

***“From Rags to Riches, The True Story of Our Promotion into Glory  
through Our Lord Jesus Christ”***

***The Normal Christian Life – Paul's Testimony Still Speaks, Part 8***

**Review:**

A comment before I review where we have come from here in the Romans, chapter 8:

What I see in the Romans is a wealth of truth,  
layer upon layer as if it were never intended to be fully understood at all,  
only a little at a time, when we might come to it in a time of need  
and find the most needed “balm of Gilead”, there.

This makes it difficult for me to finish up this chapter. Every time I come back to this Word of Truth, I am overwhelmed again, BOTH WITH the simplicity AND THE DEPTH of this teaching.

DWELLING in this Word is what is needed, daily. Oh, what a blessing it has been to me to dwell here for so many years and now for these weeks, this year. But it may be that our minds are not so focused on earthly things that there is no room for spiritual truth to dwell.

This is like a great meal set before us, but we have no appetite for it, and so we set it aside, or there is a diamond or gold mine on our property, but we have no real interest in the serious commitment that mining will require.

May this not be so. It is my privilege to provide this truth to you today as the Lord and our apostle have provided it to me -- and it is your privilege to receive it, to welcome it, and know the full blessing of it.

Last week, we did dwell in verses 26 through 32. I love that word DWELL. IF only we would truly dwell here in this precious truth. Perhaps today will offer a new start.

- Herb Roush wrote a great book years ago that is now out of print, entitled “The Sounds of the Heart”. I am down to my last two copies, or I would share them with each of you for sure. Well, the apostle in verses 26 & 27 speaks of these “sounds”, these “cries” and these “prayers” or “supplications” that he here calls “Our infirmities”:

[READ ] Romans 8:26-27

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

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

- With what words do you cry out to God from the depths of your being? And what about the Spirit's crying -- AND HIS INTERCEDING! Indeed, our cries and prayers are not worthy to be compared with the Spirit's...
  - There is much more here in these words, but I will stop and move ahead with verses 28-30. . . Leaving so much to ponder another time. Amen. So be it.
- Our assurances, vv. 28-30

[READ ] Romans 8:28-30

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

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

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

- **This summarizes our salvation from beginning to end, with the end being our co-glorification with our Lord Jesus. Even though all our suffering is included in this most general statement, it will ALL work together for our good!**

**Or now, let us just ask this question: What if this had never been revealed? Then what??**

- **What would your understanding of the events of your own life have been? What about even your sufferings now, in the present time, or your anxieties for the future, what might your understanding of these be, if these words had never been written?**
- **There is much more to ponder here, isn't there?**

Recently, I promised that we would also look into Colossians 1, and I think also Philipians 3, as well as finishing these verses here in chapter 8.

- **We shall go there in our study here for the profound and weighty background of this. Paul has laid a good foundation in the earlier verses, but more is revealed elsewhere in his letters.**

- But first, remember v. 18, for there a summary of the rest of the chapter may be found: “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.”
- These verses get to the heart of the matter before us: the nature of our ongoing sufferings is revealed, and the consequence of our entering into them as they are revealed here (!! ) is clearly shown -- all is for God’s eternal glory.
- Paul’s intent in all of these Scriptures is to encourage the saints who are undergoing great trials. But it is the way he encourages the believers that is most distinctive here and must be grasped more and more fully as we dwell here.

***Our Title: “From Rags to Riches, The True Story of Our Promotion into Glory through Our Lord Jesus Christ”***

***Our Outline:***

- ***The Divine Logic Behind Our Sufferings Reveals His Glory and Grace***
- ***Our Sufferings Together With Christ Demonstrate God’s Perfect Love***

***I. The Divine Logic Behind Our Sufferings Reveals His Glory and Grace:***

[READ ] Colossians 1:24 [I Paul] ... who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:

- **Oh, there is so much here. Paul rejoices in his sufferings! He says they are for “them”, for “you”, the believers, for the members of Christ’s heavenly Body, for the saints. He says that they are needed to complete or fill full to overflowing “the afflictions of Christ” in his own body for the benefit of the body of Christ.**

