

I. Introduction

- Curiosity — becoming students again rather than assuming we already know
 - Parallel to long-time Christians inheriting assumptions about Scripture
 - Purpose: lay aside preconceived views and re-examine the text carefully
 - Key question: Why is Romans 8 placed here?
 - How does it conclude Romans 1–7 (especially 5–8 as a unit)?
 - What is lost if Romans 8 is removed?
 - Emphasis: Paul’s writing is intentional and structured
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II. Reading of the Text

Romans 8:1–17 (CSB)

III. Romans 8:1–4 — No Condemnation & Fulfillment of the Law

A. “Therefore” — Connection to Chapter 7

- Life under the Law: desire present, ability lacking
- Rhetorical voice of a Jew under Torah
- Law mentioned frequently in ch. 7 vs. Spirit rarely

B. Pastoral Purpose of Paul

- Addressing tension between Jewish and Gentile believers
- Justification by faith, not by works of the Law
- Gospel thesis (Romans 1:17)

C. “No Condemnation” Reframed

- Not merely personal assurance, but communal reconciliation
- Stop condemning fellow believers

D. Law vs. Spirit

- Law weakened by human flesh
- God accomplishes what the Law could not through Christ
- Torah and Grace not enemies — grace fulfills Torah’s intention

E. Illustration from Exodus 32

- Law’s inability to produce life due to human sinfulness

F. Christ as the Faithful Israelite

- Perfect obedience reveals the Law’s true potential
- Sin and death defeated through Christ’s death and resurrection
- Spirit released as a result of Christ’s righteous sacrifice

G. Assurance Connected to Vocation

- Christianity not merely “going to heaven”

- God's project: renewal of creation and dwelling with humanity
 - Revelation 21:2-3 — God coming down to dwell with people
 - Believers as firstfruits in God's restorative plan
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IV. Romans 8:5-11 — Life in the Spirit vs. Life in the Flesh

- Mindset contrast: death vs. life and peace
 - Spirit-led living as preparation for resurrection hope
 - Balance of grace and obedience
 - Purpose: unity and mission rather than internal conflict
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V. Romans 8:12-17 — Obligation, Adoption, and Heirship

A. Obligation to the Spirit

- Negative stated ("not obligated to flesh") implies positive duty to Spirit
- Putting sin to death as pathway to true life
- Living now by the principles of the coming Kingdom

B. Spirit-Led Identity

- Hallmark of being God's children/sons
- "Sons" possibly echoing Israel as God's firstborn (Exodus 4)

C. Spirit of Adoption

- Contrast with slavery and fear
- New Exodus imagery — freedom into vocation

D. "Abba, Father"

- Not mere sentimentality
- Connection to Jesus in Gethsemane (Mark 14)
- Cry of intimacy during vocational struggle and suffering

E. Heirs and Co-Heirs with Christ

- Shared inheritance includes both glory and suffering
 - Spirit's testimony provides assurance in hardship
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VI. Conclusion / Exhortation

- Live as co-heirs and sons of God
- Remain faithful to vocation in the renewal of creation
- Cry "Abba, Father" in moments of weakness
- Embrace both suffering and future glory
- Hope anchored in God dwelling with humanity and making all things new

For them back then:

The Jews need to understand that there is no condemnation for Spirit-filled and Spirit led believers regardless of their adherence to dietary laws or Sabbath practices. They all needed to be reassured of their status as the children of God so that from that security they could live out their God given calling to live and die for Christ without the temptation to turn back in fear.

For us and for always:

The Church is God's chosen mechanism for renewing all of Creation and we are the firstfruits of that process beginning, starting with Jesus Himself. May we live in the world and may we live with one another in a New Creation way; not longing to escape, but preparing the way here on Earth for God to once again dwell in all of His Creation. May we be led by the Spirit and throw off the sins that so easily entangle in order to groan together with the Spirit and all Creation for the renewal of all things.

For me and for now:

May we live as co-heirs with Christ. Sons of the Living God. May we cry out Abba Father if ever our Spirit seems to be losing the battle with our flesh. May we stay on task in our new God-given vocation to be a part of the renewal of all things. And may we suffer well, whenever and in whatever form our suffering comes. Amen.