

Monday 8/21

Related Verses**Rom. 5:1-5, 10-11**

1 Therefore having been justified out of faith, we have peace toward God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
 2 Through whom also we have obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand and boast because of the hope of the glory of God.
 3 And not only so, but we also boast in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces endurance;
 4 And endurance, approvedness; and approvedness, hope;
 5 And hope does not put us to shame, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.
 10 For if we, being enemies, were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more we will be saved in His life, having been reconciled,
 11 And not only so, but also boasting in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

Related Reading

Originally, we were not only sinners, but also enemies of God. Through the redeeming death of Christ, God has justified us, the sinners, and has reconciled us, His enemies, to Himself (5:1, 10-11). This transpired when we believed in the Lord Jesus. We have received God's justification and reconciliation by faith. This has opened the way and ushered us into the realm of grace for the enjoyment of God.

In the realm of grace the first thing we enjoy is the love of God. "The love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit Who has been given to us" (5:5). Many times in our Christian life we need encouragement and confirmation. As we pass through periods of suffering, we may have questions and doubts. Perhaps you say, "Why are there so many troubles in my Christian life? Why are there so many trials and tests?" We may have such questions and

doubts about our circumstances. Although these doubts arise, we cannot deny that the love of God is within us. From the day we first called on the Lord Jesus, the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. This means that the Spirit reveals, confirms, and assures us with the love of God. The indwelling Holy Spirit seems to say, "Don't doubt. God loves you. You don't understand why you must suffer now, but one day you will say, 'Father, I thank You for the troubles and trials which I passed through.'" When you enter the gate of eternity, you will say, "Praise the Lord for the sufferings and tests which fell upon me on my journey. God used them to transform me."

In the realm of grace we boast in God (5:11). The Greek word translated boast has at least three meanings: boast, exult, meaning to rejoice, and glory. Thus, we boast in God, exult in God, and glory in God. As we stand in the realm of grace, and walk the way of peace, we constantly boast, exult, and glory in our God. This means that we enjoy God. God is our portion for our enjoyment. We have such a God in which to boast, exult, and glory.

Our natural being needs to be sanctified, transformed, and conformed. Therefore, God brings in certain tribulations and sufferings for our good. This is clearly revealed in Romans 8:28, 29, where we are told that God causes all things to work together for good that we might be conformed to the image of His Son. Hence, tribulation and suffering are for our transformation. We all appreciate peace, grace, and glory, but no one likes tribulation. Recently, I have had two operations on my right eye. Although I do not like such suffering, I must declare that in the past few years nothing has favored me more than these two operations.

Tribulation is actually the incarnation of grace with all the riches of Christ. This is similar to the incarnation of God in Jesus. Apparently He was simply the man Jesus; actually He was God. Apparently our environment is tribulation; actually it is grace. If we read Romans 5 carefully, we will see

that tribulation does not stand on the same level as grace; it is under grace. The six items of love, grace, peace, hope, life, and glory, along with the three Persons of the Godhead all supersede tribulation. Nevertheless, tribulation is a visitation of grace.

If we say that we appreciate grace but not tribulation, it is like saying that we love God but not Jesus. However, to reject Jesus is to reject God. Likewise, to reject tribulation is to reject grace. Why was God incarnated? Because He wanted to come to us. The incarnation of God was His gracious visitation. Surely we all love such a visit from God. If we love His visit, we must love His incarnation. It is the same with grace and tribulation. Tribulation is the incarnation of grace visiting us. Although we love God's grace, we must also kiss the tribulation, which is the incarnation of grace, the sweet visitation of grace.

Madame Guyon said that she kissed the crosses given to her. Many people dislike the cross because it is a suffering, a tribulation. Madame Guyon, on the contrary, kissed each cross, waiting for more to come, because she realized that the cross brought God to her. Madame Guyon said, "God gives me the cross, and the cross brings me God." She welcomed the cross, for when she had the cross she had God. Tribulation is a cross, and grace is God as our portion for our enjoyment. This grace mainly visits us in the form of tribulation.

The experience of tribulation produces endurance (5:3). Endurance is more than patience; it is the product of patience plus suffering. None of us was born with endurance; it is produced by the suffering of tribulation. Therefore, Paul says that tribulation works endurance.

We may experience this endurance in the small things of life. One thing I dislike is hearing a busy signal when I call on the telephone. Why do I dislike that? Because I am short of endurance. Another small thing I hate is when people are late for an appointment. Although such delays are a suffering to me, they help me gain endurance.

Endurance produces approvedness (5:4). Approvedness is an approved quality resulting from the endurance of tribulation and testing. Thus, approvedness is a quality or attribute that can be approved. At times, it is difficult for young brothers to have the approval of others. They need the endurance that produces a quality that is easily approved by others. Tribulation issues in endurance, and endurance brings forth the quality of approvedness. Some versions translate the Greek word here as “experience.” This is correct, for approvedness includes experience. However, it is not primarily the experience itself but the attribute or virtue that is acquired through the experiences of suffering. The more you suffer, the more you have endurance, and the more the virtue of approvedness will be produced. Approvedness is not an attribute we have by our natural birth.

