

Romans 08 - The Believer's Relationship with the Holy Spirit; Our Obligation to the Spirit, not the Flesh; Suffering in Hope of Future Glory; Eternal Security

IV. Sanctification (Rom 6:1—8:39)

(3) The believer's relationship to the Spirit (8:1-39)

(A) Spirit transferred us from death to life (8:1-11)

(a) Life in the Spirit frees the believer from condemnation (8:1-4)

(i) No condemnation for the believer (8:1)

(ii) Spirit frees the believer from condemnation and death (8:2)

(iii) God condemned sin through Christ (8:3-4)

(b) Indwelling ministry of the Spirit will empower believers (8:5-11)

(i) Spirit and flesh pursue opposite agendas (8:5-8)

(ii) Empowerment by the Spirit (8:9-11)

(B) We are not obligated to the flesh but to the Spirit (8:12-17)

(a) Our obligation to the Spirit, not the flesh (8:12)

(b) Flesh = death; Spirit = life (8:13)

(c) Life in the Spirit described (8:14-17)

(i) We are now led by the Spirit (8:14a)

(ii) Consequences (8:14b-17)

(a) Leading indicates sonship (8:14b)

(b) Sonship indicates childship (8:15-16)

(c) Childship indicates heirship (8:17)

(C) We endure suffering now in the hope of future glory (8:18-30)

(a) Because future glory exceeds present suffering (8:18-25)

(i) Proposition stated (8:18)

(ii) Proposition proved (8:19-25)

(a) Proof #1 - from nature (8:19-22)

(1) Creation's expectation (8:19)

(2) Creation's subjugation (8:20)

- (3) Creation's liberation (8:21)
 - (4) Creation's groaning (8:22)
 - (b) Proof #2 - from awaiting a new body (8:23-25)
 - (1) Redemption for our bodies (8:23)
 - (2) Hope defined (8:24)
 - (3) Hope requires perseverance (8:25)
 - (b) Because of the assistance of the Holy Spirit (8:26-27)
 - (i) General help (8:26a)
 - (ii) Specific help (8:26b-27)
 - (c) Because all things work together for good (8:28-30)
 - (i) Proposition stated (8:28)
 - (ii) Proposition explained (8:29)
 - (iii) Salvation enumerated (8:30)
- (D) We are secure in Christ (8:31-39)
 - (a) Because of the believer's relationship to the Father (8:31-33)
 - (i) The Father is the protector (8:31)
 - (ii) The Father is the provider (8:32)
 - (iii) The Father is the justifier (8:33)
 - (b) Because of the believer's relationship to adversity (8:34-39)
 - (i) Charges cannot separate the believer from Christ (8:34)
 - (ii) Trials cannot separate the believer from Christ (8:35-37)
 - (iii) Miscellaneous categories cannot separate the believer from Christ (8:38-39)
 - (a) Earthly
 - (b) Angelic
 - (c) Temporal
 - (d) Government
 - (e) Spatial
 - (f) Catch all

Sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit in the regenerated life of a believer, delivering the believer from the power of sin and performing all of God's will in the life of the believer.

First four verses are a continuation from Rom 7. These opening verses are a summing up of the truths unfolded from Rom 5:12—7:25.

Just as Rom 5 climaxed Paul's revelation concerning *justification* of the sinner, Rom 8 culminates the truth concerning *sanctification* of the believer. Both chapters end by

affirming the eternal security of the believer. In Rom 5 our security depends on the Son's life; in Rom 8 on the Spirit's power. Both rest on the Father's love.

This chapter explains the benefits of sanctification made available through the presence and power of God's Holy Spirit, who indwells every believer.

Romans 8

(3) The believer's relationship to the Spirit (Rom 8:1-39)

(A) Spirit transferred us from death to life (8:1-11)

(a) Life in the Spirit frees the believer from condemnation (8:1-4)

(i) No condemnation for the believer (8:1)

1 Therefore there is **now no condemnation** at all for those who are in Christ Jesus.

1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in union with the Messiah Jesus.

1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.

- "Therefore" - introduces a conclusion based on everything that Paul said from Rom 3-7; in the sense of logic, this phrase summarizes and concludes the argument that has gone before

— Paul tells us that the Christian life is not to be lived under human effort, but by the power of the Holy Spirit

— This affirms justification as the basis for sanctification

— A Christian must believe that they have permanent acceptance with God before they will grow in grace and godliness

- "...now" - a word referring to time. It points to the change in relationship status that occurs when we believe in Jesus

- "...no" - *ouden*, a simple negative in English; however in Greek, it's a compound negative, stronger than simply "no" (*ou*)

— This could read: Not only are Christians not condemned now, they will never be. It is impossible.

- "...condemnation" - *katakrima*, because we are in Christ and the wrath of God has been satisfied, we need not live our life as if another shoe will drop

— If we are in Christ, the wrath of God against sin has been satisfied by the death of His Son. Thus, the only attribute left that God has to express toward the believer is love.

— One of the greatest benefits of being a Christian is that we will never experience the wrath of God. The only thing left for a believer to experience is God's love, mercy and grace.

— Consequently, everything that God brings into our lives as believers is not meant to punish or scold, but it is designed as an act of love. Everything that happens to us, whether

good or bad, is designed by God to bring us to a higher level of sanctification.

— "no condemnation" is different from freedom from judgment (2 Cor 5:10); we will still stand in judgment for our actions, attitudes and behavior

— *This is one of the greatest assurances a Christian can receive:* No condemnation from any source, for any reason, at any time (John 3:18).

— No qualifying clause; it does *not* depend upon our walk! *It is not how I feel, but what God says...*

- Rom 8 opens: no possibility of condemnation; it closes: no possibility of separation!

- How does one become "in" Christ Jesus? Through the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Rom 6:3-4; 8:9; 1 Cor 12:13).

- Paul is saying in this verse the the life of the Spirit sets the believer free from the condemnation of the Law

— In Rom 7, Paul was miserable (Cf. 7:24); in Rom 8, he has hope

(ii) Spirit frees the believer from condemnation and death (8:2)

2 For the **law of the Spirit** of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

2 For the Spirit's law of life in the Messiah Jesus has set me free from the Law of sin and death.

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

- The Holy Spirit sets the believer free from the condemnation of the law

— The predicament that Paul described in Rom 7...trying to keep the law, failing, over and over again; sinning, then experiencing the consequences of his sin, over and over again...Paul has found that now he has been set free from that terrible situation.

- "...law of the Spirit" - also called the Law of Christ; this law is much kinder than legalism...it doesn't just show you what you're doing wrong, but it empowers you to actually do what you know is right

— "law" - a principle; Paul is not referring to the Mosaic Law

— This transition is just as radical as the transition from being unsaved to becoming saved. The most profound experience one can have is going from an unbeliever to becoming a Christian.

— But there is another profound change that happens once you are a Christian...it's when Jesus takes the frustrated Christian and tells them to not try so hard on your own, let Me empower you. This is when you begin to live life through the Spirit. This is the transition that happens between Rom 7 and Rom 8.

- While “the law of sin and death” will be with us as long as we are in this body, it doesn’t necessarily have dominion. The “law” of the Spirit can have dominion.
- Example: The law of gravity is upon all of us. However, with a proper air foil, and sufficient velocity through the air, we can enjoy dominion over gravity. We can take advantage of the greater power over the law of gravity.
- The “law of sin” is like the law of gravity; it pulls us down. But the “law of the Spirit” is like the law of aerodynamics; it overcomes the law of sin, lifts us up, and enables us to fly victoriously over the flesh.
- The subject here is no longer Christ’s work *for* us, but the Spirit’s work *in* us

(iii) God condemned sin through Christ (8:3-4)

3 For **what the Law could not do**, weak as it was through the flesh, **God *did***: sending His own Son **in the likeness of sinful flesh** and *as an offering for sin*, **He condemned sin in the flesh**,

3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God *did*: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and *as an offering* for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,

3 For what the Law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the flesh, God did. By sending his own Son in the form of humanity, he condemned sin by being incarnate,

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

- "...what the Law could not do" - the Law cannot not save/justify anyone, and it cannot empower anyone to live the Christian life; in these scenarios, it was "weak"

— The Law was never designed to save or sanctify anyone, so when someone takes the Law of God and uses it for an instrument of salvation or sanctification, they are using the Law for a purpose for which it was never designed.

— The Law cannot free us from sin and death because its only appeal is to the basic nature of man. It urges us to intellectually obey God, but it does not provide the power to do so.

- "...God *did*" - what the Law could not do (save anyone or sanctify anyone), God did

— The Law did not save you, Jesus did; the Law cannot empower you, Jesus did

— Fortunately, God sent His Son, out of the depths of His love, to deal effectively with sin

- "...in the likeness of sinful flesh" - not "in sinful flesh" or "in the likeness of flesh"; He was both sinless and a real person

- "...for sin" - has a wider meaning in Greek..."as an offering for sin" or "a sin offering"

— The Law could not deal with sin, so God sent His Son to do so

- "...He condemned sin in the flesh" - God condemned sin through Jesus Christ; the sin debt of the world has been paid for, so if I'm in Christ, the law no longer sits in judgment over me

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

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

4 so that the righteous requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not live according to human nature but according to the Spirit.

4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

- Here, the purpose of the Incarnation appears in the context of the struggle of Rom 7

— God fulfills the Law's requirements in us by His Spirit, who indwells and empowers us

— However, this is not automatic, simply because He indwells us...it is only as we walk by the Spirit rather than walking in the flesh

— Thus, the law's requirements will be fulfilled by the determination of the direction of our lives by the Spirit, by our being enabled over and over to decide for the Spirit against the flesh, to turn our backs more and more on our insatiable egotism and to turn our faces more and more toward the freedom that the Spirit has given us

- "walking in the flesh" = behaving as our sinful nature dictates and allowing it to govern our lives; to have our life determined and directed by the values of the world, which is in rebellion against God

- "walking in the Spirit" = living our life moment by moment in submission to and dependence upon the Spirit; living under the control and according to the values of the Spirit

- "...that" - purpose clause. All that has been said now converges to this fact: all righteousness of the law might be fulfilled *in* [not *by*] us, who walk according to the Spirit and not according to flesh. [That is, not trying by our own efforts].