**We see that there is a depth to the suffering of the saints that goes beyond merely what is experienced. Surely this testifies to a grander work indeed that the Lord is performing. That is the point here. There is an unseen dimension to our sufferings.**

**This is something to reconsider OFTEN. May we ask God for understanding as we read and consider these words. They are words in our language, but they express heavenly truths. Only by the**

**Spirit may we be taught their meaning. Amen.**

- **I have said that the login behind our sufferings is pure simplicity itself. But since it may not seem so to us so caught up in these trials of life and testimony, even though our apostle has written of that so well here in the Romans, let's also now look beyond the Romans and the Colossians to the Philippians where the emphasis is on the spirit in contrast to the flesh:**

Philippians 3:3-6

**3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.**

**4 Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:**

5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;

6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

...

[READ ] Philippians 3:7-10

7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things [but] loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them [but] dung, that I may win Christ,

9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

**10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.**

- **Verses 8 & 9: The comparison with the things mentioned before (all of his accomplishments and abilities humanly speaking -- and those good things of life associated with all of this), were of no value compared with the winning or gaining of Christ as savior -- let me repeat: the good things of life that followed all of Paul's accomplishments . . . were of no value compared with the winning or gaining [same Gk. word as in verse 7] of Christ as savior. This is all about, of course, our fully paid-up and eternal membership in Christ's heavenly Body!**
  - The issue Paul highlights here was his own religious self-righteousness in contrast with the righteousness of Christ Jesus imputed to his account through faith alone.

- And now Verse 10: Paul’s main point is here: Knowing Christ today and the power of his resurrection in itself **demand**s that we share in his sufferings, being made conformable to his death.
  - **Have you heard this clearly? Shall I repeat it? Knowing Christ today and the power of his resurrection demands that we share in his sufferings, being made conformable to his death. This was not only true for Paul; it is also true for us. The apostle asks each of us to willingly enter into this suffering that we may also share in his resurrection glory and power!!**
- Again, as we saw in Colossians 1:24, in the words “who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church”, what is most special and important, therefore. For our apostle reveals there a depth of the suffering of the saints that goes beyond mere personal experience and which testifies to a grander work indeed. And that is the Lord’s continuing work in us saints and through us saints. That is his main point here.

**With this additional background, we now move ahead to the grand song of praise offered up by the apostle Paul here before us. This is Paul’s answer to the questions asked, “What shall we say then?”**

**Now he writes again, in all the remaining verses of the chapter, of how the Lord sees us day by day and hour by hour as he takes us onward, “from rags to riches”, on this train of glory. Praise Almighty God for such abundant grace.**

## **II. Our Sufferings Together With Christ Demonstrate God’s Perfect Love:**

[READ ] Romans 8:31-34

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

32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not *[together]* with him also freely give us all *[the previously mentioned]* things?

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33 Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? [It is] God that justifieth.

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

Romans 8:35-39

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

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

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

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

39 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.

Verses 31 & 32:

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

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

- Such questions SHALL come forth from our lips and our hearts! Romans 8:31, “What shall we then say to these things?” is the apostle’s SUMMARY STATEMENT encapsulating, I believe, all of the cries of our hearts...
  - I pointed out the last time that this is a future tense and in the indicative (not in the subjunctive). Perhaps this must therefore be understood as the answer, in due time, of the Spirit dwelling within each of us.
    - THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION THEN IS “If God be for us, who [or what] can [REALLY] be against us?”
- I asked us to ponder this in our hearts. . . When will this be fulfilled is then the LOGICAL question. . . Now or only later, at the Rapture?
  - Who may bring any accusations against a Christian? vv. 33-34
    - Answer: God is the one who declares us righteous and he is greater than anyone bringing an accusation
      - Remember Job when Satan attacked him before the throne of God? (Job 1 & 2)
      - Here we also learn that Christ who died for our sins is at the Father’s right hand and intercedes for us (so the Spirit, the Son, and the Father are all on our side!!)
      - So this gives us MUCH ASSURANCE that no charge

will stand, much assurance indeed.

