

A STUDY OF ROMANS
ROMANS 8 – PART 1
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Let's pray and ask the Lord to teach us. Father, we're amazed that this is a day that we have never seen before, and one that we will never see again. We just pray, Lord, as you tell us in the Scriptures to use our time wisely for the days are evil. Father, we just pray that in these moments we have together, as we sit at your feet, that you'd be pleased to open our eyes, once again, that we might behold you more clearly, that we might worship the God of biblical revelation and not the God of our human imagination, and may it be so for Jesus' sake. Amen.

We are in Romans 8 tonight, and we will be in Romans 8 next week. The way I'm going to approach this marvelous chapter is I'm going to give you just a quick overview of the whole chapter tonight, by section, with some detail, and then next week, we'll look at some of the specifics and take a few topics specifically and wrap up this study in the book of Romans.

Rather than reading you the whole chapter tonight, I'm going to read it in sections that we're going to look at. This is going to be a big overview, which you'll see that on your handout. This is really covering chapter 8. With that in mind, let us hear the Word of the Lord beginning at Romans 8. I'm going to read about the first eight verses because that's where we're going to look at for a few moments.

“¹There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ²For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. ³For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. ⁵For 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. ⁶For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. ⁸Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”

There are several ways in which we could look at Romans 8. You'll see in the outline, the first thing we want to look at is that we have a new position because we are now in Christ. Our position in regard to the Son of God is this—you'll see that in the first three verses—that we are in Christ. We saw that in Romans 5, that we're no longer in Adam; we are now in Christ. There was a miracle involved in that positioning of us, that repositioning. We receive no condemnation and are freed from sin and death. That's the miracle that is involved.

We need to realize this, that the Gospel message of the holiness of God, the sinfulness of man, the person and work of Christ and repentance and faith is not a human Gospel. The problem with the church today many times is we try to make the Gospel human. It is not. It is supernatural. There's a supernatural impact that it has by changing us from being in Adam to in Christ, and therefore, we are to have no longer condemnation.

There's a miracle involved in our regeneration and our justification and our conversion. The means of that miracle, you'll see that in verses 2 and 3, and that was accomplished not through the law or through obedience at the fleshly level by Moses, but it was really accomplished by the death of Christ. We now also have a new position as it relates to the law, a new position as it relates to Christ and as it relates to the law of God. We are not able to fulfill the righteousness of the law by our own obedience, but we can now do it because of the person and work of Christ and the influence of the Holy Spirit.

With that introduction, there are several ways in which we could look at this chapter 8. I want you to realize that we're not suddenly introduced into something that is brand new, or something that we've not already been introduced to before. Everything in chapter 8 has already been hinted at, or at least referred to. What we have here is an outworking or an elaboration of what the Apostle Paul had already been telling us in chapter 5 of the book of Romans. What he does now, he just works this out in greater detail, which he presented in chapter 5.

The first thing that we call our attention to in chapter 8 verse 1 is this word "therefore." Whenever you come to a new portion of Scripture, it's really critically important to understand the connection of the verses that you're reading in connection with the other portions of Scripture that surround it. When you take verses out of context, don't read them in connection with the other verses which surround it, you can make the Scripture say anything you want, and you can make it defend anything you want, or you can say whatever you want it to mean.

If that's true about individual verses, it's also equally true about chapters. When you take one chapter, you have to say where does that chapter fit in the context of the other chapters that surround it. That's the issue we have here with Romans 8. The word "therefore" in Romans 8:1 really puts us on the right track to understand the context of chapter 8 in the whole flow of the book of Romans. The only natural connection that we have between Romans 8 is it really goes back to Romans 5. I want you to take a look at this. Look at Romans 5:1 and you'll see the connection between Romans 8:1.

In Romans 5:1, we see this, "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." The connecting to that is Romans 8:1, and that is this, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." You see the connection is who are in Christ Jesus. You have peace with God when you are in Christ Jesus, and because you are in Christ Jesus, you have no condemnation. There's your connection. The real connection is between Romans 5:1 and Romans 8:1.

In chapter 5, Paul laid down the wonderful doctrine of justification by faith alone. Here he's basically saying the same thing in chapter 8. He's just elaborating and going into greater detail about what he said in chapter 5. In other words, we have peace with God because we're justified by faith, and that means that you're no longer under God's wrath, and therefore, because you're no longer under his wrath, you're not under condemnation. You're either in one or the other. You're under his wrath or you're not in condemnation when you're in Christ Jesus.