Consider the example of raw gold. Although it is genuine gold, it is raw and unattractive. It needs the purifying fire. The more the gold suffers the burning of the fire, the more an approved quality will be produced. After burning and trial, the gold acquires a quality that is easily approved by everyone. Perhaps, many of the young people are like raw gold. They do not need polishing or painting; they need burning. Some of the saints who love the Lord have an amount of life and light. Because they have these things, they think they are suitable to work for the Lord. However, they lack approvedness. On the one hand, they can be productive wherever they go; on the other hand, they are raw and lack the virtue that makes people happy, sweet, and comfortable. They have the opposite of approvedness, what we may call disapprovedness. Why was your situation so good at the beginning but quite poor after a period of time? It was good at the beginning because of your gift and the light you had. It did not continue well because you were so raw, lacking the quality of approvedness. If we have the virtue of approvedness, we will not be a problem to others. We all must pray, “Lord, grant me approvedness.”

If you pray in this way, the Lord will ask, “Do you really mean business?” If your answer is affirmative, the Lord will raise up the circumstances that will produce approvedness for you. For example, He may give you the most suitable wife, the wife most useful in producing this quality within you. Most wives are excellent helpers, assisting God in producing approvedness for His servants. Most of the Lord’s servants need such a wife. The wife does not help the husband; she helps God. The disposition of the wives helps God to bring forth approvedness in their husbands.

God is sovereign. Many of us realize that we have not only been called, but also caught. We must be a slave of Christ Jesus—we have no other choice. If I could have made another choice, I would have made it. Nevertheless, I must be the Lord’s slave. Although we are the slaves of Christ, we lack approvedness. This troubles God and damages us. It also bothers the saints and the household of God. We help them on the one hand and hurt them on the other. By our light and our gift we help them; by our lack of approvedness we hurt them. Thus, we need the approvedness which comes out of endurance.

Along with this approvedness, we have hope (5:4). What is this hope? It is the hope that one day we shall all be brought into the glory of God (5:2). Although we stand in grace and walk in peace, we are not yet in glory. But the day will come when we shall be brought into glory. What is glory? As we have mentioned several times in the past, glory is God Himself expressed. Whenever God is expressed, that is glory. It is very similar to the expression of electrical current in a light bulb. The expression of electricity is the glory of electricity. We cannot see electricity itself, but the shining of electricity in the lights is the expression, the glory of electricity. Likewise, glory is God expressed.

This glory is coming, and nothing can compare with it. Several verses show us that God will bring many sons into glory (Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:17; 1 Thes. 2:12; Heb. 2:10; 1 Pet. 5:10). Here and now we enjoy

God in hope of this coming glory. While we are enjoying Him, we hope for the glory to come. We will see more of this when we consider Romans 8.

As we enjoy God in this way, we are being saved in His life (5:10). “Much more, we shall be saved in His life.” Daily we need to be saved from so many negative things. We need to be saved from our temper and our self. As we enjoy God in our sufferings, we need the saving in His life. We need to be saved in His life from the besetting sin, that is, to be freed from the law of sin and death. We need to be saved in His life from being worldly, that is, to be sanctified. We need to be saved in His life from our natural being, that is, to be transformed from our natural life. We need to be saved in His life from being self-like, that is, to be conformed to the image of Christ, the firstborn Son of God. And we need to be saved in His life from being individualistic, that is, to be built up with others into one Body. These are the savings in the life of Christ, which will be fully defined in the following chapters. This kind of saving in life is the main enjoyment we have in God.

Justification has brought us into the realm of enjoyment. In this realm we stand in grace, walk in peace, suffer in hope, and enjoy God in our tribulations. While we are suffering and enjoying, we are being saved in His life. This is the issue of justification.

(Life-study of Romans, msg. 9)

Tuesday 8/22

Related Verses

Rom. 5:12, 15-21

12 Therefore just as through one man sin entered into the world, and through sin, death; and thus death passed on to all men because all have sinned --
15 But it is not that as the offense was, so also the gracious gift is; for if by the offense of the one the many died, much more the grace of God and the free gift in grace of the one man Jesus Christ have abounded to the many.

16 And it is not that as through one who sinned, so also the free gift is; for the judgment was out of one offense unto condemnation, but the gracious gift is out of many offenses unto justification.

17 For if by the offense of the one death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

18 So then as it was through one offense unto condemnation to all men, so also it was through one righteous act unto justification of life to all men.

19 For just as through the disobedience of one man the many were constituted sinners, so also through the obedience of the One the many will be constituted righteous.

20 And the law entered in alongside that the offense might abound; but where sin abounded, grace has super-abounded,

21 In order that just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Related Reading

Sin entered through Adam's transgression (5:12). It seems that sin is mentioned in Romans 5 through 8 in a personified way. It is like a person who can reign (5:21), who can lord it over people (6:14), who can deceive and kill people (7:11), who can dwell in people and do things against their will (7:17, 20). Sin is alive and exceedingly active (7:9). Thus, this sin must be the evil nature of Satan, the evil one, dwelling, acting, and working in fallen mankind. Sin is actually an evil person. Through Adam's transgression sin entered.

Praise the Lord that we have the second man, the second act, and the second result! What is the result of Christ's obedience?

Grace came (John 1:17) through the obedience of Christ. "The grace of God has abounded to many" (5:15). Paul does not say that life has abounded. This is similar to Adam's transgression, in which sin came first and death followed. Likewise, through the obedience of Christ grace came first and life followed.

