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Romans 8

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Romans 8.

Topics.

- Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?
- God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do.
- Walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.
- All who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.
- The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we God's children.
- The creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the Sons of God.
- The Spirit helps us in our weakness by interceding for us.
- All things work for good, for those called according to God's purpose.
- That Christ might be the firstborn among many brothers.
- If God is for us, who can be against us?
- Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

The previous chapter: Paul's focus in the previous chapter was upon the struggle those in Christ experience between the mind and the flesh, it was on the desire of those in Christ to do right and yet find that within their members there is a power that stops them from attaining to the holiness and perfection they desire. Paul wrote about his battle between his mind and his flesh a new life in the Spirit and explained how sin through the law declares him guilty and condemns him to death. He spoke about a law that is operating in his body that wars against the law of his mind and ends the chapter by saying, "It is no-longer I who transgresses the law, but sin that dwells within me, O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?"

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

ROMANS 8:1-4

Are we to continue in Sin that Grace may Abound?

- **Romans 8:1-4:** There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ²For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. ³For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Remember this is a letter Paul is writing to the Christian brothers in Rome.

The law of sin and death states:

- The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23).

The law of the Spirit of life states:

- The free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 6:23).

The condemnation Paul is referring to is condemnation to death. The Scripture states "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:23), since all mankind comes from Adam, we are all infected with a cancerous virus called sin from the day we are born, no-one is exempt from this insidious disorder. Imbedded in our fallen corrupted human nature are sinful dysfunctions and aberrations (i.e., selfishness, ego, pride, greed, jealousy, lustful thoughts and envy) to name just a few. These limit all of us from attaining to the perfection of God's Holy standard, we all transgress God's Law and therefore are legally and rightfully condemned by it since the Scripture states "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23) and this universal law is carved into our DNA. Sadly, not even the knife of the most skilled surgeon can remove this menacing virus called sin which dooms us all before the Holiness of God's law. Since Adam is the earthly father of all humanity our human nature is infected with this sinister defect the Bible calls sin. This aberration or entity (sometimes personified as the devil) infects our thoughts and attitudes toward those things that are against the law of love and against God's Holiness and therefore we all fall short of the perfection of the law and the glory of God, and because of this treacherous incurable virus we are all separated from God and doomed to death with all its miseries. But there is Good News the law of the Spirit of life sets those in Christ free from "The law of sin and death" (v2) which states those who sin must die whereas the law of the Spirit states:

- The free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom 6:23).

This law means that those in Christ are set free from the condemnation of the law which has legal right to sentence us all to death. This is because the faith they have in the Lord Jesus Christ sets them free from the law of Sin and Death. God counts their faith in Christ as their righteousness totally apart from law and so by faith those in Christ are majestically and eternally set free from the law of Sin and Death.

God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: (v3) these words," mean that the law is righteous perfect and holy, but because of the sinful dysfunctions and aberrations imbedded in our corrupted fallen human nature no-one standing on planet earth is able to attain to its holy and perfect standard and in this sense it is weakened from achieving righteousness within the human race. But, God knowing our hopelessness to attain to the perfection of the law has overcome the dysfunctions and aberrations that limit us from attaining to the high demands of the law by sending his own Son the Lord Jesus Christ in our likeness and by offering him up as a sinless sacrifice for all mankind and by his death condemned that entity called sin that is imbedded in our fallen corrupted human nature. This means that sin is condemned from robbing those in Christ from eternal life. Therefore, whoever trusts in the Lord Jesus Christ is set free from the law of Sin and Death (which legally condemns us all too eternal death) since God counts the faith of those in Christ as their righteousness totally apart from the law. This is the majestic glory of the Good News of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ which is gloriously summed up in the following words of Jesus himself:

- God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

Walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit: Paul's words, "That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit (v4) means righteousness does not come by self-effort, (i.e., striving to keep the law and the customs of Moses or the traditions of the Jewish nation), but rather by faith in Christ. Walking according to the flesh in this context refers to anything we may do in an attempt to earn our own righteousness which is totally futile since we only have to fail in one part of the law and we are guilty of breaking it and therefore legally condemned by it. The following is a simple example of the futility of trying to earn our own righteousness, it is pointless for a man who is standing in a courtroom before a judge condemned of murder to attempt to use all the good things

he has done throughout his life as his defence since the one act of murder overrides the fact he may have saved many people throughout his life. Likewise the law of God works in the same way it demands we keep it in every detail before it will declare us innocent and the devastating truth is that it is impossible for any human to attain to that holy standard of perfection because of the sinful dysfunctions and aberrations that our fallen human nature has been infected with. The law of God demands we keep it in every detail before it will declare us innocent, we cannot stand before it and plead our innocence on the bases that we have spent most of our life doing good, since under law we only have to commit one crime (i.e., on sin) for it to declare us guilty no matter how much good we have done previously. Walking according to the Spirit in this context refers to trusting in Christ for our righteousness contrasted in trusting in our own self-efforts. Here is the glory, the power and overwhelming beauty of the Gospel God freely and majestically crowns and robes us with righteousness because of our faith in His Son. (Romans 8:1-4).

ROMANS 8:5-11

To set the Mind on the Flesh is Death, to set it on the Spirit is Life.

- **Romans 8:5-11:** For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. ⁶To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. ⁸Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. ⁹You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹If the Spirit of him 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 dwells in you.

Remember Paul is writing a letter to the Jewish Christian brothers in Rome, who have been indoctrinated with keeping Moses Law, its customs and the Jewish traditions, one of Paul's greatest battles was with Jewish brothers that though they believed in Christ they also believed they had to maintain Moses Law, keep the covenant of circumcision and holy days etc., to be saved. They were setting their minds on the flesh (i.e., self-effort to be made righteous) rather than setting their minds on the Spirit (i.e. faith) since it is our faith in Christ that God counts as our righteousness and not any self-effort, we might in vain attempt to do.

Setting the mind on the flesh is death, but setting it on the Spirit is life: the words, "To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace" (v6) means whoever thinks they can become righteousness in themselves through self-effort, adhering to ceremonial rites, holy days and keeping religious customs and traditions upholding laws, practising good works, attending church meeting and Bible classes etc., will be horribly disappointed since God counts none of these things as making us righteous. Obviously, many of these things are good in themselves, but not one of them has any power to save us to eternal life. The words:

- The mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law.

Refer to those who trust in their own righteousness to save them rather than submitting to God's law of righteousness that comes through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Those in the flesh refer to those who deny Christ and trust in their own self-efforts, but no-matter what they do they cannot please God since His entire plan of salvation for mankind is through His Son therefore setting the mind on the Spirit is about trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for our righteousness, it is faith that God counts as our righteousness not self-effort.

You are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God dwells in you: The words, "You, however, are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you" (v9) means that those who are trusting in Christ for their righteousness are not in the flesh meaning that they are not walking according to their own natural thinking, but are in the Spirit because of their faith and it is by this faith that the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ dwells in them and they are counted righteous therefore the words, "Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him" (v9) refers to those who instead of trusting in Christ for their righteousness are trusting in their own self-efforts.

The moment a Christian begins to trust in their-own good works is the moment they nullify everything Christ achieved for them on the cross.

Through sin the body is dead through righteousness the Spirit is life: the words, "If Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness" (v10) means that those who are trusting in Christ for their righteousness even though their body is decaying and doomed to mortal death, they will be raised to eternal life because of the righteousness God freely imputes to them because of their faith in His Son.

NOTICE: Paul often uses the word 'if' in this letter; this no-doubt is because he is writing to Jewish brothers and obviously would not know who amongst them is trusting in Moses law and circumcision etc., for their righteousness and who is fully submitted in faith to the law of righteousness that comes by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ thus the reason Paul uses the word 'if' so often.

The words:

- If the Spirit of him 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 dwells in you (v11).

Means whoever is trusting in Christ for their righteousness has God's Spirit dwelling in them and therefore just as God raised Christ from the dead to everlasting life and eternal glory God will also raise those who are by faith in Christ. This is the glory, the splendour and royal majesty of the Good News of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. God's simple and magnificent plan of salvation puts every man and woman on a level playing field, since eternal life is not dependent on our birthright, whether we are rich or poor, successful in this life or a failure whether we live in beautiful homes or are a beggar on the street, we all have to come to God in the same way, (i.e., humble repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ) there is no other path to attain to righteousness that leads to everlasting life and eternal glory.

ROMANS 8:12-17

All who are Led by the Spirit of God are Sons of God.

- **Romans 8:12-17:** So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. ¹³For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. ¹⁵For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" ¹⁶The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

Abba: (pater) refers to a father as a parent.

Adoption: means to be placed as a son in respect to God.

The context in these verses is being led by the spirit and falling back into fear which refers to being enticed back under the law to attain to righteousness because it is the law that puts a person in fear since it demands perfection and no-human can attain to it, no-matter how hard they try it is never enough, this is why there is fear. Therefore, the words:

- If you live according to the flesh you will die (v13).

Mean if you continue to try and earn your own righteousness through adhering to ceremonial rites, holy days and keeping the law, religious customs and traditions etc., you will die while the words:

- Put to death the deeds of the body and you will live (v13).

Mean stop trying to earn your own righteousness and be led by the spirit (i.e., trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for righteousness and you will live) eternally because whoever trusts in Christ is a son of God.

The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God: (v16) these words refer to that Spirit in the heart that longs to be in relationship to God and the Lord Jesus Christ and desires to bring honour to God and to Christ it is this desire that testifies that we belong to God's family since there is nothing in fallen corrupted human nature that desires to live worthy before God or honour the name of the Lord Jesus Christ thus this very desire shows that we have the Spirit of God dwelling in us and that we belong to the Lord's family.

NOTE: some may read the word, "Put to death the deeds of the body, you will live (v13) to mean overcome everything sinful in the flesh, but the last three chapters have been focused on the impossibility of achieving this, and without Christ no-one will live eternally no matter how many sins they conquer since it is never enough.

Added to this Paul begins these verses by saying, "Those in Christ are no-longer debtors to the flesh" implying they don't owe the flesh anything, meaning they can stop trying to earn righteousness by their own self-effort and attempting to control or bring the flesh into submission since though they might succeed for a moment the flesh will break forth if not in that area certainly in some other form that proves selfishness, pride, ego, greed, envy, anger, jealousy, lustful thoughts etc., are all still very much alive in our fallen corrupted human nature.

This is why before the law we are always guilty and condemned to death, it is only by being led by the Spirit, meaning by the Good News of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ which states those who trust in him are set free from the law of Sin and Death because God counts their faith as their righteousness and not the deeds of the flesh. Those who come to God through humble repentance and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ receive the Spirit of God and His love which produces a heartfelt desire to honour God's name and reflect the life of Christ (howbeit not perfectly), it is from this desire and this love they aim to overcome those attitudes and actions that are offensive to God and manifest those that reflect the life of Jesus, but this is not what saves them to eternal life, it is simply and outward evidence that they have been saved and have received in the heart that Spirit of God that cries Abba Father.

Salvation and rewards: Paul throughout this letter is magnifying and exalting above all other doctrine and teachings that righteousness that leads to eternal life is a free and pure gift and all it needs for anyone to receive it is, faith, in God's most beloved Son. No-doubt because the Jew have been so indoctrinated in circumcision, Moses Law and customs and keeping them Paul is shining a floodlight on the majestic glory of the Good News of the Gospel which proclaims, God has set us all free from our own self-efforts and instead counts our faith as our righteousness such is the abundant grace of God.

Salvation and rewards: it, is probably at this point I should do as Paul often does and raise the following question that maybe on some people's mind:

- But what about those that do make great sacrifices and those that don't?

Sadly (from my experience at least) it seems much of the mindset of today's Christianity (in all denominations) links rewards to Salvation, whereas salvation is an absolute free gift, but rewards are a totally different topic. Obviously I would expect someone who has given their life to totally serving God at great sacrifice to their own well-being and comfort or even been martyred for the Lord to receive a greater reward and I would be thrilled that they did, but even these we cannot know because we don't understand the motive of a person's heart for doing such a thing, (i.e. was it for their own glory or for God), how blessed we are that God who sees the heart is the judge and not us and though we are all saved to eternal life by faith God who is the just judge will reward our faith in the eternal Kingdom accordingly.

Paul in his letter to the Corinthians wrote:

- No one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, they will receive a reward, but if anyone's work is burned up, they will suffer loss, though they themselves will be saved, but only as through fire (1 Cor. 3:11-15)

These verses shine a brilliant spotlight upon the truth that righteousness that leads to eternal life is a free gift and that rewards are a totally separate issue to salvation. Whoever belongs to Christ will be saved to eternal life, but not all who are saved to eternal life will have rewards stored up in heaven, in fact the heavenly storehouse of some will be so empty they will suffer some form of loss.

6

Natural human limitations: though those in Christ have God's Spirit dwelling within their heart desiring to honour God and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are all still infected by Adam our father's corrupted human nature with its sinful dysfunctions and aberrations thus the reason Paul when calling the Jewish brothers in Rome to a higher standard of living concluded by telling them that he was speaking in human terms, because of their natural limitations. (Rom. 6:19) meaning he understood that though we desire to be perfect before God there are certain dysfunctions and aberrations imbedded in our fallen nature that will prevent us from achieving the standard we desire and that the law demands.

ROMANS 8:18-23

The Creation waits with r Longing for the Revealing of God's Sons.

- **Romans 8:18-23:** For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. ¹⁹For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope ²¹that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²²For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. ²³And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

The previous verses ended with the words, "God who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life (eternal) to your mortal bodies" (v11). In this context Paul is saying that no matter how much sickness, heartache,

emotional hurt, persecution his mortal body may suffer while he lives on earth, none of it can be compared to the eternal glory that God will reveal to him and by extension to all those in Christ.

NOTE: the closet I can come to mentally and emotionally comprehending this reality, is when I think of the enormous labour pain a woman suffers just prior to giving birth and that miraculous moment when a new life appears and she is holding that new born child in her arms. In that miraculous moment her facial expressions of agony and pain suddenly change and her eyes and her smile instantaneously radiates tears of overflowing joy and love, such will be that miraculous day when God reveals to us all the wonder and majestic splendour of everlasting life and eternal glory.

Creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay: how marvellous and awe-inspiring is this, not only will we receive immortality and eternal life, but all of creation which at the moment is like our mortal bodies on a path of decay, will itself be restored to its former glory. Based on (Isaiah 65:25) I expect it will again be populated with all kinds of harmless animals and an abundance of brilliantly coloured flowers, trees and birds wherever one looks with fresh flowing streams running where there once was desert places. Eternal glory will be a feast for the eyes, an ongoing delight to the taste buds and a place where weapons of war will be replaced by farming equipment and sorrow and pain replaced with joy and laughter.

The revealing of the Sons of God: (v19) Paul personifies God's entire creation (from the fall of Adam) as a pregnant woman groaning in pain waiting to give birth to the sons and daughters of God and those who are the sons and daughters of God also groaning within themselves with excitement as they wait for the adoption and redemption of their bodies (v22-23) which will with awe-inspiring power take place at the resurrection when the Lord returns in spectacular and awesome power and glory as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy city Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during his glorious millennial reign. In the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-5) the dead in Christ and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth. Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God. The book of Revelation states:

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that:

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in

certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev. 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory. For further information see titles:

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

ROMANS 8:24-27

The Spirit intercedes for the Saints according to the Will of God.

- **Romans 8:24-27:** For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. ²⁶Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. ²⁷And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

The hope in focus here is the following glorious hope Paul spoke of in the previous verses, it includes:

- The glory that God is going to reveal to those in Christ
- The manifestation of the sons and daughters of God
- The restoration of all creation to its former glory (v18-23).

8

When salvation to eternal life is spoken of as the hope of the faithful in Christ, it is not called hope because it might or might not happen, but because it is unseen and yet future. The hope itself is guaranteed because it is based on God's promise and he cannot lie (Rom. 8:24). The apostle Paul wrote:

- In hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, Promised before the ages began" (Titus 1:2).

The Christian hopes to be resurrected from the grave to be raised up to eternal life and everlasting glory to be made perfectly free from sin; to be everlastingly happy, but it is faith that gives these things a mental reality in the mind and it is under this influence of faith that those in Christ allow these unseen and yet future events to control their mind as if they were a reality now. Years ago, a Christian lady said to me, "I feel like I am treading water until Christ returns." In a sense this is what Paul is saying in the words, "We wait with patience for the hope that we do not see." The hope of course is the return of the Lord Jesus Christ since his return is the event that triggers the resurrection and the restoration of God's creation.

Spirit helps us in our weakness by interceding for us:

Groaning: means to be in difficulty, a crisis, distress or a dilemma it carries the idea of praying with an inaudible mummer or to sighing and moaning in a long low cry of grief while expressing pain and misery.

Intercede: means to negotiate or arbitrate (in favour of or against) it carries the idea of making a thing ready or bringing it to pass with the idea of affecting a goal to be reached. The words:

- The Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groaning's too deep for words (v26).

The key words here are weakness and groaning's this is because weakness refers to our inability to conquer all sin because our corrupted body has been infected with sinful dysfunctions and aberrations that hinder and limit us from attaining to the perfect demands of the law and the Holiness of God. While groaning's carries the idea of those in Christ feeling a deep sorrow and mourning over this inability to stand perfect before the law and before God. The words:

- The Spirit himself intercedes for us.

Carry the idea that the Spirit knows our heart and our mind and is able to see beyond our failings and intercede for us before God according to His will, which of course is that those who belong to the Lord Jesus Christ will be saved to eternal life in spite of the fact they cannot overcome the sinful aberrations and dysfunctions that we all struggle with. This means that even though God sees our weakness and inability to attain to the perfection of the law and the Holiness of God we are nevertheless counted as righteous because of the Spirit of Christ that dwells within us and declares us righteous before the throne of God because of our faith since it is our faith that is counted as righteousness and not our works.

ROMANS 8:28-30

All things Work for Good, for those called to God's Purpose.

- **Romans 8:28-30:** And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰And those whom he predestined he also called and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Called: means to be invited, given an invitation or to be appointed to a task and called according to God's purpose means called according to God's plan of salvation.

Foreknew: means to know a thing beforehand.

Predestined: means to declare or determine a thing in advance.

Conformed: means similarly formed by association or companionship.

Image: refers to a likeness or resemblance of a statue or profile it carries the idea of the faintness of a copy.

Those who God loves: refer to God's faithful living during the era of the Old Testament who believed in the promised coming Messiah the Christ and those who believe that he came and died and rose again for these people all things work together for good because they are in the will of God and part of His eternal plan.

NOTE: it is important to understand that the words, "Those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son" (v29) does not mean God predestines certain people to be saved and others to be doomed, but it does mean that God predestined those who do believe in Christ to be conformed to his image meaning to live a lifestyle that reflects the life of the Lord Jesus Christ.

That Christ might be the firstborn among many brothers: the words, "That he might be the firstborn among many brothers" (v29) refers to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, firstborn carries the thought of being raised from death (i.e., born into a new immortal and eternal life) this is how God sees death for those in Christ, not as an end or darkness, but a birth into a new life that far exceeds any life we can experience this side of death. Sadly, this beautiful and awe-inspiring concept of death is very much lacking in the minds of many Christians today. Certainly, there

is always going to be overwhelming grief and sadness when a loved one dies for those who remain since they are going to be denied the love of the one passed onto glory. But to be excessively grieved for those who have been born into a world of immortality, majestic glory and awe-inspiring wonder that we cannot imagine seems to portray to me (perhaps I am mistaken) a lack of comprehension in the magnificent splendour of the royal and eternal glory brothers and sisters in Christ are by death being birthed into.

Those whom God predestined, He also called: the words, “Those who God predestined he also called and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified” (v30). At first glance does sound as though God has predestined some people to be saved and others to be condemned, but to understand this we need to focus on the key word which in this verse is foreknew. God is that awesome He already knows the end game for our lives and for the history of all mankind. He does not predestine certain people to be saved, but he does know by His foreknowledge who will respond to the call of the Good News of the Gospel and has predestined that they will be justified, and glorified.

ROMANS 8:31-34

If God is for Us, Who can Be Against Us?

