

Romans 8

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Date: 28 June 2020

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] Good morning and welcome to the service this morning.

It's good to have those who are listening on the telephone and those who are watching online coming together and worship in this way. Intimations used to say that the service this evening will be the monthly Gaelic service and that will be online just before 6 o'clock and once more Farah MacLeod will take that service.

And once more in the course of the week YF meets this evening at half past seven on Zoom and the prayer meeting meets on Wednesday at half past seven again on Zoom.

So be encouraged to come to these meetings. Let's worship God now and we sing to his praise. We sing from Psalm 46 verses 1 to 5 and then verses 10 and 11.

God is our refuge and our strength in straits a present aid. Therefore, although the earth remove, we will not be afraid. God is our refuge and our strength in straits a present aid.

[1 : 38] God is our refuge andiran. Thank God. We are ■■■■ PACER! So be continued... Thy left...

You are discussed mentioned in years. Our love has given a place to wearing it's dangerous. We are transforming the things for this evening that we pray and offer. But the Telegram of God is a part of any hostile and whatever our needs to do you think again.

The seas be cast, the waters' roaring make, Untroubled be, yet though the hills by swelling seas do shake, A river is whose streams do glad the city of our God, The holy place within the Lord, The holy place within the Lord, Most high hath his abode.

God in the midst of her doth dwell, Nothing shall her remove, The Lord to her and help her will, The Lord to her and help her will, And that rightly prove.

[4 : 05] Be still and know that I am God, Among the heathen eye, Will be exalted I on earth, Will be exalted high, Will be exalted high, Our God who is the Lord of hosts, Is still upon our side, The God of Jacob,

The God of Jacob, The God of Jacob, The God of Jacob, Whatever will abide.

Let's unite our hearts in prayer, Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, We thank you once more, That on your day, We are able to come together and worship, And meet in this way.

We thank you once more for the word of God open before us, That we've been able to read and to sing, And that we come to meditate upon just shortly. And we thank you that this book that we are privileged to have in our possession is a book which is like no other book.

We thank you that this is the living word of God inspired by the Holy Spirit. We thank you that this is the means through which you have chosen to reveal yourself and your salvation plan to us.

[6 : 17] We look around us in creation and we see something of your majesty, Lord, and your creative power. But we know that if all we had was creation, we would not know enough to know how to be saved.

But we thank you that we have your word. And we thank you that in your word we learn the fact that you are our refuge, that you are our strength, that you are the one who helps us.

And who takes us through difficult times. And who takes us to that place of security and salvation when we are in Christ.

We thank you that this psalm ultimately points us to Jesus. He is the one who came from heaven to earth to deal with the sin that is in us.

He is the one who came to make it possible for us to have the peace of God which passes all understanding. We thank you that he is the one who made it possible for us to have forgiveness of sin.

[7 : 21] And to have the assurance of eternal life. So open our ears this day we pray. That as we focus on your word that we would know and that we would know within us the reality of Christ as Savior.

He is the only way. He is the truth. He is the life. And we pray that our focus would be upon him. We pray, Lord Jesus, that we would know your presence amongst us.

That we would know the spirit of Christ moving within us. And we ask that each one of us would not be trusting in ourselves and our efforts. Or in any other one or any other religion.

But we pray that we would be trusting in Jesus. We confess, Lord, our sin and our need of salvation. And we ask, Lord, that you would forgive us.

That you would wash us in the blood of Christ that was shed on the cross. And we pray that you would give to us that everlasting life that comes only from resting in him.

[8 : 29] We pray, Father, for those this morning who are going through difficult times. We are conscious always of those amongst us who are sick and who are struggling with the frailty of these bodies that we have.

And we are conscious always of those who are grieving. And we pray, Lord, for you to meet those in our minds at the point of their need.

Lord, for those whose hearts are sore. That you would bring your comfort and your strength. That they indeed would take refuge in you. For those, Lord, who are struggling, who are sick.

We pray that they would know in their weakness your strength. And we pray that they would know your presence. We thank you that you have promised that you will be with us in the hard times in life.

You have not promised that you will shield us from hard times. But you have said that when we go through the waves and when we go through the fires, when we go through the difficult things.

[9 : 30] Lord, that you will not leave us nor forsake us, but that you will be with us. And when we are trusting you, we thank you that we have the promise that one day you will take us from this sin-troubled world into a place of perfect peace, the new Jerusalem, heaven.

