

# DARTMOUTH BIBLE NOTES

FROM THE TEACHING MINISTRIES OF  
DARTMOUTH BIBLE CHURCH



Series: Exposition of Romans 8  
Romans 8:1

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.  
Lesson 1 August 21st, 1994

## *Fleeing to Romans 8*

**Introduction** Do you feel a need to know more about the Holy Spirit? First maybe we should ask, just who *is* The Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead. The Bible says that there is one God and that He is made up of three distinct persons: one essence, three persons. The Holy Spirit is the third person. He is just like God the Father and God the Son, but His role is different. The Bible has a great deal to say *about* God's Spirit, and in fact, this piece of Christian theology is perhaps the most controversial among Christians themselves in this century. So, again: do you feel a need to know more about the Holy Spirit? If you are a Christian, do you feel a need to not only know more about Him but to *sense* God's Spirit working in your life?

By my count, the Holy Spirit is mentioned seventeen times in the eighth chapter of Romans; more times than in any other single chapter of Scripture. In my own Christian life I have found myself *fleeing* to Romans 8 regularly, when various pressures or emotional stress start to trouble me. The Christian life is a battle; no--it's a *war*. And sometimes I get weary, do you? There are certain passages in Scripture that are well worn in my Bible; that I have run to often. And some of you at this point may know very little about the Holy Spirit. You may be like those Ephesian believers in Acts 19 who said to Paul *We have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit*. But all true believers in Christ *have* the Holy Spirit whether they know much *about* Him or not.

I love this chapter, and I have felt the need to bring it to you this summer and early Fall. Ten years ago I taught through this Book, verse-by-verse in adult Sunday School. Four years ago I spent some weeks going through Romans 5 with you, and we have studied Romans 12 as well. Now I think it would be good to look at Romans 8, called by some the "crown jewel" of the "crown of the New Testament," that being the Book of Romans itself. There is a great deal in this chapter. I am a little fearful, frankly, to preach it--it contains "meat", not "milk". If you are "hungry" for meat, then I am going to do my best in coming weeks to feed you. But as we go through this chapter I want to ask you to *pray*. Pray that the very Spirit that we will be talking about will burn this chapter into your heart. Ask God to make this chapter and all its truths alive to you and not just doctrine. Of yes, there's lots

of doctrine here. But I ask you to pray that more than your MINDS will be touched in the coming weeks. I ask you to pray that your hearts, your emotions and feelings about Christ, your affections and your decision-making, your WILLS will be dramatically affected. Don't ask God to make me, as your preacher, a great entertainer from the pulpit--because I don't think He is going to do that. Pray that as YOU encounter Romans 8 in the coming weeks, that His Spirit will move you and move you profoundly.

**The Background of Romans 8** Romans 8 contains thirty-nine verses written by the apostle Paul in the middle of this great letter to the first-century Christians over in Rome. The eighth chapter comes after the first seven chapters. In a sense I am doing an injustice to you by attempting this chapter with out first going through chapters 1-7. There is much there to feast on, but I feel an urgency to get to this chapter and to do it now. But let me make a couple of comments about what comes before chapter 8.

It was the winter of the years AD 54-55 in the city of Corinth, the vanity fair of the ancient world, the Paris of the first century. Two quiet and dignified men, guests in the house of Gaius, a Christian businessman of Corinth, sat down to engage in the work of correspondence. Paul, the older of the two, a man who appeared to be in his late fifties, prepared to dictate a letter to the younger man, whose name was Tertius. That papyrus scroll which flowed from the hand of Tertius would be sufficient to change the course of the history of the western world.

S. Lewis Johnson, *Sermon on Romans 1* 7-13-80

The theme of the book is found in 1:16,17. The theme is the righteousness of God which is revealed in the Gospel. Any person--any person at all--who understands himself to be a sinner can receive the very righteousness of Christ which will make him completely acceptable to God. Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel because it was all about the work of Jesus Christ for sinners. The Gospel is not about man's power; it's not about preacher-power or the power of churches. The Gospel is not about drugging people into doing what you want them to do (as Karl Marx believed). It isn't about money. It isn't about self-esteem. It isn't about feeling good about yourself. It isn't about becoming prosperous. It is about God's power to change lives, when it is accepted by faith. God's power in Christ can lay hold of drifting, purposeless individuals and give them purpose, drive and meaning. It has the power to free men from sin, self and hell. The Christ of the Gospel delivers people! That's what the Gospel is about! It's about genuinely changed lives; lives now empowered by GOD to live righteously.

In the first part of the book down to 3:21, Paul speaks of man's NEED of righteousness. The things he says about man's need of righteousness may not be "politically correct" today, but they are true nonetheless.

At the end of chapter 3 (21-26) he <sup>speaks</sup> of how God has made PROVISION of righteousness.

In chapter 4 he tells of how God's righteousness is RECEIVED BY FAITH (*do you understand this?*).

In chapter 5 he tells us that God's righteousness, received by faith, is found ONLY IN CHRIST.

