

## THE SPIRIT OF LIFE

## Romans 8:1-4

Intro: Frederick Godet, born in Switzerland in 1812, has written a very excellent commentary on the book of Romans. In his comments on Romans 8 he quoted a man named Spener who said this: "If Holy Scripture was a ring, and the Epistle to the Romans its precious stone, chapter 8 would be the sparkling point of the jewel" (p. 295). Every chapter of the Bible is important, but clearly some are especially important because of the truth they contain, and Romans 8 is one of the those chapters.

Godet says that it begins with no condemnation, and ends with no separation (Ibid.).

Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones felt that chapter 5 was really the heart of this epistle, but felt that chapter 8 continued and completed what Paul was teaching in Romans 5.

A man by the name of James Stifler, who taught New Testament at Crozer Seminary in Pennsylvania, had this to say by way of comparing Romans 5 and 8:

This chapter [8] is the counterpart of the fifth. The fifth shows that justification by faith in Christ is once and forever--it is permanent; here we have the same thing --a godly life, the fruit of justification is insured. There [in 5] the argument for permanence of justification is based on its ground, the love of God in Christ Jesus; here it is based on the power of the Spirit in Christ Jesus. There [in 5] the justified man was looked at only in his relation to God; here he is also considered in the midst of his conflict with the flesh and the world, over which he triumphs by the aid of the Spirit. Hence some points just touched on there [in 5] are developed here. The Holy Spirit is only once mentioned there [in 5] (5:5), said to be given, but nothing more; here His office is completely unfolded. Two short verses there [in 5] (3, 4) speak of "tribulations"; here they occupy attention almost wholly from verse 17 to the end. There [in 5] the conclusion is briefly given--"Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life"; here it is presented at length in a most powerful and poetic strain (vv. 31-39) (p. 134).

Dr. Stifler's words ought to help us to see how great this chapter really is.

As we go into chapter 8 I would remind you that we are still dealing with the subject of sanctification, or holiness of life. And with the emphasis which we come to in this chapter

upon the ministry of the Holy Spirit, we can easily see that we will never make any real progress in a sanctified life unless we understand something about the work of the Spirit.

Today we want to consider verses 1 through 4 although it seems to be generally agreed that the first paragraph in this chapter goes down through verse 11. Let me read all eleven verses as we begin to look at the truth of verses 1 through 4. (Read.)

The chapter begins with the statement of:

I. A GLORIOUS TRUTH (Rom. 8:1).

It is because of this verse that Dr. Lloyd-Jones liked to tie together Romans 5 and 8. It seems that this verse does belong more to the doctrine of justification than it does to the doctrine of sanctification. But let me point out that there is an inseparable link between justification and sanctification and glorification, the three words which added together make up the doctrine of salvation. You will never be sanctified unless first of all you are justified, but if you are justified you will most certainly some day be glorified. And so it is very important that each one of us makes sure that we are really justified before God, that we are truly trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior. If you are, and if I am, then the Bible teaches that Christ is not only our Savior, but we are, as Rom. 8:1 states, "in Christ Jesus." It is not that we have to wait until we die to find out if we are facing "no condemnation," but because of our justification we are at this moment cleared of every charge that formerly stood on our record against us, and we will never have to face the possibility of eternal judgment again.

"No condemnation"! It would be hard to think of two words which are more wonderful than these: "no condemnation." It is not that we deserve to be cleared. We deserve to be utterly and eternally condemned because of our sins. But this is a work of God's grace through the sacrificial death of our Lord Jesus Christ. To be "in Christ Jesus" means that His death has covered your sins, the Lord Jesus took your penalty upon Himself at Calvary, and so we are no longer under condemnation. I repeat: how could any words be more wonderful, how could any words bring a greater measure of peace to any sinners heart than those words, "No condemnation"?

For years New Testament scholars who have studied the Greek texts of the NT have said that the last part of verse 1 was added to the original text because it is not found in many

MSS, and they were speaking of what they called the best MSS. They say that it rightfully belongs in verse 4. So the old ASV omits it, as do all of the modern translations of the book of Romans. But it is found in the Textus Receptus, the Received Text, from which the King James was translated.

Now I am not prepared to go against what seems to be overwhelming evidence against this statement, but neither can I find it in my heart just to ignore it. Why would it have been found in some even though not in all? Let us say that it is genuine, how should we interpret it? Is there any way that we can make good doctrine out of this verse as it stands in the KJV? I think that there is.

Let me ask a question. How can we tell that a person is "in Christ Jesus"? How do you know that **you** are "in Christ Jesus"? In the first part of verse 1 Paul was talking about a spiritual relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ when he spoke of those who are "in Christ Jesus"? You can't tell it just by looking at a person. You can't be sure just because a person goes to church because many people go to church who are not "in Christ Jesus." If you spoke to them using those words, they would not know what you were talking about. Also, the fact that a person seeks to live a good, moral life does not mean that he is "in Christ Jesus." There are many people in this world who are, from a human standpoint, good people, but they make no claim of being "in Christ Jesus." How can we tell that we are "in Christ Jesus"?

It is by the way we live. The person who lives like he has always lived, "after the flesh," a purely man-centered, humanistic, self-dependent life, is still under condemnation.

Paul described such people in the first three verses of Ephesians 2, what we all were at one time, and what, it would seem, that most people still are. Let me read these verses to you.

And you hath he quickened,  
 who were dead in trespasses and sins;  
 Wherein in time past ye walked  
 according to the course of this world,  
 according to the prince of the power of the air,  
 the spirit that now worketh  
 in the children of disobedience:  
 Among whom also we all had our conversation  
 in times past in the lusts of our flesh,  
 fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind;  
 and were by nature the children of wrath,  
 even as others.

To walk "~~after~~ the flesh" or "~~after~~ the Spirit" is to walk

according to the flesh or according to the Spirit. That is, if you walk according to the flesh, you are living the way people live who do not know the Lord. If you walk according to the Spirit, it means that you are trusting in the Holy Spirit to change your life and to enable you to live so as to please God. This is what Paul was starting to discuss in Romans 8!

Too often the Gospel is presented as though it is possible for people to receive the Lord, but not want their lives to be changed. Salvation is not like signing up for some life insurance policy which has no effect upon the way you live. Salvation is a life-transforming work of God by which sinners become new creatures "in Christ Jesus." And it is impossible to be saved--as I have said many times before--it is impossible to be saved without being changed. And a Christian soon learns that living a Christian life is a bigger task than any of us can accomplish on our own; we need the help, the blessing, the teaching and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

So, we tell a Christian by the way he lives, not just by what he says about himself, nor about certain things which he does. And so you can see that the latter part of verse 1 is not out-of-place as far as the interpretation of the whole verse is concerned. You can tell if a person is "in Christ Jesus" by whether or not he is living according to the Holy Spirit. If he is, he will be interested in pleasing God which means that he will be interested in obeying the Bible, the Word of God.

But now let us look at verse 2. Here we have:

## II. THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT EXPLAINED (Rom. 8:2-4).

A young believer might ask, "But why do we need to depend upon the Holy Spirit? Why can't he live lives pleasing to God without the help of the Holy Spirit?"

Those are questions which deserve an answer, but they should not be questions to us if we have learned the truth that Paul expressed in Romans 7.

Do you remember that he said that what he wanted to do, he was not able to do, and didn't do, but the things that he now hated he continued to do. And he likened it in Rom. 7:24 to a Roman prisoner, condemned to death, dragging a dead body through the streets of Roman, a body that was chained to his ankle.

Do you remember what he called that dead body? He called it, "the law of sin." "Law" in this phrase means a compelling,

impelling force which was exercised within Paul's heart, causing him to do what he knew he should not do, and keeping him from doing what he knew that he wanted to do, and should do. Here in Rom. 8:2 he called it "the law of sin and death."

But notice what he said about "the law of sin and death." He spoke of being "free" from it, meaning that he was liberated, delivered from that powerful force of sin in his heart which had held him all his life as its slave. Before a person is saved, "the law of sin and death" exercises a controlling, enslaving force in his life. After he is saved that old sin nature is still there, refusing to give up the dominion it has had for so long. But now there is a new, more powerful force in a Christian's life. It is called "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." The Holy Spirit is a greater, more powerful, controlling and compelling force. And as a believer walks "after the Spirit," according to the Spirit, the Spirit frees him from the sin nature which so long has held him captive.

James Stifler has illustrated Paul's words here by speaking about the law of gravity. We know that one of the most powerful laws of earth is the law of gravity. You and I can jump up in the air, but we can't jump very far, and we can't stay up in the air once we jump. We come right back to the earth. We cannot overcome the law of gravity on our own.

But let me do this. I go out to the Portland International airport and I board a plane. The plane takes off and I fly to New York or to London at more than 30,000 feet in the air. I can stay airborne for hours as long as I am in the plane. What has happened? By the greater power of those jet engines I am able to overcome the law of gravity, and I continue to soar in the heavens as long as I am in the plane.

Let the plane represent the Holy Spirit. And let gravity represent sin. All of the time I am in the plane the law of gravity is still in effect, but the law of the plane overcomes the law of gravity so that I am able to do something in the plane that I could never do without the plane.

You see, what Paul is saying. There are two laws. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" and "the law of sin and death." "The law of sin and death" has kept me enslaved to my sin, and I haven't been able to set myself free. But the Holy Spirit has been given to me as a child of God, and His power is greater than the power of sin. And it is by the Holy Spirit that I have been set free from my sin. I can still sin, but not when I am walking in the Spirit.

In verse 3 Paul went back to what he had been saying in chapter 7 about "the law" which God gave to Moses. It tells us what God requires of us. But the Law does not help us; it orders us, but it does not empower us. And our flesh is too weak to measure up to God's standards. But God will never lower the standards which He has revealed in His Law, but we cannot be acceptable to God unless we measure up to the Law. And so what was done to meet our need of acceptance with God. Look at the rest of verse 3, and then read on into verse 4.

Please notice something very important about verses 3 and 4. You have all Three Members of the Godhead mentioned here as Paul explains for us what God has done, not for our justification in this instance, but for our sanctification. And if you read these two verses carefully you will see that Paul points us to two great spiritual realities:

- 1) The work of Christ on the Cross.
- 2) The work of the Spirit in our hearts.

God sent His Son into the world, not in sinful flesh, but "in the likeness of sinful flesh." And there is a great difference between those two statements. The Lord Jesus did not lose His Deity by becoming a Man. He was and always will be the God-Man. But in His flesh on the Cross He not only died to pay the penalty for our sins (plural), but by His death He "condemned sin [singular] in the flesh." He died that we might be forgiven of our sins, but also that we might be set free from our sin natures. And to bring us salvation we have been born of the Spirit; to sanctify us we are indwelt by the Spirit.

And so what does the Spirit do for us? By His mighty power He frees us from the bondage of our sin nature, and enables us to live so that the righteousness of God, expressed in the Law, and then made clearer than ever in our Lord Jesus Christ, "is fulfilled in us."

But is that something which just automatically takes place if we are really saved? No! This is where we meet that statement again which we considered in verse 1. Victory over sin is ours as we walk in dependence on and according to the guidance given to us by "the Spirit of life" (v. 2).

That is an interesting title, isn't it? "The Spirit of life." But don't separate it from the following phrase, "in Christ Jesus." The Spirit gives us eternal life, but always "in Christ Jesus." He sustains us in this eternal life, but always "in Christ Jesus." The Spirit empowers us for victory over sin, but always "in Christ Jesus." The Spirit enables us to be godly, to be holy, but always "in Christ Jesus."

And where do we learn about this "life"? Where do we learn what it means to "walk after the Spirit"? There is only one place. It is all in the Book of books, our Bibles, the Word of God. To walk according to the Spirit is to walk according to the Word. Therefore, let us feed our souls every day upon the Word of God, trusting the Holy Spirit to give us power to rise above the sin within us that we may walk in fellowship with God, experiencing His wonderful deliverance from sin not only day by day but moment by moment.

Concl: Martin Luther captured the truth of these verses in his great hymn, A Mighty Fortress. Let me read a couple of stanzas as I close:

Did we in our own strength confide,  
Our striving would be losing;  
Were not the right Man on our side,  
the Man of God's own choosing.  
Dost ask who that may be?  
Christ Jesus, it is He, Lord Sabaoth His Name,  
From age to age the same,  
And He must win the battle.

And then after the stanza which speaks of the demons which fill this world and how one little word from the Word can destroy the Devil, Luther said this:

That Word above all earthly powers,  
No thanks to them abideth;  
The Spirit and the gifts are ours  
Through Him Who with us sideth;  
Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also;  
The body they may kill, God's truth abideth still;  
His kingdom is for ever.

As we come to the Lord's Table this morning, make sure that you know the Lord. Repent of your sins and trust in the Savior if you have never done so. And may those of us who know the Lord find a greater song of praise in our hearts for the work of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, for their work in saving us not only from the penalty of our sins, but also from the power and tyranny of our sins. By God's grace we can be a holy people.

## THE TWO WAYS OF LIFE

Romans 8:5-8

Intro: All through the Scriptures we are taught that there are two ways of life, and only two ways. And those two ways are described in different terms. There are only two ways, and so there are only two kinds of people in the world when viewed from God's point-of-view. I am not talking about male and female, or black and white, or easterners and westerners, or any of the other divisions that we constantly read about in our newspapers. I am speaking of those who are saved, and those who are not saved; those who are trusting in Christ for their salvation, and those who are not; those who are free from sin, and those who are in bondage to sin; those who have seen the light, and those who are still in spiritual darkness, blinded by their sins; those who are justified before God, and those who are still under condemnation; those who are spiritually alive, and those who are dead in trespasses and sins; those whose sins are forgiven, and those who not forgiven. And, in the words of the last verse we considered last week, there are those who walk, or live, "after the flesh," and those who walk, or live, "after the Spirit."

So all people fall into one of these two categories as far as God is concerned. That is true of all of us here today, and of everyone listening to this message on radio. You are either right with God, or you are not. You will find differences in both groups, but in God's sight all people fall into either one or the other of these two categories. There is not just one category, nor three, nor four, nor ten, nor a hundred, nor a thousand. There are only two! I hope you understand this.

There are many people who do not like this, probably most people, but these are truths which no one can change because it is the Word of God. And I can add that just as there are only two kinds of people in the world, so there is only one way to get out of the bad and into the good. It is not enough to be religious. It is not enough to go to church. It is not enough to be baptized. It is not enough to try to do the right thing. Our salvation requires more than any one of us or all of us put together can produce. It required the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. When the Lord Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me, He did not mean a way, or a truth, or a life, but **"the way, the truth, and the life."** Peter was declaring the same truth when he proclaimed in Jerusalem,

Neither is there salvation in any other:  
**for there is none other name under heaven  
given among men, whereby we must be saved.**



And by looking at the rest of his message you can see that the "name" that he was talking about was the name of "Jesus Christ."

I sincerely hope that we all understand this. By nature we were born in sin, under judgment, with no interest in pleasing God. And it is not until God in His mercy shows us our terrible plight and reveals to us the remedy in Christ, that we can have an idea at all of the depth of our need. Humanity is alienated from God; Christ became a Man, suffered for sinners on the Cross, that He might bring to God those who trust in Him for their salvation.

But now let us learn a little more about:

# I. THE TWO WAYS OF LIFE (Rom. 8:5, 6).

Paul used the two phrases in verse 5 which he had used in verse 4, and before that in verse 1: "after the flesh," and "after the Spirit." He states in these two verses the difference between the two.

## A. They live differently (v. 5).

We need to understand what Paul meant when he used the words "after" and "mind." (Read verse 5.)

In the first place we need to know that the expression "after the flesh" describes a person who is not a Christian, not a child of God, not saved. The person who is "after the Spirit" is a Christian, has been saved, is trusting Christ, and thus is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Only those who are truly Christian have the Holy Spirit indwelling them, but they all, or, may I say, we all, have the Holy Spirit--that is, all of us have the Holy Spirit.

The word "after" not only describes the direction of a person's life, but it also includes the idea of control. And the word "mind" indicates a willingness, or even more, a desire to be headed in that particular direction. We all "mind" certain things, that is, we think about certain things, and what we think about, the objectives which we have in life, are determined by whether or not we are "after the flesh," or "after the Spirit."