In chapter 5, he describes also the wonderful doctrine of union with Christ. You can read about that in Romans 5:12-21. Here in chapter 8, he comes back to that very same thing. The two things that he talks about are going to be justified by faith, that you have peace with God, and also your union with Christ. You're no longer in Adam, but you're now in Christ.

That means what do we do with chapter 6 and 7? Well let's try to understand this. In chapters 6 and 7, if you recall, he dealt with objections to the doctrine of justification. He didn't take chapter 6 right after chapter 5 and give a greater elaboration of the doctrine; he said, "Now here's what I'm going to have to do because some people are going to ask these questions. Some people are going to object to the fact that there's justification by faith," so in chapters 6 and 7, he doesn't re-explain justification, he deals with the objections to it. How is the world going to respond to this if they don't understand justification by faith alone correctly, then he deals with those objections. You go from chapter 5, which is one connection to chapter 8, which is another connection, and in between, you've got two chapters where he's dealing with objections.

It's a wonderful way of preaching, because you anticipate what the audience is going to say, "Well what about this? How about that?" You see, that's exactly what Paul does. He takes the truth, he explains it, and then he says, "Now your objection may be this," and then he defends it. That's what he does in chapters 6 and 7.

In chapter 6, he proves that our sanctification, our being set apart to be holy, is guaranteed because of our union with Christ. You're no longer in Adam, you're now in Christ; therefore, your holiness, your sanctification, is guaranteed because your position is changed because in chapter 5, you were justified by faith and you have peace with God. In chapter 6, he deals with the positive side and says, "As a result of your change in position, yourself sanctification is guaranteed because of your union with Christ."

In chapter 7, he proves the same thing because our sanctification is guaranteed because we've been set free from the law. In other words, the law is not a restriction to you anymore because you can't be perfectly obedient and sinlessly perfect, so your salvation and your sanctification is guaranteed because you're now in Christ, not in Adam, and you're free from the trappings of the law. In other words, when you look at chapter 6, he's basically saying, he shows us positively what our union with Christ can do. That's chapter 6.

Remember, chapter 5, the doctrine of justification by faith alone. Chapter 6, this is what happens to the objections, this is what happens when you were unified in Christ and you're no longer in Adam. In other words, chapter 6 says what Christ can do. That's the positive side. Chapter 7 says this is what the law can't do. The law can't make you holy. The law can't justify you. The law can't sanctify you. Chapter 6 tells you that your union, it's Christ that does that. Chapter 7 says this is what the law can't do.

He's dealing with objections. Your real bridge is between chapter 5:1 and chapter 8:1, and in between, you've got two chapters dealing with the objections to chapter 5. In chapter 8, this is really critical for us to understand what he's going to do for us. He's basically telling us how a Christian ought to think about yourself. What we know is really true, if you really understand chapter 5, then chapter 8 he says, "Now this how you, as a justified person by faith alone need to look at yourself. This is how you think about yourself." The real battleground for us in this world system, friends, is who do we believe. Do we believe the system of the world, what they say about us? Or do you believe what God says about you in chapter 5, and now he's going to reaffirm in chapter 8.

Chapter 8 is basically saying, "Folks, if you're justified by faith alone, this is how you need to look at yourself. Think about yourself this way." The great contrast between what the world says about you and what chapter 8 says about you is this—it's your resume'. What your resume' only reveals is what you've not accomplished. That's all it ever does. It doesn't tell you what you have done. A resume' reveals what you're not. That's all it does. You don't have this degree. You don't have this experience. You don't have this degree. You don't have this. That's all a resume' does. The perfect illustration of what the world says about you is look at your resume'. It's basically saying this is what you're not.

What Paul is saying in chapter 8 is this is who you are. He's basically saying this is how you need to think of yourself. If you understand chapter 5, and you're justified by faith alone, you've got peace with God, now you're no longer under condemnation at all. You need to look at yourself this way because that's what's going to motivate our conduct.

When we talk about sin, as a result of understanding what it means to be justified by faith, we don't talk about it primarily in terms of the law, "I broke God's law." Well no kidding. You did that when you were born. You've been doing that all your life. But you're free from that. You don't look at your sin as an act of breaking God's law. We talk about our sin in terms of love. You see, sin is a love issue. It's not a law issue. You're basically saying when you sin, you're sinning against the one who loved you so

much that he died for you. You're sinning against someone who gave his life for you. You see, the issue of sin is not about the law anymore. Paul says it's about the fact that God loved you enough that he justified you by faith, "You now have no condemnation. You're not under my wrath anymore. You have a totally different style of relationship with me. When you sin, what you're doing is you're damaging my love for you." You see, we look at sin now in terms of love, not in terms of law. You see the difference?