Death is versus life, and grace is versus sin. Sin came from Adam's transgression, but grace came through Christ's obedience. Sin is Satan personified, come to poison us, damage us, and bring death into us. Grace is God personified, come to give us life and enjoyment. Through Adam's transgression, sin entered the human race as poison for man's destruction, but through Christ's righteous, obedient act God came as grace for our enjoyment.

As grace reigns unto life, so we who "receive the abundance of grace shall reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ" (5:17). From the beginning of Romans through 5:11, there is little mention of life. Romans 5:10 says that we shall be saved in His life, and Romans 1:17 tells us that the just shall have life and live by faith. However, as we enter the section on sanctification, we find a strong word in Romans 5:17, telling us that we "shall reign in life." Hence, we can "walk in newness of life" (6:4). We reign in life and walk in newness of life because we have received the abundance of grace in Christ. Today through the man Jesus Christ, by the abundance of His grace, we not only have eternal life, but we can reign over all things and all situations in this life and walk in its newness.

You may be eager to know how you can have the abundance of grace. The only way to have it is to receive it. In receiving we neither labor nor pay a price. We simply receive. Both John and Romans speak of receiving grace. We have seen that John 1:16 says that of His fullness we have received grace upon grace. In Romans 5:17 Paul speaks of our receiving the abundance of grace. We need to come to the very God who is grace and receive grace again and again until we are filled with grace. Only when we are filled with grace can we experience the reigning of grace. When grace is allowed to fill us, it abounds in us and then reigns in us. The reigning grace always follows the abounding grace.

If we are short of grace, grace cannot reign within us. Only when grace fills us up to the brim and then overflows from us can we experience the reigning of grace. When grace reigns, sin, death, and Satan are

subdued and are under our feet, and we become kings in grace. As grace reigns in us, we reign in life.

Do not consider that the experience of reigning in life by grace is an impossibility. I can testify that it is surely possible for us to reign in life. Whenever we are filled with grace, grace overflows and reigns. Then by grace we reign in life over sin, death, and Satan. We are not only set free from the three major enemies, but we reign over them. The principle of reigning in life is revealed in chapter five, but the experience of reigning in life is in chapter eight. Reigning in life is greater and higher than being saved in the life of Christ.

In this matter doctrine, teaching, and exhortation are of no avail. In a sense, not even our prayer is effectual in enabling us to reign in life by grace. The only thing that works is to come to the divine source and open ourselves from the depths of our being to be filled with God as grace. In order to be filled, we must ask the Lord to remove all insulation and frustration. We need to pray, "Lord, I am willing for every hindrance to be removed. I want to keep myself directly open to You. Lord, fill me completely with Yourself as grace." Wherever you are, at work, at school, or in your car, stay open to the Lord to be filled with Him as grace. This is what it means to receive the abundance of grace. As you receive grace in this way, you will be filled with grace and eventually grace will overflow from within you. Then you will reign in life by grace over sin, death, and Satan. In your experience these three enemies will be utterly subdued.

Sin, death, and Satan are still working within us. But if we come to the heavenly source and open ourselves thoroughly to be filled with grace, we shall reign over them in life. This is our need today in the church life. Although I appreciate very much all that is in the Gospel of John, we must go on from John to Romans 5:17 and 21 to receive abundance of grace so that grace may reign within us and we may reign in life.

(Life-study of Romans, msg. 10, 46)

Wednesday 8/23

Related Verses**Rom. 6:3-5, 11-14, 19-22**

3 Or are you ignorant that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?

4 We have been buried therefore with Him through baptism into His death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we might walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have grown together with Him in the likeness of His death, indeed we will also be in the likeness of His resurrection,

11 So also you, reckon yourselves to be dead to sin, but living to God in Christ Jesus.

12 Do not let sin therefore reign in your mortal body so that you obey the body's lusts;

13 Neither present your members as weapons of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as alive from the dead, and your members as weapons of righteousness to God.

14 For sin will not lord it over you, for you are not under the law but under grace.

19 I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to uncleanness and lawlessness unto lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness unto sanctification.

20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free with regard to righteousness.

21 What fruit then did you have at that time? Things of which you are now ashamed, for the end of those things is death.

22 But now, having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end, eternal life.

Related Reading

Since we all were born in Adam, how can we say that we are now in Christ?

In Romans 6:3 Paul says, "Are you ignorant that as many of us as have been baptized into Christ Jesus

have been baptized into His death?" Although we were born in the first person, Adam, we have been baptized into the second person, Christ. How pitiful it is for Christians to argue about the outward form of baptism! Some dispute about the kind of water used, and some argue about the method of baptism. Baptism means to be put into Christ and into His death. Whether we were good or bad, we were born in Adam. Now we see another man, Christ. How can we get into Him and be a part of Him? The way is to be baptized into Christ. The meaning of baptism is to put people into Christ. It is not a ritual or a form; it is an extremely significant experience. A spiritual transfer must happen in the act of baptism, and if we do not have a realization of this, we should not touch the matter of baptism. Never baptize people in a ritualistic way. We must have the assurance and the realization that as we baptize people we are putting them into Christ. Once we realize the significance of baptism we will not allow it to degenerate into an outward form or ritual. Baptism is an act in which we put the members of Adam into death, thereby transferring them out of Adam and into Christ. People are baptized into Christ. Even the King James Version uses the word "into" in Romans 6:3. How people have missed the mark regarding baptism in their divisive arguments about forms and methods! Whenever we baptize people, we only care that we put them into Christ. It is awful to perpetuate a ritual, but it is wonderful to baptize people into Christ.