— A statement of fact, not an imperative (Gal 5:16 *is* an imperative)

God the Father sent God the Son to save sinners. God the Son became incarnate—remaining fully God, becoming fully human, yet without sin. He atoned for our sin by becoming a sin offering for us. Now, resurrected and ascended, God the Son asks God the Father to send God the Spirit to enable all whom God saves to live righteous lives by His power.

(b) Indwelling ministry of the Spirit will empower believers (8:5-11)

(i) Spirit and flesh pursue opposite agendas (8:5-8)

5 For those who **are in accord** with the **flesh** set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are in accord with the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

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

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

5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

- "...are in accord" - live according to; to allow our flesh (sinful nature) to dominate our life

- "...flesh" - human resources. The contrast between two *believers*: the impossibility of trying to live for God by human effort vs. those that are truly walking by the Spirit

- The new nature (Spirit) and old nature (flesh) are both inside of us, and they have opposite goals and agendas

- Whether or not we tap into the right agenda is totally dependent on whether we are willing as Christians to admit our insufficiency and rely instead upon the Holy Spirit to live the Christian life

- Which is controlling you? The "human" viewpoint [your capability] or God's viewpoint [His ability through you]?

- Sincerity, or the lack thereof, is not the issue; the basis is. Is your mind on the things of the Spirit or on the things of the world?

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

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

6 To focus our minds on the human nature leads to death, but to focus our minds on the Spirit leads to life and peace.

6 For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace.

- A description of what both the flesh and the Spirit both want...

- If we go back to the flesh, our sin nature, all we can expect is death

- Setting our minds on the flesh concentrates on and desires the things of the flesh (Cf. Phil 2:5; Col 3:2). The end of that attitude is ultimately "death."

- Setting our mind on yielding to the Spirit, we'll experience "life and peace"

- The Greek is more blunt: "For the mind [under the domination of] the flesh is death. The mind [under the domination of] the Spirit is life and peace."

- Genitive case in each; these are both *believers*

- "...death" - out of fellowship; separated

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

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

7 That is why the mind that focuses on human nature is hostile toward God. It refuses to submit to the authority of God's Law because it is powerless to do so.

7 Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is no subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

- Our old nature is "hostile toward God" and has no desire to subject itself to the law of God...and it couldn't do so even if it wanted to because it's not even able to subject itself to God

- Our old nature is so corrupted and depraved that God doesn't even attempt to rehabilitate it. He makes no attempt to prop it up or to slap a coat of fresh paint on it, He just let's it to its own way.

- The flesh will never be improved. We are powerless to *change our nature*; therefore, we cannot—in our own efforts—really please God. He alone is the source of power for holiness.

- Being "in the flesh" can be defined as pleasing oneself, not God

- If these are the characteristics of our old nature, why would we ever go back to it? If I do go back to it, I'm outside of the life of the Spirit and the only thing that awaits me is (temporal) death.

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

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

8 Indeed, those who are under the control of human nature cannot please God.

8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

- If a believer does not appropriate the divine resources (baptism into Christ [Rom 6] or the power of the Holy Spirit [Rom 8]) and they go back into the realm of the flesh, I am living a life that is displeasing to God and I cannot bear fruit for the God who made me

(ii) Empowerment by the Spirit (8:9-11)

9 However, you are not **in** the flesh but **in** the Spirit, **if indeed** the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the **Spirit of Christ**, he does not belong to Him.

9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.

9 You, however, are not under the control of the human nature but under the control of the Spirit, since God's Spirit lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of the Messiah, he does not belong to him.

9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.

- "However" - marks a contrast

- Paul's readers not only had a sinful human nature, they also had the indwelling Holy Spirit

- "...in" [2x] - under the dominion of
- "...if indeed" - "since" (first class condition in Greek); Paul assumed the Spirit of God dwelt in his readers
- At the moment someone trusts in Christ by faith, the Holy Spirit took up permanent residence (John 14:16) in you; our bodies are now the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19)
- In the OT, the temple is where God lived; in the NT, God lives within every believer in the form of the Holy Spirit
- If a person has no relationship with the Holy Spirit at all, they are not a Christian. There is no scenario where a person becomes a Christian then receives the Holy Spirit later.
- There is also no scenario where someone receives the Holy Spirit, then becomes a Christian at a later time. If you don't have the Holy Spirit, you're not a Christian; if you do have the Holy Spirit, you are a Christian. Simple as that.

Three Baptisms?

Rom 8:9 is one of the clearest statements in Scripture that corrects the false notion that baptism of the Holy Spirit is a second work of grace. Nowhere in Scripture do we find a clearer indication that the Holy Spirit enters a person's life at the moment of conversion (Cf. 1 Cor 12:13). If the Spirit needed to wait for some subsequent commitment or request from the believer, it follows that He would be absent between conversion and that later point in time. But that cannot be because Paul clearly indicated that a person without the Spirit does not belong to Christ.

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

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

10 But if the Messiah is in you, your bodies are dead due to sin, but the spirit is alive due to righteousness.

10 And if Christ *be* in you, [though] the body *is* dead because of sin; but [yet] the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness.

- "If" - "since" (first class condition in Greek)

- "...body" - represents the whole person, not just their physical shell

- "...righteousness" - whose righteousness? *His!*

- The Holy Spirit is the source of spiritual "life" for the redeemed person, who now possesses Jesus Christ's imputed "righteousness"

- Paul now says that since the Holy Spirit is in you, now walk according to the Spirit's desires

- You don't have to cry out for more of the Spirit; all you have to do is live according to the Spirit's desires (Gal 5:16)
- As you move from simply being indwelt by the Spirit to walking by the Spirit, you are moving out of Rom 7 (with its legalism and frustration) into the abundant life that God has for all believers
- Putting your flesh back under another set of rules is not going to help anyone live the Christian life; you have to walk by the Holy Spirit who indwells you
- Walking in the Spirit is like an elderly person who can only get around by use of the walker. The Holy Spirit is the walker. That old person depends upon that walker to do anything...to get out of bed, get to the bathroom, go outside, etc.
- Every problem or issue that comes your way on a daily basis, walking in the Spirit says I cannot handle this on my own, I need your help to handle it.
- If you're witnessing to someone and don't know what to say...you say God, you're going to have to give me the right words to say to this person

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

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

11 And if the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, then the one who raised the Messiah from the dead will also make your mortal bodies alive by his Spirit who lives in you.

11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead [continuously] dwells in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that *indwells* in you.

- "...if" - "since" (first class condition in Greek)

- "...dwells" - take up residence in (present tense, continuous process)

— The indwelling of the Holy Spirit guarantees our future resurrection if the believer dies in his body

— See note: **Indwelling of the Holy Spirit** in John 7:39; also see [Holy Spirit](#) for a complete explanation of the ministries of the Holy Spirit.

- Paul says that the Holy Spirit is inside of you, and He has a pretty good track record of bringing dead things back to life, because He did it with Christ

— The Spirit is both the cause of the resurrection-act and the permanent means of the resurrection-life

- The link that connects the believer with Christ, and makes them participate in Christ's resurrection, is the possession of His Spirit
- As you study the Bible, you learn pretty quickly that God is pretty good at taking useless, dead things and bringing them back to life and productivity...Sarah's womb was dead, but God brought it back to life and she begat Isaac; Jesus Christ went into the tomb dead, and the Holy Spirit brought Him back to life.
- If the Holy Spirit has this ability to bring dead things to life, doesn't He also have the power and ability to help us live the Christian life? Doesn't this same Spirit have the ability to help us live a life above the flesh?
- If the Holy Spirit raised Jesus from the grave, He has the same power and ability to raise me above living life in the flesh, and certainly He can give life to my body so that I will not continually go back to the flesh.

Sometimes Christians are described as having received a new nature. The idea is that unbelievers have an old (unregenerate) nature, and that Christians now have two natures: the old nature and a new nature. Sometimes these two natures are seen warring against each other within the believer.

However, there's a more Biblical explanation: Rather than getting a new nature, the NT says that believers receive the Holy Spirit (v9). God's nature now becomes a part of our total makeup, which already includes our old sinful human nature. The NT speaks of our "old man" (Rom 6:6; Eph 4:22; Col 3:9), which refers to who we were before we trusted Christ. That "old man" contained the sinful human nature. But now we are to "put on the new man" (Eph 4:24; Col 3:10), which means that we are to live like the new people that we are, having received the Holy Spirit (though still possessing a sinful nature).

(B) We are not obligated to the flesh but to the Spirit (8:12-17)

(a) Our obligation to the Spirit, not the flesh (8:12)

12 So then, brothers *and sisters*, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—

12 So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—

12 Consequently, brothers, we are not—with respect to human nature, that is—under an obligation to live according to human nature.

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors [under obligation], not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

- "So then" - draws a conclusion from v1-11; this should cause us to consider what God has done for every believer. He has:

- Joined us to Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit

- Delivered us from His just wrath against us for our sin
- Brought us into a new realm, where Christ rules in grace
- Given us a new nature—no longer dead but alive to spiritual things
- Assured us of a new destiny—life with Him forever in resurrected and renewed physical bodies

- Because of what God has done for us (v1-11), believers have an obligation to respond appropriately. However, we can only do so with the Spirit's help.