What is our motivation? Our motivation is not obedience. Our motivation is love. Obedience is a love response. That's what obedience is. You don't obey to obey the law. You've been set free from that. That's chapter 7. The law can't do anything for you. What now changes, Paul says, is this—you understand that you've been justified. You understand that you have no condemnation. You're not under my wrath anymore. What is it that motivates you? It's your understanding and appreciation and reverence and awe for the fact that you're no longer under condemnation. What you do now, your desire to be obedient is a love response. You see, that's what motivates us. It's not the law that motivates us. It's our love for God. That's what motivates us to make the right choices.

Paul says that's how you need to look at yourself. Remember this—you've got peace with me. You're under no condemnation with me. What's your motivation? It's not going to be obedient, to obey the law. You can't do that anyway. I just proved that to you in chapter 7. I showed you what the law can't do. What's your motivation? Your motivation is love for me. That's what Paul's going to tell us in Romans 8. That's the power of this.

It's critical how you and I look at ourselves. When you look at Revelation 12:10-11, it says, "The great deceiver was thrown down. The accuser and deceiver of the brethren." Satan's greatest ploy is this. He's going to deceive you and accuse you. Deceive of your value and accuse you of your worth. That's his great...now I don't know if he causes a tree limb to fall on your car or not. I don't know that. But I do know this—that there are times when you feel deceived and you feel accused, "How can God use you based upon what you just thought?" You see, we have to deal with that. That's the evil one coming in and saying, "I'm going to accuse you. I'm going to indict you, because of what you didn't do or what you did do."

Paul's going to tell us later on, "Who can indict us? No one can Who can accuse you? No one can." We're going to see that. You see, we don't think of ourselves correctly. Now this does not give us license to be sloppy. What I'm trying to say, friends, is this. It gives us a desire to love God more because you understand the significance of what it means to have peace with God and no longer under condemnation.

You've got to be very, very careful. The evil one, Satan is going to do this. He's going to deceive you and think that you're of little worth because you don't have, you don't have what the world says you need. Or he's going to accuse you of your value. How can he use you based upon what you've just done? You see, that's the battleground. Our response, we're going to see next week, is a love response is the motivation for our obedient, not a law response.

So you see, we desire to live for his glory. When we fail to do that, it's a love response, "Father, I just, I love you so much, but I just blew it again." You see, you always need to put in that I love you. You loved me enough that I love you. Help me demonstrate my love to you." That's why it's so important in raising children. They see the correlation between their obedience and the love of their parents.

A young friend of mine has a very difficult time with her little girl. Every time I go visit her, I'll ask her, I say, "Did you love your mother today?" She kind of goes, "I think so." I said, "Now you know better than that. Did love your mother today?" "Sometimes." "How do you prove your love to your mother?"

“I obey my mother.” You see, that’s what I’m trying to teach this little four-year old. There’s an equation between the loving of her mother and the obedience. It’s not obedience, it’s the fact that she loves her mother, therefore, she’s going to be obedient.

You see, it’s the same thing here with us. When we talk about our sin as a believer in chapter 8, you don’t do it because of the law, “I broke the law.” “No. I do it because I love the Father and I want to please him and I want to live for his glory and I just didn’t do it.” So you keep coming back to the fact that it’s your love for God that motivates your obedience.

Really, a Christian should never think of ourselves in terms of Romans 7:14-21. Read this sometime after tonight. Go back and read chapter 7, verses 14-25. You should never see yourself that way, because when you do, you’re being deceived, you’re being accused, and you’re basically positioning yourself back under the law and back under condemnation. What does Paul say? You don’t have any condemnation anymore. It doesn’t mean that you’re not worthy of it. Certainly you’re worthy of it. He just says, “But you don’t have it, because you’ve been justified by faith.” Don’t look at the world the way the world looks at you. When you do that, the contrast is chapter 7:14-25. That’s when you go back and place yourself back under the law and back under condemnation.

The great theme of chapter 8 is this—it’s the security of the believer. It’s the security of the believer. The absolute certainty and final perseverance of the saints and the ultimate complete and entire salvation of everyone who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ. That’s the theme of chapter 8. That’s why it follows the bridge from chapter 5:1 to chapter 8:1.