And we thank you, Lord, for the assurance and for the comfort that we are given as we think upon these things. So we pray for those who are in particular need. We pray on for those who are lonely, who feel isolated.

We ask that they would know in the stillness of this day that you are God and that you are with them. We pray, Father, for our young people as they begin their summer holidays in a way that's different to past years.

We ask, Lord, that they would have fun, that they would be kept safe. And we ask that they would come to know you more and more in these days.

That as they don't have so much schoolwork to do, we pray, Lord, that they would know that you are with them. Whether they're playing or whether they're reading, whether they're in their homes, we pray that they would know that Jesus loves them.

[10 : 40] And we ask that they would come to trust in Christ and remember Jesus in the days of their youth. We pray on for the older people as well, those in care homes especially, that your protection would be over them.

And for those in middle years where we often find ourselves so conflicted with responsibilities and pressures and distractions. May the troubles of this world not choke us at heart level.

But may we be those who are seeking first your kingdom and knowing your daily presence. So hear our prayers. Help us, we ask. We pray on for our country, for those who are in leadership in the country.

As you have called us to, Lord, we ask that they would look to you and that you would give them wisdom. And we pray on, Lord, that there would be a spirit of repentance given to our nation once we walked close with you.

Now we are far from you, Lord. And we pray that you would bring us back. And we ask, as we have been in past weeks especially, that you would be working in the lives of many people.

[11 : 47] Awakening each of us to the reality of our sin and our need. And calling many people, we pray, to trust in Jesus and to be converted. So hear our prayers.

Take away our sin. Go before us, we ask. In Jesus' name and for Jesus' sake. Amen. Boys and girls, I hope that you are doing well.

I was wondering what to speak to you about today. And I was thinking about this week that's passed. And none of you would have missed what was going on in this week.

Because on Thursday night, there was a big storm. We were sitting in our houses and there was thunder. Hours and hours of thunder.

And we might have gone to the window and had a look and the sky was all dark. And the clouds were thick. And then all of a sudden, crash and crack. And there was forks of lightning.

[12 : 47] And there was sheets of lightning. It was a storm like I think I've never seen in this part of the world before. It's the kind of storm that you see in other countries. But I don't ever remember a storm like that.

The dog was terrified. The dog was up the stairs. He thought the lightning was coming in the front door. So he was up the stairs hiding and looking for cover. However, the phones in the early part of the storm, I was halfway through speaking to somebody.

And then the phones started bleeping. They'd gone haywire. The phones got fried. We pulled out the plugs because we were scared that the internet was going to go down. But we'd hardly pulled the plugs out.

And the power went off. And the power stayed off for ages afterwards. So it was a big storm. And in all of our houses, we would have noticed that. But if you lived in Renegadale, you would really have noticed that.

Because I think there's a picture that you might be able to see on the screen of the road to Renegadale. And we've probably all driven that road at some point.

[13 : 53] There's only one road that you can take your car to to get to Renegadale. And after the storm, with all the water that was coming down the side of the hill on Thursday night or Friday morning, it might have been, we started to see pictures of a massive big hole in the road.

It looked quite big in the first picture. But then when we saw a doll from the congregation standing in it, we saw how huge this hole was.

And he'll have his work cut out trying to fix that and get the road open again. But what I wanted to say was that now there's no way through to Renegadale in a car.

There was only one way to get to Renegadale and to get back from Renegadale. And until that road is fixed, there's no way through. And that made me think of a verse that we know well, and I've said it to you often.

But I say it to you often because it's an important verse. How do we get to heaven? How do we get our sins forgiven? How do we get eternal life? Are there many ways?

[15 : 03] Are there lots of different paths and roads that we can choose? Well, the Bible makes very clear to us that there's not many ways. There's only one way. And Jesus said that himself.

Jesus said to his disciples when they were asking him these questions, He said, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father.

No one gets to heaven except through me. So, boys and girls, let's remember there's only one way to heaven. Our sin blocks the way.

But Jesus came to take our sin away and to make it possible for us to have a clear way to heaven. He went to the cross to die. He rose from the dead.

And he's done everything to make sure the road is not blocked, but the road is now open. And the way is Jesus. So, boys and girls, be trusting in Jesus.