- This verse clearly teaches that the believer still has a sinful human nature within, even though we have died with Christ

— God does not eliminate the believer's "flesh" at conversion, therefore we must consciously not live (walk) according to it

— The flesh is still present, but it's been disabled; as Christians, we are no longer *obligated* to live in the flesh as when we were unbelievers, and experience the subsequent death

— Before we were saved, we had all kinds of obligations to the sin nature. When I walked in legalism, I had all sorts of obligations to the sin nature. But now that I have access to the Holy Spirit, the obligation to the sin nature has been disabled, nullified, removed.

— Sanctification is not something the Christian can take or leave; God commanded us to pursue it (Cf. Titus 2:12; 2 Peter 1:3-11; 3:18)

(b) Flesh = death; Spirit = life (8:13)

13 for if you are living in accord with the flesh, **you are going to die**; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

13 For if you live according to human nature, you are going to die, but if by the Spirit you continuously put to death the activities of the body, you will live.

13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

- Paul is telling NT believers the same thing Moses told the children of Israel just before they entered the Promised Land...I have set before you life and death...choose life.

— The life in God is available to you through divine resources...live according to those things

— But if we choose to not spend enough time in the Bible to understand what those divine resources are and how to use them, then we will continue to live in the flesh, and we will experience temporal death

- "...you are going to die" - Christians who consistently follow the dictates of the flesh can look forward to death. However, this is not eternal death (separation from God forever), but temporal death. Some possible examples include:

- Physical death - death may come prematurely for those who follow the flesh (Cf. 1 Cor 11:30; 1 John 5:16)
- Social relationships - following the flesh can separate us from others...friends, family, spouses, children, groups
- Financial death - foregoing God's blessings financially (gambling, overspending, mismanagement)
- Death of self - the separation of a person from themselves, through psychological alienation or disorders

- Alternatively, believers who follow God's will with the enablement of the Spirit, and put "the deeds of the body" to death will experience abundant life

— The present tense of the verbs is significant. The tense stresses the necessity of continually putting to death the deeds of the flesh.

— Paul viewed the presentation of ourselves to God as an initial act of commitment (6:13; 12:1), but also that we must daily and hourly chose to put our flesh to death (Cf. 13:14)

(c) Life in the Spirit described (8:14-17)

(i) We are now led by the Spirit (8:14a)

(ii) Consequences (8:14b-17)

(a) Leading indicates sonship (8:14b)

14 For all who are being **led by the Spirit** of God, these are **sons and daughters of God**.

14 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

14 For all who are led by God's Spirit are God's children.

14 For as many as are [being continually] led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

- "...led by the Spirit" - walking by the Spirit is allowing the Holy Spirit to direct every area of your life

— Even Jesus Christ, Himself God, was completely dependent upon the Holy Spirit (Cf. Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, Matt 4:1)

— Philip was led by the Spirit to leave a revival in Samaria and stand on a road in the desert. On that road, an Ethiopian eunuch was returning home from Jerusalem, sitting in his chariot and reading Isaiah. Philip assisted the eunuch's understanding of that passage, led him to Christ, and baptized him. That man went back to Ethiopia and started a church, and spread the gospel in Africa, further and faster than the apostles had ever dreamed of the gospel spreading.

— This is how the Holy Spirit works...when we submit to Him and allow Him to direct the course of our lives, He does supernatural things through us

— What if Philip would've said no to God? God would've used someone else (He's not short of resources), and Philip would've missed a huge blessing. God could do everything

Himself, but He wants to give us the privilege to be used as His hands and feet to those around us, as we're in submission to the guidance of the Spirit.

— Instead, because Philip decided to walk according to the desires of the the Holy Spirit, so the Spirit supernaturally used Philip to spread the gospel from Samaria to Ethiopia at the same time

— This is the type of thing God will do in our life if we respond to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. If I refuse to do it, God will just get someone else, and that person will be blessed. God's program will not be thwarted.

- "...sons *and daughters* of God" - since we are led by the Spirit, it indicates that we are sons of God

— And if we're sons, we are also His children (v15-16); and if we're His children, we are heirs with Christ (v17)

- The Holy Spirit leads people to Christ (John 16:8-11). After believers come to Christ, the Holy Spirit continues to lead them in the will of God (Cf. Gal 5:16-18).

— However, we can choose to follow or not follow, to walk according to the Spirit or according to the flesh

— The Spirit will lead us objectively through the Scriptures, and subjectively by His internal promptings (John 20:31; Rom 8:16; Gal 4:6; 1 John 3:24; 5:13)

- This leading or guiding is one of the ministries of the Holy Spirit to believers; see Holy Spirit for a complete list of ministries of the Holy Spirit

(b) Sonship indicates childship (8:15-16)

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

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

15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery that leads you into fear again. Instead, you have received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba! Father!"

15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

- Because we are in a relationship in Christ, we are not in a master-slave relationship with God where we are fearful of God

— Unlike sin, the Spirit does not enslave, compel or force us to do God's will as slaves of God. Instead, He appeals to us to submit voluntarily, as "sons of God."

— We have such intimacy with God that we can cry out to Him as if he were our earthly father and we are a small child

- "...adoption" - a legal term (Cf. justification), indicating the legal bestowal of legal standing

- Both adoption and justification result in a permanent condition, and both rest on the love and grace of God
- God has adopted us, and conferred upon us all the legal rights and privileges that would ordinarily accrue to a natural child
- In Roman law, adoption was required, even of a legitimate son, to inherit
- All born in his family were children, but only those adopted were recognized as sons. After adoption, they could *never* be disowned, but they can be *disinherited*.
- "...Abba! Father!" - an Aramaic expression for "daddy"

16 The Spirit Himself testifies **with** our spirit that we are **children** of God,

16 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,

16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

- There are two interpretations of v16:

1. The Holy Spirit testifies "to" my spirit that I'm a child of God; so I know that I'm a child of God because I have some type of subjective experience with the Spirit
 - This isn't to downgrade subjective experiences with the Holy Spirit; many believers have subjective, personal experiences with the Spirit
 - But a subjective experience with the Spirit is not the primary proof that God has given us that we belong to Him...His promises to us are.
2. The Holy Spirit testifies (cooperates) "with" my spirit in reminding God that I'm His child

- "...with" - *symmartyreō*, incorrectly translated as "to" in many translations, but translated correctly in the NASB20/95, ISV and KJV

— What is happening here is that I am crying out to God "Abba! Father!" and my spirit is testifying to God that I am belong to Him, and (v26) the Holy Spirit is praying for me

— So my spirit is testifying, the Holy Spirit is testifying (v26)...from the mouths of two witnesses let all things be established...we are both testifying to God, we are both reminding God that we belong to Him.

— Why do I need to remind God? Does He forget? If you study the prayers throughout the Bible, it's not that God needs a reminder, but it's a matter of stating to God who we are based on His promises (Cf. Ex 33:13).

— Reminding God is asserting confidence in His promises

(c) Childship indicates heirship (8:17)

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

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

17 Now if we are children, we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with the Messiah—if, in fact, we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together.

- "...if" - "since" (first class condition in Greek)

- "...heirs" [3x] - someone who follows in the pattern of Jesus

- The pattern of Jesus is one of temporary suffering followed by eternal glory...Jesus suffered horribly, but today He lives in eternal glory; such is the pattern for us...we suffer temporarily on this earth, but we will live forever in glory in heaven.

- In this world, we have sufferings, setbacks, problems, but in the next world, which is eternal, we experience glory

- It's the opposite for the unbeliever...the best that will ever happen to them is this life, then they'll stand in judgment and spend eternity separated from God in the lake of fire.

- For the believer, we go through light and momentary afflictions (2 Cor 4:17), but these afflictions are small compared to the eternal weight of glory

- Just as surely as we share in His sufferings now, we will also share His glory in the future. Our glory will be somewhat proportionate to our suffering for His sake as His disciples now (Cf. 1 Peter 4:12-19).

- This verse does not teach that glorification, the final stage of our salvation, depends on our suffering for Jesus' sake. God will eventually glorify every believer, those who take a stand for the Lord as well as those who do not (v29-39).

Inheritance

The NT teaches that the amount of inheritance children of God receive will vary depending on our faithfulness to God (Luke 19:11-27). However, there is no doubt that all Christians are the heirs of God, and will inherit glorification as well as many other blessings (Cf. 1 Peter 1:3-12).

All believers have God as their inheritance. This inheritance is received on the basis of belief. But there is another inheritance which, like that of the Israelites, is merited. They are also heirs of the kingdom and joint-heirs with the Messiah (2 Tim 2:12; Rom 8:17).

(C) We endure suffering now in the hope of future glory (8:18-30)

One thing Christians need to develop in our lives, especially new Christians, is a philosophy or theology of suffering. If we don't have a divine perspective on suffering, our faith will be unsettled the first trial or tribulation that comes our way. This passage will teach the divine perspective on human suffering.

At some point, we enter into some kind of difficulty in our lives and think oh no, I missed the plan of God. I shouldn't be suffering the way I am if I am in God's plan. The fact of the matter is your suffering might put you directly in God's plan.

Since we are heirs with Christ (v17), we can expect our lives to follow the pattern of His life: temporary suffering followed by eternal glory. Since we can expect suffering in this world, the question becomes how do we as children of God endure suffering?

Paul tells us in v18-30 that we can endure suffering if we understand three things:

1. Our future glory far exceeds our present suffering (v18-25)
2. Because of the assistance of the Holy Spirit (v26-27)
3. Because all things work together for good (v28-30)

(a) Because future glory exceeds present suffering (8:18-25)

(i) Proposition stated (8:18)

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

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

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed to us.