Chapter 8 says this, “Nothing can stop God’s salvation. Nothing can frustrate God’s salvation. That’s the theme of chapter 8. It’s this—no condemnation, no separation. You see, the end of chapter 8 is this—who can separate you from the love of God? The answer is no one. No one. The theme of this is no condemnation and no separation. Don’t put yourself back under the law and don’t put yourself back into being falsely accused, because we’re going to see that nobody can accuse you anymore. That doesn’t mean that you don’t strive to be obedient. That’s not what I’m saying. All I’m saying is who is it that can accuse you? You see, you and I have to look at ourselves correctly. That’s what’s going to motivate us correctly.

The fundamental proposition in this chapter is verse 1, “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” That’s the proposition. Paul spends the entire chapter defending that, exploring that, and exposing it and elaborating on it. In verses 1-4, he says it is true because we’ve been delivered from the law altogether, and we’re joined in Christ by the Holy Spirit. What the law could not do, Christ has done for us through his spirit.

When you take a look at the next series of verses, 5-13, Paul elaborates on what the Holy Spirit does. You’ll see there in your notes, we have a new guest in our life, it’s the Holy Spirit. What does he do? He [UNCLEAR] strength in Christ and raised him from the dead. He now lives within us and controls us. He now strengthens us and one day will deliver us from death when we’re glorified. In those verses, 5-13, Paul elaborates on the Paraclete, the one whom God sent to be our supply source, our strength.

Because of the Holy Spirit’s work within us, our salvation is guaranteed. Remember, the whole theme of this is the security of your salvation. He just gave you one reason, and that’s because you’re no longer condemned. The second reason is...I’ll give you another proof. It’s the work of the Holy Spirit in your life. You see, he works in our sanctification, the Holy Spirit does, delivering us from sin and all of its trappings, and even delivers the body at the time of our glorification.

When you look at the pilgrimage of a believer, it's three major issues—justification, sanctification, glorification. Simply put, it's this. Justification is freedom from the penalty of the law; freedom from the penalty of sin. Sanctification is freedom from the power of sin. That's because the work of the Holy Spirit accomplishes our sanctification. Thirdly, glorification is freedom from the presence of sin. From the penalty, from the power and from the presence. That's what you see in Romans 5 and the bridge to Romans 8.

In verses 14-17, Paul reminds us of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is proof that you're a child of God. There are three reasons...the Scripture talks about your security of your salvation. Three major issues. By the way, the security of your salvation is always in present tense verbs. It's not past tense. You know it right now because you know it right now. It's not something you did 20 years ago. That may have been the time of your conversion, but that's not the assurance of your salvation. It's not something you did 20 years ago; it's something you see happening in your life right now—present tense. All the verbs dealing with the assurance of your salvation in the Scripture are present tense verbs. That means you wake up today and say, "I know. Because I know."

The three reasons in which you know are these. First of all, increased righteousness in your life. You just know that, "I'm not what I used to be." It doesn't mean that you're perfect. You get credit for whose sinless perfection?

Audience Members: Christ.

Christ. There's your perfection. Don't worry about being perfect. You're never going to be that. That's why God justifies you by faith in the first place. He did something for you and I that we couldn't do, and that is be perfect. We get credit for the righteousness of Christ. The very first thing is you see increased righteousness in your life.

When I was studying the great Puritan evangelists, when I was in England, one of the ways in which they would determine if a revival occurred in the local community is they would come back five years later after they preached, and would say, two things, "Is there increased righteousness? And is there greater church attendance?" If they didn't see those two things, they would say a revival never occurred. We say a revival starts at 8:00 Monday night and ends at 12:00. What if the Holy Spirit doesn't show up? What do you have? You've got a nice program, but it may not be a revival. You see, the Scripture says the evidence of your true saving faith is increased righteousness. You see a difference in your life. I used to be this way, but now I'm this way.

The second thing is this. It's the work of the Holy Spirit with your spirit. You just know because you know. That's what Paul is saying in chapter 8. It's the work of the Holy Spirit. Somebody's going to say, "How do you know you're a Christian?" Your only defense may be this, "I just know because I know. It's the spirit's work within me." "Well tell me how you know that." "I can't describe it, but I just know that I know that I know that I know." That's because what Paul says that's the work of the Holy Spirit, because you can't be a Christian without the Holy Spirit. You can't come to saving faith without the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is not a second blessing. You don't choose to be saved and then have the Holy Spirit bless you later. You can't even make the choice to be saved apart from the work of the Holy Spirit. You can't be a believer without the work of the Holy Spirit in your life. That's what regeneration is about. That's what Paul tells us in these verses. He says, "You know that you're a child, a son or daughter of God, because you know the Holy Spirit's working in your life and you see increased righteousness in the depths of your own soul and the depths of your own spirit. You know because you know. That's the Holy Spirit working with you.