[16 : 03] And he will take us to that place of everlasting life and forgiveness and heaven eventually. So, we'll pray. Lord, we thank you that your word is so clear.

We thank you that we're not looking at heaven and seeing it like a maze where we don't know which way to go. We thank you that you've made it possible for us to go to heaven by one way and one way alone.

And that way is Jesus. So, we pray that the boys and girls and all of us would be trusting in Jesus. That we would be following Jesus. And that we would know the promise that we are with Jesus in time.

And we will be taken to be with Jesus forever in heaven as those who are trusting in him. So, hear our prayers and help us, we ask. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Now, boys and girls, just before you go off to your Sunday school class.

This is the last Sunday of the school term. Now, you're on your holidays. Congratulations. Have a good holiday. But this is normally the Sunday that you'd be up at the front of the church and we'd

have the books and we'd give you the books as a present.

[17:19] But sadly, I can't have you here in the church today. So, I can't actually give you the books by hand. But I hope by now you've got them through the post. And I hope you'll enjoy reading these books.

And through these books, you'll be encouraged to trust Jesus and to walk closely with Jesus in life. And the good news as well is that Sunday school, usually it takes a break over the summer. You have a holiday Sunday school. But Sunday school is not taking a break. And there'll be the video coming through every Sunday. And YF also isn't taking a break. There'll be the YF meetings right through the summer.

So, you'll have that teaching. So, that's good news. Now, I'll let you go to Sunday school, boys and girls. And I hope you have a good holiday. If we turn now to Romans chapter 8, please.

Romans chapter 8. And we'll read the whole of this chapter. This is God's word. Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

[18:29] Because through Christ Jesus, the law of the spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do, in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering.

And so, he condemned sin and sinful man in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us. We do not live according to the sinful nature, but according to the spirit.

Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set in what that nature desires. But those who live in accordance with the spirit have their minds set in what the spirit desires.

The mind of sinful man is death. But the mind controlled by the spirit is life and peace. The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.

Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature, but by the spirit of the spirit of God living in you.

[19:36] And if anyone does not have the spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin. Yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness.

And if the spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his spirit who lives in you.

Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation, but it is not to the sinful nature to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die.

But if by the spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. Because those who are led by the spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the spirit of sonship.

And by him we cry, Abba, Father. The spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs, heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings, in order that we may also share in his glory.

[20:46] And consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.

For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to this present time. Not only so, but we ourselves who are the first fruits of the spirit groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

For in this hope we were saved, but hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

In the same way, the spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.

[21:56] And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the spirit because the spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will. 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.

For those God foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called.

Those he called, he also justified. Those he justified, he also glorified. What then shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?

He who did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all, how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died more than that, who was raised to life, is at the right hand of God, and is also interceding for us.

[23 : 00] Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble, or hardship, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, for your sake, we face death all day long.

We are considered as sheep to be slaughtered. No, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Amen. May God bless that reading of his word to us. Just as we turn back to Romans 8, let's take a moment to pray. Heavenly Father, we ask for your help.

We pray that your word would live as we read it, that you would speak into our hearts, that we would know the help, the unction, the liberty of your spirit as we turn our minds and our hearts to this passage now.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Sometimes when we've experienced something which was amazing, when we try to communicate it, we can't find words to encapsulate what we feel and what we want to put across.

[24 : 31] So we say things like, I don't know what to say to describe this. It's like nothing you've ever seen or nothing you've ever felt before. That's how we try to describe what we've experienced.

And John in Revelation 21, when he's given a vision of heaven, he can't find the words to describe sufficiently what he's seen and experienced there.

So he communicates something to us of the wonder of heaven by saying what's not there. He says it's a place where there's no sea, there's no separation, there's no tears, there's no death, there's no mourning, there's no crying, there's no pain.

And we imagine a place like that and it fills us with such encouragement and such hope. And Paul, as he takes us through Romans chapter 8, he's seeking to communicate with us something of the wonder of the Christian life.

And he uses a similar approach, actually, to John in Revelation 21. He thinks about some of the dark shadows that are cast over our lives by the curse of sin.

[25 : 45] And essentially he says to us, when we are in Christ Jesus, which is how he begins the chapter in verse 1, when we are in Christ Jesus, when we know life through the Spirit, as the NIV title has it here in my Bible, Paul is saying these dark shadows, they're chased away.

