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Leaders notes

Lead a session

Pray for guidance and inspiration
 Read the passage. What does it simply say?
 Who is it talking to, what is the context?
 What does it mean for me
 Thank God for the help

Things to think about

- If there is no condemnation for believers (verse 1), should we ever have feelings of guilt? Why?
- In what way does the Spirit “control” our minds? (verse 6)
- When the pain of past sin haunts you, how should you respond?
- How do we get the ability to put our misdeeds to death? (verse 13)
- When we call God “Father,” do we feel fear, duty, or privilege? (verse 16).
- What do you see as your personal benefit to being a co-heir with Christ?
- How do you envision the glory that will be revealed in us? (verse 18) What will we be like?
- Where do you see first fruits of the Spirit in your life? How does that translate into hope for you?
- How much groaning do we do, and how much does the Spirit intercede for us? (verses 23, 26).
- Would Paul agree that God works for the good even in cases of child sex abuse, terrorism and genocide? (verse 28).
- God loves everyone, but does everyone love him? He will always love us (verse 39), but will we always love him?
- Read Psalm 23 as your faith statement of Romans 8:31 - 39

Excerpt taken from: (Sharing in the Life of Christ: A Study of Romans 8:1-17)

by Michael Morrison, (<https://www.gci.org/bible/rom8a>)

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Sharing in the Life of Christ

Paul's letter to the Romans can be divided into three major parts: a presentation of the gospel (chapters 1-8), the place of Israel in God's plan (chapters 9-11) and exhortations for Christian living (chapters 12-15). Chapter 8 comes near the end of Paul's explanation of the gospel. It is the climax, and the truths that Paul discusses are astounding.

Sunday 26 June. Romans 8 verses 1-4. No condemnation!

The chapter begins with an astonishing statement: "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death" (verses 1-2).

Because of what Christ has done, believers are not counted guilty and will not be punished on the day of judgment. We sin, but there is no condemnation. (If we didn't sin, the question of condemnation wouldn't even come up.) Paul knows that we sin, so he is saying, there is no eternal punishment for Christians even though they sin.

Hard to believe? Yes, because we know that sin deserves to be punished. Paul agrees, but the gospel announces that Christ has taken our sins, and the consequences, on himself. He has punished sin itself. He has experienced the consequences of sin, and escaped, so that we can also escape. On behalf of all humanity, Christ has experienced the results of our sins, so there is no further condemnation waiting for us. If we trust him, if our lives are in him, we do not need to be afraid. Sin has physical penalties in this life, but for those who are in Christ, it has no ultimate penalty for us.

Why? Because Jesus has set us free from the law of sin and death, set us free from the only law that could possibly condemn us. The law that says, "Those who sin shall die," no longer applies to us, because it has been taken care of — completely. We died with Christ, and it is no longer we who sin, but it's the sinful nature inside of us that does it (7:17). It will die, and we who are in Christ will live eternally.

Things to think about

- If there is no condemnation for believers (verse 1), should we ever have feelings of guilt? Why?

God does not want us to sin, but even if we sin, we will not be condemned because of what Jesus has done for us. The law could not give us eternal life, but God could, and he did it through the death of Christ. "For what the law was powerless to do [that is, to give life] because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh" (Romans 8:3).

Jesus did not come to condemn sinners — he came to condemn sin. He came to take away its power to control us and kill us. He came to give us life, and to do it in such a way that "the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us" (verse 4). In his life and in his death, Jesus satisfied all the requirements of the law, both its commands and its penalties. It cannot demand anything more.

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Song: Every Promise

By Keith Getty & Stuart Townend © 2005 Thankyou Music (Adm. by Integrity Music)

From the breaking of the dawn
To the setting of the sun,
I will stand on every promise of Your word.
Words of power, strong to save,
That will never pass away,
I will stand on every promise of Your word.
For Your covenant is sure,
And on this I am secure,
I can stand on every promise of Your word.