Increased righteousness and the work of the Holy Spirit. Those are indications of our true saving faith. That's part of the assurance that Paul teaches us in these verses.

We become children of God, and because we're that, we're also heirs of God, he tells us in these verses 14-17. We're also joint heirs with Christ. We need to look at our salvation this way. We have to realize that we've become sons, we've become daughters. We're his children. If God has done that to us, adopted us, made us heirs, co-heirs with Christ, and has changed our whole relationship by justifying us, and made us sons and daughters, and all that that involves, that involves your inheritance and your co-inheritance with Christ, how can our salvation possibly fail? How can it fail? If God has done that, justified you, made you a son or a daughter, made you an heir, and a joint heir with Christ, how is your salvation going to fail if God has already done that? And all the things that are involved in that, how can it fail? You see that is the truth of verses 14-17 of Romans 8.

Are you tracking with me? Does P = I here? Perception equal intention? What's my intention tonight in teaching us Romans 8? What's the intention?

***Audience Member:** To set us free from the way the world looks at us [UNCLEAR].*

Okay. That's certainly one. You've got look at yourself correctly. That's the point of chapter 8. How do you view yourself? Paul is saying, "This is how you should look at yourself. How you look at yourself is going to determine how you act." You've got to think right before you act right. That's why Paul says in Romans 12, "Do not be conformed to the system of this world." The system of this world is made up of thought patterns. If you think like the world, you're going to act the world. Paul says, "Don't do that." Think differently. When you think right, you're going to act right. When you act right, you're going to feel right.

The world says this—feel-act-think. We're told to operate on our feelings. Now there's nothing wrong with feelings. Feelings are neutral. They're neither positive nor are they negative. They're just yours. The world says, "Oh you're shy. Don't go to a meeting." "Oh, you don't have the background. Don't go do that. Don't get involved." Because you say, "Well I can't do that." Well maybe you can't. But the world says when you operate on your feelings long enough, you act on that, and when you act on that, you develop a thought pattern. The thought pattern is this, "Oh, I'm shy. I won't be accepted. I can't do that very well," and so you don't get involved. That's exactly what Satan wants you to do. He wants you to think based upon your feelings.

Paul says, "No, you need to transform those feelings." Let's go from feelings down here to thinking. Think-act-feel. He says, "When you have those feelings, say 'Yes, I'm shy. I probably won't do as well as somebody else. But I am going to think in terms of my character. I'm going to think in terms of my responsibility, my dependability. My accountability,'" whatever it may be. You act on that. You think right, you act right and then guess what? The feelings are the result.

Over here, in the world system, feelings are the cause of your actions. Over here in the kingdom, feelings are the consequence of your actions. It all starts with who do I believe. Do I believe what the world says about me? Or do I believe what chapter 8 of the book of Romans says about me? That I'm not condemned anymore. I'm not condemned anymore. I'm not under God's wrath anymore. Because he loved me enough that when he was on the cross, I was on his mind. Do you see when you think of yourself like that, you're actions change because you thought differently about yourself.

I'm not real big on this bit called self-esteem. I think many times it's the disease, not the cure. You see, because we're basically teaching you've got to think better about yourself. No, I'm saying how do

you...look at how God thinks about you. That's how you think better about yourself. It's not how the world thinks about you. We teach self-esteem in terms of getting the world to think better about you. I understand there's value to that, so I'm not negating the whole thing. I'm saying the real issue is this. The issue is I don't know want to know how the world thinks about me. I want to know how does God think about me. That's Romans 8. That's what's going to shape my conduct, not the system of the world and what they think of me. You think right, you act right, and the consequence is you'll feel right.

God proposed it himself before man had ever been created, this event called salvation, let alone before even man ever sinned. It cannot fail because God is God, and his purposes never fail. When you go to verses 28-34, we see the reason for our great confidence and assurance and our personal salvation, in those verses, 28-34, is because the very character of God is imposed upon your salvation. The very character of God is involved in everything about it. If that fails, the character of God is gone.

Notice, in verses 28-34, you'll notice, in summary, he formed the purpose of your salvation, he planned the strategies of your salvation, and he did that before the foundation of the world. There are steps and there are stages in that process in this plan of salvation. He's told what they are. Scripture reveals that. He does this. He calls us to himself. He separates us from the world. He goes on with his work within us through the steps of the sanctification work of the Holy Spirit. He takes it all the way to our final glorification. Here's the plan. Justification, sanctification, glorification. That's why I've called this series From Justification to Glorification. That's the book of Romans 5-8.

