the cross reads,

“For truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.”

The most horrific event in history was foreordained. Now, friends, this does not mean that God causes individuals to sin in order to accomplish His plan, but according to the passage, God uses the choices and actions of sinful people to accomplish it.

The story of Joseph with his brothers, in the book of Genesis, is beautifully summarized when Joseph tells his brothers, “You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good.”

Now, in Romans 8, this predestining relates to us. **“For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers.”**

God predestined us to be like Jesus by His Spirit. We are not only saved by God but we are ultimately transformed by Him to be like our Savior. It was meant to be, and everything does happen for a reason. God's reason.

-Eddie Hoekstra

Today's Reading: Romans 8:30, Acts 4:27-28

Journal Notes:

September 14, 2023**Called!****Romans 8:30**

In a generic sense, what does it mean to be "called?" A person may feel called to a certain profession, to serve our country in the military, or to be a mom. In each case, there is a sense that from somewhere or someone outside, a person is drawn to this calling. Maybe they sense a higher power wants them to pursue this calling. It results in a sense of purpose and hopefully, effectiveness. In our study today, Romans 8:30 declares that in Christ we are called. This verse is referred to as the "Unbreakable Chain of Salvation" because God does all this. Christians are predestined, then called, then justified, and ultimately, glorified. But what does it mean that we are called?

The meaning in scripture is not too dissimilar from the generic sense. Our calling is outside ourselves, namely from God, and He causes us to want to respond to this calling. He will give me the power and desire to be effective in that calling.

An important point is that our calling, for those who are in Christ, is what is theologically described as our "effectual calling." In other words, the calling is effective, resulting in the purpose of the calling. Jesus tells a parable in Matthew 22 that helps us understand effectual calling. The parable is about a banquet a king throws, but all the invited guests refuse to come. Then, the king sends his servants to invite others, who do come. One man is not dressed properly and is ejected from the banquet because he was not dressed properly, proving he was not supposed to be there. Then, Jesus says this peculiar thing that helps us understand effectual calling...

"For many are called, but few are chosen." Matthew 22:14

In this verse, the NIV translates "called" as "invited." The calling intends to get people to the banquet but proves ineffective. Jesus' word "chosen" conveys effectual calling. Not only is a person called or invited, but that calling is effective. The person called becomes Jesus' wedding guest and will be at His wedding feast in heaven, in glory! (Glorified, but that is for another devotional.)

This begs the question, “How do I know if I’m called?” There are a few quick measures of effectual calling.

1) You responded to Jesus’ call! You said, “Yes” to Him and are following Him. Like Peter, James, and John, you put away your own way of life to follow Him (Mark 1:16-20).

2) You are seeking to be effective in that calling. You walk with Jesus to be like Jesus, just as you are destined to be (Romans 8:29). You are working out your salvation (Philippians 2:12-13).

3) You know in your heart, by the Spirit, that you are His Child (Romans 8:16).

What are you to do, then? Rejoice that you are called to be His; live for Him every day; and seek to share this good news with those around you!

-Doug Drainville

Today's Reading: Romans 8:30, Matthew 22:14, Mark 1:16-20, Romans 8:29, Philippians 2:12-13, Romans 8:16

Journal Notes:

September 15, 2023**God Knows Us**
Romans 8:30

Something I struggle with daily and had to learn throughout my Christian walk is that God knows us more intimately than we know ourselves. As our Creator, He knows each decision we will make in life before we even make it. He set a path for our lives before we entered our mother's womb. God knew who would trust in Him. He chose to bestow His grace upon all those who believe in the death, burial, and resurrection of His Son, Jesus.

In Romans 8:30, Paul gives a complete explanation of the process of salvation for humanity. Paul explains that God has called upon, justified, and glorified those He has predestined, to use them for His divine purpose. God has a plan, and while we might not always understand what He's doing, we are called to trust in the process. The process of sanctification can be painful at times, but this is part of the refinement. We are being shaped and molded into the image of His perfect Son. The gospels tell us in Matthew 26:39, Mark 14:36, Luke 22:42 and John 6:38, that even Jesus, while praying in the garden of Gethsemane, struggled with being used for God's glory.