The first part of verse 5 describes a non-Christian; the second part describes a Christian. I am hesitant about using the word Christian because in modern America it has been stretched far beyond its NT meaning. American has become so pagan that people may not use the word Christian today like they used to. It used to mean a nice person, or a church-

goer, but not necessarily one who had trusted Christ as his, or her, Savior. The Devil loves to confuse our language so that many people think that they are Christians when, according to NT teaching, they are not! But I hope I have made myself clear as to what I mean when I use the term, Christian.

So verse 5 means this:

Those who are not Christians are under the control of the flesh, and that is what they think about. That is the way they live. They have fleshly, earthly goals as their objective. On the other hand, those who are Christians, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, are under the control of the Spirit, and they think about doing what the Spirit of God wants them to do. That is their objective in life.

What does this actually mean in daily life?

Well, for the non-Christian it means that by his very nature he is interested primarily in this life. He is not interested at all in eternity, nor in God, nor in the Bible. He wants to enjoy himself as much as he can day by day, satisfy his own desires and the desires of those he loves. There are people who are "after the flesh" who are very moral and very respectable. And then there are others who extend all of the way from what we would call moral people, but not Christian, to the very immoral, who would never be accused of being Christians. Our flesh causes us to seek present happiness whatever we may desire, but with no thought of whether or not what they want is the will of God, or pleasing to God. A man can be driven by his flesh to be financially successful, or to be powerful, or popular. Most politicians are a good example of the flesh in action. They want to run things. They want to be in control. They are power hungry.

So there is a great variety of ways in which the flesh controls the lives of people, but it all comes from the same flesh.

When a person receives Jesus Christ as his or her Savior, and is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, made a new creature, he does not become immediately perfect, but his life changes course. The Holy Spirit exercises a stronger control in that person's life, and his life no longer revolves around himself or earthly things, but he wants to please God. He wants to live according to the Bible. He soon learns that things can be legal, but not right—right in the sight of God. He is no longer out to make a great deal of Himself, but he wants to glorify God and God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. This is what he thinks about; he minds "the things of the Spirit."

When Paul wrote his first epistle to the Corinthian church, he touched on these same things that he wrote about in Romans 8. Listen to what he wrote in 1 Cor. 2:14, and notice that he used the expression we have here in Romans 8:5, "the things of the Spirit":

But the natural man receiveth not  
the things of the Spirit of God:  
**for they are foolishness unto him:**  
**neither can he know them,**  
**because they are spiritually discerned.**

And then listen to these words in 1 Cor. 1:18:

For the preaching of the cross  
is to them that perish foolishness;  
but unto us which are saved  
it is the power of God.

You see, that which is most wonderful and precious to those who are "after the Spirit" is scorned as "foolishness" by those who are "after the flesh."

And to show that this is not a racial thing, that people of every race who are "in the flesh" feel the same way, Paul said this in 1 Cor. 1:22-24:

For the Jews require a sign,  
and the Greeks seek after wisdom:  
But we preach Christ crucified,  
unto the Jews a stumblingblock,  
and unto the Greeks foolishness;  
But unto them which are called,  
both Jews and Greeks,  
Christ the power of God,  
and the wisdom of God.

To the person who is "after the flesh," nothing is more distasteful and a waste of time than coming to church to listen to the Word of God. But to the person who is "after the Spirit," this is what he lives for and enjoys the most. What a difference it makes when you are no longer "after the flesh," but "after the Spirit."

But now look at verse 6. Here we see:

B. The outcome of the two ways of life (v. 6).

There are some very important reasons why you had better seek the mercy of God to be "after the Spirit" rather than "after the flesh."

What is at the end of the road if you continue on "after the flesh"? "To be carnally minded" means to continue to be "after the flesh." So it means that if any person continues

right through life the same way they were when they were born, without being born again, there is only one thing you can expect: "D-E-A-T-H! Not annihilation, but death, eternal death, eternal torment, separation from God with no hope that anything will ever be different.

What did we learn from the last verse of Romans 6, verse 23?

For the wages of sin is death;  
but the gift of God is eternal life  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Putting it bluntly, if any person continues on "after the flesh," and never knows the saving grace of Jesus Christ, at the end of the road is HELL! There will be no escape. If you scorn these words, you will find out some day, when it is too late, that the Bible was right and you were wrong.

What is the end for those who are "after the Spirit," or "spiritually minded"? It is "life and peace." This is true now in a limited way, but it will be true to an infinite degree when we are in heaven. Then we will know as we cannot know now, but real life is, and what real peace is. The fruit of the Spirit is peace. The fruit of sin is death and eternal despair.

But now let us go on to the last two verses of our text. Here we learn:

II. THE HOPELESSNESS OF HAVING THE CARNAL MIND (Rom. 8:7, 8).

If you are "after the flesh," in your natural state, you have "the carnal mind." What is the chief characteristic of "the carnal mind"? It is that it is at enmity with God. Verse 7 tells us this.

What does this enmity mean?

It means that the person who has "the carnal mind" "is not subject to the law of God." It means that, if this applies to you, you are not submissive to the Word of God. It means you don't care about the Bible. You are not interested in what it has to say. You want to do what you want to do, and you want to be what you want to be, but God has no place in your life.

But let me point out something for all of us to understand. We somehow have the idea that when we get ready to change (if we ever do), then we will turn to God. If you think like that you need to read the last part of verse 7: "NEITHER INDEED CAN BE." This means that, try as you may, you can never make yourself obedient to the Word of God. You can

never believe in Christ. You can never make yourself a Christian. You don't have a free will; you are a slave to your sin. And that is why you are content to go on without God and without Christ--you don't really understand how helpless and how needy you are!

And so Paul concludes this part of the chapter by saying, "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." He did not say will not please God, but "cannot," are not able to please God. They do not possess the ability, the power, to please God. They are helplessly in bondage to their sin.

But, you say, Paul was writing to the believers in Rome. And he was! But why would he write like this to them when they were no longer "after the flesh" but "after the Spirit"? I believe it was for one important reason: He wanted them to understand how utterly dependent they were upon the Holy Spirit if they were to live a life pleasing to God.

What is the most important thing for any person to do, regardless of what generation they may live in, or what country they live in, or what language they speak? The most important thing for any person to do who has ever lived, or who will ever live on this earth is to "please God"! Nothing is more important than this. If we are not pleasing God, nothing else can really be right now, nor will it be right in eternity. And yet who is talking about God today, and what is pleasing to Him? When we talk about homosexuality, who is asking what God thinks about this? When we talk about abortion, who says lets get the Bible out and find out if God is pleased with this? When our judges were deciding where little baby Jessica was going to live, who asked, "What is the will of God?" When we talk about floods and hurricanes and crime and drugs and all of the other problems we have which can and are destroying our country, who is even remotely suggesting that God may be speaking to us as a nation and as individuals? And who is calling upon us to turn to God, to plead with God for His forgiveness for our sins, and to have mercy upon us.

You see, our destiny as individuals and as a nation is in the hands of God. It is not in the hands of any particular political party. We need to turn to God, but we cannot turn to God unless we turn to Christ. You can't have God without Christ.

And so as long as people remain in their sins, don't expect them to be interested in pleasing God. They not only will not in their present state, but they cannot! Only when God has mercy upon us, granting us repentance toward Himself and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, can the course of our lives

be changed from certain and eternal death in hell to everlasting life in heaven. And those who turn to Christ have a foretaste of heaven here on earth as they with new hearts "walk...after the Spirit."

Concl: Don't you wish everyone would know what we have in these four verses which we have considered today? Aren't you thankful that you know the truth, if you do? How thankful we should be for the grace of God which He has extended toward us in showing us in His Word not only what is wrong with us, but how He make things right in our lives. Oh, let us make sure that we are walking in the Spirit, trusting him to guide us through the Word, giving us both the desire and the ability to please Him in all that we are, and in all that we do.

If you do not know the Lord as your Savior, if you are still "after the flesh," but your eyes have been opened this morning to what is really your need, call upon the Lord to save you. Come to Him, and seek His mercy in salvation. This may be the very reason you came this morning, because God brought you and intends that you should come to know Him now. If any of you has trusted Christ for salvation during this service, I would like to know it. Please tell me as you go out. If you have questions or are not sure of your salvation, I would be glad to help you, and there are others here who would count it a great privilege to help you.

May the will of God be done in all of our lives, and may those of us who know Him leave this place today with a greater desire than ever before to live to please the Lord.

## LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

Romans 8:9-11

Intro: Romans 8 is the chapter of the Holy Spirit in the book of Romans. He is mentioned twenty-one times in this chapter, and only three times, possibly four, in the rest of the epistle. I say three, and possibly four, because the word spirit (not capitalized) is used six times. It seems to me that three of those are clearly references to the Holy Spirit, and possibly a fourth also. But, be that as it may, there are twenty-one obvious references to the Holy Spirit in chapter 8. So this justifies us in calling this the chapter of the Holy Spirit.

There has always been a great deal of confusion about the ministry of the Holy Spirit among the Lord's people, and that is surprising because the teaching of Scripture is just as clear with reference to the Holy Spirit as it is on any other doctrine. It is even hard to find a hymn about the Holy which is entirely accurate. So many of the hymns instruct us to call for the Holy Spirit to come to us, or upon us, when Paul made it very clear in this chapter, as well as elsewhere in his writings, that every true believer has the Holy Spirit abiding in him, and that He is there forever.

I hope you notice that when I speak of the Holy Spirit I am using the pronoun He, and when I write the word "He" in my notes, referring to the Holy Spirit, I capitalize it. The Holy Spirit is a Person, not just some kind of a mysterious power emanating from God. The fact that He does not have a body does not keep Him from being a Person. God has no body, and the Lord Jesus did not have a body until He was born of the Virgin Mary. So the Holy Spirit is not kept from being a Person because He does not have a body. Actually even with us, it is not our bodies that make us persons. Our bodies tell us where we are, but when we die, we leave these bodies. However, we don't cease to be persons because we are with the Lord and our bodies are still here on earth. So we need to think of the Holy Spirit as a Person, just as much of a Person as God is, or as the Lord Jesus is! If we do not understand this, we already have a false idea as to Who or what the Holy Spirit is. So I trust that all of understand that the Holy Spirit is a Person. I don't really know why the King James translated Holy Spirit as Holy Ghost. It probably was because ghost used to be an accepted word for a living creature without a body. But the word ghost really conveys the wrong idea about the Holy Spirit, and so every time I come to the words Holy Ghost in Scripture, I try to remember to say Holy Spirit, unless we are reading the Scriptures together.

But let me repeat: the Holy Spirit is a Person. We should speak of Him as He, not it. The reason we sometimes have "it" in the Bible, e.g., Romans 8:16, is because the word spirit in the Greek is a neuter word, and the translators were trying to be literal in their translation. The Holy Spirit is a Person, a Third Member of the Godhead along with the Father and the Son. All Three Persons are equal in their Deity. And the Holy Spirit is deserving of our worship, and of our trust, just as we worship the God the Father and God the Son.

I know that most of you are familiar with what I have been saying, but I have said it for the benefit of those who do not know, or who may have questions about the Holy Spirit.

In our text for today, verses 9 through 11 of Romans 8, we can see that Paul referred to the Holy Spirit in three ways:

- 1) Simply as "the Spirit."
- 2) And as "the Spirit of God."
- 3) And as "the Spirit of Christ."

In Romans Paul does not call this Third Person of the Godhead the Holy Spirit, but that should not bother us because he does call in "the Holy Spirit" in some of his other epistles.

There are those who believe that God and Christ only dwell in us by the Spirit, i.e., that the Spirit is their Representative. I personally don't hold to that view. I believe that we are indwelt by all Three Members of the Godhead, as difficult as it is for us to understand this. It is true that God is in heaven, and that the Lord Jesus is seated at His right hand, but They are omnipresent--a truth which really goes beyond our understanding. And so while the titles "the Spirit of God" and "the Spirit of Christ" do indicate that the Holy Spirit represents God and Christ, and does Their will, yet He does not replace Them. When once the truth really grips our minds and hearts that we are indwelt by the Three Members of the Godhead, we can never be the same again.

But now let us go to our text.

If I were to select one part of these three verses as the key part, I would choose those words in verse 10, "the Spirit is life." This means that it is impossible for us to understand what salvation is, and how we are to live as the Lord's people, if we do not understand this statement: "the Spirit is life." This is what Paul had already indicated in this chapter when he wrote about walking "after the Spirit." It is impossible to live the Christian life without understanding how completely dependent we are upon the Holy Spirit. And yet we hear Christian leaders boasting about their accomplishment, or letting others boast for them, as though they



were doing God a great favor by their services. Whatever there is about us that is pleasing to God, and however the Lord may use us to be a blessing to others, none of the glory belongs to us. It all belongs to God--and in our text today, Paul was saying that the glory, the credit, belongs to the Spirit of God. "The Spirit is life." I heard a very prominent preacher just this past week talking about his work as though he were doing a lot of things for which God was going to give him special honor. And while I was listening to Him he said nothing about the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. It made me wonder if he knows that "the Spirit is life" and that he can do nothing without the help and blessing and guidance and power of the Holy Spirit.

But before I say more about "the Spirit is life," or LIFE IN THE SPIRIT (which is the title of my message today), let us look at verse 9. Here Paul teaches us about:

#### I. THE INDWELLING SPIRIT (Rom. 8:9).

Paul up to this point in the chapter had been contrasting the flesh and the Spirit. He was using the expression, "the flesh," not to refer to our bodies, but to refer to our fleshly nature, our old nature, our sinful nature, that nature which has been ours from birth. Before we were saved we were "in the flesh," that is, dominated by the flesh and controlled by the flesh. Sometimes the flesh can appear to be very respectable, but at its best it is proud, self-seeking, with no place for God.

However, when we were saved, we were placed under a new and different authority, the authority of the Holy Spirit. And just as "the flesh" is in us, the Holy Spirit came to live in us, and, as Paul explained to the Galatians in Galatians 5, a constant warfare goes on between the flesh and the Spirit of God. Our old nature is not taken away when we are saved. We can still lie and steal and take the Lord's Name in vain. We can still be proud and self-centered. We can still depend upon ourselves instead of depending upon God. But the Holy Spirit is in us, more powerful than the flesh, enabling us to live in a greater way, a holy way, which we could never live on our own!

And so one of the first and most important truths that any Christian can learn, and needs to learn, is that he (or she) is indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God! What an amazing truth this is!

Our Lord spoke of this when He was with His disciples in the Upper Room. I know that most of you probably remember what the Lord said at that time, but let me refresh your memory as

well as reading it for those of you who may not know what the Lord said.

Please turn to John 14:16, 17. (Read and explain.)

So, going back to Romans 8:9, we do not have anything from this verse to do, but something very wonderful to believe! Paul said here not only that the Spirit of God and of Christ not only indwells all believers, but that the person who does not have the Holy Spirit does not belong to the Lord. Clearly this is a distinguishing difference between a person who is saved and a person who is not saved. If you are saved, the Spirit of God is living in you; if you are not saved, the Spirit of God is not in you. It is just as simple as that.

Now this being the case, a very reasonable question is: Why has He come to us? Why is He there? And why is it that He has come to stay with us forever?

There is more than one answer to that question. Verse 10 gives us one answer (which I have already touched on), and verse 11 gives us another answer.

Let us look at verse 10.

## II. "THE SPIRIT IS LIFE" (Rom. 8:10).

Here is one verse which speaks of Christ dwelling in us. The "if" could be translated since.

This verse is not an easy one to interpret, but I believe that Paul was saying that even though we are indwelt by Christ and the Holy Spirit, yet these bodies of ours are still under the sentence of death. Even though we are the Lord's people, we are going to die physically. We are under the sentence of death.

We all know this to be true. We don't know when nor where nor how death will come, but it is coming for all of us-- unless the Lord returns first. And that which brought about not only physical death, but spiritual death and ultimately eternal death, is sin! We are going to die because we are sinners.

