

"How the Lord Knows Suffering in the Life of the Believer"

Review: "The Greatest Blessing of All Is Ours, Christ In Us, the Hope of Glory"

- ***Our Constant Hope and Comfort Is That We Shall Never Be Condemned***
- ***The Greatest Blessing of All Is Ours, Christ In Us, the Hope of Glory***
- ***Our Opportunity Today Under Grace Is to Live After the Spirit***

- ***Our Constant Hope and Comfort Is That We Shall Never Be Condemned***

Romans 8:1-4

1 *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

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

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

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

- *The keys to our understanding here are these:*
 - *Verse 1 draws a conclusion from the earlier verses, where the apostle confesses regarding his life before when he had given up his liberty in Christ for bondage to a law. The conclusion its as we have seen, that though believers do place themselves under laws and by so doing give themselves over unwisely to the power of the flesh, they nevertheless, as believers with the indwelling spirit and a new nature, still are walking after the spirit and as verse 25 of chapter 7 says, serve with the renewed mind a law of God. They are lawful as God sees them. We do not lose our righteous standing before Almighty God when we turn aside from his gracious provisions for a time, in other words.*

Romans 7:24-25

24 *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*

25 *I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.*

- ***And so he concludes in verse 1 of chapter 8, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” So he cannot be writing as some believe of only the mature or the more spiritual believers but of all, in fact, of all those who are “in Christ Jesus”. That, of course, is all believers, not only some. All believers are in fact therefore “walking” after the spirit though they are not always pleasing God.***
- ***Verses 2 - 4 explain in terms much like in the earlier chapter what the facts are regarding those who have been transformed by God through their salvation. Those facts are these, all of course stated in the past tense:***
 - ***Verse 2: We have all been set free from the last of sin and death by the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus! This is wonderful indeed and provides the spiritual foundation for what is in verse 4, “... that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”***
 - ***Verse 3: How that was accomplished is here, God’s own Son took upon himself “the likeness of sinful flesh”, but not human flesh corrupted by sin itself. But from God’s point of view, it was enough. There is a lot there, but we must save it for another time, Lord willing.***
 - ***Verse 4: The requirement of the law therefore was met, it was fulfilled. There is an ending on the Greek word here so he is not talking about the hundreds of “acts” of righteousness that the law required but rather what could fulfill that law. Verse 3 explained what that was, only that perfect sacrifice that had already been offered for the sins of the world. Amen.***

So we who are “walking”, whose entire “way of living” is “after the spirit” have fulfilled in us the “righteous requirement or judgment of the law”, through Christ’s perfect offering, for we are, as the Lord God sees us, “in Christ Jesus”. So now we better know what it means to be in Christ Jesus, do we not? Amen. Praise God.

Romans 8:5-8

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

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

7 Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

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

- ***Now Paul shows the contrast with not carnal believers but with the unsafe. He writes of those "... that are after the flesh" as opposed to those "... that are after the Spirit". His conclusion regarding them is simple: they live in the realm of death and not life, and are not even able to be subject to the law of God. They have no capability spiritually of any kind. Again, we see that he is boldly contrasting believers and unbelievers and not spiritual or maturing believers with believers who are carnal and fleshly. It is so clear.***

Unbelievers are "after the flesh", are "in the flesh", and "walk after the flesh", all three. They, therefore, have no hope and only have condemnation ahead while we shall "never be condemned" for "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." What a promise we have in our Lord Jesus Christ.

- ***The Greatest Blessing of All Is Ours, Christ In Us, the Hope of Glory***

Romans 8:9-11

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

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

11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

- ***Now our apostle turns to us and our unique and detailed blessings, dispensationally considered. In so many ways he teaches us how very distinctive our blessings are now, under grace. There are two fundamentals detailed here, and both are called indwelling, first the Spirit in verses 9 & 11 and then Christ himself, in verses 9 & 10. These are not the same as is often taught:***
 - ***"The Spirit of Christ": Verse 10 gives us the focus on his resurrection life which we possess. Verse 2 summarizes what the apostle has taught us in chapters 5 and 6. There are many verses there and elsewhere such as in Gal. 2:***

Galatians 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

And there are so many more. Consider also Rom. 5:17, 21; 6:4, 23; Col. 3:3, 4.