They are no more. And so today, I want to move at speed looking at some of the no mores of Romans chapter 8.

To point number 1, we see in verses 1 down to verse 4, that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Verse 1 to 4, there is no condemnation, now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Because through Christ Jesus, the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do, and that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did, by sending his own son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature, but according to the Spirit.

[27 : 10] Paul, I think, would have been a great courtroom lawyer. He's a master at building a case. If we were to scan back through the previous chapters, already in this letter, he's left us in no reasonable doubt over the fact that we are sinners.

We're sinners by nature. As children of Adam, he's gone into that in detail in one of these previous chapters. We're sinners by practice. As God's laws, the mirror of God's laws, is held up to us, we see that we just can't keep it.

Romans 3 verse 9 is one of these key verses that underlines for us our state. There is no one righteous, says the Apostle Paul, not even one.

By nature, by practice, because of our sin, we are guilty. So what do we deserve? Well, we deserve what every guilty party deserves.

We deserve condemnation. But, says Paul, if we are in Christ Jesus, verse 1, there is no condemnation for us.

[28 : 21] We have been, verse 2, set free from the law of sin and death, not through our power or through our works, but through Jesus, verse 3. He kept the law that we couldn't keep.

He took our sin away from us, becoming a sin offering for us on the cross, verse 3. He became sin so that we could become righteous in and through him, verse 4.

So if you're in Christ, says Paul, there is no condemnation. God does not look upon us in anger because he looked upon his son, Jesus, on the cross in anger.

There is now no condemnation. This is not some future state that Paul is looking into the future at. He says, now, presently, because of all that Christ has done in the past, there is no condemnation. You are not under condemnation. And when you and I die, if we are in Christ, and when we stand before God, he will not see our sin, he will not hold our sin against us because he sees our sin held against Christ.

[29 : 43] And he sees Jesus' righteousness, a wrap like a robe around us. There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

sometimes we doubt that, don't we? Sometimes the devil says to us, your sin is too awful to avoid this condemnation.

He comes to us often and he says that. So what do we do to the devil? What do we say to the devil when he comes to us like that? Well, we point him as we look ourselves back to the cross.

We see again how Jesus suffered, how he was condemned for us. We see again what we often sing that he sealed our pardon with his blood and then we sing in praise to God and we sing in opposition to Satan.

No condemnation now I dread. Jesus and all in him is mine, alive in him, my living head and clothed in righteousness divine.

[30 : 50] No condemnation. If you're in court perhaps you've been caught speeding and there's a fine that is due and you have to appear in court.

If you appear in court and someone stands beside you and pays that fine in full for you, the judge could not ask for that fine that has been paid in full to be paid again.

That would be unjust. The debt is cleared and for us, picking up on that picture, Jesus has paid the fine.

He has paid the debt of our sin. He has been condemned for us so there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. That's point number one.

Point number two. There is no obligation now for those who are in Christ Jesus to the sinful nature but under no obligation to listen to and to obey the sinful nature.

[31 : 54] Now in Romans 7 where we were last week, Paul has given us this insight into what was going on within his own life. He's honest enough with us to open his diary and show us the war that was going on in his own life between the good that he wants to do and yet doesn't do and the evil that he doesn't want to do and yet keeps on doing.

And in Romans 8 in verses 5-8 Paul returns in a sense to that battleground and he says in verse 5 Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what the nature desires, that nature desires.

But those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. There's that contrast, there's that conflict there. The mind of sinful man is death but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace.

The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

So again here Paul takes us back into this place of conflict and note there we can't but see it surely that the place of conflict is the mind.

[33 : 18] Verse 5 it's there twice. Verse 6 it's there twice. Verse 7 again we're taken back to the mind. That's the place of conflict.

Now we can be very disciplined can't we sometimes about our outer life and what we say and what we do and what we are seen to be doing and what we are heard to be saying.

Sometimes we think that's what the battle grind is but we're taught here the real battle grind is the mind. John Stott says it's a question of our preoccupations the ambitions which compel us the interests which engross us how we spend our time money and energies what we give ourselves to

that is what you set your mind on and so the mind is that place of battle and we know that don't we we know something of this conflict the war within the mind we know what it is to be sitting in church or standing in church and saying the words of a hymn worshipfully that we're meditating upon at one moment and then the next moment to catch the eye of somebody three pews away and think a thought that's a wrong thought about them.