Now just to be able to say that would be very discouraging if that is all we had to say. If anyone here is without Christ, you need to think about this. You are going to die! What then? Don't let anyone try to tell you that when you die it will all be over, that when you're dead, you're dead! That is a lie. When you die you are going to face God as your Judge! If Christ is not your Savior before you die, it will

be too late to be saved then. The very fact that we are all going to die should serve as a warning that we need to prepare for that day. The only way we can prepare is by accepting the pardon that is offered by God through the Lord Jesus Christ. That is what Paul had in mind when he went on to write in the latter part of verse 10, "but the Spirit is life because of righteousness."

What do guilty sinners need? They need to be forgiven. They need to be declared righteous. But how can they be declared righteous when they are sinners--as we all are? It is through the sacrificial death of Christ Who died, not as a martyr, and certainly not for His own sins, but Who died for sinners. Paul wrote to the Corinthians in 2 Cor. 5:21,

For he hath made him to be sin for us,  
who knew no sin; that we might be made  
the righteousness of God in him.

Only those who are right with God through faith in Christ and what He did on the Cross, have the Holy Spirit living in them as their LIFE.

And this is why a Christian can please God when nobody else can. It is not because he is better, but because he has the Holy Spirit living in him to make it possible for him to live a life that is pleasing to God, a life of obedience to the Word of God.

So why has the Holy Spirit been given to us? Because we are now righteous before God. Our sins have been forgiven. We are new creatures in Christ. And the blessed Holy Spirit has come to teach us the Word, and to make it possible for us to live so that God will be pleased and glorified with our lives. Such a life is impossible except for the Holy Spirit.

How do we get victory over those sins which had such a death hold on us before we were saved? Paul gives the answer here, but he also gave it to the Galatians in Gal. 5:16 where he wrote,

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit,  
and ye shall **not** fulfil the lust of the flesh.

What were the sins you have had trouble with? Pride, dishonesty, drinking, immorality? What sins are you struggling with now? If you learn to walk in the Spirit, you will experience deliverance from your sins.

But that is not the end of the story. We have learned that a child of God has the Holy Spirit. And we have learned that a child of God needs the Holy Spirit in order to live to please God. But how did Paul add to what he was saying when we get

to verse 10?

Here we learn that the Holy Spirit is:

III. THE QUICKENING SPIRIT (Rom. 8:11).

I hope all of you remember that I have said over and over that there are three phases to salvation: the past, the present, and the future:

- 1) The past for all who are saved is justification. We are as justified now as we ever will be. Our standing with God is perfect! It will never be changed because it is based upon the work of Christ on the Cross Who died that we might be forgiven, and that we might be cleared of all charges which were against us. It was the Holy Spirit Who drew us to Christ so that we could be saved. We would never have come if He had not drawn us.
- 2) The present is that we are being sanctified. Later on in this eighth chapter of Romans we will learn that all believers are predestined to be made like the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the work of the Holy Spirit in each one of our lives NOW!
- 3) The final phase of our salvation is glorification. This is when we will finally be like our Lord. All possibility of sinning will be forever gone, and we will be completely what God wants us to be in body, soul, and spirit. The transformation will take place at our resurrection, and here Paul said that it is the Holy Spirit Whom God will use to "quicken," make alive, our "mortal bodies." (Read verse 11.)

When Paul wrote to the Ephesian church he said something which applies to the truth that he was presenting here in Rom. 8:11. I refer to what we read in Eph. 1:13, 14.

Paul was enumerating some of the many spiritual blessings that we all have in Christ. And he saved this one to the last because we will experience it last. Listen to Eph. 1:13, 14:

In whom ye also trusted,  
after that ye heard the word of truth,  
the gospel of your salvation:  
in whom also after that ye believed,  
**ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,  
Which (Who) is the earnest of our inheritance  
until the redemption of the purchased possession,  
unto the praise of his glory.**

The Holy Spirit indwelling us is our life. He is our Teacher. He is our Restrainer. He is our Guide. He is our Power. And He is much more. But one thing we are often

inclined to overlook is that He is our Guarantee, our certainty, our assurance from God that some day, although we may die before the Lord comes, He, the Holy Spirit, is going to raise us from the dead, and finish the work of making us like the Lord Jesus Christ!

What our relationship to the Holy Spirit will be in eternity, I don't know. I am sure it will be even more wonderful than it has been here on earth. But one thing I do know, and you know it, too: He lives in us, He is perfecting us, and He is not going to stop His gracious and glorious work until the work of salvation is finished. Then we will be presented to God, as Jude said, "faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24b).

Concl: And so in the three verses of our text, Romans 8:9, 10, and 11, we have the whole story of salvation. And the Holy Spirit has a vital part, an indispensable part, in all that has to do with our salvation. The Holy Spirit is absolutely essential in each phase of our salvation. How thankful we should be for Him. And how we should seek His help, His blessing, His guidance, His strength, every day that we live. By the grace of God we can say that we are people in whom God the Holy Spirit dwells.

When I was first saved I really did not know what my relationship to the Holy Spirit was. I didn't know if He was with me, or if I needed to pray that He would come. I went through quite a long period of uncertainty and confusion. In my case it was Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer whom God used to bring me to understand that the Holy Spirit was in me, and that He had been in me from the very moment that I trusted in the Lord Jesus as my Savior. And furthermore I learned that He would never leave me, and that He was working day by day to make me more like the Lord. I haven't always been a cooperating child of God, but how thankful I am that the Lord has never given up on me. And He won't give up on you.

But make sure that you know the Lord Jesus as your Savior. If Christ is not your Savior, the Holy Spirit is not in you, and if the Holy Spirit is not in you, you are still in bondage to your old nature and to all of your sins. Christ can set you free, and perhaps as I am speaking to you, the Holy Spirit is speaking to you, too. Come to Christ now. Come to have your sins forgiven. Come that your life now may be changed, and that you, too, will have the assurance that some day you will not only be in heaven, but that you will be like Christ--just exactly what God wants all of His people to be.

## MORTIFYING THE DEEDS OF THE BODY

Romans 8:12-14

Scripture Reading: Col. 3:1-17.

Intro: The study of a book like Romans has some of the same characteristics that a story in one of the Gospels would have. For example, tonight, the Lord willing, we are going to be looking at the healing of the palsied man who was taken to the Lord by his friends. Because they could not get in the house where the Lord was because there were so many people there, they took the roof apart and lowered the sick man into the house where the Lord Jesus was. I think that most of you are familiar with that story.

However, the story would not make sense to us if we skipped the first verses in the account, and started reading where the Lord said, "Rise, take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house." If we have any curiosity at all, we would want to know what was wrong with the man. We would want to know how he got there if he had not been able to get wherever he was by himself. If he were not in his own home, we would like to know where he was, and so on and on.

The only way that we can learn those details is to go back to the beginning of the story, and read all that Mark has written. The whole story gives us what we call the context, and we can only understand any one verse if, first of all, we see what has gone before.

Now I say that the study of a book like Romans is similar to that. We do not necessarily have to go back to the beginning of the book in order to understand, say, the three verses we are going to be considering today. It would help us a great deal if we would. But we at least have to know what the Apostle Paul was teaching in the verses which come just before our text. If we don't, then the twelfth verse will be hard for us to understand:

Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

Let us think for a moment about the word:

I. DEBTORS (Rom. 8:12).

This verse tells us what we are not! But who did Paul have in mind when he said "we"?

Well, in the preceding verses he was contrasting those who were "after the flesh," or "in the flesh," with those who were "after the Spirit," or "in the Spirit." And we have learned that by "in the flesh" he meant people who do not know the Lord; by "in the Spirit" he was speaking of people

who do know the Lord. And, of course, when he said "we" he was including himself, and so he must meant that those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are not "debtors...to live after the flesh." It is all spoken in a negative way.

But what did he mean by "debtors"?

There is a verse in the book of Proverbs which should be of help to us in understanding this expression. You will find it in Prov. 22:7, and it reads like this:

The rich ruleth over the poor,  
**and the borrower is servant to the lender.**

I think we all understand what that means. If we have borrowed money from someone, we are that person's servant as far as that debt is concerned. So to be a debtor is to be, to the extent of the debt, a servant. We pay the kind of interest the creditor demands, and we make the amount of payments which are required of us. As long as we have that debt, we are not free in that area of our lives. "The borrower is servant to the lender."

The Greek word which Paul used here conveys the same idea. It speaks of someone who is bound by an obligation. He is under an obligation to do something for the one to whom he is in debt.

Paul was speaking of those who are still in sin. They are under an obligation to obey the demands of their sin nature. They are not free. They have to sin because that is the obligation they are under. They are not free to do otherwise, and do not have the means to obtain their freedom. The sinner is a bondservant to his sin.

But when a person receives Jesus Christ as his Savior, his debt is paid. He no longer has to sin. He is free from sin. He still can sin, but he is no longer a debtor to sin. This is true only of those who know the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior.

But will you notice that Paul said, "We are debtors." We do have an obligation, but it is not to sin. And yet we have an obligation. We are not free to do as we please; we are under an obligation to God to do His will, to live for His glory. And the debt we owe to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to God, is a debt that we will never be able to pay.

Isaac Watts (1707) captured this idea in his well-known hymn, At the Cross. I am thinking of the last stanza which goes like this:

But drops of grief can ne'er repay

**The debt of love I owe;**  
Here, Lord, I give myself away,  
'Tis all that I can do.

So while we are no longer under obligation to sin, we are under obligation to our Lord. We are not our own; we have been bought with a price. Therefore, we are to glorify God in our body and in our spirit which are God's. Cf. 1 Cor. 6:20.

In Romans 1:14 Paul said,  
I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians;  
both to the wise, and to the unwise.  
Paul was not indebted to people as such; he was indebted to God to carry the Gospel to those people.

But what kind of indebtedness, obligation, did Paul have in mind here in Rom. 8:12. It was his obligation to the Spirit. He was no longer a slave to his sin, but he was a bondservant to the members of the Godhead. He no longer had to sin, but he was under the new dominion and authority of the Holy Spirit.

What is required so that we will not continue to live in sin? This brings us to what Paul had to say about:

## II. MORTIFICATION (Rom. 8:13).

Paul continues to speak only of believers. It is absolutely impossible for anyone who is not a Christian to do what Paul was telling the Roman Christians to do in this verse.

We have, first,

- A. A warning (v. 13a): "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die."

Paul was addressing the church at Rome in the way that we might address any church, knowing that there could be those who were identified with the church who were not saved. And so he could have been saying that if a person professes to be a Christian, but continues to live "after the flesh," he or she is not really saved, and will experience eternal judgment.

How important for all of us to make sure that we are not deceiving ourselves! But there is no reason for us to be deceived if we are paying attention to the teaching of Scripture.

But this is followed by:



- B. A promise (v. 13b): "But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

We all need to know two things about our relationship with sin as the people of God:

- 1) That victory over sin is not something which is automatically ours when we are saved. We will be engaged in a warfare then which will be greater than anything that we have ever experienced before.
- 2) It is necessary for us to mortify the deeds of our bodies if we are to experience the real blessings of our salvation.

Look upon this as a promise, but that is exactly what it is. If we "mortify the deeds of the body," we shall experience life in its fullness, spiritual life, divine life! And so it is very important that we know what Paul was talking about when he spoke of mortifying "the deeds of the body."

Now let me call your attention to the fact that whatever Paul meant by mortifying the deeds of the body, he made it very clear that we cannot do it in our own strength! It can only be accomplished "through the Spirit." That is, through the Holy Spirit, by the power of the Holy Spirit. And this means day after day, hour by hour, minute by minute. That is the reason that only believers can mortify the deeds of the body because only believers have the Holy Spirit. (You will remember that we learned that earlier in this chapter.)

John Owen, in his paper on the mortification of sin in believers points out that what we do about sin must be done sincerely. The Holy Spirit will have nothing to do with a proud, hypocritical heart. We must really want to be delivered from our sin, and only the Holy Spirit can give us that desire. And so we have to start with Him, not start on our own and turn to Him when we run into trouble.

Now to mortify means actually to kill, to put to death! Paul was not saying that we are going to eradicate our sin nature, or come to some kind of an experience where we will no longer be capable of sinning. No, he did not mean that, and we should not be seeking that. But he was talking about what happens when a person is killed. He is rendered powerless. He is no longer capable of influencing others, or of introducing action of any kind. And so we as believers are to deal with our sins in such a way, through the Holy Spirit, so that our sin nature is rendered powerless to produce sinful deeds in our bodies.

And lest there be any doubt as to the things which we need to mortify, Paul has also given us the passage which I read in

Colossians 3. The verb that Paul used there (νεκρῶ) is different from the verb that he used here (θανατῶ). But their meaning is the same. Sin needs to be subdued. Sin needs to be rendered inactive, to have its power taken away. And this is what we are to do when we mortify the deeds of the body. Sin always has to do with the body, and so it is with the deeds of the body that we need to be concerned.

In addition to being sincere, what does this require? It means that we seek by God's grace and through the Holy Spirit to stop sin before it gets started. Let me give you some verses that will be of help to all of us. They suggest that there are things for us not to do as well as things that we need to do. In other words, to mortify the deeds of our bodies calls for positive action as well as negative action.

First, we need to get the Word of God into our hearts. Cf. Psa. 119:11. Getting the Word into our hearts not only means knowing the Word, and possibly even memorizing the Word, but it means to obey the Word, to live according to the Word.

Cf. also Eph. 6:10-17.

Second, it means that we need to pray, and not just say prayers, but give ourselves to pray. Cf. Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians in 1 Thess. 5:23. Pray this prayer for yourself, and get others to pray the same prayer for you. This is the way a pastor needs to pray for his people. This is the way parents need to pray for their children, and children need to pray for their parents. This is the way teachers need to pray for their pupils.

Remember how the Lord taught us to pray in Matt. 6:13. "And let us not into temptation, but..." When a Christian gets so careless and/or self-confident that he or she doesn't pray, LOOK OUT!

Third, although we haven't come to the twelfth chapter of Romans yet, most of you know those first two verses. (Quote Rom. 12:1, 2.) And along with that, remember what we learned in Rom. 6:11-13. Be careful about what you look at. Be careful about what you listen to. Be careful about what you say. Be careful about where you go. Instead of looking at things which will be a temptation to you, look at that which will make you love the Lord more. Instead of listening to things which can lead to sin (even in your thoughts), listen to good and holy and righteous things. Instead of reading that which will defile your mind, let your attention be given to the Word of God. The Bible speaks in Psalm 1 about meditating on the Word day and night. This is what it means to mortify sin.

Fourth, notice Paul's words in Rom. 13:13, 14. The more we become like the Lord Jesus Christ, which is the purpose of our salvation, the more we will find it necessary to mortify the deeds of the body.

Fifth, there are times when you will suddenly find yourself in a situation where you are being tempted. You weren't looking for it; it found you. What should you do?

Paul told Timothy to "flee youthful lusts" (2 Tim. 2:22). Run away from temptation like Joseph ran away from Potiphar's wife.

Sixth, be faithful in attending church where you can be taught the Word of God. Cf. Heb. 10:25, "Not forsaking..." What did the Apostle mean, "And so much the more as ye see the day approaching"? We know that as we get closer to the coming of the Lord, things are going to get worse, not better. And this will mean greater temptation for us. Therefore, we need to be frequently where we can be strengthened by the Word of God because the battle is going to get stronger, not weaker.

More could be said about mortifying our flesh, but I hope you will take what I have said, and put it into practice in your own life. Don't start any day without the Word of God, and don't start any day without seeking the blessing of God upon your life. "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17).

All of this means that we will be doing what Paul told the Roman believers to do when he wrote in Rom. 12:21,  
Be not overcome of evil,  
but overcome evil with good.

Verse 14 speaks of those who are:

### III. LED BY THE SPIRIT (Rom. 8:14).

Here is a good example of why it is best to leave a verse in its context. The Apostle Paul was stating here one positive way you can identify a son (or daughter) of God.

Does it simply mean that he seeks to know the will of God when he needs guidance? No, that is not the main idea in the verse.

Paul was speaking about a person's relationship with sin, and what he does to handle sin. When you see a person who is concerned about sin, grieved about sin, a person who wants to be delivered from sin, and who is taking the steps I have just mentioned to you, you can be sure that such a person is

a son of God!