When I stumble and I sin,
Condemnation pressing in,
I will stand on every promise of Your word.
You are faithful to forgive,
That in freedom I might live,
So I stand on every promise of Your word.
Guilt to innocence restored:
You remember sins no more!
So I'll stand on every promise of Your word.

When I'm faced with anguished choice,
I will listen for Your voice,
And I'll stand on every promise of Your word.
Through this dark and troubled land
You will guide me with your hand
As I stand on every promise of Your word.
And you've promised to complete
Every work begun in me,
So I'll stand on every promise of Your word.

Hope that lifts me from despair,
Love that casts out every fear,
As I stand on every promise of Your word.
Not forsaken, not alone,
For the Comforter has come,
And I stand on every promise of Your word.
Grace sufficient, grace for me,
Grace for all who will believe,
We will stand on every promise of Your word.

Prayer:

Lord thank you that there is no condemnation for me, and that I am set free from sin and death, by your Spirit.

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Monday 27 June. Romans 8 verses 4-11. Life in the Spirit

Paul then tells us that Christians “do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit” (verse 4). We do not set our minds on what the flesh wants, “but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires” (verse 5). We are not perfect, but as we are led by the Spirit, we think and do the things of God.

Before we came to believe, our minds were headed for death. The unconverted mind “is hostile to God. It does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so.” It is rebellious and disobedient. Paul concludes, “Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God” (verses 6-8).

Things to think about

- In what way does the Spirit “control” our minds? (verse 6)
- When the pain of past sin haunts you, how should you respond?

But now, we “are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ” (verse 9). The Holy Spirit lives in and guides everyone who belongs to Christ, and “the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace” (verse 6). If we don’t even *want* to live right, we do not belong to Christ (in the sense that Paul is using it here; everything belongs to Christ in another sense).

Our old bodies are dead because of sin, and they received their wages on the cross (6:2-6). In Christ, though, we have new life — “If Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness” (8:10). Because Christ is righteous, and we are in him, the Spirit gives us life.

“And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead [i.e., the Father] will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit, who lives in you” (verse 11). God will also raise us, if his Spirit is living in us, leading us, motivating us. Our bodies will be raised like his — immortal, incorruptible and glorious. The Holy Spirit plays an essential role in our salvation.

Song: Breathe on me breath of God

By Edwin Hatch (1878)

Breathe on me, Breath of God, fill me with life anew,
that I may love the way you love, and do what you would do.

Breathe on me, Breath of God, until my heart is pure,
until my will is one with yours, to do and to endure.

Breathe on me, Breath of God, so shall I never die,
but live with you the perfect life for all eternity.

Remember a promise

- The Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead lives in, and is energizing __(your name)__
(v. 11)

Prayer:

Help me, Lord, to so live by the Spirit that I may walk with the Spirit.

(Galatians 5:25)

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Tues 28 June. Romans 8 verses 12-17. Our obligation

“Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation,” Paul says (verse 12). It is not to live according to the flesh, for if we do that, we will die (verse 13). Paul does not directly say what our obligation is, but his contrast implies that we are obligated to live according to the Spirit of God. There is no ultimate penalty for failures, Paul says in verse 1, but the obligation still remains: “if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live” (verse 13). We are called to serve the Spirit, not the flesh. We are commanded to serve God, not self. We are commanded to resist sin, to put misdeeds to death.

Things to think about

- How do we get the ability to put our misdeeds to death? (verse 13)

The old person is condemned; the new person is not. Therefore, we want to spend as much of life as we can in the new. Whatever we do according to the sinful flesh will die, but whatever we do in obedience to God will be of eternal value. The more we reject sin and the more we obey God, the more we are really alive. “For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God” (verse 14). If we are in Christ, we are guided by the Spirit into a life that pleases God. Our obedience is led by the Spirit; we cannot take credit for it. Paul says that the life he has now is Christ in him (Galatians 2:20); Paul cannot take credit for the work that Christ does in him (Romans 15:18).