- ***“The Spirit of God”: He is an enabler as verse 11 indicates. It seems to be the application of Christ’s life in us and through us that is the focus here. But surely both Spirits work together in unison to accomplish the purpose of God through us.***
- ***There is much teaching compressed here in few words, but having both the Spirit and Christ indwelling us is most wonderful indeed. We should expect some differences in their ministries to us and such there are. Gal. 5 outlines some of them. But perhaps the greatest of all is in Col. 1:***

Colossians 1:25-29

25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;

26 *Even* the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

27 To whom God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:

29 Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

- ***Paul now draws a very practical conclusion about our lives with the blessings and provisions for our lives as believers living by grace with its many critically important distinctive. We are most blessed!***
- ***Our Opportunity Today Under Grace Is to Live After the Spirit***

Romans 8:12-14

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

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

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

- *Again, a “therefore”, for he is continuing the previous thought of a resurrection quality of life as verses 10 & 11 say so well.*
- *“We are debtors ...”, not to the flesh, but to the Spirit indwelling. Indeed. Such great blessing ask of us a reasonable response, do they not?*
- *Now verse 13 troubles some since under grace what kind of punishments might be appropriate for carnal living, surely not what the law of Moses demanded for many failures to keep that law, the death penalty. But that seems to be the understanding of the KJV translators here in using the future tense: “for if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” This is just as it would have been under Moses. But the Greek text though it does have future tenses, they are not future tenses of the verb “to live” as implied in the translation here, but rather future tenses of the verb “to be about to be”. He is writing as he did in verses 6 & 10, where it is the realm of living that is contrasted so definitively between those who are unbelievers and we ourselves blessed as he has written here. Verse 13 is restating what verse 11 already has taught, using the wording “if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” where verse 11 had “he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you”. This restates in very concrete and practical terms the blessings we have under grace to “walk in the spirit” not any longer fulfilling “the lust (or desires) of the flesh”, as written so powerfully in Gal. 5:16.*
- *And now this wonderful statement, again, like the others, true of ALL of us who have believed and have been so transformed by God as Paul has so faithfully shared with us here: “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” This leading is something we all have by virtue of the indwelling Spirit of God and not therefore some only who have a special enabling from God as the charismatics and pentecostals are so willing to boast. Indeed, as he writes next “they are the sons of God”, and indeed we all are. Praise God. And I have a testimony here, perhaps.*

- *We must stop here for the tone now changes significantly from doctrinal teaching with a practical aspect to a major subject in Paul's letters, the suffering of believers, its purpose and glorious consequence. That is a large subject indeed, and we will save it for next time.*

Our Outline Today: "How the Lord Knows Suffering in the Life of the Believer"

- *Our Privilege As Sons Is to Suffer and to be Glorified Together With Christ*
- *But Our Sufferings Today Are Nothing Compared with the Coming Glory!*

I. Our Privilege As Sons Is to Suffer and to be Glorified Together With Christ:

[READ] Romans 8:15-17

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

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

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

- *The Lord always knows the end from the beginning, for he has planned and engineered our salvation, our lives, and our eternity!*
- "... ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father": *We have an intimate relationship; and we therefore have no reason to fear due to our unsaved condition of spiritual bondage to sin and death. Why? Because of the intimacy of our relationship with the Trinitarian God as revealed here all in three verses. Here it is with the Father, our heavenly Father! Then it is with the Spirit and finally with the Son. My, my, there is so much here to ponder and in faith take at his word through our apostle.*
- *"... the spirit within witnesses with our spirits" that indeed we are children of the Father. This is an interesting verse indeed.*
- *And now the wonderful promise and one that includes not only our future glorification together with Christ but also our current trials and burdens of suffering ... "together with him", praise God!*
- *What it all means or should mean for us considering the burdens we do bear here and especially as we live godly in Christ Jesus is the whole point of the apostle's teaching here. We have every reason to*

be hopeful because we are part of the Lord's eternal plan and we are in the very center of his working. But our suffering is part of the plan and that is fundamental here, isn't it? Paul had learned this through his sufferings and he is testifying of that here. Amen.

