

“Word on Wednesday Bible Study”

“Righteousness: The Power of God’s Spirit”

Romans 8:1-39

Minister Perseus Poku

January 22, 2025

Date of Writing: Circa 57 AD

Location: Paul wrote this letter in Corinth.

Target audience: Jewish and Gentile Christians living in Rome

Theme: The Righteousness of God

The apostle Paul opens by expressing his desire to visit Rome that he may share the gospel with them. Paul attempts to instruct the church about righteousness versus sinfulness. The epistle to the Romans is a manual on how a Christian should live. Paul instructs the believers in Rome that Christians cannot do everything they want to do. It is a calling and a challenge to live according to Godly precepts. Christian author Max Lucado, writes the following regarding the book of Romans:

In this profound epistle, Paul explores all the wrong options and takes us to the only correct one. The wrong solutions are pleasure and pride (chapters 1 and 2); the correction solution is Christ Jesus (3:21-26). According to Paul, we are saved by grace (undeserved, unearned favor), through faith (complete trust) in Jesus and his work.¹

Chapter 8

Romans 8 is without doubt one of the best known, best loved chapters of the Bible. In Romans 7 Paul has been preoccupied with the place of the law, in Romans 8 his preoccupation is with the work of the Spirit. In chapter 7 the law and its synonyms were mentioned some thirty-one times, but the Holy Spirit only once (6), whereas in the first twenty-seven verses of chapter 8 he is referred to nineteen times by name. The essential contrast which Paul paints is between the weakness of the law and the power of the Spirit.²

¹ Max Lucado, *Romans* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007), vi.

² John R. Stott, *The Message of Romans* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 216.

Paul let us know that we are free from the internal sin. Christ has made us free from the law which leads to death. In addition, the insufficiency of the law was made sufficient through the atonement.

Moreover, Paul states that through Christ, the righteous requirement of the law was fulfilled in believers. In addition, he (Paul) continues to compare and contrast behavior under the law versus those under the Spirit. The apostle highlights the following (vv. 1-8):

- ✓ Those who live according to the flesh, have their minds set on the flesh.
- ✓ To be carnally minded is death.
- ✓ The carnal mind is enmity against God and is not subject to the law of God.
- ✓ Those that are in the flesh cannot please God.
- ✓ Those who live according to the Spirit, have their minds set on the Spirit.
- ✓ To be spiritually minded is life and peace.

After juxtaposing the actions of those who live by the law versus those who live under the Spirit, Paul makes a bold statement. He states that if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His (vs. 9). This statement alone obliterate the false argument that all religions lead to the same God. In addition, Paul let us know that the Holy Spirit was instrumental in the resurrection of Jesus (vs. 11). Scripture is clear that all three persons of the trinity were part of the resurrection (the Father, Son, & Holy Spirit).

Paul further states that we are indebted to Christ not the flesh. The sons or children of God are those who put to death the deeds of the body. In addition, Paul states that believers are heirs. Through the blood of Christ we have been adopted by the Father with full privileges. We are joint heirs with Christ. This is a pleasant and humbling thought. However, Paul argues that this reality is contingent. If we suffer with Him, we may be glorified with Him. Again, the apostle tackles this false doctrine that Christians will not suffer or endure hardship.

One of the many false doctrines regarding this issue stems from the prosperity movement. There were some in this heretical group who preached that if a Christian became ill it was due to their lack of faith. Paul's writing demonstrates that this is not necessarily the case. You can be devout, full of faith and still get sick. Paul himself who had the gift of healing left his friend Trophimus sick. The short answer is not complicated. It is up to God who He selects to heal physically. Healing is never up to the saint but to the creator. God promise spiritual healing for all who accept Christ. However, he never makes this claim for physical healing.

This chapter also informs us of another reality (vv. 18-25). Creation was damaged by the fall. Paul writes that creation groans and experiences birth pains. Just like it was not the original plan

for women to experience pain during birth (Gen. 3:16), nature was painless or perfect in the beginning. All of this changed when sin came into the world.

Paul also addresses pneumatology (the study of the Holy Spirit). The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is often misunderstood by many church members. It is the apostle's goal to address one of the actual ministries of the Spirit. He interprets our prayers and groans. In other words, when we are not making sense in our prayers, the Holy Spirit can discern our intent and translate it to the Father. In addition, He (the Holy Spirit) makes intercession for the saints according to His will (vs. 27).

Verse 28 highlights another popular verse in Christianity. Paul writes:

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” Paul is basically stating that because of our connection to God, when things are not right He will cause it (the situation) to work out for our good (vs. 28).

In verse 29, Paul talks about God's foreknowledge. His ability to see the future, present and past at the same time. In this case Paul states that God knew before who would be called according to His purpose. This verse is often part of the discussion as it relates to pre-destination. There are those on one spectrum who argue that because God knows who is going to accept Him, those people have no choice. As a result, there is no need to evangelize (e.g. hyper Calvinism). Conversely, there are those who argue that man's will is the more vital ingredient in someone getting saved. The aforementioned views are two extremes. The Scriptures teaches us that we are chosen by God but yet free in our ability to deny Him. God desires for humanity to freely choose Him without compulsion. The reality is He knows who those people who will choose Him.

Finally, Paul let us know about God's divine protection and assurance. Once God is for us that is more than anything in the world that comes against us. In addition, Paul chose the word “election” to identify our calling in relationship to justification. Justification deals with God seeing us as righteous because of the work Jesus has done. Who are God's elect? Paul answers that God's elect are those who have been justified. Moreover, no one can separate us from the love of God. This passage alludes to the security of the believer. Jesus himself said the following:

“I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one.”-John 10:38

Paul reinforces the aforementioned verse. The believer who has authentically professed Christ cannot lose their salvation. The primary reason is because salvation is based on God's power to save and not us. Paul writes:

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?-vs. 35

Paul emphatically states that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. In order to prove his point he again cites an Old Testament verse:

“Yet for Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.”- Psalm 44:22

This chapter concludes with good news. Despite the suffering and challenges that we have to face as believers. We are more than conquerors. The final verdict is nothing or no one can separate us from the love of Christ including the following:

- ✓ Death
- ✓ Life
- ✓ Angels
- ✓ Principalities
- ✓ Things to come
- ✓ Height
- ✓ Depth
- ✓ Any created things