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

- Paul compares current sufferings (of which he experienced many) on this earth as not even worth comparison to the future glory that we will someday experience

— In light of eternity, we should view the cost of suffering with (for) Jesus now as insignificant ("now worthy to be compared"), in view of the glory that lies ahead for us. Paul calls our earthly suffering "momentary and light" (Cf. 2 Cor 4:17), and compares it against the "eternal weight" of glory.

— When we compare current suffering to eternal glory, it puts into perspective that whatever we're going through is minor

— Paul doesn't give one comparison between the two for our understanding, because the two (suffering and glory) are not even worth comparison! Paul doesn't want to waste ink even comparing the two because our suffering is so minuscule and glory is so overwhelming and incomprehensible

- When we encounter suffering, we do two things: focus on ourselves, and believe that the suffering we're facing will go on forever, with no end

— However, whatever suffering or pit you find yourself in, from God's perspective you are only in that pit temporarily

— If you want to see someone who suffered, take a look at Paul (2 Cor 11:23f). Paul literally went through hell to get the gospel out...he was misunderstood, he was slandered, he was shipwrecked, he was flogged close to death multiple times. When we read this passage on suffering, we shouldn't for a minute think that Paul is writing this from some ivory tower. Paul understood and enduring tremendous suffering for the cause of Christ.

- "...consider" - counting up both the debits and credits on the ledger of life...

— The comparison between our present suffering and the eternal glory we will enjoy is adequate proof that the Christian life is worth any sacrifice or suffering

- "...glory that is to be revealed to us" - the believer's promised future glory includes:

- Honor or reward for good works done in and for Jesus (Rom 2:7)
- A complete experience of God's unimaginable glory (Rom 5:2)
- Resurrection and renewal of our bodies to be like Jesus' glorious body (Phil 3:21)
- Eternally joyous worship and service to God (Rev 22:3)
- Privileged confidence of Christ, our brother (Heb 2:10-14)
- Deeper intimacy within God's unlimited presence (Matt 25:21)

Why Do Christians Have Trials?

1. To glorify God (Dan 3:16-18,24-25; John 9:1-3)
2. Discipline for known sin (Heb 12:5-11; James 4:17; Rom 14:23; 1 John 1:9)
3. To prevent us from falling into sin (1 Peter 4:1-2)
4. To keep us from pride—Paul kept from pride by his "thorn in the flesh" (2 Cor 12:7-10)
5. To build faith (1 Peter 1:6-7)
6. To cause growth (Rom 5:3-5)
7. To teach obedience and discipline (Acts 9:15-16; Phil 4:11-13)
8. To equip us to comfort others (2 Cor 1:3-4)
9. To prove the reality of Christ in us (2 Cor 4:7-11)
10. For testimony to the angels (Job 1:8; Eph 3:8-11; 1 Peter 1:12)

(ii) Proposition proved (8:19-25)

(a) Proof #1 - from nature (8:19-22)

(1) Creation's expectation (8:19)

19 For the eagerly awaiting creation waits for the revealing of the **sons and daughters of God**.

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

19 For the creation is eagerly awaiting the revelation of God's children,

19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

- Paul uses a literary device called personification; he personifies creation by using the words "eagerly awaiting" and "waits" (v19, and "groans and suffers" (v22)
- Paul is assigning human attributes to an inanimate object, in this case the earth and universe, to make a point: the statement of nature's expectation
- In this personification, nature itself cannot wait for something to happen
- "...sons of God" - angels; when Jesus returns at the second coming, He will return with His angels (Matt 25:31; 2 Thess 1:7) and the raptured church (Jude 14)
- The Second Coming is the event that creation is "eagerly awaiting"

(2) Creation's subjugation (8:20)

- 20 For the creation was subjected to **futility**, not willingly, but **because of Him** who subjected *it*, in hope
- 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope
- 20 because the creation has become subject to futility, though not by anything it did. The one who subjected it did so in the certainty
- 20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected *the same* in hope,
- "...futility" - *mataiotes*, frustration [NIV], frailty, purposelessness, failure, decay, perishable (Eph 4:17; 2 Peter 2:18)
 - God's judgment on humanity extended to the perfect world He had created for people. Adam, not nature, sinned, but nature was subjected to judgment because of human sin.
 - God judged the totality of His Creation along with people for their sin (Gen 3:14,17-19); yet, the curse was instituted with a future *hope* (v24)
 - People are frustrated when we know we should attain a goal, try repeatedly to attain it, but fail. Nature is unable to attain its purpose.
 - The Fall of Man was the greatest ecological disaster in the history of mankind
 - "...because of Him" - a reference to Adam; the capitalization of "Him" is a mistake as this reference does not refer to God
 - The pronoun may be capitalized because Adam was given the position of authority, along with his wife, over creation

(3) Creation's liberation (8:21)

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

21 that the creation itself would also be set free from corrupting bondage in order to share the glorious freedom of God's children.

21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

- This verse is a preview of what will happen to creation when the earth is renovated after the Second Coming and during the millennial kingdom

- When Christ returns, there will be profound geographical and topographical changes to the earth: the light of the moon will be as bright as the light of the sun, and the sun will be 7x brighter than it is today (Is 30:26); the wilderness and the desert will be glad and the wilderness will rejoice and blossom; waters will break forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert (Is 35:1-2,6).

- "...will be set free from" - it will begin with the removal of nature's curse (Is 11:1-13; 65:17-25; Micah 4:1-5; Zeph 3:14-20; Zech 14:1-21, etc.)

- For a thousand years there will be people living on the earth *without the curse!*

- "...slavery to corruption" - "bondage of decay"; the 2nd law of thermodynamics, the law of entropy. It's all winding down.

- "slavery" - speaks of nature's enslaved condition. Frustration has to do with the feelings that the condition causes.

- "corruption" - decay; all that is physical eventually decays. Physical death comes to everything with physical life.

- 1st Law: Conservation of Matter/Energy: You can't win.

- 2nd Law: Entropy—The Bondage of Decay: You can't even break even.

- 3rd Law: Everything has positive finite entropy: You can't get out of the game.

Randomness (Entropy)

The Second Law of Thermodynamics, also called the "Arrow of Time" asserts that as time advances, the universe progresses from a state of order to a state of greater disorder (entropy). This also declares that the energy available to do work continually decreases. The universe appears to run "downhill" to an eventual heat death when no temperature differences exist, no energy is available, in uniform randomness (Cf. v21).

Only biology and anthropology attempt to ignore entropy. The entire Theory of Evolution (Biogenesis) is a direct violation of the entropy laws. (We're not dealing with adaptation, sometimes referred to as "micro-evolution" or evolution with a small "e".)

The Third Law of Thermodynamics: every substance has a finite positive entropy which may become zero at a temperature of absolute zero. All information that is useful is ordered: Alphabet, words, language, etc. This contrasts with "noise" which is randomness.

(4) Creation's groaning (8:22)

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

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

22 For we know that all the rest of creation has been groaning with the pains of childbirth up to the present time.

22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

- This is the current state of creation...the "whole" creation groans and suffers in labor pains until the Second Coming, because of sin

- Two thoughts/interpretations of the illustration of child birth/birth pain:

1. Creation is acting as though it is going through birth pains in that it is straining to produce fruit
2. The image of childbirth points beyond the cause of grief to its joyful fulfillment. Labor pains normally are full of hope. This "hope" will take place in two stages:
 - Stage 1: The renovation of the present cosmos in conjunction with the return to earth of the Lord Jesus and the establishment of the messianic kingdom on earth (Is 11:5-9; 35:1-2,5-7; 65:20,25; Amos 9:13)
 - Stage 2: The creation of "a new heaven and a new earth" (Rev 21:1; Cf. 2 Peter 3:7-13)

(b) Proof #2 - from awaiting a new body (8:23-25)

(1) Redemption for our bodies (8:23)

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

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

23 However, not only the creation, but we who have the first fruits of the Spirit also groan inwardly as we eagerly await our adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

23 And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body.

- "...first fruits" - the Holy Spirit's indwelling of believers is a "first fruit"; Eph 1:14 calls it a "pledge" or down payment

— A down payment on a car or house is a pledge to the seller that the rest of the money will arrive

- In the same way, the Holy Spirit is God's down payment to believers that something greater will arrive: a glorified body (Cf. 1 Cor 15:35-50)
- This is an appositional use of the genitive and means that the Holy Spirit *is* "the firstfruits" of God's work of salvation and re-creation in believers
- Elsewhere the Holy Spirit is called "a deposit (down payment or earnest) *guaranteeing our inheritance*" (Eph 1:14; Cf. 2 Cor 1:22), a similar idea
- In the OT, God commanded the Israelites to present a portion of their harvest that ripened first ("first fruits") as an offering to Him (Ex 23:19; Neh 10:35). This offering acknowledged that the entire harvest was from Him and was really His. It was an offering made in faith, confident that the rest of the harvest would follow.
- "...we ourselves groan within ourselves" - believers share in the same sense of groaning and anticipation that creation is feeling. However, only believers have the "firstfruits of the Spirit."
- "groan" - present tense, "keep on groaning"
- "...adoption" - earlier in Rom 8, our adoption was treated as already accomplished. God took us out of the family of Adam (5:12-21) and brought us into His family as His own dear children (v14-17).
- Yet v23 treats our adoption as something for which "we wait eagerly"—as something still future
- At the same time, v23 states that believers still anticipate their adoption in its completeness, which is said to be "the redemption" etymologically, the Greek word describes a release or deliverance achieved by a ransom payment
- "...redemption" - *apolytrōsis*, future tense, speaks to the redeeming of our body (glorification)
- This is called the revelation of the sons of God (Rom 8:19) and "the glorious freedom of the children of God" (v21). It will occur at the Rapture of the Church when believers will be raised and transformed with glorious bodies (1 Cor 15:42-54; 2 Cor 5:1-5; Phil 3:20-21; 1 Thess 4:13-18). Paul called that day "the day of redemption" (Eph 4:30).