God purposed in himself long before we were ever born, long before he created us, and long before man ever sinned, he planned that out. It cannot fail because God's character is involved. But there's something else involved in all of this that's really astounding than all of this. God brings to pass this great plan of salvation, and he did not even spare his only begotten son. You'll see that in verses 28-34. Didn't even spare his son, but delivered him up for us all. There's the absolute guarantee of the security of your personal salvation. That is the guarantee that the rest of your salvation is going to follow.

We not only have God's character, we not only have God's Word, we not only have God's plan, but we also have the action of God in sending his Son, his Beloved Son, into this world deliberately, deliberately to die for us, to be the Sin Bearer, to be the Lamb of God. You see, that was part of the purpose. That's the real reason of the assurance of your salvation. It was the action of God based upon sending his Son to be the Sin Bearer for you.

Some people ask me the most important Word in all the Bible, and I could not argue with you if you said grace. I certainly couldn't argue if you said love. There might be other words that you would say are the most important. But if you turn with me to 2 Corinthians 5:21, this is a summary of Romans 8, "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." There's a little Greek word in the original translation of that called hupere. It's the English transliteration of the Greek word. It's hupere. It means on behalf of, or in place of. Notice that verse, "he made him who knew no sin to become sin in place of us, so that we might become the righteousness of Christ."

In my mind, that little word hupere is the most important word in all the Bible because it involves God's grace, it certainly involves God's love and it involves everything else about the majestic salvation that God has granted you in Christ Jesus. It's in that one little word—in place of, on behalf of. In other words, it wasn't me; it was him. That's the assurance that Paul says in Romans 8:28-34. That's the guarantee that you know that you have security of your salvation. "Because of my action to do for you that you could not do for yourself. That was I purposely, deliberately chose to have my Son come and die for you, so that you could become the righteousness of God and live a life that's free of condemnation, and be at peace with me."

Often times you hear people say when you talk about certain doctrines in the Scripture, “Well that’s not fair. That’s not fair.” You see, what we’re doing, immediately we’re bringing the Gospel down to a human level. We’re humanizing the message of the Gospel. Well the Gospel isn’t fair. If you believe in capital punishment, you’ve got the Gospel. The Gospel is capital punishment. Somebody died for me, paid for my sins and it was capital punishment.

I’ll tell you what’s not fair, folks. It’s not fair that Christ died for me. That is not fair at all. Why should somebody else have to pay for my heinous, cosmic treason against a holy God? Why should somebody else have to do that? You see, there’s no answer to that apart from two words. It’s just. It’s righteous. But it is absolutely not fair because it is the ultimate illustration of capital punishment. Somebody died because of what somebody did. That’s what Paul is saying in Romans 8:28-34. You see, there’s the ultimate proof. It’s God’s deliberate act to send his Son to die for you and me.

When you and I take communion...we need to realize that...let me phrase it this way. A lot of times people ask me, “Why is it that Jesus most often times when he performed a miracle, he said don’t go tell anybody?” We would think in our worldly mindset, “Whoa! You talk about an attraction to come and hear me preach. Let me whip out a few miracles and people are going flock to see me.” That’s as good as PowerPoint. We’re going to get him in here because of all of our marketing. Let’s market his miracles.” But Jesus says this, “Don’t go tell anybody.” To the best of my discernment as I look at that and ask myself, “Why did he say that?” I think it’s this. He understood this; that there would be a groundswell of public opinion so much in his favor because what he could do that nobody else could do, so much in his favor, the world would rally around him. They would be drawn to him. They would come to him. They would want to hear him preach. They would adore him. They would do all these things that the world would do to somebody who does something miraculous. But Jesus says, “Don’t tell anybody that.”

Why would you want to eliminate a man who could institute free national healthcare? Society wouldn’t want to do that. They’re not going to get rid of a man who could institute free national healthcare. How about would you want to eliminate a man who could eliminate hunger? Of course not. You wouldn’t want to do that. But Jesus says, “I didn’t come to institute free national healthcare. I didn’t come to heal. I didn’t come to feed people.” Jesus is not in heaven saying, “Oh Lord, I wish I had one more day.” We know from John 17 that’s not what he’s doing. We’re told this in John 17 in his wonderful high priestly prayer, the Lord’s Prayer, John 17, is this, “I brought you glory on earth by finishing what you gave me to do.”

