

The first four verses of chapter 8 should be connected to chapter 7, linking with the expression of hope, *“I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

Romans 7:24-25 (NASB)

²⁴ Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? ²⁵ I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

Romans 8:1-4 (NASB)

¹ Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. ³ For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

These opening verses of chapter 8 form a summing up of all the truth previously unfolded in this part of the epistle beginning with chapter **Romans 5:12**.

The last part of verse one is an interruption (which properly belongs to verse **Romans 8:4**), obscuring the sense of the great truth expressed in the opening words:

8:1 'There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.'

- This statement requires no qualifying clause.
- It does not depend on our walk.
- It is true of all who are in Christ, and to be in Him means to be of the new creation.
- It was man's innate aversion to sovereign grace, that brought these restricting words into the text of some versions.
- It seemed too much to believe that freedom from condemnation depended on being in Christ Jesus and not upon our walking after the Spirit.

A clearer reading of verse two would probably be,

²“*The Spirit’s law(principle) (which is life in Christ Jesus) has delivered me from the law of sin and death.*”

That is, the **Spirit’s law of life in Christ Jesus** received at new birth is put in contrast to the Law of sin and death against which the believer struggles in vain, as long as he wrestles in his own strength. Ironside

We are brought to God “*in Christ Jesus,*” and so all question of judgment is forever settled. It can never be raised again.

This leaves the believer free to be occupied with pleasing God,

- not as a means of escaping the divine displeasure, but
- out of love to Him who has brought us to Himself in peace.

3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

What the law, with all its demanding and solemn warnings and threats could not accomplish (produce a life of holiness, because of the weakness and unreliability of the flesh), is now realized in the power of the new life by the Spirit.

Victory comes through turning from self to Christ risen. The Spirit's law principle brings blessing because it gives power to him who did not have it before. **It is a new principle**: life (not in or of ourselves, but) in Christ Jesus.

This new life is imparted to the believer, and in the power of this new life he is called to walk. ***"It is God who worketh in us both the willing and the doing of His good pleasure."***

⁴ so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

It's a relief to the bewildered, troubled soul, oppressed with a sense of his own unworthiness, and distressed because of frequent failures to live up to his own highest resolves, **when he learns that God sees him in Christ Jesus**, free from all condemnation.

- He may shout, **“But I feel so condemned.”**
- In the realm of faith this is not the question. **It is not how I feel but it is what God says.**
- He sees me in Christ risen, forever beyond the reach of condemnation.
- God has pronounced the believer free from condemnation whether he fully rises to the glorious fact or not.

If you doubt,

- Look away then altogether from self and your *condition*
- Look away from entrapments and feelings to Christ risen,
- Your sins were once put on Him at the cross
- See yourself in Him, exalted there at God's right hand

- ❖ Christ would not be risen if the sin question was not settled to the divine satisfaction. The fact that He is risen and that you are seen by God in Him is the fullest possible testimony to your freedom from all condemnation.
- ❖ The law demanded righteousness from a man whose nature was utterly corrupt and perverted, and which could only bring forth corrupt fruit.
- ❖ The Holy Spirit has produced a new nature in the man in Christ, and linked with this new life are new affections and desires so that he gladly responds to the will of the Lord as revealed in His Word.

In verses **Romans 8:5-27** Paul opens a whole range of truth in connection with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, who is the only true *Minister* of Christ on earth.

We see that there are two exactly opposite principles to be considered, or two opposed standards of life.

⁵ For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

⁶ For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,

- Those who are after the flesh, that is, the unsaved, are dominated by the fleshly nature
- Contrasted to this they who are after the Spirit - believers

7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able *to do so*,

- ❑ It is not that the flesh is, or ever will be, in any sense improved.
- ❑ The flesh in the oldest and godliest Christian is as incorrigibly evil as the flesh in the vilest sinner.
- ❑ All efforts to reform or sterilize the flesh will be proven unsuccessful.
- ❑ The law only demonstrates its incurable wickedness. And this explains why the natural man is so utterly unprofitable.