(2) Hope defined (8:24)

- 24 For in **hope** we have been saved, but **hope** that is seen is not **hope**; for who **hopes** for what he *already* sees?
- 24 For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he *already* sees?
- 24 For we were saved with this hope in mind. Now a hope that can be observed is not really hope, for who hopes for what can be seen?
- 24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?

- "...hope" [4x] - *elpis*, believing that I will receive something that I don't already have. If you already had it, or if you could see it or feel it, it wouldn't be hope.
- In the meantime, while we wait for our glorification, we should look forward with "hope" to what God promised and patiently endure our present sufferings (v25)
- Hope in the Bible means not anxiously wishing or uncertainty (as it means in English), but rather confident assurance of something yet future
- The Greek word for "hope" [*elpis*] has no relationship to the English word, where we say, "I hope I get the new job." The word doesn't hold an "I hope so" mentality, but rather an "I know so" mentality. Our hope is assured.
- The walk of the Christian is by hope and by faith (Heb 11:1). If you could see it, you wouldn't need hope or faith (John 20:29).
- The Christian knows that glorification is coming because God has made a promise to us, and we receive it by hope and faith even though we have not yet entered into the promise

In Rom 8, Paul gives nothing less than the 100% iron-clad assurance of our salvation. If a believer cannot stand on the doctrine of eternal security AND the assurance of their salvation, how can they live the Christian life? They are effectively neutralized, hapless, and powerless.

It is the privilege, not of some, but of all believers by the Spirit through faith who are born again in Christ as revealed in the Scriptures, to be assured of their salvation from the very day they take Him to be their Savior and that this assurance is not founded upon any fancied discovery of their own worthiness or fitness, but wholly upon the testimony of God in His written Word.

(3) Hope requires perseverance (8:25)

25 But if we **hope** for what we do not see, through perseverance we **wait** eagerly *for it*.

25 But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

25 But if we hope for what we do not yet observe, we eagerly wait for it with patience.

25 But if we hope for that we see not, *then* do we with patience wait for *it*.

- "...hope" - *elpis*, see note on v24

- "...wait" - *apekdechomai*, "eagerly await"; he who has the strongest "hope" will have the greatest stability under stress (2 Cor 4:16-18)

— This Greek word is used 7x in the NT...always in regards to the return of Christ!

- Blessed is the believer who looks at their circumstances in life, their suffering, as bad as it may be, as temporary, and does not become despondent thinking their situation and circumstances will last forever

— That person is blessed because they are operating by faith...they believe God is going to make good on a promise one day

- The walk of hope and faith requires perseverance
- One of the hardest things to go through in life is delayed gratification; this is what God is telling us as we look at suffering through the lens of eternity. The Christian life is one of delayed gratification, but one day, based on the promises of God, it will materialize. And from eternity, we'll look backward and have a hard time remembering our "light and momentary afflictions."

(b) Because of the assistance of the Holy Spirit (8:26-27)

(i) General help (8:26a)

(ii) Specific help (8:26b-27)

26 Now in the same way the Spirit also **helps** our weakness; for we do not know **what** to pray for as we should, but the Spirit Himself **intercedes** for *us* with **groaningstoo deep for words**;

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

26 In the same way, the Spirit also helps us in our weakness, since we do not know how to pray as we should. But the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans too deep for words,

26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

- The second reason we can endure suffering, other than the understanding that our future glory greatly outweighs any present suffering (v18-25) is that we know Someone has our back...

- In our suffering, the Holy Spirit does not leave us as orphans (John 14:18)

- The Holy Spirit has a ministry designed to help believers through suffering...

- "...helps" - *synantilambanomai*, present tense: "keeps on helping." He is our "linebacker" in prayer!

- The Greek word literally means that "the Holy Spirit puts His hands to the work in cooperation with the believer"

- Jesus taught the same truth when He called the Holy Spirit a *parakletos* (John 14:16-17,25-26)

- "...what" - the KJV and NIV understood Paul to be saying that we do not know "what" to pray for, which implies ignorance of the content and subject of our prayers

- The NASB and ISV understood Paul to be saying that we do now know "how" to pray as we should, implying ignorance of the proper method and procedure of prayer

- The Greek text permits either interpretation, though it favors "how" (NASB/ISV)

- Jesus gave instruction to His disciples about both content and method (Matt 6:9-15; Luke 11:2-4)

- "...intercedes" - *huperentunchanō*, to pray on behalf of someone else; only usage in the NT
 - When a believer encounters a problem or situation that is confusing or chaotic and we don't know how to pray or what to pray for, the Holy Spirit steps in and prays on our behalf
 - One of the ministries of the Holy Spirit to believers is praying and interceding (see [Holy Spirit](#))
 - The reason the Holy Spirit needs to pray for believers is because of the weakness in our prayer life. Being finite, we don't always know what our real needs are. We pray about what we think we need, but we don't always know exactly what our needs are. But, the Holy Spirit does.
- "...groanings" - 3rd reference to groaning in this passage: creation is groaning (v22), our bodies are groaning (v23), and now the Holy Spirit is groaning
 - These "groanings" are *not* uttered; this has nothing to do with praying in tongues, as some suggest
 - The groaning is done by the Holy Spirit, not believers, and apparently is not stated in words
 - The intercession of the Holy Spirit is a ministry for all believers, not only for those who speak in tongues. The context of Rom 8 is speaking of things which are true of all believers.
- "...too deep for words" - the Holy Spirit "groans" for us beyond a verbal capacity that we can recognize
 - This is because God's desire for our lives is so powerful that it is even beyond human vernacular. If God were to explain to me what He wants for me, what my future holds, and how He intends to use me and bless me, He couldn't do it with words because His calling on my life and His ambition for me is beyond human expression and understanding.
 - In 2 Cor 12:4 Paul was caught up to the third heaven, and he heard inexpressible words which a man is not permitted to speak
 - What Paul heard was so profound, so lofty, that he had no words to describe it. This is how the Holy Spirit prays for us.

We know how to approach God in prayer and the general subjects that we should pray about, but we struggle with *how* to pray most effectively and exactly *what* to pray about. A basic principle of effective praying is that it must be in harmony with the will of God to be effective (1 John 5:14-15; John 14:13; 15:16; 16:23-24). However the precise will of God is often hard for us to ascertain. Here is where the Holy Spirit comes to our aid by interceding for us. "Groans" express feelings of compassion for our weak condition (Cf. Eph 6:18). We should not confuse "groanings" with praying in tongues or a private prayer language. This passage promises God's help in prayer to all believers, not only those with the gift of

tongues. Further, Scripture never connects the gift of tongues with intercessory prayer. This verse seems to be saying that the Holy Spirit prays *for* us, not that He prays *through* us to the Father. The believer doesn't do anything at all...it's the Spirit Himself who intercedes when we don't know how to pray, not some kind of unintelligible prayer language.

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

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

27 and the one who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, for the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to God's will.

27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what *is* the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to *the will of God.*

- "...according to *the will of God*" - the Holy Spirit intercedes for believers according to the will of God

— The Holy Spirit is not specifically praying for my financial prosperity, your health, or for a vocation that will fulfill you...none of those things are mentioned here. He *could* be praying those things for me, but the bottom line is that He is praying that God's will be executed in my life.

— Even though the Spirit's words are not expressed, the Father knows what the Spirit is thinking. This is an interesting statement about the Father's omniscience and the intimacy within the Trinity.

— The Lord Jesus also continually intercedes for believers in God's presence (v34; Heb 7:25)

(c) Because all things work together for good (8:28-30)

(i) Proposition stated (8:28)

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

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

28 And we know that for those who love God, that is, for those who are called according to his purpose, all things are working together for good.

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

- An often misinterpreted, misunderstood, and misused verse...

- "And" - indicates a transition from the groaning and suffering in the previous passage to the glory that is given to those who love God
- The "And" here also is a progression of the ministries of the Trinity: the Holy Spirit helps "we" (believers) (v26); Jesus, who "searches hearts" and "knows the mind of the Spirit" (v27) intercedes for the saints; then v28-30 focuses on the purpose of God the Father.
- "...know" - *eidō*, something we can be certain of in an uncertain world; something you can "take to the bank"
- We may feel weak, discouraged or defeated; we may not see any good God is doing through some hardship at the time or in our lifetimes. Thus, we can't rely on what we see (finite) or what we feel, but we need to faithfully "know" and trust that God is working things out for His (and our) good.
- This is a promise that the Christian must build their life on...if you don't build your life on this promise, you will become angry at God because you will feel that life has been unfair to you...and guess what, life is unfair.
- Yet God, in His sovereignty, will take even the most unfair things in our lives, and collectively (all the unfair things) will work them out for good
- "...all things to work together" - *synergeo*, active voice present tense of the verb *synergei*
- This emphasizes that this is a *continuing* activity of God. It takes *continual* external inputs to coordinate the process.
- "things" - everything; in context, these things include the adversities experienced by a believer
- God does not always use good things to bring about good in our lives: sin, sickness, suffering and other evils are not good. Betrayal is not faithfulness; persecution is not protection; hatred is not love; death is not life; but God will bring lasting good out of great evil.
- We know from v32 that "all things" include the Cross and the grave. God did not spare His own Son; the Father and Son worked through the worst evil to accomplish the greatest good (Acts 2:23-24; 4:10-12).
- "...good" - if this "good" means health, wealth, popularity, promotion and comfortable living, this promise is not true
- God's work for good cannot mean so little as worldly success, admiration or happiness
- This refers to what is good from God's perspective, not man's perspective. This is evidenced by the next verse (v29): the greatest good is for God to make believers like Jesus Christ—Christlike character in this life (Gal 5:22-23; Phil 2:1-8; Col 3:12-17) and fully accomplished in glory (Phil 3:20-21; 1 John 3:2-3).
- "...those who love God" - placed in apposition to the phrase "called according to His purpose" meaning that those who love God are also those who have been called according to His purpose.