What's going on there? There's a battle raging between the sinful nature which is always in us as long as we're in this world and the spirit of God the spirit of Christ and the question is who are we to listen to?

Who are we obliged to obey to obey in this battle? Who is in control of us? And Paul as he speaks to those who are in Christ as he speaks to those who are Christians he says to us you however are not controlled by the sinful nature but by the spirit if the spirit of God lives in you.

[35 : 19] And if anyone does not have the spirit of Christ he does not belong to Christ but if Christ is in you your body is dead because of sin yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness and if the spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his spirit who lives in you.

Paul is saying here as those who are in Christ as those who have the spirit of Christ living within us we have no obligation to listen to the old sinful nature.

For those who fly it's a while since we've flown but for those who fly sometimes when we're on the plane as the plane begins to accelerate in the runway and then starts to lift and then starts to soar sometimes when we're sitting there in seat 9b we stop reading the magazine and we wonder how does how does this work?

We know that we are subject to the law of gravity we know that we can't fly but the law of gravity is always pulling us down and so sometimes as we're rising up into the sky we wonder how is it that we as we sit in this heavy metal box weighing many tons how is it that we're going up and going up at such speed?

And the answer to that question is that's because there's another law at work yes the law of gravity is still at work but there's another law at work the law of aerodynamics there's another power at work a power that is pulling us up and it's a stronger power and that's actually the picture here I think which is which is a helpful one the sinful nature will always be with us as long as we are in this world and the sinful nature will always be pulling us down we're not ever going to get to a state in this world as Christians where we are free from that pool of the sinful nature we're never going to be sinless in this world we're always going to feel the pool down of the sinful nature but when we believe in Jesus when through faith verse 9 we belong to Christ the Holy Spirit himself comes into our lives now who is the Holy

[37 : 59] Spirit well he is God he is the one verse 11 who raised Christ from the dead and he is the one who gives us power in this battle against the sinful nature so Paul says to them and God says to us through Paul listen to him listen to the Spirit cooperate with him as those who are sons and daughters of God as those who have been saved through the finished work of Christ you have no obligation to the sinful nature but your obligation is to the Spirit who calls us to and who empowers us to live lives which are not all about me not all about self but lives which seek to glorify Jesus therefore says Paul in verse 12 brothers we have an obligation but it is not to the sinful nature to live according to it and so he goes on verse 13 and 14 for if you live according to the sinful nature you will die but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body you will live because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God the sinful nature

I think another helpful picture might be the sinful nature it's like an old abusive employer maybe there was a time in our lives when we worked as a kitchen porter in a hot kitchen with an angry chef and the chef ranted and raved and threw pans and bawled at everybody in his kitchen the chef had control of you as the kitchen porter you were his slaves as long as you were in the kitchen and Paul reminds us in this letter he says you may once have been slaves to sin but you're no longer slaves to sin you're no longer under the control of the sinful nature think again about the picture the angry chef you finish your work you go back to university you're no longer under his employment and then one day you meet him on the street and he sees you and he speaks down to you again he says oh I remember you you used to work for me in the kitchen go and get me four packs of cigarettes will you and you can look at him and you can say no I won't

I no longer work for you I don't have to do what you say and as Christians we must constantly be saying to the old sinful nature no I will not do what you say yes I hear what you're saying yes I feel

the pull of you on my life but I will not do what you say and to the spirit day by day hour by hour we should be saying yes I will and I delight to do what you say sometimes it's difficult often it's difficult but remember God himself lives in us to give us his power the same power that rose Jesus from the dead it is given to us so that we may live for the glory of Christ no obligation to the sinful nature no condemnation thirdly no fear of

God's punishment verse 15 for you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear but you received the spirit of sonship and by him we cry Abba father the spirit testifies with our spirit that we are God's children now if we are children then we are heirs heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory there's some people that cause us to fear when I think back to school days we had an old headmaster Mr. Rogers the Beak as he was not very fondly known and when the door opened of the classroom and he walked in or when you got a message to go and appear in his office the first feeling was a feeling of fear a fear of punishment now if we are out of