Paul writes Romans 8:30 in the past tense because, in God's eyes, our glorification is already complete, and we must trust in His process to be justified through our faith in Jesus Christ.

-Tim Zentner

Today's Reading: Romans 8:30, Matthew 26:39, Mark 14:36, Luke 22:42, John 6:38

Journal Notes:

September 16, 2023

Romans 8:30d says: “And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified **he also glorified.**”

**Already Glorified?
Romans 8:30d**

Today, we're continuing to discuss Romans 8:30, but this time we are focusing on the part of the verse that is about being glorified. Glory is such a common word in Christian circles that we often don't realize that it can be understood in many different ways. One common way to think about glory is to consider it as something that happens or is given to you when you die. You may have heard someone saying something like, “They're going to glory” as another way to talk about going to heaven or being raised in the resurrection. There is good reason to think about glory this way; for example, in 1 Corinthians 15:42-43, Paul talks about those who are in Christ as being “raised in glory” at the resurrection. In this sense, glory is something that is given to those who will be raised in the future. Here, however, in Romans 8:30, Paul talks about glory as something given to believers in the past tense, which is to say that those who are in Christ have already been glorified in some sense.

Earlier in the book of Romans, Paul spends some time explaining the human condition; in Romans 1:23 Paul says that we “exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images [i.e. idols].” As we know from Genesis, all people are made in the image of God and the implication of that is that we are put in a position to rule and steward His creation (see Genesis 1:26-30). When humanity began worshiping idols, rather than the one true God, we subverted the created order, exchanged the glory given to us as being made in His image, and compromised our ability to live that role well. The Bible makes it clear that it's wrong to worship images because we are the image of God!

Following Jesus frees us from that idolatry and allows us to become “conformed to the image of his son” (Romans 8:29). God's glory is being restored to us even now! So, how can we live this? We take seriously the implications of being made in the image of God by ruling creation well, in order to join in God's work of redemption.

And how can we rule well? By looking at how Jesus did it. Haley Jacob, whose work on this subject inspired this devotion, has pointed out that Jesus' model for this was "dominion via self-sacrifice." Following His lead, we ought to serve others as Jesus served us and in this way, the world will know the glory of God (John 13:12-15).

-Wes Viau

Today's Reading: Romans 8:30d, 1 Corinthians 15:42-43, Genesis 1:26-30, John 13:12-15

Journal Notes:

September 17, 2023

BREATHING THE GOSPEL

Romans 8:31-39

Before digging into this week's text, start the week off with a simple reading and reflection on the text we are covering this week.

Breathe in...the Word of God

As you read through this week's text. Try not to get distracted by questions or ideas; just get a feel for the overall message of the text. As you breathe in the Word and finish the reading, ask yourself: **What is God speaking to me today through this text?**

Breathe out...your words to God

Don't forget to spend some time reflecting on the text and articulating how today's reading is moving you! If you are able, take some time to journal your prayer and talk to God about how you hope to apply his Word to your life!

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. - James 1:23 (NIV)

Today's Reading: Romans 8:31-39

Journal Notes:

September 18, 2023**God's Unmatchable Love**
Romans 8:31

Some days we feel like the whole world is against us. Our day is not going the way we planned. The water heater broke; we can't find a job; we have tension with our significant other; our body aches with pain. We may even feel like our minds and our emotions betray us.

God wants to remind you of something today: **HE IS FOR YOU!**

Jeremiah 32:17 says: **"Ah, Lord God! It is You who have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for You."**

Oftentimes, we hesitate to step out in faith and do the things we are called to do. We limit ourselves to our human capability! But God's Word is clear: the One who flung the stars into the sky and calls them each by name also calls EACH of us by name. He cares about both our enormous and our little problems and wants us to be bold in our faith because He is our strength and power.

God is so mighty and so powerful and He is on OUR side. When we get caught up in the business of life and the chaos of this world overwhelms us, we tend to look at our circumstances and see a giant mountain ahead, but God sees a molehill. We must remember to call upon our omnipotent God because He is for us today and always.