It is good to read the Bible, but Bible reading will not profit you if you don't obey what you read. It is good to go to church, but church attendance will not give you much help unless you are a doer of the Word, and not just a hearer. The Holy Spirit leads us away from sin, and toward holiness of life. Many people would rather be entertained than be edified. Many people today are more interested in being happy than they are in being holy, not knowing that the truly happy people are those who are holy. Many professing Christians are far more interested in what is going to please them than they are in what will please God.

Where do you stand in your relationship with the Holy Spirit? Are you being led by Him away from the things that displease God and into those things that do please Him? Is the Word really a lamp for your feet, and a light for your path? Is it, or do you just say that it is?

Concl: I wish all of you could have been at our Family Camp this past week. Under Gary's ministry we had a most blessed time in the Word. I think I can speak for all of us who were there that at times we felt uncomfortable and ashamed that we do not love the Lord more than we do, and that we do not obey Him as much as we need to, nor trust Him as we should. But one point that Gary emphasized throughout the week about revival that I hope none of us will ever forget. It was that revivals start in our hearts personally. Under God's blessing it may spread out into our families and into our churches and even into our nation, but it starts one by one with each one of us when the Lord begins to work.

We don't know when the Lord might be pleased to give us revival, but one thing each of us needs to be careful about and that is that we are doing the Lord will, that we are avoiding sin and seeking holiness, that we are trusting the Lord through all of the experiences of our lives. May we listen to the Spirit of God as He seeks to make us what the Lord wants us to be, and as He leads us to do what the Lord wants us to do. This is the true Christian life, a life of blessing, or peace, of joy, and of faithful service with our dear Lord.

HEIRS OF GOD  
Romans 8:15-17

Intro: (Read the text.)

When we come to this point in the book of Romans, we ought to be reminded of a very similar passage which Paul wrote in the epistle to the Galatians.

(Read Gal. 4:1-7.)

The books of Romans and Galatians are companion epistles in many respects. In Romans we have the most complete statement of the doctrine of salvation to be found any place in the Bible. This includes, as I have said many times, justification, sanctification, and glorification. In Galatians Paul was writing to Gentile churches which had been "invaded" by judaizing teachers who sought to bring the churches under the Mosaic Law. And so Paul was defending salvation by grace through faith so that the Gentiles would not be inclined to live under the law, experiencing the bondage that characterizes such a life. The reason that people revert to living under the Law is because they think that is the only way that they can live victoriously over sin. But, as I have also said before, no one has ever been saved by keeping the Law, and no one has ever been sanctified by keeping the Law.

Those were not the reasons that God gave the Law to Israel. The Law taught the people what sin was, and showed that they were sinners, but it was not the means of deliverance from sinning. Those who tried to use the Law as a means of being delivered from sin found themselves in bondage. They were not victorious. They were not happy. They were not peaceful. Peace came to the Lord's people in OT times from trusting the Lord to do for them what they were unable to do for themselves. Hebrews 11 surely teaches us that the life of faith did not begin with the NT. However, as Paul has already explained for us in Romans, after the coming of Christ, and after His work on earth was finished and He returned to heaven, the Holy Spirit was given to indwell all of the Lord's people permanently. It is through Him that we have victory over sin, a victory which was made possible by the death of our Lord upon the Cross. Christ died to save us from sin's penalty, and to make us acceptable to God. That is justification. But He also died to deliver us from sin's power, and that is sanctification. We must not think that people in OT had no victory over sin. They certainly did! But they did not if they were depending upon their own efforts to keep the Law. That was bondage, and bondage is always characterized by fear.

Note Paul's words in Rom. 8:3, 4. (Read.)

So what we need to do is to learn to "walk...after the Spirit." Walking after the Spirit is not bondage, but freedom. It is liberty. And this is how we experience victory over sin.

And so in the verses we want to consider today, Paul pointed out:

I. WHAT WE HAVE NOT, BUT WHAT WE HAVE (Rom. 8:15).

I am applying what Paul said to us, but he wrote it thinking especially of the Roman believers. And so he said, "Ye..." But I am on good ground by saying "we" because Paul's words here apply to all who know the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior.

Paul was not preaching the law of God as God's provision for our sanctification; he was preaching the grace of God through the ministry of the Holy Spirit as the God-given provision for our victory over sin. And so Paul was indicating here that he was not repeating what the Jews had under the OT with respect to the Law, but He was showing them the gracious and marvelous provision that God has made for us in the Holy Spirit.

Let me encourage all of you to think every day about the Holy Spirit. Remember Who He is. And remember where He is! If Christ is your Savior, the Holy Spirit lives within you. And He is always there. He is in you when you get up on the morning. He is with you throughout the day--wherever you go, whatever you do. He is with you when you go to bed and night, and He stays with you all through the night. He not only hears whatever you say, but He even knows what you think. But He is not in you just to check up on you; He is in you to help you, to strengthen you, to guide you, to teach you. He is in you to deliver you from your sin, and to make you holy.

And so your life and my life are not to be lives of drudgery and bondage, but of victory and joy and blessing. Think about the Holy Spirit every day, and depend upon Him to be your Helper in every way that you need Him.

But Paul mentions one thing here in verse 15 which the Holy Spirit does for us, and it has to do with God. Look at the last part of verse 15. It says, "But ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

Those who translated the KJV could have translated this, "Whereby we cry, Abba (which means, FATHER). " You see, "Father" is the meaning of "Abba." In fact, "Abba" is not a translation at all. It is a word which is brought over from

the Greek into the English. The Greek text says "Abba." Actually it is like our word, Papa, or Dada. These are words which a child can pronounce before he has any teeth. We would be perfectly accurate in saying that this is spiritual baby-talk.

But, you know, there are people who are grown who still call their Father, Papa. This is what our granddaughter Allison calls her Daddy, and I am sure she will always call him Papa. And that is perfectly OK. And so while Papa is baby-talk, it is not limited to babies. An adult may call his father, Papa. "Abba" is from the Aramaic language, and it is the word which Jewish children used for their fathers.

But what is the significance of this word?

It is a child's recognition of a relationship. It is a title which belongs only to one person. We don't have many fathers; we just have one.

We don't have many heavenly Fathers; we just have one. And it is the Holy Spirit Who first causes us to recognize that God is our Father. And He is the One Who prompts us to call God, Father, Abba. James tells us in Jas. 1:18 that God has begotten us into His family by the Word of truth. That is why we can call Him, Abba, Father.

But now let me spend a moment or two with that word "adoption."

There is nothing wrong with being an adopted child in a family, but that is not the meaning of the word here. We are not adopted into God's family; we are born into God's family. This word in the original is a word which speaks of our position in the family of God. It speaks of a member of the family who has all of the rights of sonship as compared with one who is only a minor child.

Illus: The prodigal son's request of his father. As a small child he could not have made such a demand upon his father, but having become legally of age (as we would say), he did have the right, and his father, as you know, granted his request. He was an heir to his father's fortune, and he was exercising his rights as a son.

Paul in Galatians, and here in Romans, was referring to this ancient practice to teach a very important point about our relationship with God. We are born into God's family as babes, but our position is different from that which believers had in the OT. We have blessings which had not yet been given to the Lord's people, and the permanent indwelling of

the Holy spirit is one of those blessings. When Paul wrote what he did in Eph. 1:3-14, he was writing truth which really had no parallel in OT teaching. We have been blessed with "all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." We are heirs of God, and we have access to our inheritance in many ways (not all ways) which OT believers did not have. And it is the Holy Spirit Who has brought us into this relationship through the work of Christ.

How thankful we should be that we live this side of the Cross! And yet how ashamed we ought to be when we are forced to admit that many OT saints seem to have been more devoted to the Lord, and trusted Him more than we do.

The Holy Spirit in our hearts prompts us to call God our Father, and to be assured that we are saying what we have a right to say.

But now let me go on to my second point. Let me call it:

## II. THE WITNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (Rom. 8:16, 17).

The Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit. That is, He witnesses within us, giving us assurance, "that we are the children of God." Every Christian has this. It is a God-given testimony within our spirits assuring us that we are members of God's family. We can tell in other ways, but this is basic to all true assurance, the witness of the Holy Spirit with our spirit. You don't have to ask Him to give you this testimony; He just does!

But now there is an interesting thing about Paul's use of words in this verse, and in verse 17.

In verse 14, which we had last Sunday, Paul used the word which is rightly translated "sons." And in verse 15, as we have just seen, Paul said that we are brought into God's family, not by adoption, but with all of the rights of sonship. But here in verses 16 and 17 Paul did not speak of believers as "sons," but as "children," actually born ones, emphasizing how we got into the family of God. We are God's children by birth, the new birth! And this is why we can call ourselves HEIRS OF GOD.

And not only that but we are "joint-heirs with Christ." It would be wonderful enough just to be in the family of God without any rights, but here we learn that we are not only heirs of God, but we are heirs of God and possessors of the same inheritance which our Lord Jesus Christ has.

This is where I feel that I should sit down and let someone



else, more knowledgeable than I am, tell us what it means to be "joint-heirs with Christ." It goes far beyond what I am capable of understanding. But let me read some verses which will help us to understand what Paul was speaking about here.

Paul said in Galatians, in the passage I read to you at the beginning of my message that if we are sons, then we are heirs "of God through Christ" (Gal. 4:7).

But listen to this verse at the beginning of the book of Hebrews, Heb. 1:2, speaking of our Lord, that  
God...hath in these last days  
spoken unto us by His Son,  
**whom he hath appointed heir of all things,**  
by whom also he made the worlds (ages).

What does this mean?

It means that before creation itself God ordained that all things would eventually become the inheritance of our Lord Jesus Christ! And you and I are going to share in that inheritance. Can you imagine anything more amazing? Yes, there is something more amazing than that.

Listen as I read these verses:

Gal. 3:29, "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Tit. 3:7, "That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

Heb. 1:14, speaking of angels, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

Heb. 6:17, 18, "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us."

Jas. 2:5, "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?"

1 Pet. 3:7, "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them (the wives) according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered."

But now you are saying, "What is our inheritance? We are HEIRS OF GOD, but what for?"

The answer is to be found several places. Please turn to Ephesian 1, and let me read verses 11-14. (Explain.)

Now let me read what Peter wrote about our inheritance. If you like, turn to 1 Peter 1, verses 3-12.

And although the Apostle John did not use the words heirs or inheritance, it was our inheritance that he was speaking about when he wrote 1 John 3:1-3.

And yet we have the answer in our text, the last part of Rom. 8:17, "If so be that we suffer with him (Christ), **that we may be also glorified together.**"

Suffering is a vital part of our sanctification, and it leads on to glory! A willingness to suffer reproach for Christ is an evidence of our salvation, and is all a part of what God is doing to prepare us for glory.

So our inheritance is heaven. Our inheritance is to be with Christ. But even more than that is our inheritance. It is to be like Christ.

Concl: This is our hope. This is our inheritance. This is what it means to be HEIRS OF GOD. The inheritance is ours now. Nothing can take it away from us. But while we enjoy many of the blessings of salvation now, we are not going to experience the fullness of our salvation until we are with the Lord in our glorified bodies. God waits for that! The Lord Jesus waits for that! The Holy Spirit waits for that! All of creation waits for that! You and I should be waiting for that!

The first time you ever called God, "Father," the Holy Spirit was bearing testimony with your spirit that you were then an heir of God, and that the greatest privilege of your sonship would be that some day you would be like your Savior.

Earthly inheritances are nice, but they cannot compare with this inheritance, nor can the greatest earthly inheritance even make a down payment on what is ahead of all of us who know the Lord Jesus Christ. Our inheritance is ours by grace. If you do not know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, come to Him today, believe in Him which means to trust Him to save you. He died to save sinners from their sins. May God grant you repentance and faith that you may join the ranks of us who, as the HEIRS OF GOD, are on our way to heaven and GLORIFICATION.

## THE GLORY TO COME

Romans 8:18-23

Intro: Today we begin the consideration of the revelation given to the Apostle Paul about the final phase of our salvation. As I have been telling you for many weeks now, it is GLORIFICATION!

Many of us used to sing from a hymnal which had an old hymn, written in the last century, called Complete in Thee. The four verses were written by a man by the name of Aaron Wolfe who died in 1902; the chorus was written by a former President of the Moody Bible Institute, Dr. James M. Gray. The verses are wonderful, and so is the chorus. But it is the chorus which I want to repeat for you today. The words go like this:

Yea, justified! O blessed thought!  
And sanctified! Salvation wrought!  
Thy blood hath pardon bought for me,  
**And glorified, I too, shall be!**

This is a good Romans hymn. It has all three of our doctrines: justification, sanctification, and glorification.

Justification has to do with our standing before God in Christ. We are forgiven, cleansed, and are perfectly acceptable to God in Christ--and I do mean perfectly!

Sanctification has to do with our condition before God, our spiritual growth in holiness. This is not perfect yet, like our justification, but by the grace of God it is, or should be, improving every day that we live.

Glorification is the doctrine which has to do with what we will be when the God's work of salvation is completed in us.

We saw last week that glorification is a major part of our inheritance. Glorification describes the purpose of our salvation. We are going to be glorified when we are like the Lord Jesus Christ. Glorification begins when we are justified, it increases through our sanctification, and it will be completed when we are caught up to meet the Lord. When Paul wrote to the Thessalonian church about the coming of the Lord, and told them that "the dead in Christ will rise first," he was speaking of the very moment when they will be glorified. And then he said that those who are living will be "caught up with them to meet the Lord in the air," and that will be the time of their glorification. It might be that I could say that it will be the time of our glorification because many of us may live to see the Lord's return. What a day that will be!

So we can say, "I have been justified (and still am); I am being sanctified; I shall without any doubt some day be glorified. The work of salvation for us began when we were first saved. It continues to go on in our hearts up to this present moment. Some day, in the time appointed by the Lord, the work will be completed. This is the message of the first eight chapters of Romans!

Now as we get into this most important subject, I think that you will agree with me that Paul describes it in a very unique way. We don't believe that this was his idea, but that the Spirit of God led him to write what we have before us today in verses 18 through 23 of Romans 8. The Spirit of God has given us an insight into the future which we would not have if He had not given it to us. Nobody really has the wisdom to know what is going to happen during the remainder of this day. And Solomon gave us this proverb in Prov. 27:1,

Boast not thyself of tomorrow;

for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.

James in his NT epistle (4:13-15) said essentially the same thing. Listen to his words:

Go to now, ye that say,

To day and to morrow we will go into such a city,

and continue there a year,

and buy and sell, and get gain:

Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow.

For what is your life? It is a vapour,

that appeareth for a little time,

and then vanisheth away.

For that ye ought to say,

If the Lord will, we shall live,

and do this, or that.

Only God can really tell us what is going to happen in the future! Not only that but God can guarantee that what He says is going to happen, will actually happen! He is a sovereign God, in control of everything that ever has happened, of everything that is happening, and of everything that ever will happen. So divine prophecies and divine promises are not just good guesses about what may happen, but they are positive predictions which cannot fail.

Now before we get started with our text for today, let me tell you another thing that we learn from the Bible that we cannot learn any place else. The Bible gives us true understanding of things that have taken place in the past--not everything, but of those things which God has been pleased to include in His Word.

The Lord must laugh when He listens to some of the statements of some of our scientists. Just yesterday I learned on the

news that you and I can buy a petrified nest of dinosaur eggs that are millions of years old if we have \$30,000 that we would like to part with. And I am sure that somebody will buy it. What a hoax!

However, when you and I come to the Word of God we come to the absolute truth. And we are going to learn something about creation this morning that the best of our scientists would never know unless they learned it from the Word of God. But before I get to that, let me begin where the Apostle began in his presentation of the truth of glorification.

The first thing we have is:

I. A COMPARISON (Rom. 8:18).

Paul in this verse contrasted the present for a child of God with the future for a child of God. I want to make it clear that he was speaking about the Lord's people, not about everybody in the human race.

In speaking about the present, he used the word "sufferings"; in speaking of the future, he used the word "glory."

If I had written this verse, it would not have nearly the meaning that it does coming from the Apostle Paul. To be sure I have had my trials and sufferings, but nothing to the extent that the Apostle Paul experienced. He did not speak of suffering (singular), but of "sufferings" (plural) because there were many ways that he had suffered, suffering as a child of God. Let me read what he had to say about his sufferings when he wrote his second epistle to the Corinthian church. You will find what I am reading in 2 Cor. 11:23-28. (Read.)