Christ if you're listening this morning and you know that you are not in Christ but you are still resisting Jesus you're still hanging on to your sin it's sensible that you should fear standing before God if we are determined to reject Jesus if we are determined that we will hold on to our sin we have reason to fear God and the punishment that he will bring upon us if we remain in that state but Paul here he is writing in this chapter to those who are in Christ and if we are in Christ if we are those whose sin has been taken away if we have accepted Jesus then Paul makes clear that we are not only forgiven sin but we are taken into the family of God we are God's children verse 17 we can call God verse 15

[43 : 45] Abba father and we can be sure that when we meet God when we go from time into eternity he will not punish us for our sin because Jesus has been punished for our sin but rather he will welcome us into the glory of being eternally with him there's no fear of God's punishment for us if we are in Christ Jesus that's the third point fourth point no comparison no comparison specifically between the sufferings that we experience in time and the glory that we will experience in eternity if we are in Christ sometimes when we get a letter through the post we might have an offer of a deal might be that we're being told in the cover letter that we're due to be given a million pounds or a new car or whatever a new speedboat whatever and we look at this offer of a deal and at first glance it looks amazing but we're understandably skeptical and then when we check the small print we see ah there's a catch here this is going to cost us something this is not as it seems and even as we came to the end of the last section there may be some people looking at verse 17 and thinking about all the wonder of what it means to be in Christ and then they say ah there's a catch here because it says in verse 17 if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory the sufferings we say as we see the reality of the

Christian life being painted for us in this chapter and that's true there are sufferings there's no such thing as a suffering free route to glory the Christian life will cost us and all the Christians that Paul wrote to in that time they knew that you couldn't be a Christian and not suffer Paul knew that more than most he had been disowned by his family and friends he had lost his job as a Pharisee he lost a lot of money he lost his reputation he'd been badly beaten many times he was almost killed on many occasions eventually he would be killed because of his faith in Christ Jesus Paul is somebody who knew what it was to share in the sufferings of Christ probably more so than any of us who are looking at this passage today but Paul says as one who had shared in these sufferings he says in verse 18

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us and Paul here he's using accounting terminology Paul in a sense he has a spreadsheet open before him and he has two columns in this spreadsheet and one column is the column where he inputs sufferings and in the other column he inputs the weight of glory and he says these two columns they're just not worth comparing and that's something that we're told here for our encouragement if we are truly Christians we will suffer we don't look for suffering in some dark sense but we will suffer if we are going to hold firm to God's word in a culture where God's word is far from popular we will suffer if we are going to be zealous about sharing the gospel telling people about Jesus being the only way in this kind of a culture of multi-faith and pluralism we will suffer we will experience something of what

Paul writes of here but when it comes we're to remember Paul's spreadsheet remember that there is no comparison between our present sufferings real as they may be and the future glory that is

promised to those who are in Christ remember that teenagers when you're in the playground and you feel like you're being frozen out because you're a Christian remember that when sometimes people may hold us at a distance because of our desire to want to share Christ with them remember that when we experience something of suffering there is no comparison between the sufferings that we experience here and the glory in the hereafter Octavius Winslow says one second of glory will extinguish a lifetime of suffering no comparison point number four point number five no isolation we're in a strange time just now where we were talking a lot about isolation we know about isolation just now some people more than others some people who live alone and who enjoy the companionship of friends who pop in regularly in normal times have missed that over past months and feeling isolated can be very difficult sin as Paul has impressed upon us in previous chapters sin has made life very difficult what God designed to be good has been spoiled by sin and that spoiling is felt not just by us as humans but it's felt by all creation verse 19 the creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed for the creation was subjected to frustration not by its own choice but by the will of the one who subjected it in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God these verses actually help us to understand a little more of what's going on just now in this world that we live in we hear and we see something of a sea that is polluted and sick we hear often about climate change and the dangers and the changes that that's bringing into the environment and the weather we hear about species dying now what is that that's evidence of God's creation subjected to frustration verse 20 it's evidence of creation's bondage to decay presently verse 21 you know we hear we see the groans of creation verse 22 we know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to this present time and we we groan too says

[51 : 53] Paul not only so verse 23 but we ourselves who have the first fruits of the spirit groan inwardly because of sin now if this is where Paul put his pen down and put a full stop we would be tempted to slip into despair if this is where this chapter came to an end we would be given clarity certainly on all that's wrong with the world we would see the reason for all that's wrong with the world and with us that being our sin we wouldn't see the solution would we this is where Romans 8 finished we may think that God has walked away from creation that he's left us isolated to suffer in this sinful environment that we've actually chosen for ourselves but thank