Praise the Lord that we have been baptized into Christ! Although we were born in Adam, by baptism we have been identified with Christ in His death and resurrection. Through death and resurrection Christ was transfigured from the flesh into the Spirit. Even Christ Himself needed death and resurrection to transform Him from the flesh to the Spirit. Likewise, through identification with Christ in His death and resurrection, we have been transferred out of Adam and into Christ. When we were baptized into Christ, we were transferred from being a part of Adam into being a part of Christ. Now we are no longer in Adam. We are absolutely in Christ. This is the fact of

identification. Now we must see and understand clearly two further points related to this.

Romans 6:5 says that "we have grown together with Him in the likeness of His death." What does this mean? The phrase "likeness of His death" in Romans 6:5 refers to baptism. Baptism is the likeness of the death of Christ. In baptism, we have grown up together with Christ. This phrase "grown together" affords the translators a difficult problem. However, if we stay very close to the meaning of the Greek word, there will be no difficulty. The same Greek word is used in Luke 8:7 to speak of the thorns which grew up together with the wheat. Likewise, we have grown together with Christ. When we were baptized into Christ, in one sense we were put to death; in another sense we began to grow. This very much resembles the sowing of seed into the earth. Apparently the seed is sown; actually it begins to grow. By being baptized into Christ we have all grown together with Christ in the likeness of His death. Since we have grown together with Him in the likeness of His death, we are now growing together with Him. We have grown, yet we are growing.

We also are growing together with Christ in the likeness of His resurrection (6:4-5). What is the likeness of His resurrection? It is the newness of life. We all should walk in this newness of life. We all must see these two points. We must see that we have grown together with Christ in baptism and that we grow together with Him in the likeness of His resurrection, that is, in the newness of His resurrected life. If we see this, it means that we see that we have died with Him and that now we are growing with Him. We were buried with Him in baptism and now we are growing with Him in His resurrection, in His divine life. We must walk according to what we see, that is, walk in the newness of life.

Furthermore, we need to present ourselves and our members as slaves to God (6:16, 19, 22). If we present ourselves to God as slaves and our members as weapons of righteousness, we will be sanctified spontaneously. This means that we take sides with the

resurrected Christ Who dwells within us as life. We stand with this eternal life. In this way we give the eternal life the opportunity to work within us, to separate us from everything common, and to sanctify us. The result of this presentation is sanctification. This is the order of our experience: we see, we reckon, we present ourselves to God, we reject sin, and we cooperate with God.

We must reject sin, for it still dwells in our fallen body (6:12). Do not cooperate with sin any longer. Reject sin and cooperate with God. Do not be so spiritual that you become passive and cease to do anything at all. Passivity is dreadful. If you are passive, you will be cheated and deceived. We should be neither passive nor too active, since neither our passivity nor our activity is of any value. What then should we do? We must see the facts, reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God, present our members and ourselves to God, reject sin, and cooperate with our God. We should not do anything on our own. Do not try to love your wife or submit to your husband. Do not try to be humble or kind. However, you need to reject sin. When sin comes to you with a proposal, you must say, “Sin, depart from me. I have nothing to do with you.” Do not let sin continue to lord it over you (6:14). This means that you reject sin and turn to God and say, “Lord, I am Your slave. I want to cooperate with You. Whether or not I love my wife, it is up to You. In the matter of loving I want to cooperate with You. I want to be Your slave. Whatever You do, I will follow You and cooperate with You.” Do not be passive or active. Simply reject sin and cooperate with God. If you do this, you will not only be righteous, but also sanctified. You will undergo an inward, dispositional change.

The issue of sanctification is life eternal (6:22). Thus, Romans 8 follows Romans 6. Romans 6 concludes with sanctification unto eternal life; Romans 8 begins with the Spirit of life. Do not ask me where to put Romans 7. Although this chapter is in the Bible and cannot be deleted, it can be eradicated from

our experience. We may leap from the end of Romans 6 to the beginning of Romans 8.

What the Apostle Paul means in Romans 6 is that, on the one hand, we are in the fact of having been crucified and resurrected with Christ and that, on the other hand, we have the divine life. That fact that we have been crucified and resurrected with Christ has transferred us out of Adam into Christ. The divine life enables us to live a sanctified life. We need to see that we have been transferred. Based upon our seeing, we reckon ourselves as such by believing. Then we need to cooperate with the divine life by rejecting sin and by presenting ourselves and our members to God. We do have a position to reject sin, for now we are “not under law but under grace” (6:14). Sin has no ground, no right, to make any claims upon us, but instead we, standing under grace, have the full right to reject sin and its power. At the same time, by taking sides with Christ, we present ourselves and our members as slaves to God that the divine life may work within us to sanctify us, not only positionally, but also dispositionally, with the holy nature of God.

As a summary, we may say that we have all been baptized into Christ. By being baptized into Him we have been identified with Him in His death and resurrection. We have grown together with Him in His death and are now growing together with Him in His resurrection life. We see that we are dead to sin and alive to God and reckon it so in our heavenly accounting book. Based upon this reckoning, we present ourselves as slaves to God and our members as weapons of righteousness. This affords the opportunity for the divine life within us to do its sanctifying work. Then we learn to reject sin and to cooperate with God. The result of it all is sanctification, which ends with life eternal. Praise the Lord!