- **Romans 8:31-34:** What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³²He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ³³Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

The words, “If God is for us, who can be against us?” (v31) should joyfully overwhelm everyone who trusts in Christ and comfort and excite them almost beyond what human emotions can cope with. If you are in Christ God's eternal favour is toward you. Ponder for a moment; if the Most Holy and awe-inspiring God of all creation did not spare His only beloved Son to save you while you were a sinner will He not give you all things concerning salvation now you are devoted to His Son and love him. All things in this context refer to all things regarding eternal life (i.e., grace, mercy, justification and forgiveness etc.), Paul is saying God will give those in Christ all that they need to enter into eternal life and everlasting glory. The Message Bible states it this way:

- God didn't hesitate to put everything on the line for us, embracing our condition and exposing Himself to the worst by sending his Son, is there anything else he wouldn't gladly do to save us.”

Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies: (v33) These words, are enormously powerful and comforting words since they mean no human has the power to condemn anyone who is trusting in Christ. Following are at two obvious reasons for this:

1. Not one of us can stand before God free of sin since we are all infected with sinful dysfunctions and aberrations in our human nature that prevent us from attaining to the perfect standard the law demands and therefore all of us fall short of God's glory.
2. Not one of us know the heart of another (i.e. their past indoctrinations, their family condition, their health or financial struggles, the lack of love they may have experienced, the rejection of family or friends, verbal, sexual, or physical abuses or the hurt that they keep hidden in the heart), only God knows all these things and therefore only He is able to judge the sincerity and honesty of those who are trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ.

A typical example of this maybe a young mother who loves Christ and has two children, but happens to be living in a third world country, she has no hope of a job, no social security and no-one with money to help her, so to provide food for her children she against everything that is in her sells her body, this woman is suffering beyond what most of us can imagine, but most religious people would look to her outward behaviour and condemn her as a gross sinner, but God sees the brokenness of the heart, the motivation to lay her own dignity aside to save the life of her children. This is the reason we cannot condemn anyone who is faithfully trusting in Christ, and even more so if we are not prepared to step in and do whatever is necessary to rescue them from what we might be condemning them for. God has not called brothers and sisters in Christ to judge the salvation of those who are struggling to overcome behaviours or habits that they are trapped in for reasons we may not understand rather those in Christ are called to encourage and show grace and mercy and when they are able help those in troubling circumstances and leave the judging to eternal life or death to the Lord Jesus Christ.

A natural example: only God can know what the motivation of the heart is. Consider a pastor of a major church who has tremendous success, a congregation of thousands and many being saved and the cleaning ladies who faithfully clean the church after every meeting. The pastor because of his great gifts receives fame, money, power, self-importance and great esteem whereas the cleaning ladies receive none of these things, in fact in some cases no-one even notices them. Now if we were to judge by outward appearance most of us would exalt the pastor above the ladies, but we cannot know if the pastor is in the ministry to serves self, (i.e., for the fame, money, power and importance) or to serve God, depending on the inward motivation of the heart he and the cleaning ladies will be rewarded accordingly and it is certain that in some cases the humble ladies will be exalted above their pastor, minister or priest. This is why no brother or sister in Christ should judge the salvation of another but leave that judgement to the Lord of Glory who we will all stand before to give an account of ourselves and not of others.

NOTE; the power and beauty of the Good News of the Gospel, is that it is the Spirit of saves in spite of the motivation of another, it matters not what the motivation of a preacher is if he is proclaiming the Good News of the Gospel and there happens to be honest hearts in the assembly seeking God He by His Spirit will respond accordingly even though the preacher maybe ministering for his own selfish gain. This is because God will respond to a heart that has the right attitude and save that person since God's eternal word is not bound or limited by another person's wrong heart attitudes and motivations.

ROMANS 8:35-39

Who shall Separate us from the Love of Christ?

- **Romans 8:35-39:** Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul in these verses is saying that no matter what the apostles (and by extension all who belong to Christ), suffer whether it be troubles of life, rejection of friendships, a failing business, a broken marriage, living on the breadline, living in danger or facing persecution or a terminal disease none of it will separate them from the love of God that they experience through their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This means that the only thing that has any power to cause God the Father and His Son to withdraw their

favour and eternal saving grace from us is our own deliberate and conscious rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Providing we do not throw away our faith in Christ we are more than conquerors in spite of our sinful dysfunctions and aberrations dwelling within and regardless of whatever may come against us. The only thing that can separate those in Christ from the love of God is our own unbelief.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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