8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

- ❑ It is not that man, does not know right from wrong, or, knowing it, is powerless to do right.
- ❑ To say he is ignorant would be to declare that man is not a responsible creature but is simply the victim of a hard cruel fatalism.
- ❑ But knowing the evil and approving the good the natural man inclines toward the wrong and fails to do the right, because he is dominated by sin in the flesh, to which he yields his members as instruments of unrighteousness, as we have seen in chapter six,
- ❑ As he is powerless to change his nature he therefore cannot really please God.

9 However, 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 does not belong to Him.

But it is different with the believer.

- He is no longer in the flesh since he was born of God.
- No longer as being of the family of the first man, and
- No longer under the dominion of the old nature.
- He is now in the Spirit, and the Spirit of God dwells in him

One without the Spirit of Christ is none of His, or *“he does not belong to Him.”*

It is not merely the personality of Christ that is in view, but the Spirit of Christ is the Holy Spirit whom Christ has sent into the world and who indwells all His redeemed ones in this stewardship of grace. This produces a Christlike disposition in the one so indwelt.

But if Christ (by the Spirit) be in us, He alone is the source of our power for holiness.

¹⁰ If Christ is in you, though **the body is dead** because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.

The body is to be considered as though lifeless and inert so far as ability to produce fruit for God is concerned.

Our new life must be of the Spirit. *“The Spirit is life because of righteousness.”*

This is not to ignore or undervalue the body.

It too has been purchased by the blood of Christ, and we have the promise that-----

¹¹ But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

But the body is for the Lord, and the same Holy Spirit who raised up Jesus from the dead will eventually raise us up, by giving resurrection life to these mortal bodies.

He is speaking of the body of the living believer who has the new life now, in a body subject to death. It shall put on immortality at the Lord's return.

12 So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—
13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the POWER of the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

Since God has claimed us for this, **we owe nothing to the flesh. We are not its debtors to do its service. To do so would only mean to die** (it is the great fact to which he calls attention that “**sin when it is finished brings forth death**”).

The body is viewed as the vehicle through which the flesh acts. It incites the natural appetite to lawless indulgence.

The Spirit-led man must be on his guard against this. He must and will put to death these unlawful desires. Colossians 3:5

¹⁴“*as many as are led (controlled) by the Spirit of God, they are the **sons of God.**”*”

To walk in the flesh is to walk contrary to the whole principle of Christianity.

It is by this life in the Spirit’s power we mortify the deeds of the body and manifest our new life and relationship.

This is the Spirit of adoption, of adopted sons-acknowledgment, whereby we automatically lift our hearts to God in the cry of the conscious child-----

¹⁵ For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"

Adoption is to be distinguished from new birth.

- All born in his family are children.
- Only those **adopted** were recognized as sons.
- So, we have been born again by the word of God and thus are children, as were all believers from Abel down.
- But as indwelt by the Spirit we are **adopted sons**, and this will be fully manifested when we are changed into our Savior's image at His coming again.

Someone has aptly suggested that "**Abba**" is a word for baby lips, whereas the Greek **pater**, or the English equivalent, Father, is a word for the more mature. But young and old join together in approaching the Father by the Spirit.

¹⁶ The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

He Himself bears testimony with our human spirit that we are God's children. We received His Witness to us as **given in His Word**; thus, we have the Witness in us, the Word hidden in our hearts (**1 John 5:10**), and now the Spirit Himself takes up His abode within and leads us into the enjoyment of heavenly things.

¹⁷ and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

If children of God in Christ it naturally follows that we were adopted and are his heirs, and thus we are joint-heirs with Christ. We share in all His acquired glories, and so we shall eventually be “glorified together.”

In verses **8:18-27** Paul is going **to contrast our present condition with the coming glory.**

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

Even though we are indwelt by the Spirit we are called to a path of suffering and sorrow as we follow the steps of Him who was, on earth, the Man of Sorrows.