Psalms 34:17 says: **"The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; He delivers them from all their troubles."**

-Alyse Drainville

Today's Reading: Romans 8:31

Journal Notes:

September 19, 2023**Prosperity Gospel**
Romans 8:32

This verse can easily be taken out of context to insinuate that we can have anything we want because God promises it. But, as we take a step back and read the verse in context, it is clear that is not what Paul is saying.

God gave up his own Son for all. So often, we just casually talk about this incredible sacrifice, as if we are entitled to it. We hold up a cross, or wear or display it, to signify our faith. That is great, but the reality of the cross is ugly by earthly standards. It is only by understanding HIS incredible GIFT that we can celebrate the cross. Any of us who are parents can not imagine giving up our “perfect” child (though none of them are perfect). How much more amazing that God gave HIS perfect SON for our sake! Sometimes, we just need to stop and focus on that incredible love and sacrifice, made for all of us who are broken (which is ALL OF US).

Who is “us all?” Does that mean all mankind or more specifically, God’s chosen and elect? That is answered in verses 28-30. God **did** give up His own Son for all mankind, but His free gift of grace must be accepted for one to be a part of “us all.”

Once we accept this free gift, God, with His Son, will graciously give us all things; Our Triune God has our backs. The gift is not material possessions, like health, wealth, or notoriety. The gift is the fruits of the Spirit: peace and comfort in our daily walk with our Savior.

In Matthew 6:19-21 we read about our treasures from Christ’s own words. These “things” that God promises are not earthly physical treasures, but spiritual treasures. We all need to be cognizant of this in our daily lives that we only worship ONE God. Do you want to put your trust in Prosperity, or in the truth of the Gospel. God, in His providence, may or may not provide some of these possessions for our enjoyment, but they are all HIS and to be enjoyed according to HIS will and not our own.

Don't fall into the trap believing that you are entitled to anything on your own: Only by God's grace (the Gospel) can we truly enjoy each day on this earth, with the anticipation of spending eternity worshiping our sacrificial Savior.

Today, I challenge you to tell someone how exciting it is to be a part of "US ALL."

-Simon Vander Woude

Today's Reading: Romans 8:32, Romans 8:28-30, Matthew 6:19-21

Journal Notes:

September 20, 2023**God's Got This**
Romans 8:33-34

To me, this passage, Romans 8:33-34, is one of the most extraordinary passages in the Bible. God, through Paul, outlines the whole Gospel and describes God's complete protection of us. God gave His only Son, which shows how much He loves us (John 3:16). Christ died for us; He has forgiven us of our sins and He gave us the Holy Spirit to teach us. If we are His, no power on Earth or in Heaven or Hell can prevent His bringing us to Himself. We have God's stamp of protection, our seal of eternity.

Do you ever think you are not good enough for God? That He won't save you? Do you think salvation is for everyone else, but not for you? If God gave His only Son for you, He isn't going to hold back salvation. If Christ gave His life for you, He isn't going to turn around and condemn you. He will not withhold anything. His redeeming grace is a comfort to us and provides us with peace. God has a plan. When you become a Christian, God declares you righteous. Therefore, believers are protected by Christ's crucifixion, resurrection, exaltation, and intercession. You cannot be found guilty. The world will try and tear you down and Satan would love to make you believe you are not good enough, but we have assurance through the Word of God that we are protected. The One (God) who justifies is also the one who judges (John 3:18). Jesus is at God's right hand presenting our case (Hebrews 4:14-15).

Christ's love for us, not our love for Him, is our power and strength. His love is our safeguard against the difficulties of life. When we are a Child of God, no one, nothing, can separate us from Him. Romans 8:38 guarantees this promise. Reading God's word gives us knowledge, but trusting God is our responsibility. Our faith gives us the confidence that nothing can keep us from our God.

We have to remember God is in control. Let God handle it. Glorify Him in all we do.

