

Romans 8

Good morning and thank you for joining us. You have lots of choices of places in which to fellowship, and we're grateful you're here with us. Would you please turn in your bibles to Romans 8? This is our 5th and final installment in our study of Romans 8, one of the most incredible chapters in all the Bible.

Last time we ended our study in verse 28, and we spent a lot of time talking about suffering.

This morning we'll finish Romans 8 as we study verses 29-39, and we'll also be participating in communion together.

Well as you know it's Independence Day weekend, where Americans everywhere celebrate the birth of our great nation. And I was thinking about the history of our nation, what caused our founding fathers to come here, and all the incredible trials they had to overcome to maintain their independence.

Independence and America go together like peanut butter and jelly. But as we celebrate Independence Day this weekend, I pray we're able to see ourselves from a different perspective, not that of independent Americans, but rather as utterly dependent Christians, wowed and overcome by His grace.

The title of this morning's message is **WHAT A WONDERFUL SAVIOR**

Let's pray

You've likely heard the saying, 'you can't see the forest through the trees.' It's an expression that describes how sometimes we can be so close to a situation that we lose sight of the bigger picture, we miss out on perspective.

The same can happen with the Bible. In fact, it happens all the time, when people take verses out of context by just plucking out

a verse here and a verse there and twisting them to make the point they want to emphasize.

To ensure sure that we are not doing that as we finish Romans 8, let's remind ourselves of what we've studied so diligently the last couple of months by reading Romans 1-28 without interruption, and then begin our study in verse 29.

1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus,[fn] who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. 5 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. 6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. 8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. 10 And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 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.

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 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. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. 19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; 21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. 23 Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. 24 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? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.

26 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us^[fn] with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

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

Now we pick up our study in verses 29-30

29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. It's important we define a few of these words for this is the 1st time they've been used in our study.

Foreknew-speaks of having knowledge before hand

Predestined-means to predetermine, to decide beforehand.

To call-means to call aloud, to utter by name

Justified-just as if I'd never sinned-to be treated as righteous

I don't know of 2 verses that have caused more conflict and division in the church than these 2 verses that deal with the doctrine of salvation.

Countless Christians have become divided and labeled over the debate of God's election and mans responsibility to choose salvation. And most of those divisions have been aligned in to 2 groups, those who follow the interpretation of these verses by John Calvin, known as Calvinism, and the interpretation of these verses by Jacobus Arminius, known as Armininism.

Since the Protestant Reformation in the 16th Century, Christian churches and leaders have disagreed over such issues as depravity, God's sovereignty, human responsibility, election, predestination, and eternal security.

And it usually boils down to 2 viewpoints-God's Sovereignty-He predestines those who will be saved, and man's responsibility-that we have a choice in choosing to be saved by accepting Jesus.

John Wesley, Billy Graham were staunch in their beliefs of Arminianism, emphasizing man's responsibility to choose to accept God's free gift of salvation.

Just as George Whitfield, William Wilberforce and CH Spurgeon were staunch in their position regarding God's sovereignty.

There are many verses that speak to God's sovereignty-in God choosing us to be saved. We just read it-lets read verses 29-30 again. **29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.**

We also see God's sovereignty-His foreknowledge and choosing in Ephesians 1.

Ephesians 1:4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, 5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

Clearly the Bible teaches about God's election-God choosing us to be saved, His sovereignty.

Yet the Bible also teaches about mankind's responsibility in choosing God.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

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

It's not always easy to maintain the unity of the Spirit among believers on these difficult doctrinal matters. **SHOW PIC** It seems that the sovereignty of God and human responsibility are like two parallel lines that don't seem to intersect within our finite minds.

CLOSE PIC

But the bible clearly teaches both- Yes God is absolutely sovereign and knows all and He chooses us to be saved.

And

Yes, human beings are called to make a genuine decision to place faith in Christ unto salvation.

These two facts seem contradictory to us, but we have limited minds. I don't try to reconcile the 2-He's God, I'm not.

It's important to remember that God's ways are "past finding out"

Romans 11:33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!

AND

Isaiah 55:8 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts,

Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD.

9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth,

So are My ways higher than your ways,
And My thoughts than your thoughts.

To say what God says in the Bible - no more and no less - is not always easy, comfortable, or completely understandable. There are parts of the Bible, and these verses are some of them, that I can't fully grasp.

In difficult doctrinal matters such as this, I personally have no problem with folks who disagree on these positions. But these disagreements should never divide the body of Christ. We're called to love one another **Ephesians 4:32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.**

SHOW PIC But tragically, what often occurs with disagreements is that battle lines are drawn over these issues, and war is declared. **CLOSE PIC**

The litmus test regarding a Christian's strong personal conviction regarding a doctrinal issue is to evaluate how their position has helped them be more Christ like in their character.