In his humanity, I would assume that Jesus would say, “You know, if I had had one more day, I could have preached to a lot more people. Just think, if I had had another week, how many people I could have fed. One more month? Wow! I could have done a lot of miracles.” But he’s not saying that. He said, “I finished what you gave me to do.” You see, Jesus didn’t come to heal. He didn’t come to preach. He didn’t come to feed. He came to die. That’s communion. That’s what you and I remember. Not the benefits of our salvation, but the cause of our salvation, and that is God deliberately sent his Son to be the Sin Bearer for you and me so that you could look at yourself in terms of Romans 8 and say this, “I am no longer in Adam. I am now in Christ. I have peace with God. And there’s no condemnation for me anymore because I’m in Christ Jesus.”

You see, how we respond in this world, friends, is all dependent upon how you look at yourself. This is not positive mental attitudes. It’s not what I’m talking about. I’m talking about something that miraculously happened in your life when God redeemed you from pit of this world and resurrected you from the deadness of your sin. That’s what Paul is talking about in these verses. You see, the real proof is this. It’s God’s motive in saving you. That’s your real proof. His motive was this. He loved you

enough, and me enough, to deliberately, before the foundation of the world, purpose in the counsel of his own will to send his Son to die for you. That's why when you and I sin, we don't look at it in terms of the law. We look at it in terms of love. "Father, you loved me so much. Help me not to not do that because I really do love you. I just don't know how to do it well." You see, our motivation is a love response, not an obedience response.

You see, this death was no accident. It was not the primary act of men, as we think. It was according to the determinant counsel and foreknowledge of his will. Turn with me to Acts 2. You'll see this wonderful sermon in Acts 2 beginning at verse 22, "²²Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—²³this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. ²⁴God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it." You see, this was not an accident, folks. This wasn't because people just lost their minds and decided to get rid of a man. It was the predetermined counsel of God's will that this would happen for your sake, right now, in the year 2012.

How do you and I look at ourselves? Oh, we say we don't have enough of this; we don't have enough of that. My goodness, folks, when God gives you himself, he gives you everything. What more do you want? What more do you want? God's given himself to you. That's Romans 8, and that flows after Romans 5, which says you've got peace with God.

Unfortunately, the church has bought into the marketing mentality of this world. What we do is we market the benefits of the Savior, but we don't offer the Savior. What do we offer? Would you like to have the peace of God? (Philippians 2:14) Would you like to have peace of God? Here's what you do. You can't have peace of God till you have peace with God. That's Romans 5. You've got to talk about being justified by faith alone. What does that mean? What's the process of that? You see, the result of being justified by grace alone is you have peace with God, you have access to God, you have no condemnation from God; therefore, you have what? You have the peace of God that passes all understanding.

A non-believer is not going to understand a thing that I've said in the last 50 minutes. They can't do that. They just can't understand that. But you see, that's the beauty of the Gospel. It is not human. It is supernatural. Something that God did because he loved us.

The whole motivation is, you see, I can talk about theology and I can talk about all these great theological words. But the bottom line is this. God just loved you; just loved you enough to do it. All the theological words that I'm giving you and all the explanations I'm giving you really center around one thought. God is love. That's why he did it. That's the assurance of your salvation. When you know that, you've got to look at yourself that way.

God planned the death of his own Son in order to save you and me. I love the old hymn, the old Gospel hymn, when I was on the cross, you were on my mind. Do you realize what that means? That means Dale. It means Suzanne. It means Jim. It means when I was on the cross, I was thinking about you, Dale. I was thinking about you Ted. I was thinking about you Suzanne. I was thinking about you, Bruce. Thinking about you, Sig. Thinking about you, James. You were on my mind. You see, that's how we need to look at ourselves, and see the magnificence of God's love in all of this theology I'm giving you. The overriding issue is this. It's the love of God. God just loved us enough to do that.

Is it conceivable that God would do all that stuff that I've been talking about for nine weeks and then let anything cause it to fail? It's impossible. It's inconceivable to think if you're listening, and you

understand what I've been saying, what the Scripture teaches us, it's inconceivable that his salvation for you will not be eternal and you can't lose it. Because you didn't earn it. You didn't achieve it. You didn't make it happen.

As Paul says in Romans 8:29:31 (we'll talk about this next week), ²⁹“For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. ³¹What then shall we say to these things? (the things he just said) If God is for us, who can be against us?” God has done all of that for you. Who in the world can be against you? And yet we have the audacity to slap God in the face and say, “Oh this is what the world says I need to become.” Paul says don't do that. Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Well, we find Paul's summary now, as we wrap up this session tonight. We'll pick out a few things next week and go through them in more detail. I just wanted you to see the big picture of Romans 8, so you would see how it fits in with Romans 5. We see the summary in verses 35-39. He stated in verse 1 that there was no condemnation for those of us who are in Christ Jesus. Now that he's proved it in all these 28 verses, he now asks, “Who shall separate us (or who conceivably could separate you) from the love of Christ?” It's a question he's asking.