The Spirit does not enslave us or frighten us with threats of condemnation, but gives us a secure membership in God’s family: “So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God’s Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, ‘Abba, Father.’ For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God’s children” (verses 15-16, New Living Translation).

Things to think about

- When we call God “Father,” do we feel fear, duty, or privilege? (verse 16).

Since God’s Spirit lives in us, we can confidently call God our Father — and this has important implications. “If we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ...” (verse 17). This means an assurance of salvation and an assurance of glory — but it also means that we suffer, as Jesus did. “...if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.”

When our lives are placed in Christ, then we share in his life, both the good and the bad. We share in his sufferings, in his death, in his righteousness and in his resurrection. As God’s children, we are co-heirs with Christ, sharing in who he is and what he has done. We are united with him — forever in glory!

Things to think about

- What do you see as your personal benefit to being a co-heir with Christ?

Song: Abba Father

By Dave Bilborough © 1997 Kingsway's Thankyou Music

Abba Father, let me be
Yours and Yours alone
May my will forever be
Ever more Your own
Never let my heart grow cold
Never let me go
Abba Father, let me be
Yours and Yours alone

Remember a promise

- _(your name)_ is led by God and thus is a child of God (v. 14)
- _(your name)_ can call God "Abba" or Daddy! (v. 15)
- Through Christ _(your name)_ is an heir of God, inheriting divine blessings (v. 17)

Prayer:

Thank You, Father, that by grace through faith I have become Your child

(Ephesians 2:8).

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The Certainty of God's Love

Throughout the book of Romans, Paul has argued that God counts us as righteous because of what Christ has done. Even though we sometimes sin, those sins are counted against the old self that was crucified with Christ; our sins do not count against who we are in Christ. We have an obligation to fight sin — not in order to be saved, but because we are already children of God. In the last part of chapter 8, Paul turns his attention to our glorious future.

Wed 29 June. Romans 8 verses 18-21. All creation is waiting for us

The Christian life is not easy. Fighting sin is not easy. Enduring persecution is not easy. Coping with day-to-day life in a fallen world, with corruptible bodies, has its difficulties. Nevertheless, Paul says, “our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us” (verse 18). Just as there was for Jesus, there is joy set before us — a future so wonderful that our current trials will seem minor.

Things to think about

- How do you envision the glory that will be revealed in us? (verse 18) What will we be like?
- Where do you see first fruits of the Spirit in your life? How does that translate into hope for you?

But we are not the only ones who will benefit. Paul says that there is a cosmic significance to God's plan being worked out in us: “For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed” (verse 19). The creation not only wants to see us in glory — the creation itself will also be blessed with change when God's plan is brought to completion, as Paul says in the next verses: “For the creation was subjected to frustration...in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God” (verses 20-21).

The creation is now in decay, but that is not the way it is supposed to be. But at the resurrection, when we are given the glory that rightly belongs to God's children, the universe will somehow be freed from its bondage, too. The entire universe has been redeemed by the work of Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:19-20).

Song: All creation is a song

By Graham Kendrick and Paul Baloche © 2005 Integrity's Hosanna Music/Thank You Music

All creation is a song
Waiting to be sung
All of nature like a prayer
Waiting for a tongue
For who will give it voice
And make its anthem ring
Or rise to lead a choir
Of all created things?
Lord hear your people sing

Blessing honour glory power
To Creations' King
Songs of earth and songs of heaven
Join as one to bring
Blessing honour glory power
To Creations' King

All the nations are a song
Waiting to be sung
Every instrument and voice
Created for the One
The Maker of all things
The Majesty above
Who bought us back from death
With such a costly love
What praise could be enough?

Prayer

We thank you, our Father, for these mighty promises.

We know that one day these words, which are essentially forms and empty sounds to us, will be filled with a content that is beyond description. You will astonish our minds and our hearts by what you have prepared.