(Life-study of Romans, msg. 11)

Thursday 8/24

Related Verses

Rom. 7:18-24

- 18** For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but to work out the good is not.
19 For I do not do the good which I will; but the evil which I do not will, this I practice.
20 But if what I do not will, this I do, it is no longer I that work it out but sin that dwells in me.
21 I find then the law with me who wills to do the good, that is, the evil is present with me.
22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inner man,
23 But I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind and making me a captive to the law of sin which is in my members.
24 Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death?

Rom. 8:1-4

- 1** There is now then no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.
2 For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death.
3 For that which the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh,
4 That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.

Related Reading

In chapter five of Romans we saw that the gift in Christ surpasses the heritage in Adam, in chapter six we were shown our identification with Christ, and in chapter seven we found the bondage of the law in our flesh. Romans 8 is a contrast to Romans 7. In Romans 7 we have bondage; in Romans 8 we have freedom. In Romans 7 we have the law; in Romans 8 we have the Holy Spirit. In Romans 7 we have our flesh; in Romans 8 we have our spirit. Thus, Romans 7 reveals

the bondage of the law in our flesh, while Romans 8 unveils the freedom of the Spirit in our spirit.

We need to read Romans 8:1-6 carefully and attentively. “There is now then no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has freed me from the law of sin and of death” (vv. 1-2). The phrase “the law of the Spirit of life” is very significant. In this phrase we see three elements that compose one entity—the law, the Spirit, and the life. These three items are one.

“For what is impossible to the law, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (v. 3). God is the subject of this sentence. He condemned sin in the flesh of Christ by “sending His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin.”

“That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to flesh, but according to spirit. For those who are according to flesh mind the things of the flesh; but those who are according to spirit, the things of the Spirit” (vv. 4-5). God condemned sin in the flesh that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk according to spirit. Those who are according to spirit mind the things of the Spirit. Please notice that the first mention of spirit in verse 5 refers to our human spirit and that the second mention refers to the Holy Spirit, meaning that those who are according to their human spirit mind the things of the Holy Spirit.

“For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace” (v. 6). The mind set on the human spirit is life and peace. Every word in Romans 8:1-6 is precious. We should not pass over even one word in these verses. Due to the limitation of time, I can only present a sketch of Romans 8.

In Romans 8 Paul does not say, “There is no condemnation in Christ Jesus because the blood of Jesus has cleansed me.” This kind of condemnation is not dealt with by the blood. We are freed from

subjective condemnation, not because of the blood which cleanses us, but because of the law which liberates us. There is a law which sets us free from inward condemnation. This law that releases us has the greatest potential of any law. Although we have the law of God outside of us demanding, the law of good in our mind agreeing with the law of God, and the law of sin in our body warring against and defeating the law of good, we must nevertheless praise the Lord that in our spirit is the law of the Spirit of life. No law can prevail against this law. Who can defeat the Spirit of life? Nobody and nothing can defeat the Spirit of life. This law of the Spirit of life is the spontaneous power of the Spirit of life. It is the most powerful law in the universe; it is in us and it sets us free.

How does the law of the Spirit of life set us free? It frees us in a “super” way. If, according to the ancient method of warfare, some soldiers were surrounded by enemy troops, they would have had to fight their way through. However, in modern warfare there is no such need. If we are surrounded by the enemy, we need not fight through—we have a way up. We have an upward way. Thus, we may say to Satan, “Satan, compared to me you are powerful. But don’t you know that I have a wonderful God who is both in my spirit and in the heavens? It may be difficult for me to go to the heavens, but it is easy for Him. He is both in me and in the heavens. Satan, I don’t need to fight through. I just say, ‘Praise the Lord,’ and I am in the third heaven. Satan, you and your attacking army are under my feet, and I am free.”

In case you think this is little more than a good theory, let me apply it and make it very practical. Suppose we have a sister who wants to submit to her husband according to Ephesians 5. She says, “I love this word. It is so sweet and holy. I want to submit myself to my husband.” This is simply the exercise of her mind as it attempts to fulfill the commandment given in Ephesians 5. However, when she determines to practice this, something strange happens. It seems that her surroundings change and the very opposite of submission occurs. Her husband, who is always nice

and gentle with her, on the very morning that she determines to submit to him, is quite mean. Much to her disappointment, she fails to fulfill the commandment. Satan comes up against her, surrounds her, and attacks her. The more she tries to suppress her irritation with her husband’s behavior, the more angry she becomes, until she finally loses control of her temper. Her struggle, her attempt, was vain. The sister was defeated because she used the wrong strategy. Whenever we are surrounded by the enemy, we should forget about every attempt of fighting through and say, “Praise the Lord! Amen!” Immediately we will be transcendent. Every enemy, including the people who aggravate us, will be under our feet. If you do not believe this, I ask you to try it. This strategy works; it is the most “modern,” most prevailing weapon against the enemy. Instead of condemnation there is praise. Why is there praise and release instead of condemnation? Because the law of the Spirit of life frees us from the law of sin and death.

For the two types of condemnation we have two different remedies. The blood of the crucified Christ is the remedy for objective condemnation, and the Spirit of life—Christ processed to be the life-giving Spirit—within our spirit is the remedy for subjective condemnation. When we experience subjective condemnation, all we need to do is praise the Lord and we will be transcendent. Do not pray at such a time, for the more you pray, the more condemnation you will experience. Neither should you say, “Lord, I apply Your blood.” This is not the remedy for this kind of situation. It is the wrong medication for the illness. When we are under subjective condemnation we need the Spirit of life. “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has freed me from the law of sin and of death.”