However, all we can possibly suffer here is as nothing compared to the glory soon to be manifested to us.

¹⁹ For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.

All creation is expectantly waiting for the full revelation of the true estate of the sons of God, when it too shall share in that glorious liberty.

²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope

The creation was made subject to vanity, not of its own will but through the failure of its federal head, yet subjected not forever, but in hope of final restoration, and in that day it shall be delivered.

²¹ that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

- ❑ *Slavery to corruption*” and
- ❑ Made to share in “*the freedom of the glory of the sons of God.*”
- ❑ Creation does not share in the liberty of grace.
- ❑ It will have its part in the liberty of glory, the kingdom age of millennial blessing.

²² For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now

Groaning and travailing in birth-pangs through all the present age, waiting for the regeneration

23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

We ourselves, though we have received the salvation of our souls and have the first-fruits of the Spirit, we groan in unison with the groaning creation as we wait expectantly for our acknowledged adoption when we shall receive the redemption of our bodies and be fully like Himself.

24 For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees?

- **In this hope we have been saved and in its power we live.**
- **We walk by faith, not by sight.**
- **If already seen, hope would fade away, but in this hope, we patiently wait for the Lord.**

²⁶ In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words;

²⁷ and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

Meanwhile, often tried to our limits, we do not know even what we should pray for as we should, but the indwelling Spirit, knowing the mind of God fully, makes intercession within us according to the will of God, though not in audible words, but with unutterable groanings.

“Once we groaned in bondage, now we groan in grace,” as another has well said, and this very groaning is in itself a testimony to the changed conditions brought about by our union with Christ. Ironside

And so we go on in peace amid tribulation, assured in our hearts that,

²⁸“God works All things work together for good to them who love God, who are the called according to His purpose”

This introduces the closing part of the chapter, and the doctrinal division of Romans, which is a summing up of all we have gone over, and a conclusion to the opening up of *“the righteousness of God as revealed in the gospel”*.

It breaks into two sub-sections.

1. In verses **Romans 8:28-34** we have **“God for us.”**
2. In verses **Romans 8:35-39**, **“No separation.”**

We have a chain of five links in verses 29-30 reaching from Eternity in the past to Eternity in the future-

foreknown, predestinated, called, justified, glorified!

- ❑ Every link was formed in heaven, and not one can ever be broken.
- ❑ This blessed segment is not for theologians to wrangle over but for saints to just rejoice in.

29 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;

- Foreknown before we ever walked on this planet,
- Predestinated to become fully like our blessed Lord
- Conformed to the image of God's Son, that He, who was from all Eternity the "only Begotten," might be
- "the Firstborn among many brethren."

³⁰ and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

So, we were foreknown, called, predestined by divine grace, justified by faith based on His accomplished redemption, and our glorification is as certain as the foreknowledge of God.

What shall we say to all of this? If God is for us, who is against us?

If God is so openly for us now-not against us as once our troubled hearts and guilty consciences made us believe-*what power can be against us?*

Who can successfully fight against the divine will?

³² He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

In giving Christ, God showed us that, **“He loved us better than we loved our sins,”**

If He did not *spare “His Son but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?”*

The Principle of “God gave us the best, will He not give us the lesser?”

The next two verses **33-34** should probably all be thrown into question-form, as in several critical translations:

³³ “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? Shall God, who justifies?

³⁴ Who shall condemn? Shall Christ who died, yea, rather, who is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us?”

Is there an answer to these challenges?

There is no answer possible.

Every voice is silent.

Every accusation is quieted.

Our standing in Christ is complete and our justification unchangeable.

38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,
39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Verses 35-39, Paul triumphantly challenges any possible circumstance, or personal being in this life or the next, to attempt to separate the believer from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.

No experience, however hard or difficult can do it. Even though exposed as sheep to the slaughter, because death just ushers us into the presence of the Lord.

And so, as We started with this part with “**no condemnation,**” We end with “**no separation.**”