These were sufferings he had because he was a child of God and a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was a combination of physical sufferings and spiritual sufferings. They always go together.

Can't you hear some of Paul's Jewish friends saying about him that he was a fool to go through all of those things when, if he had stayed in Judaism, he could have had a quiet, respected, and profitable life? How do you think would Paul have answered them?

I think he would have used the words which he wrote earlier in that same epistle in chapter 4, verses 17, 18:

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment,  
worketh for us a far more exceeding  
and eternal weight of glory;

While we look not at the things which are seen,  
 but at the things which are not seen:  
 for the things which are seen are temporal;  
 but the things which are not seen are eternal.

You see, people who do not know the Lord can only see the present, and they live for the present. That is the reason they want to get as much and enjoy as much as they can here because most of them figure that this is all that they have.

Paul knew better! He knew that the present was only preparation for the future. He did not ignore the present; he couldn't do that. But he knew that the present with its many sufferings and trials were God's way of preparing him for the glory that is still to come.

And so if you asked Paul if the sufferings of the present were worth the glory that is to come, he would say that that which is to come is so much more glorious that it is impossible to compare them. Put them in the scales, and the glory far outweighed the sufferings. In fact, much of the glory, if not all, comes through sufferings.

Paul touches on this theme a number of times in his epistles, but in the four verses which follow he gets into a subject which, as far as I know, is limited to these four verses. But remember a subject does not have to be mentioned many times in Scripture to be true. And it certainly does not have to agree with the predictions of men to be true. God only has to say a thing once, and if it is not something which men have discovered, and which they talk about, remember that this is a revelation from God. And a large part of divine revelation is God telling us things which otherwise would remain unknown.

Here Paul was speaking about:

## II. CREATION (Rom. 8:19-22).

In our KJV the word "creature" is used in verses 19, 20, and 21, but it should be creation as it is in verse 22. Paul was not speaking just of living creatures, but of all creation. He was speaking of creatures that walk and swim and fly, but also of the heavenly bodies, of trees, grass, rivers, lakes, oceans, mountains--in short, all of creation.

What an unusual way to begin a section dealing with the glorification of the people of God! Let us see what he has to say. This will give you a divine portrait of creation that you can only get from the Word of God.

Verse 19 tells us that all creation is waiting for something. And the words which Paul uses here speaks of an intense anticipation of something. Creation is not just waiting, but waiting, fully expecting something to happen.

What is creation waiting for, according to God?

Creation is waiting for "the manifestation of the sons of God." "Well," you probably are saying, "I still do not understand. What is 'the manifestation of the sons of God'?" It is the glorification of God's people. It is the time yet future when glory will be seen in the people of God.

You see, now you can't really tell by looking who is a child of God, and who is not. But when we are glorified, there will not be any question. Then it will be revealed, then it will be made known, then it will be clear, what it means to be a child of God. "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2).

But why is creation waiting, waiting expectantly, "for the manifestation of the sons of God"? Let us go on reading in verse 20.

Verse 20 tells us why.

"Creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly," that is, not because of anything that creation did. What Paul is telling us here is what we can learn from Genesis 3, and that is that Adam's sin affected creation in a bad way! Because of Adam's sin, creation over which he had dominion, experienced the tragedy of his sin. Creation was weakened. It became frail. It lacked the original vigor which it had. The word which Paul used here, "vanity," could be translated depraved. But creation did not do this to itself; man did it to creation. Man's sin caused a certain depravity to fall upon nature. And so now we have storms, terrible storms, we have disease and death, we have bugs and weeds which we are constantly trying to control. We have creatures living on other creatures. We have animals that will kill human beings. Creation demonstrates at every turn the effect of human sin, and creation would in time destroy itself (with human help) if it were not for the sovereign restraint and "hope" (v. 20) which even creation has.

God has done this, but God does not intend for creation always to show the effects of man's sin. When the time of glory comes, creation itself will be lifted out from under this "vanity," and, according to verse 21, "shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

Do you remember what Isaiah wrote about creation? Let me read Isa. 11:6-9. It follows a passage which speaks of the coming of the Lord.

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb,  
and the leopard shall lie down with the kid;  
and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together;  
and a little child shall lead them.  
And the cow and the bear shall feed;  
their young ones shall lie down together:  
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.  
and the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp,  
and the weaned child shall put his hand  
on the cockatrice' den.  
**They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain:  
for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord,  
as the waters cover the sea.**

What a difference there will be between "the bondage of corruption" and "the glorious liberty of the children of God"! You and I have never seen creation as it was, nor can we really anticipate what it will someday be again! However, there is no doubt but what this will take place.

And so, concluding what he had to say here about creation, we read his words in verse 22. He said, "We know," i.e., we understand, we can see, we are aware, that "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now."

There are many conflicts, many troubles, many distressing things, in creation. But there is one thing in which creation is united, and that is in its longing, its grief over what it is, its travail, like a woman giving birth to a child, going through terrible pain now, but looking forward to a new birth for creation itself.

It is not a false hope, but it is a restoration, a redemption, that most certainly will take place. All of creation will change when we, the sons of God, are glorified. And so we can say that all of creation will manifest the glory, too.

But now, in conclusion, we come to verse 23.

### III. THE PEOPLE OF GOD (Rom. 8:23).

We do our share of groaning, too. Groaning here does not mean complaining (although we do our share of that, too). This groaning is a longing for things to be better. When we get sick, we look forward to the time when we will feel better. We have trouble with these bodies of ours. Paul had trouble with his. Everybody does. But the child of God knows that things will not always be like they are now.



Things are not only going to be better; they are going to be perfect! And we long for that day. What day? The day when our bodies will be fully redeemed, and when by the grace of God in our very beings we will manifest as never before what it means to be the sons of God.

Notice that expression, "the firstfruits of the Spirit." Paul says that we have that now. What did He mean, and what does that expression anticipate?

"The firstfruits" is an expression that means two things:

- 1) We now have a part of more that is to come.
- 2) What we have guarantees that the rest will in God's time be given to us.

Cf. 2 Cor. 5:1-5; Eph. 1:13, 14.

Concl: As I close, let me ask you a question.

I have been speaking today about those of us who are believers. We are the ones who are destined for glory. And we know that the glory means that we will be made like the Lord Jesus Christ. Here is my question: How much are you like the Lord Jesus Christ now? I am not speaking about your outward appearance; I am speaking about what is going on in your heart, and in my heart.

Let me give you one more verse as I close, and I trust that it is descriptive of you, and I hope that it is descriptive of me. The verse is 2 Cor. 3:18. If you are using our Bible reading plan, and are on schedule, you read it yesterday. Here it is:

But we all, with open face  
beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord,  
are changed into the same image from glory to glory  
even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

What does this mean? It means that as you and I continue to look in the Word, seeing the Lord, we are going to reflect the glory of the Lord from one degree to another, in an ever-increasing way, because the Holy Spirit is going to be making that change in us.

We look into the mirror of the Word, and the reflection we see is Christ in us. May that be the great desire of our hearts, to be like the Lord Jesus Christ.

Closing verses: Phil. 3:20, 21.

SAVED BY HOPE  
Romans 8:24, 25

Intro: My text for today is just two verses: 24 and 25 of chapter 8. But these verses are full of salvation truth. In fact, when we examine them as I intend to do, the Lord willing, you will see that the full story of salvation is told in these two verses. But, in harmony with the section on glorification in which they appear, the emphasis is upon that which is still to come for all of us. And that future prospect is bound up in the word "hope" which appears five times in these two verses (four of them in verse 24).

(Read Rom. 8:24, 25.)

I want to take up every detail of these verses. They show the richness of the Word of God, and illustrate how carefully the Holy Spirit directed the Apostle Paul in his writing. I am sure that the Apostle Paul would agree with me when I say that only the Holy Spirit could have included so much truth in just the few words of these verses--twenty-five words in the Greek text; forty-two words in the KJV.

Let us begin by thinking about what Paul said here about:

I. SALVATION (Rom. 5:24).

I refer to the words, "For we are saved."

Paul taught at least three things about salvation when he wrote these words.

A. We are saved right now.

Actually Paul put it in a tense to express that we were saved at some time in the past. But this work of salvation is complete, absolutely guaranteed, final, without anything having been left out.

While there are future aspects of salvation which we are yet to experience, yet every true child of God can say with real assurance, "I am saved, and I have been saved ever since I trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior."

The Apostle John told those who received his first epistle that he had written unto them that they might "know that" they had "eternal life" (1 John 5:13). We could add to that Paul's great declaration of his faith when he wrote to Timothy,

I know whom I have believed,  
and am persuaded that he is able to keep

that which I have committed unto him  
against that day (2 Tim. 1:12).  
And we even have words for our Lord Jesus Christ to confirm  
that salvation is an eternal work of God. Listen to these  
words taken from John 10:28, 29. The Lord was speaking of  
His people as sheep, as said,  
And I give unto them eternal life;  
and they shall never perish,  
neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.  
And then, as though that weren't enough, He went on to say,  
My Father, which gave them me,  
is greater than all;  
and no man is able to pluck them out  
of my Father's hand.

Secondly, with regard to our salvation, Paul was saying that:

B. We did not save ourselves.

The Greek actually says, "We were saved." We did not save ourselves; someone else saved us. And by the time we get to this place in the book of Romans we know that God has saved us through what the Lord Jesus Christ did for us when He died on the Cross. The NKJV says, "For we were saved." The NIV renders it, "For in this hope we were saved." The NASB makes it even stronger with this translation, "For in hope we have been saved."

The verb is a passive verb which means that someone else saved me; I didn't save myself.

You will never find a single person who has saved himself. We can't get it as reward for our character because we are all sinners. We cannot earn it because we could never do enough. No amount of money can purchase it. It is ours by the grace of God and because of the love of God.

A third thing is indicated by this statement, and supported by Paul's teaching in this epistle.

C. We were all saved the same way.

God does not have two ways of salvation. There is not one kind of salvation for men, and another for women. Or one kind for adults, and another for children. There is not one kind of salvation for whites and another for blacks. There is only one way of salvation, and that is through Christ. Anyone who wants to be saved has to come through Christ. Paul was a Jew writing to a predominantly Gentile church, and he put himself in the same category with them when he wrote, "For we are saved..." Anyone who refuses to come to God

through Christ will never be saved. People in all nations, in every generation, of both sexes, whatever their ages might be, however good they may have tried to live, or however bad -- we all have to be saved the same way.

Listen again to these well-known verses: John 14:6; Acts 4:12. Christ is the only Savior there ever has been, and He is the only Savior there ever will be. And what a Savior He is! The writer of the book of Hebrews said in Heb. 7:25, Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost (completely) that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

I trust that we can all be included when we say, "For we are saved..."

However, as wonderful as those first four words are, they do not give us all that Paul said about salvation. He added a second point. It has to do with:

## II. THE HOPE OF SALVATION (Rom. 8:24).

The KJV reads, "For we are saved by hope."

Now you might come back at me and say, "Well, Paul sounded like we can't be so sure about our salvation after all! Isn't he saying here that we hope we are going to be saved? Wasn't Paul really teaching that we can't really know that we are going to be saved until we actually get to heaven?"

I can answer those questions with a very positive statement: No, Paul was not teaching that we can only hope that we will be saved, when ultimately we may not be saved. Let me try to explain what Paul was saying.

In the first place, thinking about this expression, "by hope," we all know that we are not saved by hoping, and Paul was not saying that we are. We are saved by faith. We are saved by the mercy and grace of God. However, according to A. T. Robertson, a great American NT Greek scholar who lived in the latter part of the 19th century and the early part of the 20th century, the particular word which Paul used here could be translated, "in hope, by hope, for hope" (IV, p. 376). So it is our task, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to seek to determine what Paul was saying.

Actually any of those translations would fit when we understand what Paul meant by the word "hope."

In dealing with this word, let me assure you that Paul was not introducing a question, or suggesting uncertainty about

the eternal character of salvation. I have given you some statements about salvation which should give us peace of mind about whether salvation can be temporary, or is eternal. The Bible leaves no question but that it is eternal. There undoubtedly are people who profess to be Christians who will not be saved, but every person who really believes in Christ as Savior will without exception get to heaven!

What, then, did Paul mean? What did he mean that we are saved in hope, or for hope, or even as we have it in the KJV, "by hope"?

He meant that, while we are really saved now, completely saved, we are not in our present condition as we eventually will be.

When Paul wrote his first epistle to the Corinthian church he made a very interesting statement using this word hope. This is what he had to say:

If in this life only we have hope in Christ,  
we are of all men most miserable (1 Cor. 15:19).

"Most miserable" is sometimes translated, most pitiable. Or that we are the most to be pitied. What did he mean?

He meant that if all we can hope to attain is all that we can get in this life, we are to be pitied more than anyone else who has ever lived without Christ. If we could know the most godly person who ever lived (excluding our Lord Jesus Christ), if he or she had nothing more to look forward to than what he or she could gain in this life, he would be in a most pitiful situation. The greatest saints are the ones who claim to be the greatest sinners. E.g., the Apostle Paul in 1 Tim. 1:15. Be as godly as you will, you are still a sinner. You can still fail God. You are still subject to temptation and to the weaknesses of the flesh. We pursue holiness knowing that we are saved in hope, in the absolute certainty that things are not only going to be better some day, but they are going to be perfect! Weakness will be gone. Temptation will be gone. Sin will be gone. Death will be gone. We are going to be like our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Our bodies will be glorified. We will be holy as He is holy.

As I have said many times before, Paul did not call it a hope because it was uncertain. He called it a hope because it is yet future, but it is just as certain as our justification before God! Our hope is based upon the unfailing promises of a faithful God.

Cf. 1 John 3:2.

And so Paul went on to say in the latter part of Rom. 8:24, "...but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" When our hope is finally realized, we will no longer think of it as a hope. We will not be looking forward to it; we will enjoying it forever. And, as we saw last week in the verses which led up to our text for today, this hope is going to affect all of creation. The curse will be lifted from us, and the curse will be lifted from all nature. What a day that will be! The only thing we don't know about the fulfillment of this hope is when it will happen. But we can be absolutely sure that the day will come when our faith is turned to sight.

Paul was speaking of our hope when he wrote in 1 Cor. 13:12,  
 For now we see through a glass darkly;  
 but then face to face:  
 now I know in part;  
 but then shall I know even as also I am known.

We had a man in our church in Tacoma who was about the age of my Dad. He was a deacon in our church, and a very successful business man. He was Scotch, and had a very delightful Scotch accent. He was also a lay preacher. I used to enjoy hearing him preach even when I was in elementary school, or grade school as we called them then. But one thing I have always remembered about him, and remembered with great blessing. It was the way that he usually, and I think I would be accurate in saying, always, ended his prayers. I didn't know it then but he was using words found in two different verses in the Song of Solomon. And this is what he would say: **"Until the day break, and the shadows flee away"** (Song of Sol. 2:17; 4:6).

What was he looking for? He was looking for the coming of the Lord when the night would be past, the day of His appearing would come, and the shadows of the night of the Lord's absence would be forever gone!

This brings me to my last point.

### III. PATIENTLY WAITING FOR THE REALIZATION OF OUR HOPE (Rom. 8:25).

We are yet to see the complete fulfillment of our salvation. Even those who are now with the Lord as waiting for it. They are with the Lord, but they are not yet glorified. Their bodies are still here on earth. Their bodies are not yet redeemed, and, of course, neither are ours.

Now does this verse mean that we are just to comfort ourselves in the realization that a perfect day is coming, so we

can sit idly by and wait for that day to come? That is hardly the point that Paul was making. Let me tell you at least in part what it seems that the Apostle Paul had in mind. Let me point out four things:

A. We must believe that our hope will be realized.

If we are waiting for it, we are not doubting that it will be. We are convinced by Scripture that the day will really come. The day will dawn. That which the Lord's people have been looking for ever since the Lord Jesus returned to heaven, will one of these days come. Maybe you remember when this truth really gripped your heart for the first time.