Notice this. This is its ultimate guarantee. Not in the greatness and majesty and glory of the power of God, not even his plan and his purpose. His final argument is this. It's the love of God. That's the final argument. It's the love of God that God has made all of this possible because God is love.

Paul closes by asking several questions in verses 32-35, and he answers them very clearly. He basically says this, “There's no need to fret over what God will do, for if God is for us, he's not against us.” God is either for you or against you. You see, God is not for everybody. Some people he's against. He's either for you or he's against you. He says, “If you're in Christ Jesus, don't fret over what God's going to do because he's for you.”

The proof is that he gave his very best on the cross, his Son, so surely he will freely give us everything that we need. Can anyone indict us for sin? Look at those verses 35-39. Can anybody indict you for sin? The answer is no. We'll talk about this next week.

We've been justified. Why can't they indict you? It's because you've been justified. You've been credited for the sinless perfection and perfect obedience of Christ, and you have that standing now before God. God never changes. Another question he asks. Can anybody condemn you? Who can condemn you? The answer is no one. Christ died for us, and he now lives as our advocate, as our lawyer, as our defense attorney, if you would. He's at God's right hand.

Look at verse 34. I mentioned that the whole of Romans 8 is this—no condemnation and no separation. Look at verse 34. What is Christ doing right now while we're in this class? Interceding for us. The reason there's no separation is because of intercession. We don't understand the intercessory work of Christ very much because we never teach that. You see, at this very moment, because you are in Christ, you're no longer in Adam, he's at the right hand as your defense attorney, and he's saying, “Father, she's one of ours. I died for her. I died for him. I'm going to intercede for her in her struggle right now, in his difficulty that he's going through and the choices that he's making. I'm going to intercede and say, Father, I paid the cost of that choice that he just made. He's one of mine. He's one of ours. He was a love gift that you gave to me. When I was on the cross, he was on my mind. So Father, he's been justified. He has right standing with us. We can't accuse him anymore. Let's just have the Holy Spirit give him the grace that he needs at this moment to survive.”

You see, the glory of all of this is no condemnation, no separation, because of intercession. Jesus is at the right hand of the Father saying, “Father, those people at Mt. Lebanon United Presbyterian Church, in the City View Room, on November 7, 2012, Father, I’m going to intercede for all of them who are in Christ Jesus because they were love gifts that you gave to me. Father, let’s have our Holy Spirit teach them the truth, regardless of what Bruce says. Bruce has errors in his theology; he just doesn’t know where they are yet. Father, work in his life so that when he discovers them, he’ll know when to change them. But in spite of what he’s saying, Father, let’s help them remember the Holy Spirit is the true teacher, not him. In doing that, Father, the Holy Spirit will guide them into all truth.”

Can anything separate us from the love of Christ? The answer is no. Not even the devil himself can do that. That’s what you see in verse 38. Principalities and powers means the forces of the evil one. Not even Satan can separate you. Don’t let the world try to do it by teaching you how to think of yourself in worldly terms.

No condemnation. Intercession. No separation. Notice this—yet in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. We are more than conquerors. That’s the word “nike.” It means conqueror or victorious. He uses the word “hupernike”, which means “super-nike.” It means you’re more than a conqueror. You’re more than victorious because you’re in Christ Jesus. Nike’s made a mint off that word. They don’t understand what it means. But if you’re in Christ, we do, because you are really now a “hupernike”; you’re more than a conqueror, because you’ve been justified by faith, you have peace with God and because you have no condemnation, “Because I’m going to continue my work in your life, Jesus says, by interceding on your behalf, and the result will be no separation. Ever. Ever.” Can you lose your salvation? No.

Let’s pray. Father, I trust that you will honor yourself by having us remember only those things are consistent with your glory, your nature, your attributes, your character. If I’ve said anything, Father, that’s inconsistent with your revealed Word, or contrary to who you are, would you be gracious, first of all, to forgive me for my inadequacy in teaching, and secondly, to protect us from the untruth, because it’s the truth that will set us free. Father, give us the grace and the courage to think of ourselves in terms of Romans 8, not in terms of Romans 7:14-21. Do not let the evil one put us back under the law or back under condemnation because there is no condemnation for those of us who are in Christ Jesus. And all God’ redeemed said...Amen!