We pray that we may understand this, and thus be able to endure patiently and with thanksgiving what we are going through now, knowing that it is the very suffering that is working and producing the glory.

We ask in Jesus' name, Amen.

Thu 30 June. Romans 8 verses 22-27. Waiting patiently

Even though the price has already been paid, we do not yet see everything the way God wants it. “The whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time” (Romans 8:22). The creation is burdened, as if in pain, as it forms the womb in which we are being birthed. Not only that, “but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies” (verse 23). Even though we have been given the Holy Spirit as an advance payment of salvation, we also struggle, for our salvation is not yet complete. We struggle with sin, we struggle with physical limitations, pain and sorrow — even while we rejoice in what Christ has done for us.

Salvation means that our bodies will be made new, no longer subject to decay (1 Corinthians 15:53), and transformed into glory. The physical world is not junk that must be tossed aside — God made it good, and he will make it good again. We do not know how bodies are resurrected, nor the physics of the renewed universe, but we can trust the Creator to complete his work.

We do not yet see a perfect creation, neither in space nor on earth nor in our own bodies, but we are confident that it will be transformed. As Paul says: “For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently” (Romans 8:24-25).

We wait, with both patience and eagerness, for the resurrection of our bodies, when our adoption will be completed. We live in the situation of “already but not yet”: already redeemed, but not yet completely redeemed. We are already freed from condemnation, but not yet completely freed from sin. We are already in the kingdom, but it is not yet in its fullness. We live with aspects of the age to come, even as we struggle with aspects of the old age.

“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans” (verse 26). God knows our limitations and frustrations. He knows that our flesh is weak even when our spirit is willing, so his Spirit intercedes for us, even for needs that cannot be put into words.

Things to think about

- How much groaning do we do, and how much does the Spirit intercede for us? (verses 23, 26).

God’s Spirit does not remove our weakness, but helps us in our weakness. He bridges the gap between old and new, between what we see and what he has declared us to be. For example, we sin even though we want to do righteousness (7:14-25). We see sin in our lives, but God declares us righteous, because God sees the end result even while the process has just begun.

Despite the discrepancy between what we see and what we want, we can be confident that the Holy Spirit does what we cannot. He will see us through. “He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in

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accordance with the will of God” (8:27). The Holy Spirit is on our side, helping us, so we can be confident!

Song: Holy Spirit we welcome you

By Chris Bowater © 1986 Sovereign Lifestyle Music

Holy Spirit, we welcome You
Holy Spirit, we welcome You
Move among us with holy fire
As we lay aside all earthly desires
Hands reach out and our hearts aspire
Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit
Holy Spirit, we welcome You

Holy Spirit, we welcome You
Holy Spirit, we welcome You
Let the breeze of Your presence blow
That Your children here might truly know
How to move in the Spirit's flow
Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit
Holy Spirit, we welcome You

Holy Spirit, we welcome You
Holy Spirit, we welcome You
Please accomplish in me today
Some new work of loving grace, I pray
Unreservedly have Your way
Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit
Holy Spirit, we welcome You

Remember a promise

- (your name) 's body will be redeemed, set free and made whole (v. 23)
- The Spirit helps (your name) 's weaknesses with intercessions from deep inside (v. 26)

Prayer:

Thank You, Lord, that by Your indwelling Holy Spirit I am “sealed for the day of redemption”

(Ephesians 4:30).

Fri 1 July. Romans 8 verses 28-30. Called according to his purpose

Even despite our trials, our weakness and our sins, “we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” (verse 28). God does not cause all things, but he allows them, and works with them for his purpose. He has a plan for us, and we can be confident that he will complete his work in us (Philippians 1:6).

God planned in advance that we should become like his Son, Jesus Christ. So he called us through the gospel, justified us through his Son, and united us with him in his glory: “For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified” (Romans 8:29-30).

The meaning of *foreknowledge* and *predestination* is vigorously debated, and this verse does not resolve the debate, for Paul is not focusing on these words here (nor does he elsewhere). Paul is not commenting, for example, on whether God allows people to refuse the glory he has planned for them. Paul’s purpose here, as he nears the climax of his presentation of the gospel, is to assure readers that they do not need to worry about their salvation. If they want it, they’ll get it. And for rhetorical effect, Paul speaks even of being *glorified* in the past tense. It is as good as done. Even though we have struggles in this life, we can count on glory in the next life.

Things to think about

- Would Paul agree that God works for the good even in cases of child sex abuse, terrorism and genocide? (verse 28).

Song: Praise to the Lord

By Joachim Neander(1680) trans. Catherine Winkworth (1863)

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!
O my soul, praise him, for he is your health and salvation!
Come, all who hear; now to his temple draw near,
join me in glad adoration.

Praise to the Lord, above all things so wondrously reigning;
sheltering you under his wings, and so gently sustaining!
Have you not seen all that is needful has been
sent by his gracious ordaining?

Praise to the Lord, who will prosper your work and defend you;
surely his goodness and mercy shall daily attend you.
Ponder anew what the Almighty can do,
if with his love he befriends you.

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Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore him!
All that has life and breath, come now with praises before him.
Let the Amen sound from his people again;
gladly forever adore him.

Remember a promise

- All things work together for the good of _(your name)_ who loves God and is called according to his purpose (v. 28)
- God takes initiative to know, guide, call, justify, and glorify _(your name)_, helping _(your name)_ to become more and more like Jesus (v. 29-30)

Prayer

Thank you, Lord, that having begun a good work in me, You will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ

(Philippians 1:6)

Sat 2 July. Romans 8 verses 31-39. More than conquerors

“What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all — how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?” (verses 31-32). If God went so far as to give us his Son even when we were sinners, we can be sure that he will give us everything else that we need to make it. We can be sure that he is not going to get angry at us and take away his offer.

“Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies” (verse 33). On the day of judgment, no one can accuse us, for God has declared us not guilty. No one can condemn us, for Christ our Savior is interceding for us: “Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died — more than that, who was raised to life — is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us” (verse 34). We have not just a sacrifice for our sins, but also a living Savior who continues to help us in our journey toward glory.

Paul’s rhetorical skill shines in the stirring climax of the chapter: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: ‘For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered’” (verses 35-37, quoting Psalm 44:22). Can our troubles separate us from God? If we are killed for the faith, have we lost the battle?

Absolutely not, Paul says: “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.” Even in pain and suffering, we are not losers — we are better than conquerors, because we share in the victory of Jesus Christ. Our prize — our inheritance — is the eternal glory of God! The prize is infinitely greater than the cost.

“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (verses 38-39). Nothing can separate us from the plan that God has for us. Absolutely nothing can separate us from his love! We can be confident in the salvation he has given us.

Things to think about

- God loves everyone, but does everyone love him? He will always love us (verse 39), but will we always love him?
- Go on and read Psalm 23 as your faith statement of Romans 8:31 - 39

Song: O love that will not let me go

By George Matheson

O love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe,
that in thine ocean depths its flow may richer, fuller be.

O light that followest all my way,
I yield my flickering torch to thee;
my heart restores its borrowed ray,
that in thy sunshine's blaze its day may brighter, fairer be.

O joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
and feel the promise is not vain that morn shall tearless be.

O cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
and from the ground there blossoms red life that shall endless be.

Remember a promise

- If God is for (your name) then who can be against (your name) ? (v. 31)
- In all things (your name) is more than a conqueror through Christ's love (v. 37)
- Nothing – absolutely nothing! – can separate (your name) from the love God that is in Christ (v. 38-39).

Prayer:

Make me an instrument of your peace, Lord, that others may take courage through my faith witness.
Amen