So believe it. Have no doubt about it. It is a certain hope.

B. We must wait expectantly.

This word "wait" is used in verse 19, verse 23, and again here in verse 25. It means to be watching and waiting with your head stretched out, looking for the Lord.

You know, it is one thing to know that somebody is coming; but it is another thing to be looking for them to come at any moment. What a disappointment it would be to tell your loved ones that you were coming home, only to arrive and find out that no one was really looking for you.

Illus: Andrea as a little child wanting to sit on the davenport in the front window waiting for her parents to come home.

But there is still more for us to learn from this.

C. We must persevere as we wait.

"Patience" does not mean that we sit passively and wait for the Lord to come. It means that we keep busy doing what He wants us to do until He comes.

What does He want us to do?

He wants us to be reading His Word. He wants us to be obeying His Word. He wants us to be serving Him, telling others about Him. There are battles to be fought and won. There are sins to overcome. There are people to be reached.

The Lord wants us to be pursuing holiness, seeking to be more Christ-like.

The other night before I went to bed I got out Bishop Ryle's book of Holiness, and read through his Introduction again. Among other things, this is what he said:

True holiness does not consist merely of believing and feeling, but of doing and bearing, and a practical exhibition of active and passive grace. Our tongues, our tempers, our natural passions and inclinations--our conduct as parents and children, masters and servants, husbands and wives, rulers and subjects--our dress, our employment of time, or behaviour in business, our demeanour in sickness and health, in riches and in poverty--all, all these are matters which are fully treated by inspired writers. They are not content with a general statement of what we should believe and feel, and how we are to have the roots of holiness planted in our hearts. They dig down lower. They go into particulars. They specify minutely what a holy man ought to do and be in his own family, and by his own fireside, if he abides in Christ (p. x).

If we are eagerly expecting the Lord to come, we shall want to be what He wants us to be, and to be doing what He wants us to do.

But let me mention one more thing:

#### D. Prayer.

We can't be holy without spending time in prayer, much time. That goes along with the point I have just made. But in speaking of prayer I am thinking of John's prayer at the end of the book of The Revelation. It was not John's last prayer in that book, but the next to the last.

The Lord said, "Surely I come quickly." And the aged Apostle John said, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

That prayer is there to teach us to pray like the Apostle John prayed.

Concl: So believe that He is coming. Be eagerly looking for Him. With all of your energy pursue holiness in every area of your life. And pray each day for His return. What a difference we could make in this world if we were waiting patiently, perseveringly, for our Lord to come so that the day would break, and the shadows would forever flee away.



THE HOLY SPIRIT, OUR INTERCESSOR  
Romans 8:26, 27

Intro: Every Christian ought to know that he has been saved to be glorified. By this we mean that we are going to be made like the Lord Jesus Christ. Even our bodies are going to be glorified. Paul said in Phil. 3:21 that the Lord is going to change these bodies of ours and make them like the body of the Lord Jesus. We are going to be glorified body, soul, and spirit.

This does not mean that we will be Deity, but it does mean as Paul also said in 1 Cor. 15:49 that "we shall bear the image of the heavenly." The Apostle John said, referring to the Lord Jesus and to us, "We shall be like Him." But in the same verse he also said that "it doth not yet appear what we shall be." We know that we are going to be like the Lord. We know that we will be holy and without sin, not even capable of sin. We know that we will not be subject to sickness, or to injury, or to death. But John's words seem to indicate that glorification will be so wonderful that it is actually impossible to describe in words what it will be. If we were able to understand it fully, we probably would be inclined to say, "That will never happen to me! It is impossible for me to ever be that much like the Lord."

But as unbelievable as it may seem, it is true! This is God's purpose in our salvation. But the change that He will finally complete in us does not start when He comes; it started the very moment we were saved. That process which is going on now in all of our lives is called sanctification. This is what spiritual growth is, becoming more like the Lord. It is not instantaneous; it is progressive. In fact, it is such a gradual work that you and I are unaware that it is going on. But it is! And as we go through this section on glorification, we must not forget how Paul introduced it in verse 18.

Today we come to the two verses in the chapter which speak of the intercessory work of the Holy Spirit: verses 26, 27. And you will notice that verse 26 begins with the word, "Likewise." This word in the original could also be translated, even so, or after the same manner.

The important thing for us to see in looking at this word is to recognize that with this word Paul was linking together what he was about to write with what he had just written. And then it seems that when he got to verse 28 he was taking another step forward in what he was saying about glorification. How does this help us to understand this passage.

Well, it seems to me that the Apostle Paul was giving the believers in Rome assurances that God will actually glorify His people. He was assuring them that we really will be "conformed to the image" of God's Son. This is not some kind of an impossible idea or dream that someone has had, but it is really going to happen.

From verse 18 down to verse 30 Paul gives three guarantees that those of us who know the Lord will be glorified. Let me point them out for you.

The first is that this was God's original purpose in salvation, a purpose which was established before the foundation of the world. It is a purpose that is creation-wide (if I may express it that way). The effect of what God will do for His people will be felt throughout creation. And, as we saw in those verses, this is what all creation is waiting for. This is the hope of creation as well as our hope in salvation.

The second guarantee is the intercessory work of the Holy Spirit. This is what we are going to be considering today, and so I will describe it more in detail in just a moment.

The third guarantee is found in verses 28 through 30 where Paul combines the purpose of God in salvation with the power of God--perhaps I should say, with the all-power of God, or His omnipotence. Some translations of verse 28 read, "And we know that God works all things together for good." There is not strong textual authority for making this addition, but whether "God" should be there or not, we know that the verse could not be referring to anyone but God! He is the only One Who could possibly work all thing in the lives of all of His people, "together for good." This not only shows His mighty power, but also His infinite wisdom -- omnipotence and omni-science! But we will see more about that next week, the Lord willing.

For now, let us look at verses 26 and 27. (Read.)

Here in verse 26 we have:

# I. THE PRAYERS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (Rom. 8:26).

We can never think of salvation without thinking about God, the Father. God is the Author of our salvation. He is the One Who determined that there would be salvation for sinners. He decided what salvation had to be in order to be satisfactory to Him. And He sent His Son to be the Savior.

In the same way we cannot thing of salvation without thinking

of our Lord Jesus Christ. He came to earth as a human being, suffered the penalty of our sins upon the Cross. We know that no one can be saved with believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. This means trusting in His redemptive work on the Cross for salvation.

So there would have been no salvation without what the Father has done, and what the Lord Jesus Christ has done.

But the Holy Spirit has also been an essential part of our salvation. He is the One Who convicted each one of us of our sins, and of our need of a Savior. It is through the Holy Spirit that we have been born again. And the Holy Spirit is very active in our spiritual growth. We need to learn to walk in the Spirit. The Spirit produces fruit in our lives. He teaches us the Word of God. We don't know a single thing about spiritual truth but what the Holy Spirit has been our Teacher. But in this verse we learn a very amazing thing about the Holy Spirit. It is that He intercedes for us. He is our INTERCESSOR.

Just so we will all understand what we are talking about, let me answer the question, What is an intercessor?

An intercessor is one who pleads on behalf of another. An intercessor is important when there is a special need to be met. A mother might plead with a judge to be lenient on her son who has been arrested for committing some kind of a crime. When a person is asked to fill out a reference blank for somebody applying for a job, or for a student seeking entrance into a college or university. This is a form of intercession. There are many way to illustrate what an intercessor is.

However, to those of us who are Christians, intercession is prayer. A person is not saved, and we pray that they will be saved. We are interceding for them. Or a person is sick, and we seek the blessing of the Lord upon them, hoping that they will get well. We are interceding for them. We pray for the blessing of God upon some servant of the Lord, either here at home, or on some foreign field. We are interceding for them. Perhaps you have several people for whom you pray regularly. You are there intercessor. You are going to God on their behalf, seeking His blessing upon them.

We all can understand that. But is it not amazing that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us?

The Holy Spirit is God, just as the Lord Jesus Christ is God, and we would not think that they needed to pray to anyone. They are just as powerful as the Father is. Just as wise.

Why can't the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit all act on Their own, and bless where blessing is needed?

I don't know that any of us has the complete answer to that question, but we know that there is a oneness among the Members of the Godhead which means that they work in complete harmony with each other. And, for the purpose of our redemption, it was decided in eternity past the role which each should have in our salvation.

So the Holy Spirit prays for us. And He does this because He wants to help us. That is really the meaning of the title which are Lord gave to Him in the Upper Room Discourse (John 14, 15, 16): "the Comforter." He is called to our side to help us.

But what is the Holy Spirit's main concern for us?

Our infirmities. For Him to help our infirmities means that He strengthens us where we are weak.

The question is, Where are we weak? What kind of weaknesses do we have?

One verse we have already had in Romans can be of help to us. I am referring to Rom. 5:6:

For when we were yet without strength,  
in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

This verse obviously means that Christ died for us because morally we were "without strength," we have "infirmities" which keep us from pleasing God. Many sins that we have committed before we were saved as well as after we were saved, are due to our weakness. Everybody has done things that they did not intend to do. Temptations get the best of us because we are morally weak. People get involved in drugs because they are weak, not strong enough to resist the temptation. People sin because they are weak.

When we are saved, we still carry that weakness with us. We want to please God, but we soon find that we are not strong enough to please Him. We get determined to read our Bibles, to pray, to be faithful in attending church, but they we do not follow through. After we fail we start all over again, and, if we are not careful we fail again. We feel that we are strong, but actually we are weak, very weak. It doesn't take a major obstacle to keep us from doing what we should do as Christians.

Paul mentions this here because one of the biggest hindrances to our sanctification is our weakness, our infirmities. We don't do what we should be doing; on the other hand, we do

what we should not be doing. And so God in His infinite wisdom has given the Holy Spirit to help us in our infirmities. And the Holy Spirit does this by interceding for us, by praying for us. The Holy Spirit prays that the Father will make us strong where we are weak. The Holy Spirit prays for us when we are tempted. He prays for us when we have failed the Lord, and have fallen into sin of some kind.

Now He does this with groanings which cannot be uttered. What are we to understand by this expression?

Our charismatic friends put their own interpretation on this. They feel that when they are groaning, they are praying in the Holy Spirit. But this verse does not say that we groan; it says that the Holy Spirit groans. And it does not say that He groans through us! He intercedes for us "with groanings which cannot be uttered." So the person who moans and groans in prayer is doing what this verse says cannot be done.

What was it that Paul had in mind when he wrote this verse?

He was indicating how intensely the Spirit longs for our sanctification--knowing that it is sanctification which ultimately leads to glorification. It means that the Holy Spirit longs to see us glorified. He longs to see us become like Christ. He is grieved when we sin. Cf. Eph. 4:30:

And grieve not the holy Spirit of God,  
whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.  
"The day of redemption" is the day when we will be glorified. When we sin, the Spirit is grieved because our sin hinders us on our way to glory.

You and I have no idea how the Spirit of God yearns over us, longing to see us become more like the Savior. But we can be sure that our sorrow over sin, and our ability to overcome temptations to sin, are due in no small measure to the interceding work of the Spirit.

So our path to glory would fall far short of the destination if it were not for the faithful intercession of the Holy Spirit.

But now let us move on to verse 27. Here we have:

## II. GOD'S ANSWERS TO THE SPIRIT'S PRAYERS (Rom. 8:27).

But you might say that this verse does not say anything about God's answers to the Spirit's prayers. Oh, doesn't it? I think that you will see that it does before we get through today.

Let us make sure that we understand who Paul was talking about in this verse.

The first "he" refers to God; the second "he" refers to the Holy Spirit.

God searches the hearts of His people. What we are in our hearts is what we are! We can't hide anything from the Lord. So God knows why the Holy Spirit is so concerned about us. And He knows what the Holy Spirit wants us to be. So there is never any confusion between God and the Holy Spirit. Instead, there is perfect agreement. The Father wants the same thing in the lives of His people, the "saints," which the Holy Spirit wants. The Holy Spirit "maketh intercession for the saints according to (the will of) God."

There is no question but that the translators of the KJV were absolutely right when they added those three words, "the will of." But they are not in the original. And it seems to me that the text is much stronger if we were to read it, "He maketh intercession for the saints according to God"!

I think now that you will be able to see why I gave this verse the heading, GOD'S ANSWERS TO THE SPIRIT'S PRAYERS. The Apostle John wrote in 1 John 5:14, 15 that if we ask anything according to the will of God, God hears us. And if we know that He hears us we can be assured that He will answer our prayer.

As I think most of you know, we are studying 1 Thessalonians in our Tuesday Bible Class. And we are coming to that verse in 1 Thess. 4:3 which says, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification."

The Holy Spirit is deeply concerned about our sanctification. He longs to see us a holy people. More than that, He is looking forward to the time when we will no longer be able to grieve God with our sins. And the point which the Apostle Paul is making in these two verses is that our sanctification, and ultimately our glorification, are absolutely assured for many reasons, but one of the biggest reason is the intercession of the Holy Spirit!

Concl: This passage ought to do at least two things for those of us who can rightly be called saints because we know the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior:

- 1) It ought to give us real peace that our glorification is assured. If the Holy Spirit is praying for us in this regard, it has to be certain. This gives us a great reason for praising the Lord.
- 2) It should teach us that, if the Holy Spirit is so greatly

concerned about our sanctification and glorification that He actually prays for us "with groanings which cannot be uttered, then we ought to be deeply concerned about our glorification, too.

If the Holy Spirit prays about something which is absolutely certain, then we have no excuse for not praying for and seeking the same thing.

What we are is weak. What we need is strength. If left to ourselves we will fail the Lord constantly. But let us be thankful that the Holy Spirit knows how truly weak we are, and that we can only be strengthened by the God Who has determined that we will be holy, just like His Son.

THE POWER OF GOD IN SALVATION  
Romans 8:28-30

Intro: For the past several Sundays we have been examining the great doctrine of glorification. Paul introduced it with the words in Rom. 8:18,

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.

So he was combining the worst circumstances of our lives, "sufferings," with the glorious destiny which will be ours in the Lord Jesus Christ. So what Paul has said in this passage must be considered in the background of sufferings.

We as believers suffer in different ways, don't we? We have our physical problems like anyone else. We can get sick. We can be involved in accidents. And eventually we die.

But there are sufferings peculiar to those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. We often face persecution because we are the people of God. In Paul's day that often meant physical violence. That has not been our experience so far, and we can thank God that it has not. But we often find ourselves facing barriers in our own families. We lose friends, or unable to make new ones when they find out that we love the Lord. So we do know what persecution is although it is not as severe as the people of God have had to face in the past.

We face temptation in various forms, temptations to sin, temptations not to trust the Lord. We have to confess that we often fail to do the will of God, and this causes us great distress. We are often tried severely by unanswered prayer. So often our labor seems to be completely fruitless. Perhaps I haven't touched upon the particular kind of suffering that you have experienced, but we all have our trials, our testings, things which cause us to suffer in varying degrees of intensity.

But Paul was indicating that the road to glory is not a bed of roses. It does not exclude suffering, but suffering is a vital part of it. And you can see that Paul spoke of our glorification of something that is certain. It is future, but it is certain.

Then to encourage the Roman believers who were experiencing suffering, Paul gave at least three reasons why we can be assured that glory will eventually be ours. We have considered two of them. We come to the third today.

In verses 19 through 25 Paul said that we can be assured of our glorification because this has been the purpose of God



for His people from the very beginning. This means, from before the world was created. In verses 26 and 27 (which we considered last Sunday) we have assurance through the intercessory ministry of the Holy Spirit. Today we look at the third ground of our assurance in verses 28 through 30: THE MIGHTY POWER OF GOD!

In Rom. 1:16 Paul referred to the beginning of our salvation and said that the Gospel is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." That is how we were all saved. God used His Word powerfully in our lives, and we were saved believing in Christ.

In Romans 8 Paul was speaking about the consummation, the end, the goal of our salvation. That, too, is only possible through the mighty power of God. Salvation from beginning to end is a work of our Almighty God.

But let us notice now what Paul wrote in verse 28. This is surely one of the best known and most loved verses in all of the Bible. Probably most of us memorized it just from hearing it over and over again. In fact, repeat just that one verse with me now. (Repeat Rom. 8:28.)