God this chapter does not stop here thank God that from verse 23 to 27 Paul makes clear that we are not isolated God has not left us in our sin he has not left us in that state of eternal groaning but he is with us so we have hope verse 23 we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons the redemption of our bodies for in this hope we were saved that the hope that is seen is no hope at all who hopes for what they have already seen but if we hope for what we do not yet have we wait for it patiently the same way the spirit helps us in our weakness we do not know what we ought to pray for but the spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express and he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the spirit because the spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will what is Paul saying in these verses well if we get to the very core of what he's saying in these verses he's saying we are not isolated we are not alone we have the hope of eternity if we are those who are in

Christ we have the hope of the redemption of our bodies it's a hope that we have to to verse 25 wait patiently for until then Paul says we have the Holy Spirit we're still not isolated God is with us we have the Holy Spirit verse 26 helping us in our weakness groaning with us and in us even as we pray as he carries us through this this sin sick world Archie McLeod in his commentary says when Jesus ministered on earth he groaned when he saw what sin was doing to mankind Mark 7 John 11 today the Spirit groans with us but the Spirit does more than groan he prays for us John Stott says God the Father understands prayers that are sighed rather than said because he searches our hearts the Father answers these prayers prompted by the Spirit in our hearts

I think it's an amazing thing to think about that God the Holy Spirit he lives in us he helps us in our weakness and even when we're struggling and stammering to get our words out in prayer even when we can't get any words out in prayer he sighs he groans within us and gives expression to the prayers that we cannot find words for when we are in Christ the amazing thing is we're not simply signed up to a code or a way of life but we have the Spirit of Christ living in us not only did God come from glory to this sin sick world to save us in Christ

Christ and all that he did on the cross for us but still today the Spirit of Christ he lives within us helping us to pray helping us to live in this sin sick world so the good news within this point is that there is no isolation for those who are in Christ Jesus Jesus said I am with you always to the very end of the age and we have that expanded in great power in this chapter so that's the fifth point no isolation and now the final point no complaining do you remember that character that used to come on our screens at Hogman A Shot's the reverend

[57 : 42] I am Jolly a kind of awful character in some ways but we couldn't help but laugh at him because he was so like so many Christians and so many ministers that we've met I hope he's not like me but I don't know Christians can be very guilty of complaining our way through time but in light of these closing verses we need to see that if we're in Christ there should be no complaining but there should be much rejoicing and Paul here he gives us he gives us six takeaway reasons to rejoice and I'll just give them to you very very quickly reason number one God is working for our good verse 28 we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him who have been called according to his purpose and my car is not running well

I take it to the garage as long as the mechanic is working on it I'm happy I believe when the bonnet is up and he's in the guts of the engine I don't know what he's doing I can't see what he's doing I don't understand what he's doing but I believe that he's doing something good and sometimes we look out in our lives things are difficult things are hard for us to understand but we have the promise here to take away with us in all things all things all things God is working for the good of those who love him if you want a further explanation of that go and look at the life of Joseph in all things God is working for the good of those who love him and that gives us reason not to complain but to rejoice take away point two God will bring us to glory for those God foreknew verse 29 he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his son that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and those he predestined he also called those he called he also justified those he justified he also glorified right now

God is preparing us for glory if we are in Christ he is conforming us verse 29 to the likeness of his son Jesus and often that the times that he brings us most into alignment with Jesus are in these circumstances that we don't understand that we find difficult but that he's working within so right now God is working he is preparing us for glory and then when we die if we are in Christ God will bring us to glory it's not wrong to believe that we have a place in heaven if we are those who are trusting in Christ Jesus it's actually wrong not to believe when Jesus has promised him all the commentator says not one of those on whom God has set as love will fail to arrive in heaven and that gives us reason to rejoice third takeaway reason to rejoice

God is for us verse 31 what then shall we say in response to this if God is for us who can be against us think back two weeks to when Gordon preached in the evening and where he spoke about David and Goliath now little David was he quaking and shaking in his size six boots as he as he stood with this giant towering over him no he wasn't why not because he knew God was for him and so even this giant couldn't be against him is God for us if we are in Christ yes he is how do we know because he's told us in scripture because he's shown us in Christ at the cross and all that he's done for us God is for us not against us so if God is for us who do we have to fear we have to fear no one and nothing not even the coronavirus when we think about that for a moment that gives us reason to rejoice fourth take away reason to rejoice