Has their doctrinal position caused them to be kinder and more loving? Are they now more forgiving and merciful, more prayerful and more worshipful because of their doctrinal position? If so that's wonderful because that means their position is guiding them in becoming more like Jesus. They'll produce fruit.

If you remember, Jesus said we'll know them by their fruit. So whenever a particular position on the Scriptures causes a Christian to become argumentative, legalistic, or divisive, I begin to question the validity of that position.

All that to say, I know God loves me. He's elected me. Therefore, He's going to see me through and usher me into eternity. At the

same time, however, I recognize it's not because of my righteousness or anything I am or have done that causes Him to elect me into the kingdom. Quite the opposite. It's purely God's grace.

We are all trophies of God's grace.

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? Think about what we've learned about God being for us in our study of Romans. In light of the fact that there's no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, in light of the fact that everything is working out for our good because of Christ, in light of the fact that we are already glorified from God's perspective, Paul finds himself speechless. **What then shall we say to these things.**

God is never holding a grudge against us, or disappointed in us, or washing His hands of us. Whenever we think those things we know these are lies from the enemy! God is for us! And God's favor triumphs over all opposition.

There's a lot of folks against Christians today aren't there? But God is for us-we have no need to fear!

SHOW PIC To be clear, lots of folks think that God is for them – terrorists commit unthinkable atrocities thinking that God is for them. So do cultists! **CLOSE PIC**

Notice carefully the Holy Spirit guards this statement in v 31 with an "if," Why is this so important? Just because some crazed terrorist thinks God is with him does not make it so. God is only for us if we are reconciled to Him through the blood of Jesus Christ.

John 3:18 He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Folks we need to remember that "God is for us." What He has done for us through His Son in the past, and what He is doing for us through the Spirit in the present should give us confidence as we look forward to the future.

Philippians 1:6 being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;

No one and nothing can stand in God's way! 31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us!

And how can we trust that God is for us? Just look at what He's done...

32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? If the Father already gave His ultimate gift, His only begotten Son to die for our sins, why would we think that He would ever hold anything good back from us? God gave Himself for us-what more could He do?

33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. As believers we are secure from every charge against us. If we are declared "not guilty" by the highest Judge, God Himself, who then could declare us guilty?

But Satan sure tries to convince us, doesn't he? Revelation describes Satan as the accuser of the brethren. But Christ already paid the penalty, and God has already declared us righteous!

34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Because Jesus is our advocate, no one, not even Satan can condemn us!

Four reasons are laid out in verse 34 of why believers are not condemned.

First, Christ died for us and removed our guilt.

Second, Jesus rose from the dead and is therefore able to give life to those who trust in Him **John 11:25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.**

Third, Jesus has ascended to the position of supreme authority in heaven at the right hand of God.

Finally, we're not condemned because Jesus currently intercedes for us to the Father on our behalf. **Hebrews 7:25 Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.**

So in romans 8:26 the spirit makes intercession for us when we don't know how to pray the way we ought, and verse 34 tells us Christ is making intercession for us!

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Paul listed seven things, in increasing intensity, that a believer might experience that they may believe could come between a believer and Christ's love. Paul himself experienced them all 2 Corinthians 11

And here Paul quotes Psalm 44

36 As it is written:

“For Your sake we are killed all day long;
We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.”

One of the uncomfortable truths we share as believers is that the bible guarantees we will experience suffering

1 Pet. 2:21-25; 21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us,[fn] leaving us[fn] an example, that you should follow His steps:

22 “Who committed no sin,

Nor was deceit found in His mouth”;

23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; 24 who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.

AND

1 Peter 4: 12 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. 14 If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.[fn] On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. 15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people’s matters. 16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.[fn]

17 For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 Now

“If the righteous one is scarcely saved,

Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?”[fn]

19 Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.

37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. This is the only time in the whole Bible the word conquerors is used. It means to gain a surpassing victory. Notice it's not we will be more than conquerors as long as we do a bunch of things, no being a believer in Christ Jesus makes us more than conquerors!

To be more than a conqueror means to have the victory in the midst of the battle. While conflicts rage all around us, while the outcome may seem to be uncertain, we remember we have the glorious victory and rejoicing because we are more than a conqueror. We are more than conquerors through Him who loves us.

This is who we are in Christ Jesus! **SHOW PIC** Few things are more tragic than a Christian who acts like Eeyore! Oh bother, I know I'm saved, guess I'll just have to pick up my cross and carry it.” **CLOSE PIC**. TRAGIC! The war is won-we win! The glories of heaven await us!

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

39 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.

Height is only used 1 other time in the Bible, it speaks of the highest height. Depth speaks of the depth of the sea, and we haven't even explored the depth of the sea. So no matter how far

away, nothing, nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And why is this? Because we're so good?

Because God needs us?

No, it's all because of His grace.