Let us call this:

#### I. PAUL'S THIRD GREAT ASSURANCE (Rom. 8:28).

I mentioned last week that some manuscript authority for translating this verse like this:

And we know that **God works** all things together for good to them that love God...

But I also mentioned that whether or not we take this as the true reading, we all know that God is the only one capable of such an amazing work. He works everything in our lives together for good.

Not everything in any of our lives is good, i.e., good as far as we are concerned. We all have things in our lives which we like, but we also have things that we don't like. We have things that we would choose, but we have other things that we would never choose!

However, when you read this verse, don't think about what seems good to you. And I must not think in terms of what seems good to me. What Paul was saying was that God takes everything in our lives, and works them together so that the outcome is that which is good to Him! Paul was referring to that which is good to God!

But how could he say, "We know"? How could He be so certain?

There are several reasons.

"We know" that because of the love of God for us. Paul will speak of this in the latter part of the chapter. However, this is one reason we know that the outcome of all things in our lives will be good. God's love for us would not permit anything else.

"We know" by the many promises of the Word. God had a purpose in saving us, and He has given us promise after promise to encourage us on our way to heaven and to glory.

"We know" by the lives of the people we read about in the Scriptures. Just think for a moment about Abraham, about Joseph, about Moses, about David, about Elijah, about Peter, about Paul, just to name a few. And we see it preeminently in the life of our Lord. While His enemies were doing their worst, Paul said that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (2 Cor. 5:19).

"We know" this also because we can see even in our present state that God has used our trials to further His work in us.

Surveying the history of God's dealings with His people, and looking at the promises of His Word, Paul could not come to any other conclusion. To have said merely that we hope, or that sometimes it has worked out this way, would have been to rob God of the glory which rightly belongs to Him, and to no one else!

But Paul describes the people for whom this is always true. And he looks at them first from the human standpoint: they love God. And then from the divine standpoint: they are "the called (ones) according to His purpose." We only can recognize those who are "the called according to his purpose when we see evidence in their lives that they love God. They are people who want to please Him, who want to learn of Him. In chapter 5 Paul said that once we were God's enemies, but after we are saved, we love Him.

So it is not everybody who can take comfort from this verse. Only those of us who love God, those of us who have been saved from our sins through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now before we leave this great verse and go on to verse 29 I want you to link together two words in this verse. They are the words "good" and "purpose." We have not yet been told specifically what God's purpose in salvation is. I have mentioned it many times. But if we were reading Romans for the first time we would know that God's purpose is our glory.

We would know that we are going to be manifested, revealed, as the sons of God. But Paul has not yet made God's purpose in salvation specifically clear. But it is this "purpose" which is "good." God is continually working in all of our lives so that He is moving us closer and closer to the fulfillment of His purpose in saving us. And this is what is "good."

Please keep this in mind. Verse 28 speaks of the providence of God Who always is involved in every circumstance of our lives. We are never at the mercy of people nor of events. God is always on top of things as they touch our lives, working them all together for our present and eternal good.

Now let us see:

## II. THE REASONS FOR PAUL'S ASSURANCE (Rom. 8:29, 30).

I have given you several reason why Paul could say, "We know." Now let's see the reasons which he has given us.

The word for at the beginning of verse 29 indicates that an explanation is coming. The word moreover at the beginning of verse 30 shows that the explanation which Paul began in verse 29 is continuing in verse 30.

Notice that both of these verses have to do with what God has done, what He has done for us. Not a word is said about what we have done for ourselves. There is nothing that we have done for ourselves that enters into this great theme. We are the recipients; God has done the work.

Notice this difference also between verses 29 and 30. Verse 29 takes us back to before creation, into what we sometimes call eternity past. Verse 30 speaks about what has taken place during the lifetime of all of us who love God.

What happened in eternity past? Look at verse 29.

Before there was any creation, before there was any man, before there was any sin, God determined that there would be salvation, and God determined what it would mean to every child of His.

If you know the Lord Jesus as your Savior, put your name in where the word "whom" is, and then notice that the he's in the verse refer to God. God foreknew us, and then He predestinated us. Paul did not mean that God simply foreknew that we would believe in Christ, and so He chose us. That would have made our salvation depend upon our will. No, by "fore-know" the Apostle Paul meant chose. This is the doctrine of

election. Bishop Moule wrote in his commentary on Romans that is was "no mere foreknowledge of what they would do, but rather of what He would do for them" (pp. 237, 238).

Cf. Eph. 1:3, 4.

But God chose us for a purpose. He chose us and predestinated us "to be conformed to the image of His Son." Ah, here we learn what glorification will be! We will be made like the Lord Jesus Christ.

It would have been impossible for any mere man to plan a salvation as glorious as this! It would have been far more than we deserved to have our sins forgiven. But to have added to that the unspeakable blessing of being in heaven should overwhelm us with gratitude and praise. And yet the blessing of all blessings is that we will be forever with the Lord, and forever like the Lord.

What did Paul mean by the word "predestined"? It means that in the mind of God He determined long before the event ever took place that those who love Him would be "conformed to the image of his Son." This is an unalterable purpose of God. The meaning of the word is illustrated in another verse where it is used: Acts 4:28. There, in prayer, the Apostles Peter and John prayed, recognizing the hand of God in all that had happened to the Lord. And so they said,

For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel  
**determined before** to be done.

So before creation, and before sin, God planned everything about salvation, and determined before that His saved ones would be like His Son.

"Conformed" -- According to Sanday and Headlam (p. 218) this "denotes inward and thorough and not merely superficial likeness." It is not that we all will become God, but we will bear the likeness of His character. We will reflect Him in what we are outwardly and inwardly. No one can fully explain what this will mean because even John, when he said that "we shall be like him," also said, "And it doth not yet appear what we shall be" (1 John 3:2). But however we look at it, we are destined to bear a glory, not of angels, but like that of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Lord was "the firstborn from the dead" (Col. 1:18). He was raised in a glorified body although that glory was not fully displayed during the remainder of His life on earth. But it was a part of the purpose of God that He pledged to His Son that He was the first of many others who would be raised after Him, and in His likeness, so that He would be

"the firstborn among many brethren." Therefore, God cannot fail to carry out His purpose in redemption without breaking a promise He has made to His Son.

I said a moment ago that verse 29 gives us a glimpse into eternity past. This was God's grand and glorious plan for our salvation. But at this point the question is, How will He ever get His chosen ones to come to Christ, to believe in Christ, and ultimately to be made like the Lord Jesus? Men not only will not come; they cannot come! How, then, can the plan of God ever be carried out? Verse 30 gives us the answer.

Note the divine progress in carrying out the redemptive plan. Those whom God predestinated, He called. Those He called, He justified. Those He justified, them He glorified.

How did God intend to bring His chosen ones to Himself? He would call them! And His call would be effective, effectual. This is more than a general invitation; this is a specific, compelling, irresistible call given by God to His elect.

Do you remember when you first became conscious that God wanted you, that He was calling you? Do you remember when you came to Christ? Perhaps it was not until later that you learned that it was not your idea at all, but His! And when you came, He justified you, and glorified you!

But you say, "Wait a minute! I know I am justified by Christ. And I know that I am being sanctified, although it seems that I make such slow progress. But how could Paul say that we are already glorified? How could he even use this language of people who are yet to be saved?"

Charles Hodge has given us this answer:

Paul is speaking of that God, who sees the end from the beginning, and in whose decree and purpose all future events are comprehended and fixed; so that in predestinating us, he at the same time, in effect, called, justified, and glorified us, as all these were included in his purpose (p.286).

Why didn't Paul include sanctification in this list? He did! It is that work of God which leads to our glorification, and so sanctification is included in glorification. Everything in the purpose of God regarding salvation is so certain that Paul could speak of the completed work as though it had already taken place, even for those who are yet to be saved.

Concl: Talk about standing on holy ground! This is where we have been today. Paul here gives us the only true

picture of salvation. In no part of it did Paul have anything to say about what we have done for God because we have done nothing. It has not been by our will that we have been saved, but by God's will. We did not come of our own accord, by our free will; God called us, and drew us to Himself. Before He called, we did not want to come. When we heard His call, we couldn't get to Christ fast enough.

And now He has justified us through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross. Day by day He is working all things together for our sanctification, that which is good in His sight. And when our Lord comes, as He surely will, the work of salvation will then be complete, and we shall stand before the Lord transformed outwardly and inwardly to be like our precious Savior.

We ought to be looking forward to the coming of the Lord, expecting Him at any time. But let me tell you something: You and I can't possibly be anticipating our Lord's coming as much as He is. Do you remember the last request He made of the Father in His high priestly prayer? He said this:

Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am;  
that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world (John 17:24).

Why does He want us to behold His glory? Because at that very moment we will be glorified and be made like Him.

Oh, to be like Thee! blessed Redeemer,  
This is my constant longing and prayer,  
Gladly I'll forfeit all of earth's treasures,  
Jesus, Thy perfect likeness to wear.

Oh, to be like Thee! Oh, to be like Thee!  
Blessed Redeemer, pure as Thou art!  
Come in Thy sweetness, come in Thy fullness,  
Stamp Thine own image deep on my heart.

My heart was deeply moved as I prepared this message. I felt overwhelmed with what it means that I am the Lord's. I hope you have tasted anew of that blessedness today, and that we will all live more and more each day as He wants us to live, looking forward to that great day when we will see Him and be like Him and be with Him forever.

## THE LORD ON OUR SIDE

Romans 8:31-34

Intro: In the book of Romans we have had many opportunities to see how wonderful our salvation is. In fact, words fail us when we try to describe it. It is amazing that there is any salvation at all. We don't deserve it. We would have no complaint against God if He condemned us and let us suffer the eternal consequences of our sins. However, He did not choose to do that. He chose to save us. And no book in the Bible gives us such a clear picture of our salvation as the Holy Spirit has given us in this book of Romans.

Before Paul really began to describe our salvation, he showed us how needy we were. We are not only sinful, and defiled by our sin, but by nature we don't want to have anything to do with God. We were at enmity with Him. We thought we were strong, but the truth is that we were, and are, morally weak. We succumb to temptation very easily. Even after we were saved, we have failed the Lord many times. He, however, never gives up on us. He has designed a salvation which is dependent upon Him for its success, not upon us. And so, after we get through the section on condemnation, we have many reasons, verse by verse, for praising God.

Paul carefully described here in Romans what it means that we are justified. He shows that through the death of Christ for our sins we are cleared of all charges against us in the court of heaven. Then the Apostle went on to describe the work of sanctification and the special responsibilities of the Holy Spirit in our salvation. He told us certain things that we need to do as well, but it is always with His help; it is never what we do "on our own."

Finally we come to the short but magnificent passage in Romans on glorification. It is here that we learn that God has saved us to make us like His Son. God chose us in eternity past. He sent the Lord Jesus to die for us. He called us and brought us to Himself. He justified us. Now He is sanctifying us. And we are all awaiting the day when His work in us will be finished, and we will be glorified.

However, as we come to our text for today, I want you to see how far we have come since chapter 1. Nothing is more unlike the Lord Jesus than God's description of us in chapters 1, 2, and part of chapter 3. It is absolutely incredible that God could take sinners like we, and make us like His Son. Nothing could be more beyond the realm of possibility as far as we are concerned. For us to try to make ourselves like the Lord would be laughable if it were not so ridiculous. But with God in the picture, it is still amazing, but the impos-

sible then becomes possible.

Now this is what prompted Paul to ask the questions that we find in verse 31. In fact, in the four verses of our text we have five questions--two in verse 31, and one each in verses 32, 33, and 34.

# I. PAUL'S REACTION TO HIS OWN TEACHING (Rom. 8:31).

Notice verse 31. (Read.)

I know what I am saying when I tell you that there are times when anyone who studies the Word of God is almost overcome with the truth of the Word. But Paul showed us here that there are times when even the writers of Scripture seem to have been overwhelmed with what they were writing. The truths which Paul had been discussing amazed him. It seemed to him as though something should be said, but he appears to have been, at least momentarily, speechless. It was all so wonderful, so far beyond what any child of God could deserve. Who but God could have devised such a salvation as we have in Christ. I am sure that we would all agree that it would be enough to know that we are justified, and are being sanctified, and will be glorified. But to be able to speak of it all as though it were already finished, this provoked his first question. You can almost imagine that, as he was dictating this letter to Tertius, he stopped speaking, so overcome was he with the truth.

And we ought to dwell on these truths until we feel just like Paul did. Such blessings as Paul has been describing for several chapters could only be ours by the grace of God. They speak of a love, a divine love, which passes our understanding.

But then he went on to his second question in this series: "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

In some of our past studies I have pointed out to you that the word if in the Bible often should have been translated since. That is the case here. There is no question but that "God is for us." He really is on our side. He has taken our part. And this did not start when we were saved; it started before the foundation of the world when He chose us to be saved! As John Brown pointed out in his commentary, being for us is "the reverse of being against us" (p. 255). God is not our enemy; He is our Friend. He has not sought our judgment, but our salvation. How marvelous it is to be able to say, and to know that it is true, that God is for us! In fact, He is so much for us that He is never against us. If there are times when He has to discipline us, it is always



because He is "for us."

Think about this question for a little longer. Notice every word in it. Paul was not talking about some person like he was, or somebody like we are. He was talking about GOD! It is GOD Who is "for us." Think about it. It is GOD Who is "for us." This is the God of creation. This is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the sovereign God, the Almighty God. He is the eternal God.

"Who can be against us?" Paul did not mean that we would have no enemies. He did not mean that we would have no trouble with people standing in our way, seeking to hinder us in our walk with God. We all have trouble that way. What Paul meant was, Who is there who can undo what He has done, or, Who can keep God from doing what He determined from eternity past that He would do? That is the question.

I forget who the Puritan was who made the statement, "It makes no difference who your enemies are if God is your Friend." I love that; don't you? Nobody even has the right to ask God what He is doing. Even if all of the nations and all of the angels would rise up against God, He could banish them all with just a word!

David was recognizing this truth when he wrote Psalm 124.  
(Read.)

Note also the first few verses of Psalm 27, and Psalm 46.

When Abram was fearful that the kings he had conquered to free Lot, might regroup and retaliate against him, the Lord said this to Abram: "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" (Gen. 15:1).

Cf. also the Lord's words in John 10:27-30.

When the Apostle John was talking about false spirits and false prophets which are in the world, he had this also to say:

Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them:  
because greater is he that is in you,  
than he that is in the world.

So this is our greatest security: God is for us! But how do we know that He is? I have already given you many Scriptures to show that He is on our side. What more did the Apostle Paul have to say?

In verses 32, 33, and 34 we have three specific proofs that God is on our side. Let us see what they are.

II. THREE PROOFS THAT GOD IS "FOR US" (Rom. 8:32-34).

The first and greatest proof is to be seen in:

A. The death of "his own Son" (Rom. 8:32).

He spared Abraham's son, Isaac, when they were on Mount Moriah, but He did not spare "His own Son." Spare Him from what? Spare Him from death! But why should His Son die? He was delivered up "for us all." Notice that wording: **"for us all."**

But why did God do this? Because this was the price of our salvation. What did it mean to His Son? It meant that He took the penalty which rightfully should have fallen upon the very people He died to redeem. It is impossible for anyone to describe how much the Lord had to suffer. Paul was giving a proof that God is for us. Instead of holding Him back, He offered Him up. The Lord laid our sins upon Him. Surely there could be no greater proof that He is "for us."

In Romans 5:8 Paul showed that the death of Christ was absolute proof of God's love for us.

But then Paul took his readers a step further when he ended his question by saying that if God did that, "How shall He not with him freely give us all things?"

This statement can be translated in at least two ways.

In the first place it can mean that because Christ died for us, then God will "with Him," not apart from Him, "freely give us all things" that are necessary for our salvation. And this is exactly what God has done. There is nothing required for the forgiveness of our sins which is not given to us through Christ. There is nothing that needs to be added to what Christ did on the Cross to make us acceptable to God. Justification, sanctification, and glorification are all based upon the work of Christ on the Cross. And as an act of God's grace, He, without any charge to us, "freely gives us all things."