God will give us what we need verse 32 he who did not spare his own son but gave him up for us all how will he not also along with him graciously give us all things and the logic here is compelling Paul is saying if God so loved us that he gave us his sons that we could be saved eternally surely he loves us enough to give us what we need to be sustained daily we worry about these little things don't we will we have enough bread will we have enough money will we have enough work will we have enough health we worry about these things but what we're being told here is we shouldn't worry God promises to give us all the things that we need not always the things that we want but the things that we need and that gives us reason to rejoice God

[63 : 16] God promises that we are not that we will not be condemned verse 33 to verse 34 is where we see that I like actually the commentator Oliot's translation of these two verses he says who can bring any charge against us seeing that the God of grace has been a judge and declared us guiltless who is going to condemn us seeing that it is God's son who has died for our offenses has risen again for our justification and is bearing up our cause at God's right hand at this very moment and the answer to these questions is no one is going to condemn us no condemnation now

I dread and you might say didn't Paul already say that and the answer to that question is yes he did so why is he saying it again because we need to hear it again and again and again and as we hear it we are given more and more reasons to rejoice and the final takeaway reason to rejoice is simply this

God loves us and we have that in these closing verses who who shall separate us from the love of Christ shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword it's written for your sake we face death all day long we are considered a sheep to be slaughtered no in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us for I am convinced that neither death nor life neither angels nor demons neither the present nor future nor any powers neither height nor depth nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord God loves us sometimes life separates us from the people we love coronavirus has separated us from some of the people that we love a change of circumstances sometimes fear misunderstandings at the personal level sometimes another person comes into our experience and comes between us and separates us from the people that we love sometimes it's life and often times painfully it can be death that separates us from those whom we love our lives and our love is fragile but when we see and receive the love of Christ we see and we receive a love that is eternal and unbreakable and we're given reason to rejoice in it

John Stott says there is nothing that you will go through today or in the coming days that can separate you from God's love no broken romance financial hardship tragedy or even death although at times your hold on God may be frail he has you in his grip and will not let you go God loves you and is for you hold fast to this unshakable conviction live in the confidence comfort and joy of it these are six takeaway reasons to stop our complaining and to stir our rejoicing and there is a very fast flyover Romans chapter 8 the chapter which as Alistair

Begg puts it begins with no condemnation from the wrath of God and ends with no separation from the love of God the chapter that shows us again all that God has done for us in Christ it's a chapter that impresses upon us the huge blessings that are ours in Christ so how do we finish what do we conclude with well we conclude with this call to be in Christ to be trusting her Calvin says all that God has done for us will be of no value to us as long as we remain outside of Christ so be in Christ trust in him as saviour and receive him receive the spirit of

Christ as lord of our lives may God bless these thoughts on his word to us what gift of grace is Jesus my redeemer there is no more for heaven now to give he is my joy my righteousness and freedom my steadfast love my deep and boundless peace to this I hold my hope is only [69 : 32] Jesus for my life is only bound to him oh how strange and divine I can sing all is mine yet not I but through Christ in me the night is dark but I am not forsaken for by my side the saviour he will stay I labour on in weakness and rejoicing for in my need his flower is displayed to this

I hold my shepherd will defend me through the deepest valley he will lead all the night has been won and I shall overcome yet not I but through Christ in me no fate I dread I know I am forgiven the future show the price it has been paid for Jesus bled and suffered for my pollen and he was raised to overthrow the grave to this

I hold my sin has been defeated Jesus love whenever is my plea all the chains are released I can sing I am free yet yet not I but through Christ in me with every breath I long to follow Jesus for he has said that he will bring me home and day by day I know he will renew me until I stand with joy before the throne to this I hold my hope is only

Jesus all the glory ever more to him when the praise is complete still my lips shall repeat yet not I but through Christ in me when the race is complete still my lips shall repeat yet not I but through Christ in me yet not I but through Christ in me and may the grace of our

Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all both now and forever more Amen all all ile of God change and one og his God shall kill him should die come a cause him to those he God these v may