- Who (or what) shall separate us from the love of Christ?
  - A long list is now given of all of our worst enemies, and after that, he quotes from Psalm 22:44
    - 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.
  - And the conclusion, “NAY”, none of them will succeed.
    - For NOTHING can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus!
  - “For thy sake”
    - These seem to be the key words here. What do they mean?
    - “Sake”? Have we lost the meaning of this in current day English?
      - Oxford E. D.: “For the benefit of”.
      - So, how does God benefited when we enter into suffering, that is the question?
      - **A secondary meaning is also given in the OED, especially for usage like we have here: “In honor of or respect for”.**
      - **These last two seem to make it so clear. The glory of God is the key to our suffering. And, as fallen creatures so stained by sin and sins, we are not likely to ascribe such a great glory to God that is due apart from the full recognition of our own nature and circumstances.**
      - And yet it is God’s greatest work to then lift us out of this humiliation into sharing with him in his eternal glory!

- Christ himself entered into our sin and our suffering but came forth gloriously in resurrection -- AND SO SHALL WE!
- **So, it is for His sake that we suffer here in this life. It is appropriate. It is right.**
  - And until the completed redemption we suffer here “together with Christ” as Paul exclaimed in Philippians & in Colossians.
  - **We are joined together, and we are co-suffering that we might be co-glorified, glorified TOGETHER!!**
- **Now, let us not forget that it is the glory of the cross and the shed blood that has accomplished all of this. All of our enemies have been vanquished, and we are MORE THAN CONQUERORS -- though we be as sheep for the slaughter! Amen and amen.**
- Brethren, do we believe the testimony of the Apostle Paul as he reveals the plan and purpose of God regarding us, his children? Do we believe God?

Have you, have I, truly received this teaching, this doctrine?

- Many false teachers are about and gaining more followers every day. Many of them are Satan’s instruments, promoting a false gospel.
  - Just ask those who seem not to be adhering to the teachings of grace. Do they believe that NOTHING at all can separate them and us from the love of Christ?
    - That no sin is so great . . . or even comes close. That nothing in the creation is great enough either to separate us,

For to separate us from the love of God the Father and of our saviour the Lord Jesus would mean that the plan of God has failed entirely.

For the plan of God is to bring many sons to glory, remember? Hebrews 2:10

- Many are focused on some kind of health and wealth gospel, a gospel associated with signs and wonders, all conditions and blessings that the Scripture assigns to the gospel of the kingdom, not the gospel of the grace of God.
- So, there is much confusion surrounding us, and we are called upon to clearly live out and boldly proclaim these precious truths of God's unlimited grace. And we are promised suffering together with Christ.

**Some Final Thoughts / Conclusions:**

- The Logic Behind Our Sufferings -- Philippians 3:8-10
- The Sufferings and the Glory -- Romans 8:33-39
- Do you know the Lord through the saving grace via his gospel and by way of faith alone -- with no works even involved?
  - Or have you never come to him on his terms, in his way, recognizing that his shed blood was sufficient payment for all of your sins, past, present, and future, and that his resurrection is a reality.
- Do you know him daily and moment by moment - are you walking with him? Or are you living your life out in the realm of the flesh and the world and not enjoying the blessings of his abundant grace?
- And HOW are we suffering? Have the Apostle's words here in this eighth chapter of Romans made a difference? Have they been written our hearts?
- FINALLY, are we encouraged?
  - Well, the blessings God has granted to us believers under grace are great indeed. And they are all of grace and never of works. So the apostle can speak quite authoritatively and with great power concerning all of us.
- Praise God for his grace and the new life that we have in Christ. He dwells within.
- And his promise is that we shall be delivered once and for all one day from all of the trials of this life as we suffer together with him -- HEAVEN'S GLORY IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER, BELOVED!!

Romans 8:18 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.

Ephesians 2:4-10

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

6 And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus:

7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:

9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

***Remember our title today: "From Rags to Riches, The True Story of Our Promotion into Glory through Our Lord Jesus Christ". And it is true. For by grace we are saved through faith. Amen.***

Romans 8:35-39

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