But I believe there is another wonderful truth in this statement that God through Christ freely gives us all things. It is similar in meaning to verse 28. If there is any way in which we might feel that God is not "for us," it would be in our trials, our sufferings, because we are His children. But this verse assures us again that God gives us everything that we may experience because they, too, are a part of what He is doing to make us like His Son.

Cf. 1 Cor. 3:21-23.

Think about what Paul had to say here, and your heart will be encouraged all the more to believe that God is on your side.

But building upon this let us go on to the second proof that God is "for us."

B. It has to do with our justification (Rom. 8:33).

Paul's question is this: "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?"

If there is one thing that possibly could cause God to turn against us, it would be sin! Can anybody lay a single charge against God's elect? Just because a person is one of God's elect, does it mean that he has been kept from sin? I wish it did, but it doesn't! We have all sinned, and there are many charges that could be laid against any one of us--many charges! Only the Lord could fearlessly ask His enemies, "Which of you convinceth [convicteth] Me of sin?" (John 8:48). No charge of sin could be successfully laid against our Lord because He never had sinned.

But what provision has God made for His elect? Paul said, "It is God that justifieth." Since God has declared His elect to be justified in Christ, there is no charge that can be leveled against His people that would ever cause God to turn against His own.

Have His elect sinned? Yes, many, many times--and they still do! But their sins are atoned for by the death of Christ, and God has fully accepted us in Christ, declaring us to be just in His sight. And out of faithfulness to His Son, our God will never reverse that decision. Our cases will never be reviewed. They are eternally closed and secure.

This brings us to the third and final proof that God is "for us."

C. The past and present ministries of Christ (Rom. 8:34).

There really is not any difference between bringing a charge against God's elect as compared with condemning God's elect. The purpose of the charge is to condemn, and to condemn anyone is to bring a charge against them. Both amount to a reason, or reasons, as to why God would not be held to His promise to save His people.

In the second proof that God is for us in verse 33, Paul says

that there is no reason to bring any charge because God has already justified that one against whom the charge has been laid. Our great Accuser is the Devil. And Revelation 12:10 indicates that he is busy accusing the people of God "day and night."

But why would Paul ask what is essentially the same question twice? It is because in the second proof he referred to what God has done; in this third proof Paul was speaking of what Christ has done, AND WHAT HE CONTINUES TO DO. Let us see what his answer is to the question, "Who is he that condemneth?"

Paul's answer: He mentioned three things that Christ has done. He died. He arose from the dead. He ascended to the Father's right hand. And what is He doing there? He is interceding "for us."

Not only is God "for us," but the Lord Jesus is "for us" too. And could anyone who has been saved ever be lost if the Lord Jesus is their Intercessor? Obviously not!

Cf. 1 John 2:1, 2.

The Lord Jesus is at the Father's right hand as our Advocate, our Paraclete. And He would not be taking up our case when we sin if He were not also "for us."

Concl: People who worry about their salvation are usually spending too much time looking at themselves and their sins, and at their feelings, rather than looking at the Three Persons of the Godhead. Paul was teaching the Roman believers in this passage that they needed to look at God, look at the Lord Jesus Christ, and look at the Holy Spirit.

When you look at God, what do you see and what can you learn? See verses 32 and 33. And add to that verse 31.

When you look at the Lord Jesus Christ, what do you see and what is He doing? See verse 34.

When you look at the Holy Spirit, what is He doing, and why? See verses 26 and 27.

It was not Paul's purpose, and it certainly is not my purpose today, to give anyone a false sense of security. Paul was addressing God's elect. He was addressing those who had shown that they were the elect of God by their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior. The encouragement that Paul has given in these verses so lavishly is only for the Lord's people. If you are not trusting in Christ for your

salvation, you cannot possibly be justified. You have every reason to be afraid. But if you do know Him as your Savior, your heart can be at perfect rest.

And so the question I ask as I close is, Do you know the Lord Jesus as your Savior? Are you trusting God that your sins are forgiven because of what Christ did on the Cross? Do you find in your heart a real desire to obey the Word of God so you can please God? Has your attitude toward sin changed? Does it grieve you now? Do you love the Savior, and do you love being where you are right now--with His people? Does the Holy Spirit bear witness with your spirit that you are a son of God? If you can honestly answer these questions affirmatively, then what Paul has written here for you. And you can rest assured in your salvation.

If you are not trusting Christ as your Savior, possibly the Lord brought you here today because He intends to save you. Let me encourage you to come to Christ now, to put your trust in Him. He will save you, and He will save you now. No one else can save you. Christ is the only Savior.

## MORE THAN CONQUERORS

Romans 8:35-39

Intro: We have seen in the last few Sundays that the Apostle Paul brought this great section on salvation to a close, not only pointing us to our eventual glorification, but giving us various assurances that glory will most certainly be ours! We have seen that all creation awaits the glorification of the people of God. Involved in this is the fact that "we are saved by hope," a hope which cannot be disappointed because it rests upon the faithfulness of God. In addition, we have the help of the Holy Spirit by prayer, not our prayers, but His prayers for us, for our infirmities. Next Paul brought out that glory is according to the purpose of God. And as though this were not enough, we have the assurance gathered out of the fact that God is for us, that He is the one who has justified us. And since Christ is the One who died for us, rose for us, ascended for us, and is interceding for us, our assurance grows stronger and stronger.

However, at the end of the chapter Paul placed the experiences of believers along side of the love of Christ and the love of God in Christ, asking if there is anything that can possibly separate us from such love as They have for us.

The Apostle Paul's point is this: "Can any of the things mentioned in these last five verses, especially verses 35, 38, and 39, prevent us from reaching the final glory and the joy that will accompany it? Can anything keep us from obtaining what God in His love has provided for us? "The love of Christ" (verse 35) is not our love for Christ, but Christ's love for us. "The love of God" (verse 39) is not our love for God, but God's love for us. Our love for Christ and for God could secure nothing because it is so changeable, so fickle. But Their love for us is another matter.

I am going to divide these five verses into three parts:

- 1) Verses 35 and 36 give us THE PROBLEM.
- 2) Verse 37 gives us THE ANSWER.
- 3) Verses 38 and 39 give us THE APOSTLE'S STRONG CONVICTION.  
This conviction was not based upon feeling, but upon truth, the truth of God.

Now let us go to the first point:

I. THE PROBLEM (Rom. 8:35, 36).

Paul mentioned in this one verse seven terrible possible experiences for the child of God. This verse takes us back in thought to verse 18 and the expression, "the sufferings of

this present time." The believers of the first century experienced these things far more than we have, but they stand as possibilities for everyone who knows the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. This world is not our home, nor is it any friend to the grace of God. And the Apostle Paul indicated to Timothy in the third chapter of his second epistle that conditions like this are going to get worse, not better, the closer we get to the coming of the Lord.

Let us make sure that we understand what each one is.

#### A. "Tribulation."

This is pressure. Godet called it "overwhelming external circumstances" (p. 333). It is what the apostles were faced with in the way of punishment if they kept on with their preaching. There are many ways in which the enemies of the Gospel have put pressure upon the Lord's people, sometimes threatening to harm their families, or personal torture for themselves.

#### B. "Distress."

This is the inward effect which people under tribulation feel. It is the anguish that a person would feel if he were shut up in a very small space. It is worse than tribulation; it is tribulation in action.

#### C. "Persecution."

This is relentless opposition. This is what the Jews were doing to Paul when they followed him from city to city, stirring up opposition against him. One writer suggests that this is trouble for which a person would have no protection from the law. Cf. Godet, p. 333.

#### D. "Famine."

There may be an abundance of food around, but the servant of the Lord is deprived. If he is fed at all it is usually with food less than what a person would give to an animal. Paul spoke in 2 Cor. 11:27 of being "in hunger and thirst, in fastings often."

#### E. "Nakedness."

In the passage mentioned above, 2 Cor. 11:27, Paul also spoke of being "in cold and nakedness." His clothes were often taken away from him to add to his humiliation and discomfort. This did not necessarily mean that he was completely naked, but that he did not have enough to keep him warm.

F. "Peril."

This is where his life would be in danger. In 2 Cor. 11:26 Paul wrote this:

In perils of waters, in perils of robbers,  
in perils by mine own countrymen,  
in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city,  
in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea,  
in perils among false brethren.

G. "Sword."

It is believed that Paul eventually died by the sword. We know that a sword brought an end to the ministry of John the Baptist. Many met their death in those days by the sword.

But the question is: Can any or all of these keep the child of God from all that God in His love has prepared for him? Or do they mean that there has been any change in the love of God for His people who experience such things?

Before giving the answer Paul quoted from Psa. 44:22. (Read Rom. 8:36.) (Then read from Psalm 44.) Such experiences were not peculiar to people living after Christ was here. It has always been descriptive of the attitude and treatment of Lord's people by the people of the world.

So, instead of it being an evidence that God no longer loves, or that God cannot help, this is confirmation of the faith of those who suffer like this. We have not seen this, but we may! Perhaps it is a testimony of the shallowness of our lives and of our fear of such things that we are not in trouble like the Lord's people have been in the past. May the Lord give us the courage to be faithful to Him if such should ever be our lot.

Note the words, "For thy sake..."

Now we come to:

II. THE ANSWER (Rom. 8:37).

Can any of these things tear us away from the love of Christ? What if we fail under such conditions--and many of the Lord's people have!

Remember the Apostle Peter's denial of the Lord. But remember also that the Lord did not forsake him. While not excusing his failure, we know that he became stronger through it. And that is one thing which Paul meant when he spoke of us as being "more than conquerors." However, this is only possible



"through him that loved us."

What else does it mean to be "more than conquerors"? It means that we not only come out victorious, but actually the things and people which were against us become instruments in God's hands for our greater perfection. This is another version of Rom. 8:28. We become superconquerors! But it is only through God and through Christ. We come to the end of our resources only to find supplies which we never knew existed before.

John Brown quoted from Samuel Rutherford who experienced banishment and imprisonment for his faith. This was back in the 1600's in England. In one of his letters he wrote this:

My Lord Jesus is kinder to me than ever He was; it pleaseth Hi to dine and sup with His afflicted prisoner. A king feasteth with me, and His spikenard casteth a sweet smell. I dare not say but my Lord Jesus hath fully recompensed my sadness with His joys, my losses with His own sweet presence. I find it a sweet and rich thing to exchange my sorrows with Christ's joys, my afflictions with the sweet peace I have with Himself.

And then in a later letter he wrote this:

I am, in this house of my pilgrimage, every way in good case. Christ is most kind and loving to my soul. It pleaseth Him to feast with His unseen consolation a stranger and an exiled prisoner. I would not exchange my Lord Jesus for all the comfort out of heaven. His yoke is easy and His burden is light (Brown, Exposition of Romans, pp. 268, 269).

Brown said that Rutherford often spoke of his times in prison as times of bright sunshine because of the way he enjoyed fellowship with the Lord.

We never experience the sufficiency of God's grace until we need it. "More than conquerors"! What a description for the people of God under fire. And it is God's love for us that makes the difference! He loves us with a love that is without beginning, and without an ending, and without ever a change.

I have spoken of this chapter as the mountain peak of Romans. And it seems that we haven't reached the summit yet. We finally arrive at the summit in verses 38, 39.

This is what I have called:

### III. THE APOSTLE'S STRONG CONVICTION (Rom. 8:38, 39).

When you compare verse 35 with these two verses, you will see that verse 35 assures us of the love of Christ; verses 38 and 39, of "the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." The Father and the Son are united in many things. One of the most important for us is Their love for us.

Paul said, "For I am persuaded..." This was not only a STRONG CONVICTION with him, but an explanation of the verse which went before. Why was he so certain that all of us can be "more than conquerors through him that loved us"? It is for this very reason: Nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

His persuasion was not just the excitement of the moment. It was not just some feeling, some emotion, that he had. It was a persuasion based upon the truth of the Word of God, the truth which Paul had a part in writing.

This was the equivalent of saying that he believed! He believed it because he knew it to be the truth of God. As he searched the Scriptures, he could come to no other conclusion. He knew beyond the shadow of a doubt. Paul could not have stated his conviction more strongly than he did when he said, "For I am persuaded..." He was convinced so strongly that he could never doubt, if he ever had, the amazing love of God. He knew that nothing could ever separate him from God's love. He knew that nothing could ever prevent His entrance into heaven and to glory. He would not boast in his love for God, but he never ceased to glory in God's love for him.

What are the threats that seem to suggest the possibility of being separated from the love of God? Let us note what they are.

John Brown suggests in his commentary that we have a pair of expressions, then a trio, followed by a pair, and then ending with another trio. This is how they go:

- 1) The first pair: "Neither death, nor life."
- 2) The first trio: "Nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers."
- 3) The second pair: "Nor things present, nor things to come."
- 4) The second trio: "Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature."

A. The first pair: "Neither death, nor life."

Death surely means our death, and all that may be involved in

our dying. Death separates us from our families here on earth, from our loved ones, from our work, from our possessions, and whatever honors we may have achieved. And we can be so easily forgotten. But death never separates us from God's love. In fact, it is the door by which we enter into the enjoyment of that love in heaven as we never have been able to enjoy it here on earth.

Life also presents problems for us as Christians. We do not know what trials or temptations may come our way. We hate to think of how we have failed the Lord. We look back with regret upon the sins of daily living. But whatever they might be, they can never separate us from God's love.

Perhaps here Paul had in mind what he would write in Rom. 14:8, 9:

For whether we live, we live unto the Lord;  
and whether we die, we die unto the Lord'  
whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.  
For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived,  
that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

B. The first trio: "Nor angels, nor principalities,  
nor powers."

Paul was dealing here with those who have authority over us. "Angels" may include bad angels (the Devil and demons) as well as good angels. "Principalities and powers" can be either heavenly, angelic authorities, or they might even refer to earthly authorities: kings, governors, etc.

All of us know the temptations which Satan places before us. We certainly do not understand all that Paul had in mind when he wrote in Eph. 6 about our warfare with "principalities and powers..." But we all know something of the conflict. It is unthinkable that the elect angels would try to separate us from the love of God because they are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to us. Governments have stood against the people of God, forbidding them to worship, often forbidding them to practice their faith, often killing believers. But they all stand under the greatest authority of all, the authority of the God of our salvation. And come what may, do what they will, they are powerless to separate us from the love of God...

C. The second pair: "Nor things present, nor things  
to come."

Under this heading we can list the same things in both categories. The only difference is that we are facing some now, and we are going to face the same things, maybe even in a

worse way, in the days ahead. This would include honor or scorn, health or sickness, wealth or need, war or peace, changes in government or living circumstances. Not only can these things not break the love of God toward us, but they are utterly unable to weaken them in any way.

We all are inclined to fear the future because we have no control over it. The future for us in our country right now looks very ominous. But whatever we may face now, or in the days ahead, we are secure in the love of God.

D. The third trio: "Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature."

On earth we live either in the heights or the depths or somewhere in between. Sometimes we are up; sometimes we are down. Probably in this world, with some exceptions, we are more down than up. The Psalmist prayed in Psa. 130:1, 2,

Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord.  
Lord, hear my voice: let thine ears be attentive  
to the voice of my supplications.

The Psalm seems to indicate that the Psalmist was in the depths because of his sin. But we can also be in the depths of discouragement. We can be there because of humiliation. We can be in the heights of prosperity and blessing, but that is often the place where people forget the Lord.

However, whatever may be our position at any particular time, up or down, in the worst of times and in the best of times, nothing can separate us from the love of God. We may fall away, but the Lord will never let us go.

Godet suggests that the reading, "nor any other creature," might be a reference to creation itself. Events in creation often pose a threat to the people of God. Some people bring creation and God so close together that they make a god out of creation. This is what the New Age is doing. Acts in creation often pose a threat. Think of the anger against God which many people expressed in losing all of their possessions in the recent floods in the mid-west. But even those things, while they are trouble even to a child of God, are never capable of permanently separating us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Concl: As we come to this point in the book of Romans, we can all wonder why we, or anyone else, who knows the Lord would ever doubt that their salvation could be anything but eternal! A saved person cannot under any circumstances lose his salvation. Why? Is it because he will always obey God. No! He will often fail the Lord. But our salvation is not dependent upon our love for God, but His love for us.