-Mary Lea Bradford

Today's Reading: Romans 8:33-34, John 3:16, John 3:18, Hebrews 4:14-15, Romans 8:38

Journal Notes:

September 21, 2023

Who Shall Separate Us From The Love Of Christ?

Romans 8:35-36

Romans 8: 35 starts with a question, **“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?”**

If we are honest with ourselves, this is probably a question we have asked, not because we want to test God, but because we think God thinks like us. We experience separation from others as a result of bad things in our lives. So, similarly, we believe there must also be an eventual breaking point for God. There has to be something that can separate us from Him. But, the truth is, God's ways are higher and greater than ours. His forgiveness is constant. His love is deeper and wider than we can understand.

Paul, in the next verse, lists some of the things Christians can expect to experience: trouble, hardship, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, sword; all these events force believers to face death. He lists them so we will not be surprised when we experience such things; he wants to make sure we know he is not saying, “There are some horrible things that could separate you from the love of Christ.”

No. Nothing can separate us from Christ's love. This is fantastic news because God's love for the believer is indissoluble. Nothing can separate us!

I love the way John Piper puts it.

“Christ's love is not a memory. It is a moment-by-moment action of the living Son of God.” A wife might say of her deceased husband, **“Nothing will separate me from his love;”** she means that the memory of his love will be sweet and powerful all her life. But that is not what Paul means here. In verse 34, it says plainly, **“Christ Jesus is the one who died — more than that, who was raised — who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.”**

The reason Paul can say that nothing will separate us from the love of Christ is because Christ is alive and is still loving us now. He is at the right hand of God and is, therefore, ruling for us. And he is interceding for us; which means he is seeing to it that His finished work of redemption does, in fact, save us hour by hour and brings us safe to eternal joy. His love is not a memory. It is a moment-by-moment action of the omnipotent, living Son of God to bring us to everlasting joy.

Take time today to remind yourself of Christ's love for you and be reminded He will always love you!

-Justin Lopes

Today's Reading: Romans 8:35-36

Journal Notes:

September 22, 2023**The Battle Belongs To The Lord**
Romans 8:37

Just recently, I had the privilege to see the actual battlefield at the Golan Heights in Israel. We got to hear first-hand how the Syrians snuck up on them and started to overpower them...many lives were lost in this fierce battle. We heard how Israel had only two tanks left, and only a few fighting men—the enemy was closing in on them with lots of men and equipment. They were so close to each other that they were actually looking into the barrels of each other's tanks! Israel's position was weak and hopeless, with nowhere to turn. They knew that the Syrians had access to their radios, so in a last attempt to do something, they sent out a command for more tanks and men to come to the front line (tanks which they did not have). To their surprise, the Syrians did an about face and fled the scene!

From this story, one can only conclude, "The Battle Belongs to the Lord!"

Just as in this battle, we must also hand over all our battles to the Lord. Big or small, the Lord wants them all. When all seems hopeless, He is our hope and He loves us so much that He died for us!

Romans 8:37 says, "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loves us!"

A favorite verse to add to this promise is Revelation 3:21: "To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on the throne."

-Gerrilynn De Jager

Today's Reading: Romans 8:37, Revelation 3:21

Journal Notes:

September 23, 2023**The Love of God**
Romans 8:38-39

These last two verses of Romans 8 provide a beautiful and powerful closing to this epic chapter! Paul wants YOU the reader to think deeply about the inescapable, unreasonable, unbreakable love of God! One of my favorite hymns, The Love of God, beautifully illustrates the Love that Paul writes about in these two verses...

Could we with ink the ocean fill,
and were the skies of parchment made;
were ev'ry stalk on earth a quill,
and ev'ryone a scribe by trade;
to write the love of God above
would drain the ocean dry;
nor could the scroll contain the whole,
though stretched from sky to sky.
O love of God, how rich and pure!
How measureless and strong!
It shall forevermore endure—
the saints' and angels' song.

As you read through these closing verses, don't miss the richness and depth of these truths. Read through these verses slowly; take your time on this one!

-Logan Beardsley

Today's Reading: Romans 8:38-39

Journal Notes:

