

More Than Conquerors

Romans 8

Through the Spirit—God’s gift to us in the gospel—we truly have life. It was impossible for the law to give us life because our sin nature couldn’t obey it. God did the impossible for us by sending his Son to suffer the law’s condemnation in our place and to free us to live according to the Spirit. There are only two possible worldviews. The one is determined by the sinful nature. The other by the Spirit. The sinful nature cannot please God, cannot keep the law, and in fact hates God. But those who have the Spirit live by the Spirit and are led by the Spirit. We received the Spirit that makes us God’s Sons. He empowers our prayers; he testifies that we are God’s children; he assures us that we are God’s heirs. Our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the future glory. Yes now we along with all creation groan as we wait for our sonship to be revealed in the glorious resurrection. Yet even in this in-between time, the Spirit helps us with our weakness, groaning within our hearts those inexpressible prayers which the Father understands. Even now we know that all things work for our good. He who chose us before the world began will bring us safely to glory. God is for us! Who can be against us? In all things we more than conquer through him who loved us.

1. Study Romans 8:1-11

We have life even though our flesh dies

- ✓ Remember the heart cry with which Paul ended his previous remarks (7:24-25). In the light of this, why are Paul’s words in 8:1 so comforting? Consider:
 - i. “No condemnation” = complete pardon
 - ii. “Now...”
- ✓ vv. 2-3: Paul “plays” with the word “law” again. In verse 2 it probably means something like “the controlling authority.” In verse 3 it refers to God’s moral will
- ✓ vv.3-4: What was impossible for the law to accomplish? Why? How did God do the impossible? Notice that Jesus’ mission was not just to create us to exist, but to do, to live, to walk (a literal translation: “live” = “walk”)
- ✓ vv 5-11 Paul contrasts two worldviews or ways of thinking. The one characterized by ‘flesh’ (sinful mind), the other characterized by the ‘spirit’ (or Spirit). Draw out the contrasts between the two:

2. Study Romans 8:12-17

- ✓ vv. 12-13 What is still a very real and very terrifying possibility for a Christian?

“We have an obligation” We owe God a life!

- ✓ v. 14-15 uses the language of being sons and legal heirs. A slave cannot inherit anything. Only your legal son can. A slave was completely under the will of his master. A master could even kill his slave if he wanted to, and slaves were often subjected to cruel beatings.

In Roman society, one could adopt a person as one’s heir. All former relationships were cancelled, and the adoptee enjoyed full family rights. Octavius (better known to us as Caesar Augustus) was not Julius Caesar’s son. But when Julius Caesar’s will was read in which the great man adopted Octavius as his son, he was thereafter known as Octavianus Caesar—Caesar’s son and heir in every respect.

“By him we cry, ‘Abba, Father!’” The word for ‘cry’ refers to a heartcry: an exclamation that is pulled from our lips by love. “Abba” is an Aramaic word the Christian community learned from Jesus.

- ✓ v. 16 “the Spirit testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children,” there are two witnesses here: the Holy Spirit (who works through the gospel to give his testimony) and my spirit (or my new self of faith, who is created by the gospel). Both give their witness that I am in fact God’s “child”. In this verse the term in Greek is not the same as in verses 15-17. The word here is the word for birth child and emphasizes the unchangeable nature of this relationship.
- ✓ v. 17 Note the pattern of the Christian life. It is always through sufferings to glory. We will most certainly inherit, no question about that. But we’re not in heaven yet, and there’s a time of suffering we must endure.

3. Study Romans 8:18-27:

We Rise Above Our Present Troubles

- ✓ v. 18 A/D Paul is trivializing the pain and suffering we go through in life.
- ✓ vv. 19-22 What rather surprising truth does Paul teach us here?

Many people think that Christianity is advocating a spirituality that somehow is too holy to be involved in the physical world. In this powerful personification, Paul sees creation itself joining with us in expressing a yearning for the transformations Jesus will bring.

Notice that Paul doesn’t ever really describe the future glory except in terms of the present yearning, the present groaning.

Note the expression “as in the pains of childbirth”—why is this such a powerful metaphor for the kind of pain we feel in a sin-sick world?

- ✓ v. 26-27 What ever-present companion do we have in our present state of weakness? What great comfort does this offer us in our

prayer life?

4. Study Romans 8:28-39

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- ✓ vv. 28-30 “all things work for good”—a statement Paul proves by pointing first to the Christian’s election. God chose us from eternity. He called us to faith in time. He justified us by faith in time. We can be so certain of the future glory that Paul can even refer to it in the past tense “...he glorified.” It’s a done deal, because what God has promised is as good as done. Our salvation is secure because it’s all in God’s hands.
- ✓ vv. 31-39 “all things work for good”—a statement Paul also confirms by talking about the unconquerable nature of God’s love.

- ✓ First he points to the nature of the love: “he did not spare his own Son...” What kind of argument is this?

- ✓ Then he asks a series of questions, all of which finally lead him to say, “I am convinced that neither...”

| | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| death | life |
| rulers above | rulers below |
| present | future |
| any kind of power | |
| height | depth |

anything else in all creation
(10 in all)

...can separate us from this powerful love. God has gripped us now and will never let us go. In all these things we are more than conquerors through Christ.