This is not an experience outside of Christ, but an experience absolutely in Christ. In Christ, not in Adam nor in ourselves, but in Christ, we have the Spirit of life, who is Christ Himself as the life-giving Spirit, in our spirit. In Christ our spirit has been made alive with Christ as life. Because we are in Christ the Spirit of life, who is Christ Himself, dwells in our spirit and

mingles Himself with our spirit as one spirit. In Christ we have our quickened spirit, the divine life, and the Spirit of life. In Christ these three—our spirit, the divine life, and the Spirit of life—are all mingled as one unit. In Christ, with this unit, there is the spontaneous power, which is the law of the Spirit of life, that continually sets us free from the law of sin and death as we walk according to the mingled spirit.

This experience is not once for all; it must be a continuous daily experience. Day after day, moment after moment, we need to live in the mingled spirit, walk according to this spirit, and have our minds set on this wonderful spirit, forgetting our attempts of keeping the law of God and of doing good in order to please God. For once we drift back to our old, habitual way of trying to do good, we are insulated immediately from the powerful law of the Spirit of life. We must look to the Lord that we may abide in our spirit always so that we may enjoy the freedom of the law of the Spirit of life.

(Life-study of Romans, msg. 14, 15)

Friday 8/25

Related Verses

Rom. 8:9-16, 23-27

9 But you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Yet if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not of Him.

10 But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness.

11 And if the Spirit of the One 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 indwells you.

12 So then, brothers, we are debtors not to the flesh to live according to the flesh;

13 For if you live according to the flesh, you must die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the practices of the body, you will live.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery bringing you into fear again, but you have received a spirit of sonship in which we cry, Abba, Father!

16 The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.

23 And not only so, but we ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan in ourselves, eagerly awaiting sonship, the redemption of our body.

24 For we were saved in hope. But a hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what he sees?

25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly await it through endurance.

26 Moreover, in like manner the Spirit also joins in to help us in our weakness, for we do not know for what we should pray as is fitting, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

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

Related Reading

In 8:9 Paul says, “But you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone has not the Spirit of Christ, he is not of Him.” In the foregoing message we pointed out that to be of Christ is a matter of position, but to be in spirit is a matter of condition. The position that we are of Christ is settled once for all; however, the condition of being in spirit may fluctuate. For this reason, we need to consider how to stabilize our condition of being in the spirit.

One way to stabilize this condition is to declare that we are in the spirit. Learn to say, “I am in spirit!” In the past I encouraged you to call, “O Lord Jesus.” Now I am encouraging you to say, “I am in spirit.” Sometimes we can contact the Lord simply by saying “O”; it is not always necessary to say, “O Lord Jesus.” In the same principle, we do not always need to say, “I am in spirit,” for it may be adequate simply to say the word “in.” If you are about to lose your temper, exercise yourself to say “O” or “in.” This will help

you to remain in the spirit. According to verse 9, we are in the spirit since the Spirit of God dwells in us. Now we can remain in this condition by declaring the fact that we are in the spirit.

Among Christians today, there are many teachings concerning how to experience the Spirit. I can testify that these teachings may hinder us from experiencing the work of the Spirit. In Romans 8 Paul does not say, “In order to be freed from the law of sin and death, you must fast and pray. The law of sin is terrible, and it is too powerful for you to overcome. That is why I cried out, ‘Wretched man that I am. Who can deliver me?’” Paul did not teach the believers in this way. Neither did he teach that believers must confess all their sins to both God and man before they can experience the Spirit.

To understand the matter of being in the spirit as mentioned in verse 9, it will be helpful to consider how we were saved. When we heard the proclamation of the gospel, we recognized it and acknowledged it. There was no need for us to say, “From now on I must behave myself in a way that pleases God. In the past I have done many sinful things. If I confess my sins and make up my mind to improve my behavior, then I’ll be saved.” This is wrong. This mistaken concept can affect a person’s Christian life for years. After a person hears the proclamation of the gospel, he should simply utter a strong, “Amen!” and say, “Thank You, Lord Jesus.” Anyone who has the heart to accept, to acknowledge, what has been proclaimed to him through the preaching of the gospel will certainly be saved.

Now let us go on to consider from Romans 8 the various aspects of the blessed work of the Spirit. First, the Spirit is the indwelling Spirit (vv. 9, 11). It is a great matter to have the Spirit indwelling us. Suppose the President of the United States came to your city and stayed for a while in your home. That would be considered a great honor and privilege. But we have someone much higher than the President dwelling in us—we have the Spirit of God dwelling in our spirit!

The second function of the Spirit is to give life. As the Spirit indwells us, He is not idle. Rather, He is active to impart life to us. The indwelling Spirit is the life-giving Spirit, the Spirit who gives life.

The third function of the Spirit is found in verse 13: “For if you live according to flesh, you are about to die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the practices of the body, you will live.” According to this verse, the Spirit not only gives life, but also kills, puts to death. Positively, the Spirit gives life; negatively, He kills and clears away all the negative things within us.

Fourth, in verse 14 we have the function of the Spirit’s leading: “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” The indwelling Spirit leads us, and His leading is so sweet. Many of us can testify that it is the Spirit who leads us to the church meetings when we may be inclined to do something else. Praise Him that He is the One leading us!