- This promise applies only to believers. How can all things work for the good of those who reject the Giver of all things?
- For believers, suffering is an opportunity to glorify God as we find He is all we need (Ps 73; 119:71-72; John 9:1-3,35-38; 2 Cor 12:7-10)
- This is the only place in Romans where Paul wrote of the believer's love for God. Everywhere else he referred to God's love for the believer.
- "...those who are called according to *His* purpose" - this promise cannot be claimed by the unbeliever; it has no jurisdiction over the life of an unbeliever
- The promise is this: not all things that happen in your life are good, but God will use whatever happens in your life for good

This verse does not say that God causes all things. Nowhere in Scripture does it say that God causes sin or evil. He permits these things, but that is much different than causing them. Therefore, when tragedy strikes a believer, we should not conclude that this is one of the "all things" that God causes. Rather, this verse says that God *brings good out of all things*, even tragedies, for the believer. The cause of tragedy are Satan, sin and sinners. Even though God sometimes allows bad things to happen, we should never lay the blame for these things on God.

Does this promise make sense in my life? Circumstances often seem to promise bad and worse, not good or better. How do I know God is at work to bring good from pain, persecution, conflict and confusion? These 12 verses (v28-39) lay out solid hope for believers in the midst of life's greatest trials. These verses claim there is nothing more secure in any person's life than God's guarantee for a believer's eternal identity and destiny.

(ii) Proposition explained (8:29)

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

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

29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that the Son might be the firstborn among many brothers.

29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

- The "good" from v28 is this: God has a goal/purpose for every believer...He wants my life, in thought, character, conduct, word and deed to imitate the thought, character, conduct, word and deed of Jesus Christ

— This is the sanctification process...God's will for our lives is to take our daily walk, our daily life, and allow our practice to catch up with our position. We never become perfect, but what begins to happen is that our progressive sanctification makes us more Christ-like in moral character in our daily life.

— Everything that happens, even bad things from the human perspective, if we give God a chance, He will use them like sandpaper to smooth out our rough edges

— This isn't popular teaching today because what people want is "instant" spirituality, instant success, instant glorification, but often in reality this is a slow, arduous process of progressive sanctification.

- "...He foreknew" - *proginōskō*, means simply to know something beforehand; that foreknowledge means nothing more or less than to know something beforehand is clear in the other places where the same Greek word is used in the NT (Acts 26:4-5; 2 Peter 3:17)

— The OT often speaks of God's foreknowledge in an intensely personal, loving way (Gen 18:19; Jer 1:5; Amos 3:2)

— Some question whether *proginōskō* can mean that God looked down the corridor of time and chose those based on some decision that they would make? Yes, *proginōskō* can be used that way. Peter uses it that way in 2 Peter 3:17, where he describes an action for them to take based on knowledge that his readers had beforehand.

— This is why it's important to recognize that "foreknew" [*proginōskō*] precedes "predestined" [*proorizō*]. Those He "foreknew" would one day accept Him are the same ones He "predestined" to be conformed to the image of His Son.

- "...also" - *kai*, denotes a differentiation, making it clear that foreknowledge could not be the same as predestination (also see note on v30)

- "...predestined" - *proorizō*, to predetermine from eternity past; to foreordain or be "marked out for favor"; notice that "foreknow" comes before "predestined"

— Grammatically, the object of "predestined" is "those who" and the indirect object (the goal) is "to be conformed to the image of His Son." For coherence, the verse must be understood as stating that God predestined the conformity to Christ's image for a group characterized by belief.

— The emphasis lies not on God choosing the individuals in advance, but on God's predetermined plan for those who belong to Christ.

— Predestination and election are biblical teachings—but they are *never* unto salvation. To the Calvinist, however, predestination/election is always and only unto salvation—a view that is imposed wrongly upon Scripture. The reality is that throughout the Bible, election/predestination is always unto specific blessings that accompany salvation, but not to salvation itself.

— God, in eternity past, marked all believers (those He foreknew) out for favor...and part of that program involves the transformation of your daily life into the image of His Son

— Predestination flows from God's deeply personal love (Eph 1:4-5). It means that God fixed His love on His people, those He foreknew would put their faith in Him, before the world began (Cf. Acts 2:23; 1 Peter 1:2).

— *God has determined beforehand that those who believe in Christ will be adopted into His family and conformed to His Son.* [Ryrie]

— Predestination differs greatly from "fatalism"—fatalism says "What will be, will be," which implies that human beings have no real responsibility and events are inevitable. Fatalism leaves no room for human dignity, responsibility or choice.

- Calvinists camp on *proorizō* to bolster their argument for Unconditional Election; however, this is not the main operative word in this passage, but for the sake of argument pretend that it is...

— What are we "predestined" to? This verse says we (those who believe) are predestined to be "conformed to the image of His Son." This verse *doesn't say* that we were predestined to salvation because God somehow selected us so that we could be saved.

— We are predestined to be sanctified, and eventually glorified, not predestined to be justified. This passage does not state, and cannot mean, that God predestines people for salvation.

- "...conformed to the image of His Son" - this is what God predestined...that we would be conformed to the image of His Son, that we would become more like Christ in our daily lives (practical sanctification)

— ***The Son became as we are so that we could become as He is***

— ***God's will, the "good" that He works all things together for (v28), is so that every believer may become more like Christ***

— God's will is that Jesus is the Firstborn, but He has many relatives (people who imitate Christ's character). We don't become gods, but gradually in our lives our thoughts, character, conduct, words and deeds begin to follow the pattern and likeness of Jesus Christ.

— God's will for your life is not necessarily to make you *happy*, but it is to make you *holy*. God's will for your life is not necessarily to make you prosperous, although he often does that. God's will for our lives, first and foremost, is to conform us to the image of His Son, Jesus Christ.

- "...so that He would be the firstborn among many brothers *and sisters*" - God's will is that Jesus is the Firstborn, but He has many relatives (people who imitate Christ's character). We don't become gods, but gradually in our lives our thoughts, character, conduct, words and deeds begin to follow the pattern and likeness of Jesus Christ.

- ***So v28-29 is saying that whatever happens in our life, whether good or bad, God is using those things first and foremost to transform us into the image of His Son***

- This passage (v29-30) is an example of the futuristic present tense (Cf. Joshua 6:2; 1 Cor 15:42-44; 2 Peter 3:8; 1 John 2:17; Jude 14)

(iii) Salvation enumerated (8:30)

30 and these whom He predestined, He **alsocalled**; and these whom He called, He **alsojustified**; and these whom He justified, He **alsoglorified**.

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

30 And those whom he predestined, he also called; and those whom he called, he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

- Oftentimes people will get into arguments about predestination vs free will when they come to these verses, and completely miss the point that Paul is making...

- "...also" [3x] - *kai*, denotes that a distinction is being made: predestination is not the same as "called" which is not the same as "justified," which is not the same as "glorified"

- "...called" - best described by Jesus in John 16:7-11 as the "convincing" ministry of the Holy Spirit to unbelievers, convicting them of the single sin that will keep them out of heaven and cause them to die in their sins: unbelief in Jesus Christ (Cf. 2 Thess 2:14)

— This is sometimes referred to as "effectual calling" (there are two different kinds of calls in Scripture):

1. External/General Call - this is the general proclamation of the gospel, where people are invited to repent of sin and turn to Jesus to be saved. Jesus gave this call (Matt 11:28; John 7:37).
 - This call is open to all, but left to themselves, people do not come. Because we are prideful and rebellious, we prefer our own ways to God's ways.
 - This call is a true and gracious call, but people remain spiritually dead and will not come unless God draws them specifically.
2. Internal/Effectual Call - this call does more than invite people to come...it gives the ability or willingness to respond
 - Jesus gave us an example of this call when He raised Lazarus, who had been dead four days (John 11:25-26,38-44). In the tomb, Lazarus was a picture of us spiritually: dead, with no desire or ability to respond. Jesus called out specifically to Lazarus, who supernaturally heard Jesus' call and was supernaturally able to obey.
 - God originally called creation out of nothing; with the same effective power, He now calls life out of death

- God's "calling" is the point at which the things God determined in eternity past pass over into time ("fore" knowledge, "pre" destination). His "call" is the point where what God has decreed before time about His loved ones becomes fact in our time-bound lives.
- "...justified" - God as Judge declares sinful people to be in right standing before Him
 - It follows "called" on the list of God's actions because God's call is what brings faith into being. Faith is the first true evidence God's call has produced spiritual life. There is no justification without faith.
 - God's declaration cannot be on the basis of our own merit because we have none. God justifies people on the basis of personal faith in what Jesus did by dying in their place.
 - Jesus took the full penalty our sins deserved, and God credits His Son's perfect righteousness to our account (2 Cor 5:21)
- "...glorified" - past tense; our removal from the presence of sin into the presence of God, at either death or the Rapture, whichever one comes first
 - Although our glorification is yet future, Paul spoke of it as a past event. He could say this, not because it has already happened, but because it is so certain to take place that it is as good as having happened already. Our glorification is just as certain as our predestination, our calling, and our justification, all of which are past events and referred to here in the past tense.
 - In fact, in God's eyes, we are already glorified
 - Our glorification is our ultimate victory over sin and it is sure, just like God promised Joshua victory before the battle of Jericho was even fought (Joshua 6:2)
 - This is an example of the "prophetic past," in which a future event is so certain that the prophet (Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit) considers it as if it had already happened (Cf. Is 44:28; 52:14; 53:1-6)
 - Paul assures his readers that God will glorify even the weakest believer. God never goes back on anything He has said and never changes His mind (Num 23:19; Ps 33:11; Mal 3:6; Titus 1:2; Heb 6:18).
 - God initiated our salvation, therefore we can know that God will continue this work to completion until the day He makes us fully like Jesus Christ (Phil 1:6). We will be glorified—illuminated *with* God's glory *for* God's glory.
 - The use of the past tense "glorified" here may raise a question in Paul's readers such as, Paul, are you really sure that our ultimate glorification is a done deal? Can you provide some more information on this? Paul says, I'm glad you asked, then he wrote v31-39...
 - Paul covers two of the three tenses of salvation here: justification and glorification. Where's sanctification? Why did Paul not include sanctification as a phase in our salvation?

— Paul left sanctification off of the list because it is the one stage of our salvation where human cooperation is required (Cf. Luke 8:14; John 15:2; Rom 6:4; 2 Cor 5:15; Eph 2:10). Paul listed only those things that God does by Himself in order to stress His sovereign working to bring the believer to His goal.

The Basis of our Eternal Security

1. Upon His Sovereign Purpose
 - Eternal purpose declared (Eph 1:11-12). This eternal purpose is anchored within the veil, confirmed by an oath (Heb 6:17-20).
2. Upon His Solemn Promise
 - Our salvation depends upon His promise, not our faithfulness (Rom 4:16) Therefore it is of faith [nothing on man's part], that it might be by grace [everything on God's part] ; to the end the promise might be sure...
 - If it depended at any point upon human ability to continue to believe, then the promise could not be secure. The promise that those who believe will be saved is confirmed everywhere (Gen 15:6; John 3:16; Acts 16:33; Rom 4:23-24).
3. Upon His Infinite Power
 - He is free to save us. Christ's death has rendered God free to save us in spite of moral imperfection. Our eternal security does not depend upon our moral worthiness. Christ is the propitiation for our sins (1 John 2:2).
 - To assume that there is some sin sufficiently serious to cause us to forfeit our salvation is to assume that we were less worthy of salvation after having committed this sin than before, which reduces salvation down to human ability to merit it.
 - He has purposed to keep us saved (John 6:37-40; 10:28-29)
4. Upon His "Much More" Love
 - His intent is love based (Cf. Rom 5:6-10)
 - God knew when He saved us that we were totally depraved, and therefore any new manifestation of sin in our lives after our conversion cannot be any motivation to God to change His mind and withdraw His grace and His salvation (Rom 8:32,38-39; 11:29).
 - He saved us for reasons *independent of us* and outside of us (Eph 2:7). He was motivated by His *electing* love, not by observation of good in the sinner.
5. Upon His Answer to the Prayer of His Son
 - We, as believers, are called many things in Scripture: saints, believers, elect, sheep, partakers, etc. But the title most dear to the heart of Christ is repeated *seven* times in His high priestly prayer in John 17: "those whom thou hast given me" (Cf. John 17:11-12).

- Jesus prays that we will be kept from hell (John 17:15); and will be with Him in heaven (John 17:20,24). [This keeping is from *perishing*, not necessarily all forms of inheritance]
- The Father always answers the prayers of the Son (John 11:42)

(D) We are secure in Christ (8:31-39)

(a) Because of the believer's relationship to the Father (8:31-33)

(i) The Father is the protector (8:31)

31 What then shall we say to **these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us?**

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us?

31 What, then, can we say about all of this? If God is for us, who can be against us?

31 What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?

- In v31-33, Paul gives us three attributes of the Father:

1. He is our Protector (v31)
2. He is our Provider (v32)
3. He is our Justifier (v33)

- "...these things" - referring to our ultimate glorification, and the fact that it is in the past tense, just as our predestination, our calling and our justification are in the past tense

- "...If God *is* for us, who *is* against us?" - Paul is saying that our glorification is assured because God is our Protector

— Our glorification will happen because God has ordained it, and God is omnipotent and omniscient, and He cannot lie

— "If" - first class condition: "since"

— "God is for us" - the key to the believer's security is what He has done for us through His Son in the past, and what He is doing for us through the Spirit in the present, should give us confidence as we look forward to the future.

— He will certainly complete His work of salvation by glorifying us in the future (Phil 1:6), and nobody can stand in His way.

(ii) The Father is the provider (8:32)

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

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

32 The one who did not spare his own Son, but offered him as a sacrifice for all of us, surely will give us all things, along with his Son, won't he?

32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

- Paul makes an argument from the greater to the lesser...if God already gave us the greatest gift, then He will also give us the lesser gifts?
- "...spare" - *epheisato*, from *pheidomai*, is the same word used in the LXX in Gen 22:12, translated "withheld"
- God said to Abraham, "You have not *withheld* your son." Then God directed Abraham to spare Isaac and to offer a ram as a substitute (Gen 22:2-14), whereas God offered His own Son, on that very spot, as the Sacrifice for sin (John 1:29).
- Since God gave the greatest sacrifice of all, His own Son, He will certainly not hesitate to give believers all other things pertaining to and leading to their ultimate sanctification (2 Peter 1:3). Answered: Rom 5:6-10.
- God has already given us His greatest gift, His only Son, God has sealed all His promises in the blood of His Son. This great promise secures every other promise (2 Cor 1:20).
- God's plan for our salvation cost Him dearly. Having made the greatest possible sacrifice for us already, we can be assured that He will also do whatever else may be necessary to conform us to the image of His Son.
- "...delivered Him over" - *paredoken*, gave Him up; the same Greek word is used in 1:24,26,28 ("gave them over") to describe the compounding effect of sin

Verse 32, along with 5:8-10, are unanswerable texts for those who deny Christ's substitutionary atonement. These passages state plainly that, if Jesus *gave Himself for us* in atonement, everything else must follow because, having done the most that He could do in dying as our substitute, the lesser things—such as conviction of sin, repentance, effectual grace, faith—must inevitably follow.

(iii) The Father is the justifier (8:33)

- 33 Who will bring **charges** against God's elect? God is the one who justifies;
- 33 Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies;
- 33 Who will accuse God's elect? It is God who justifies!
- 33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that justifieth.
- "...charges" - *enkalesei*, an accusation, word of condemnation; a negative spoken against you (Cf. Acts 19:40; 23:29; 26:2)
- We know who the accuser is: Satan (Rev 12:10; Cf. Job 2:3-5; Zech 3:1-5; Luke 22:31)
- Jesus Christ transferred/imputed His righteousness to us at the point of faith, consequently God the Father looks at us as if we're as pure and spotless as Jesus Himself
- If this is true theologically, if it's true legally, if it's true positionally, then what grounds does Satan have to bring any accusation against me?
- What about sins we commit after we are saved? Is there a sin that can undo our salvation? Might someone accuse us and cause God to condemn us?

— Believers asking these questions need to more fully understand the doctrine of justification: God has *declared us* righteous in Jesus Christ once and for all in response to Jesus' payment for our sin on the Cross. We do not stand before God on our own imperfect and changeable righteousness; we stand before Him as new creations in Christ, clothed in His Son's perfect righteousness, which never fails, fades, or changes.

— Satan is identified as "the accuser" of God's people (Rev 12:10; Cf. Zech 3:1). His accusations are valid, because they are based on the believer's sinfulness and defilement. But Satan's accusations will be thrown out of court, because it is God who justifies.

— Satan gets nowhere with his accusations against believers because all sin is ultimately against God, who has already acquitted the elect. Thus, God is the only one in the position to charge the believer with guilt. But, He will not do so because He has declared us righteous (not guilty).

— The Judge Himself declares the accused person righteous on the basis of his faith in Jesus Christ (Cf. 3:24; 5:1). As a result all accusations are dismissed and no one can bring an accusation that will stand (Cf. Rom 8:1!).

Zechariah saw a vision that shows what it means to stand justified before God (Zech 3:1-7). In the vision, Joshua, the high priest, stood before the angel of the Lord. Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes, a picture of his sinfulness. Satan was eager to accuse Joshua, but the Lord rebuked him. The Lord ordered Joshua's filthy clothes to be removed and said, "See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put fine garments on you." [NIV] Who will accuse Joshua now? The answer is: no one, because God had already clothed him in righteousness to securely cover his past, present and future.

Joshua's story becomes my story through faith in Christ. Apart from the work of God in Christ, many could condemn us successfully—Satan, and countless others, even our own hearts (1 John 3:20). But "it is God who justifies." No one can seek our condemnation now since the highest court of all has already declared us righteous in Christ.

(b) Because of the believer's relationship to adversity (8:34-39)

(i) Charges cannot separate the believer from Christ (8:34)

34 who is the one who **condemns**? Christ Jesus is He who died, but rather, was raised, **who is at the right hand of God**, who also **intercedes for us**.

34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

34 Who is the one to condemn? It is the Messiah Jesus who is interceding on our behalf. He died, and more importantly, has been raised and is seated at the right hand of God.