II. But Our Sufferings Today Are Nothing Compared with the Coming Glory!

[READ] Romans 8:18-21

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

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

20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected *the same* in hope,

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

- ***This is the teaching now that underscores verses 15-17: To summarize, we now learn the facts presented and the reckoning as our example through Paul (as before his testimony was also so important, wasn't it).***
- ***In one sentence he presents the facts as he knows them: "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us". And don't forget, this is his testimony — is it ours? And then he explains this further in verses 19-21:***
 - ***The whole creation and we ourselves surely "wait" earnestly and expectantly "...for the manifestation of the sons of God": such a hopeful expectation indeed is ours — if we will receive it and reckon on it! The Greek word translated "earnest expectation" here (and also in the other place it is found, means to "stretch out the neck in anticipation"!***

[READ] Philippians 1:19-21

19 For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

20 According to my earnest expectation and *my* hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but *that* with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether *it be* by life, or by death.

21 For to me to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain.

- ***It was Paul's "earnest expectation", with outstretched neck in anticipation, that made the difference for him and that is his testimony there in the Philippian letter and also here in the Romans. Is it ours?***

- ***And now he goes even deeper in his explanation (note the word "for"). First the statement of fact and then the details needed for our understanding: "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope ...". First the statement of hope, if we are willing to by faith receive it (so we therefore can reckon upon it):***
 - ***For in spite of Adam's Fall and its consequences for him, Sara, and their offspring, and the entire creation as well that has been tainted with its many effects, there is nevertheless hope he writes here. Any why?***

 - ***"... Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.": A glorious future indeed awaits the creation and we ourselves who are not only a part of that but the central focus of the work of God under grace. Praise God for such a positive and encouraging hope! But what does verse 20 say?***
 - ***"For the creation was made subject to vanity": Vanity means perishable or subject to decay, it is the opposite of salvation in the Greek language.***

 - ***"... not willingly": Or, through no personal choice or of its own will? Here is referring it seems to Adam and all others of humankind.***

 - ***"... but by reason of the creator himself...": This is perhaps the best translation according to the context here and in the next verses. The creator rules the creation. He "owns" it as it were. And he allowed Adam's sin and brought the consequences as he willed. Can we stand in judgment of that? God forbid.***

- "... because ...": ***Here we see the culmination of it all and therefore the implied purpose and final end behind the Lord's judgment and curse upon Adam and the creation itself. The mark of hope for his final resolution is there and the word of hope opens our hearts and minds to it. Amen.***

THIS IS INDEED THE HOPE AGAINST HOPE, THE HOPE IN THE UNSEEN, OUR ULTIMATE DELIVERANCE INTO THE GLORIOUS LIBERTY OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD. AMEN. ENCOURAGING, ANYONE?

Conclusions & Exhortations:

- ***I have been encouraged by Paul's teaching here today and I sincerely hope you have been too! Even our sufferings are part of his eternal plan of glory, for us and for the creation in general. And so much is contained in that one word in verse 20 "... by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." Subject to vanity Not willingly ... but by reason of the creator himself, because ...***
 - ***"... Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." May we all gain the same understanding Paul had as he suffered so much indeed "for the glory of God"!***
 - ***Our Lord God has a purpose therefore for everything, even our suffering.***

[READ] 2 Corinthians 12:2-10

2 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.

3 And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)

4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

5 Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.

6 For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but *now* I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me *to be*, or *that* he heareth of me.

7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.