Romans 8:15 gives us the fifth function of the Spirit: “For you have not received a spirit of slavery to fear again, but you have received a spirit of sonship in which we cry, Abba, Father.” The Spirit cries, “Abba, Father,” in a very sweet way. Whenever we cry, “Abba, Father,” we sense sweetness and comfort. Truly the Spirit is the crying Spirit.

As we have already pointed out, according to verse 16, the Spirit witnesses with our spirit. Hence, He is the witnessing Spirit. Because of the witness of the Spirit, we have the confirmation and testimony within us that we are children of God. There is a living One, the indwelling Spirit, witnessing in us that we are children of God.

Seventh, verse 26 says, “And in like manner the Spirit also joins in to help us in our weakness; for we do not know for what we should pray as is fitting, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” Here we see that the Spirit functions by joining in to help us in our weakness. If we were not weak, the Spirit would not join in to help us. But simply because we are weak, He becomes our

partner helping us in our weakness and sharing our weakness. This is a wonderful blessing which human words cannot explain adequately.

Eighth, in verse 27 we have the interceding of the Spirit: “But He Who searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because He intercedes for the saints according to God.” The interceding of the Spirit is also mentioned in verse 26, where we are told that the Spirit intercedes for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. According to these verses, the Spirit’s interceding takes place not in the heavens, but within us. Notice that verse 27 says that God searching our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit. This indicates that He has mingled Himself not only with our spirit, but even that He has mingled His mind with our heart. God searches our heart to know the mind of the Spirit. This means that the mind of the Spirit is one with our heart.

At this point let me ask a question: Is it the Spirit who groans, or are we the ones groaning? Verse 26 says that the Spirit intercedes with groanings which cannot be uttered. Surely we are the ones groaning. But our groaning is the Spirit’s interceding. This indicates once again that we and the Spirit, the Spirit and we, are one. Our groanings become the Spirit’s interceding. Furthermore, the Spirit’s mind is involved with our heart. How wonderful that the Spirit is not only mingled with our spirit, but His mind is mingled with our heart and His interceding is in our groaning! How marvelous that He is one with us in this way!

Eventually, according to verse 23, we have “the firstfruit of the Spirit.” What we are enjoying today is just the firstfruit, not yet the full harvest. The firstfruit is an example, a foretaste, a guarantee, of the full taste which is coming. As verse 23 indicates, this full taste is related to the redemption of our body. Today we are enjoying the Triune God in our spirit and, at most, also in our soul. Our body has not yet been brought into the full enjoyment of the Triune God. Therefore, we need the redemption of our body. While we are enjoying the firstfruit of the Spirit, we are expecting in

the future to enjoy the full taste, the redemption of our body.

It is not an insignificant matter to remain in the spirit. When we stay in the spirit, we enjoy the Spirit’s indwelling, life-giving, killing, leading, crying, witnessing, joining in to help in our weakness, and interceding. Eventually, we enjoy Him as the firstfruit of the Triune God, who will become our full taste. This is not a mere teaching; it is an unveiling and also a proclamation of the facts for our enjoyment.

When you read of all these aspects of the work of the Spirit, there is no need to fast and pray. Instead, just say amen to each function of the Spirit: “In the spirit, amen. Indwelling, amen. Life-giving, amen. Putting to death, amen. Leading, amen. Crying, amen. Witnessing, amen. Joining in, amen. Interceding, amen. Firstfruit, amen. Amen, I am in the spirit, enjoying the work of the Spirit in me.” I encourage you to amen every verse in Romans 8, especially the phrase “in the spirit.” If you proclaim the fact that you are in the spirit and say amen to each aspect of the work of the Spirit, you will experience a change in your Christian life. This will transform you, build you up, and give you the growth in life.

(Life-study of Romans, msg. 69)

Saturday 8/26

Related Verses

Rom. 8:28-39

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

29 Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers; **30** And those whom He predestinated, these He also called; and those whom He called, these He also justified; and those whom He justified, these He also glorified.

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

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

33 Who shall bring a charge against God's chosen ones? It is God who justifies.

34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ Jesus who died and, rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or anguish or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword?

36 As it is written, "For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; we have been accounted as sheep for slaughter."

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

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

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

Related Reading

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For Your sake we are being put to death all day long, we have been reckoned as sheep for slaughter” (vv. 35-36). Although this certainly speaks of suffering, the following verses declare, “But in all these things we more than conquer through Him Who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (vv. 37-39). We are not defeated; we more than conquer because God loves us. Why does God care so much for us and do so many things for us? Simply because we are His beloved. No one can separate us from His love. Once He loves us, He loves us forever with an eternal love. Nothing can separate us from Him. Because He loves us and because we are His beloved, sooner or later we

all shall be sanctified, transformed, conformed, and glorified.