34 Who is he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

- Paul now lists three things that cannot unravel our salvation (glorification, v30):
 1. Charges/accusations from Satan (v34)
 2. Trials (v35-37)
 3. Numerous miscellaneous categories (v38-39)
- "...condemns" - these charges/accusations (v33), from Satan, are designed to condemn us, to come against our minds, they cause me to think that Christianity works for everyone else but doesn't work for me
 - But these condemning accusations that come against me constantly have zero effect on my salvation, based on the authority of God's Word
- Why is it that these charges against us brought by Satan, who brings them either into our own minds or directly into God's presence (Cf. Job), have zero effect? Because of Jesus Christ, His death, burial and resurrection, and His current position at the right hand of God.
 - "...who is at the right hand of God" - Jesus current position (Cf. Luke 22:69; Acts 2:33; 5:31; Eph 1:20; Col 3:1; Heb 1:3,13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22); His current office is that of the believer's High Priest. See Present Ministry of Christ.
 - We hear a lot of sermons on what Christ did in the past, during His earthly ministry, and what Christ will do in the future, but we don't ever hear anything about what Jesus is doing right now. Yet Paul's whole argument on how we can stand up to Satanic accusations and condemnation are rooted in Christ's High Priestly ministry.
- "...intercedes for us" - one of at least 11 things Jesus is doing during His Present Session (Cf. Heb 7:25)
 - The condemning charges and accusations of Satan bounce right off of believers and have zero effect on our position in Christ or our justification because Jesus is praying for us, to the Father, around the clock.
 - These charges can have a huge emotional and mental effect on us if we do not understand who we are in Christ and what Christ is doing for us. Legally, positionally and theologically, accusation after accusation can be thrown at us, and they just bounce right off, with no effect because Christ is interceding for us.
 - We learned in v26 that the Holy Spirit intercedes for believers; here we learn that Jesus Christ Himself also intercedes for us
 - The Judge is also our defense attorney, so nothing can rise up to cause God to condemn us
 - "for us" - the Greek word means "on our behalf" or "for the benefit of"

It Depends Upon God the Son

Thus, if God has *already justified* the man who believes in Jesus (Rom 8:26,30), how can He lay anything to the charge of His justified one? His justification comes from the imputed righteousness of Christ and *is legally ours!* It is not a subject of merit, and its loss cannot

be the subject of demerit. Like a father, God can and does correct His earthly sons, but *they always remain sons*. (Cf. the Prodigal Son, Luke 15:24.) God, having justified the ungodly (Rom 4:5), will not and cannot contradict Himself by charging them with evil. "Who is the one who condemns (v34)?" Paul gives four answers, each of which are taught elsewhere in Scripture, but are gathered here to underscore the unconditional security of the believer:

1. Christ died
 - Upon His Substitutionary Death (Rom 5:8; 8:34) - who can condemn us if the penalty has already been paid?
 - The greatest proof of eternal security is justification by faith. Justification refers to how God sees us, not how others—or even we ourselves—see us.
 - It is entirely a forensic (legal) matter (Col 2:14); our "Certificate of Debt" has been "paid in full": *tete/stai!* (John 19:30).
2. He is risen - Rom 5:9-10,19; 10:4; Col 2:10, et al.
3. He advocates
 - Upon His Present Session: Advocate and Intercessor; Legal Advocate (1 John 2:1-2)
4. He intercedes
 - He is our priestly Intercessor (Heb 7:23-25; 9:24)

(ii) Trials cannot separate the believer from Christ (8:35-37)

35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? *Will* **tribulation**, or **trouble**, or **persecution**, or **famine**, or **nakedness**, or **danger**, or **sword**?

35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

35 Who will separate us from the Messiah's love? Can trouble, distress, persecution, hunger, nakedness, danger, or a violent death do this?

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

- Paul now moves the subject away from accusations and condemnation from Satan, to the common and ordinary trials of life...

- The apostle suggested seven things a believer might experience (Paul experienced all of them: 2 Cor 11:23-28) that someone may think could cause a believer to break their positional relationship with God and lose their salvation:

- "...tribulation" - *thilpsis*, "pressure or distress"; mentioned frequently by Paul in 2 Corinthians

- "...trouble" - *stenochoria*, lit., "narrowness," i.e. being pressed in, hemmed in, crowded; distress

- "...persecution" - *diogmos*, 10x in NT, always in reference to the gospel

- "...famine" - *limos*, 12x in NT; the God of Elijah looks after His own
- "...nakedness" - *gumnotes*, 1 Cor 4:11
- "...danger" - *kindunos*, jeopardy, peril; 8x in one verse (2 Cor 11:26; Cf. 1 Cor 15:30)
- "...sword" - the world *hates* the saints
- These things—stated in increasing intensity—do not separate Christians from Christ; instead they are part of the “all things” (Rom 8:28) God uses to bring them to conformity with His Son
- Present trials and sufferings are not an indication that God has withdrawn His love from us. Even though the Father allowed the Son to suffer, He did not stop loving Him.
- The Father deals with His adopted sons in the same way as He dealt with His own Son

36 Just as it is written: “FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE KILLED ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE REGARDED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED.”

36 Just as it is written, “For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

36 As it is written, “For your sake we are being put to death all day long. We are thought of as sheep headed for slaughter.”

36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

- Paul quotes Ps 44:22 to argue that trials and tribulations for the believer are nothing new...David experienced severe trials during his life, and he lived around 1000 BC

— These experiences in the lives of believers are not abnormal...it's the way it has always been, even back 3000 years

— The sufferings Paul refers to are the those that are the consequence of our identification with Christ (Acts 5:41; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 4:14-19)

37 But in **all these things** we **overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us**.

37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

37 In all these things we are triumphantly victorious due to the one who loved us.

37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

- "...all these things" - tribulation, trouble, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, or sword (v35)

- Paul is speaking to the believer's ultimate victory, it's already been designed that way, it just doesn't feel like it to us sometimes

— "all" - includes but not limited to Paul's list (v35); includes any problem or trial that life can throw your way, any problem fallen people can throw your way, any problem the world system can throw your way, or any problem Satan can throw your way

— None of these things can derail our glorification, and it's not even close...

- "...overwhelmingly" - *hypernikomen*, suggests "hyper-conquerors"; our victory is sure
- Believer's don't conquer these various trials by a last second half court shot in triple OT...the game is not even close. It's a skunking, a blowout, not even a game.
- "...conquer" - to defeat, to overcome, to not be stopped or swayed by them
- "...through Him who loved us" - to ensure we're not mistaken into thinking that we can do this in and through the power of ourselves, Paul reminds us that we can't. We can only conquer these things through our relationship with Jesus Christ.
- In all these adversities (Cf. "all things" in v28 and "all things" in v32 with "all these things" in v37), rather than being separated from Christ's love, believers "keep on being conquerors to a greater degree" or "keep on winning a glorious victory" through Him who loved us.
- In the end, I am going to win because I'm connected to the Winner (Cf. Phil 4:13; 1 John 4:4)

(iii) Miscellaneous categories cannot separate the believer from Christ (8:38-39)

- (a) Earthly
- (b) Angelic
- (c) Temporal
- (d) Government
- (e) Spatial
- (f) Catch all

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

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

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

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

- "...I am convinced" - Romans was the 6th epistle he wrote; the previous one was 2 Corinthians

— If you go to 2 Cor 11:23-28 you can read about the horrific sufferings that Paul had already experienced

— Paul was a man who suffered for the cause of Christ, yet he says that he is "convinced" with 100% clarity that the sufferings and trials he has experienced, which were extensive, cannot derail his future glorification or separate him from the love of God

- "...death, nor life" - a figure of speech called a merism; a merism is a list that includes two polar opposites, and is meant to communicate these plus everything in between
 - For example, God created the "heaven and the earth." He didn't just create heaven and earth, but it encompasses everything in between...man, animals, water, air, trees, etc.
 - Paul is saying that death cannot separate us from the love of God, and life cannot separate us from the love of God, and everything between those events cannot separate us from the love of God
- "...angels, nor principalities" - refers to fallen angels (demons) because the good angels do not oppose believers, they help believers (Heb 1:14)
 - There are more good angels than fallen angels (Rev 12:4), but these fallen angels wage war on believers (Eph 6:12), but the spiritual warfare we endure as believers cannot derail our future glorification
- "...things present, nor things to come" - the things that are harassing you today, and the things that will harass you tomorrow
 - Neither the things I can see in front of me, or the things lined up to come against me, can separate me from the love of God
- "...powers" - a reference to government out of control
 - Paul wrote Romans during a time when the Roman government was out of control. An insane man named Nero was emperor and was preparing to launch the first imperial wave of persecution against Christianity, something Christians had never experienced before at this scale.
 - A formal wave of persecution, launched by Rome, against God's church. Nero burned down Rome, then blamed it on Christians. He would light Christians on fire while they were alive, to illuminate his garden parties. He imposed taxes to build the Roman Coliseum, in order to throw Christians to lions, who would tear them apart limb from limb to packed crowds.
 - Not even a government gone wild can separate us from the love of God...

39 nor **height, nor depth**, nor **any other created thing** will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

39 nor anything above, nor anything below, nor anything else in all creation can separate us from the love of God that is ours in union with the Messiah Jesus, our Lord.

39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature [created thing], Shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- "...height, nor depth" - nothing in the realm of space or time can separate us from the love of God

- "...any other created thing" - a catch-all phrase, just in case some lunatic will come along at some point in the future and point out something that is missing from Paul's list
- Since God alone is Creator, this phrase omits *nothing*. Nothing in all creation can drive a wedge between the loving God and His redeemed people.
- Thus, this list has to include the behavior and belief of His own children as well (John 10:28-29). Not even the redeemed can remove themselves from God's love, which Jesus has secured for them.
- This should *really* re-prioritize our entire outlook on *everything*!

Application

- Even when our plans seem good to us, God often has something better in mind that wins out in the end (Prov 19:21)
- God orders and controls absolutely all things, at all times, in all places and in all people for the good of those who love Him
- God may call me to exchange what is good now for something hard but ultimately better
- If personal happiness keeps me from coming alongside those for whom times are tough, then I have forgotten God's purposes for my current pleasures include His glory and the good of others (James 2:16; John 13:34-35; 1 John 3:17)
- Have I pointed someone to God's glorious promise in Rom 8:28, only to hesitate or lack faith in it when I am suffering?
- Have I spent more time in prayer trying to get "good" in my way and timing than to give God my heart and mind to trust His perfect purposes?