Paul was wise and very deep. As I have pointed out previously, he composed three of the sections in Romans according to three of the attributes of God—His righteousness, holiness, and glory. Eventually, however, Paul guides us into the love of God. Ultimately, our security is not only God’s righteousness, holiness, and glory, but also His love. What is God’s love? Love is the heart of God. God’s love issues out of His heart. Righteousness is the way of God, holiness is the nature of God, glory is the expression of God, and love is the heart of God. After speaking of God’s righteousness, holiness, and glory, Paul brings us into God’s heart of love. Why has God demonstrated His righteousness? Because man was fallen. Man was wrong with God and needed His righteousness. Why must God exercise His holiness? Because man is common. God must sanctify all of His common, chosen ones. Why must God give us His glory? Because all His chosen ones are low, mean, and vile. Hence, He must exercise His glory to transfigure us. But what was in God’s heart originally? Love. Before God exercised His righteousness, holiness, and glory He loved us. Love was the fountain, love was the root, and love was the source of it all. God loved us before He predestinated us, He loved us before He called us, He loved us before He justified us, and He loved us before He glorified us. Before everything and anything else He loved us. Our salvation originated with the love of God. Love is the source of all that God does for us, and this love is His heart. Love was the source of God’s eternal salvation which includes redemption, justification, reconciliation, sanctification, transformation, conformation, and glorification. Salvation began with God’s heart of love.

Therefore, after God’s salvation has been fully accomplished, His love remains our security. The love of God is not only the source of our salvation, it is the security of our salvation. Many Christians talk about eternal security. Eternal security is the love of God. God cannot be wrong in any of His attributes. Our security is His love. In verse 31 Paul asks, “What shall

we then say to these things?” What shall we say about predestination, calling, justification, and glorification? We have nothing to say except, “Hallelujah!” “If God is for us, who can be against us?” Now we can understand this word in a deeper way. God is for us because from eternity His heart loved us. Thus, His love is our security.

Paul touched upon this love in 5:8 when he said that “God commends His own love to us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.” This actually was an introduction to and a recommendation of the love of God. When we believed in Jesus the Holy Spirit poured out God’s love into our hearts (5:5). Although Paul touched upon this matter of love in Romans 5, he did not cover it adequately. He waited until he had compassed the vast scope of God’s predestination, calling, justification, and glorification. After finishing the entire record he reached the appropriate time and place to present us a full revelation of the love of God. Paul was persuaded that nothing can separate us from the love of God because he knew that this love does not derive from nor depend upon us, but upon God Himself. This love was not initiated by us; it was initiated by God in eternity. Because of this Paul could say that we conquer in all things. Paul was convinced that nothing can “separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

This phrase “in Christ Jesus” is very significant. Why did Paul say this? Because he knew that there would be a problem if the love of God had been shown apart from Christ Jesus. Apart from Christ Jesus even a little sin such as losing our temper would separate us from the love of God. However, the love of God is not merely the love of God in itself, but the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. Since the love of God is in Christ Jesus everything is insured, and we are assured that nothing can separate us from it. Are you insured? Paul was. I use the word insured; Paul uses the word “persuaded” saying, “I am persuaded.” Paul was convinced that in all things “we more than conquer through Him Who loved us.” This does not mean that we in ourselves are able to overcome; it

means that God is love and that Christ is victor. God loves us and Christ has accomplished everything for us. Since God's love is eternal, His love in Christ Jesus is our security. We are not only under God's righteousness, holiness, and glory, but we are in His heart of love. Now we can understand 2 Corinthians 13:14 which says, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all." The love of God is the source. Therefore, the Apostle Paul has brought us through the righteousness of God, the holiness of God, and the glory of God into the heart of the God of love. This is where we are. Hallelujah! This is our eternal insurance policy. Now you know how to answer people when they ask you if you have insurance. You can say, "I have insurance. My insurance policy is Romans 8:31-39. I am insured by the love in God's heart." We are insured by God's eternal love in Christ Jesus.

(Life-study of Romans, msg. 21)

Lord's Day 8/27

Related Verses

Eph. 1:3-14

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ,

4 Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love,

5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

6 To the praise of the glory of His grace, with which He graced us in the Beloved;

7 In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of offenses, according to the riches of His grace,

8 Which He caused to abound to us in all wisdom and prudence,

9 Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself,

10 Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him;

11 In whom also we were designated as an inheritance, having been predestinated according to the purpose of the One who works all things according to the counsel of His will,

12 That we would be to the praise of His glory who have first hoped in Christ.

13 In whom you also, having heard the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation, in Him also believing, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of the promise,

14 Who is the pledge of our inheritance unto the redemption of the acquired possession, to the praise of His glory.

Further Reading:

Further Reading: <i>Life-study of Romans</i> , msg. 50
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Hymns, #948

1 Myst'ry hid from ages now revealed to me,
'Tis the Christ of God's reality.
He embodies God, and He is life to me,
And the glory of my hope He'll be.

Chorus

Glory, glory, Christ is life in me!
Glory, glory, what a hope is He!
Now within my spirit He's the mystery!
Then the glory He will be to me.

2 In my spirit He regenerated me,
In my soul He's now transforming me.
He will change my body like unto His own,
Wholly making me the same as He.

3 Now in life and nature He is one with me
Then in Him, the glory, I will be;
I'll enjoy His presence for eternity
With Him in complete conformity.

Churchwide Truth Pursuit of Romans

Level 1—Romans Sequential Study

Scripture: Rom. 3:21-31

Assigned Reading: *Life-study of Romans*, msg. 35-36

Level 2—Romans Topical Study

Crucial Point: All Things Working Together for Good to Those who Love God

Scripture: Rom. 8:28-39

Assigned Reading: *Life-study of Romans*, msg. 21

Supplemental Reading: None

Hymn: 635

For study questions and additional materials, please visit the church website at churchinnyc.org/bible-study