In chapter 6 he says that God's holiness and righteousness can ACTUALLY BE EXPERIENCED progressively in a person's life. It is not just *theory*. You can actually see it happening in your own heart and mind and decisions and speech and actions.

But in chapter 7 he is very careful to point out that it cannot be experienced by self-effort. Then if it doesn't happen by my own effort how CAN it happen?

That brings us to chapter 8 where we begin today, the righteousness of Christ can only be experienced BY MEANS OF the precious Holy Spirit, Himself, working in our lives.

**Verse 1** So when we come to 8:1 and we read *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus*. In the Greek it is more blunt and more simple than that (8 words to 13 in English). "**NO condemnation then now [for] those in Christ Jesus**". "Because of all I've said, my Roman brethren, about what God has accomplished through the completed work of His Son, Jesus, there isn't any condemnation now. None at all..." *(My expanded translation)*

As we used to say in the 50's and 60's, can you "dig" it? It's incredible! If this is all true, then there isn't any damnation coming for me! The theologian Karl Barth wrote of this verse "we have touched the torpedo-fish and are benumbed." Do you feel the gravity of this verse? Because of what GOD has done--and oh yes, dear ones, He IS a doer of things on this planet, despite the attempts of some to dismiss His presence or deny it--because of what GOD has accomplished through that short thirty year time-space ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, on this planet, there is no death-sentence on *those who are in Christ Jesus*. No, he already argued brilliantly that there IS a death-sentence on the race. On everyone in the race. You've got to believe that in order to be rescued from it.

I believe the Lord will say at the judgment day to all who rejected the Gospel, "You cannot blame Me. I warned you of your condition. I diagnosed your disease through my servant Paul. You knew. But you denied being sick. You denied being poisoned. And seeing the remedy before you, you emptied the bottle in the floor. It is tragic, but it is true."

A man, a woman, a child, must understand that they are spiritually ill before a holy God. And they must not just see a *glimpse* of it. They must read the whole diagnosis. They must become terrified at the disease. They must be told what *condemnation* is ahead. This is a word most of us might find hard to relate to. In Greek it is the word *katakrima* (κατακριμα) which means a "judicial pronouncement" of punishment [Moulton/Milligan 327].

Unless you have heard the words in a court of law "guilty--your sentence is \_\_\_" it is hard to really understand the word *katakrima*.

But once a person is made to be aware, to understand the terror of their state in sin, THEN they can be told that there is a cure.

And <sup>dear ones,</sup> it is a complete and permanent cure.

And it is a cure that costs nothing. There is no deductible. There is no co-payment. It is free of charge; theirs for the asking.

It is Jesus Christ, God's Son, the second person of the Godhead. HE came and took the death-sentence. HE came and suffered complete and total condemnation.

No condemnation means I do not have to fear the future.

It means I do not need to be cynical about this world.

It means I can love people freely, because I have been freely loved by the sin-bearer, God's Son.

It means I can relax. It means I can let joy flow into my heart and then I can give it to others.

Paul says that being free and clear of any pending judgment and condemnation is *for those who are in Christ Jesus*. The negative implication of that phrase is scary. There is no good news for those NOT in Christ Jesus. There is incredible news for those *in Christ Jesus* but for those without the Savior the news is not good, it is frightening.

But anyone can get into *in Christ Jesus*. It isn't just Americans. It isn't just twentieth century Baptists. It isn't just English-speaking people. It isn't just people who can read or who have money or who dress nicely. It can be anyone; anyone at all. The power of God revealed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ is absolutely UNIVERSAL. It is for all; for anyone who will hear it, believe it and receive it. Is that you? It can be and it can be at any time. You cannot earn it. You cannot "ready yourself." You cannot "gear up for it." If you are not "in Christ Jesus" yet, your need is dangerously urgent and it is desperate and it is immediate. And it is fixable immediately, too.

As we close with the hymn *Fairest Lord Jesus* let's worship Him as our Savior who has taken away our sins and who has removed condemnation for us. There can be no more exciting fact in the universe than that!

# DARTMOUTH BIBLE NOTES

FROM THE TEACHING MINISTRIES OF  
DARTMOUTH BIBLE CHURCH



Series: Exposition of Romans 8  
Romans 8:2 ☞

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.  
Lesson 2 Sept. 4th, 1994

## *What the Holy Spirit Has Done*

**Introduction**      The great majority of our population is discussing issues like this:

- How can we guarantee adequate medical care for everyone around?
- What can we do to stem the tide of rising crime?
- Where are our responsibilities to the citizens of Cuba, Haiti, Rwanda, and Bosnia?
- How can I provide the best education possible for my children, when the public schools are deteriorating in the quality of education and ability to provide a safe and wholesome environment?
- Where shall we put that casino, the economic "savior" of our area?

On a little deeper level, many people are asking themselves,

- How can I find a marital partner who will make me happy?
- How can I divide my waking hours up so that I can earn enough money to afford a better lifestyle for me and my family?
- What can I do to make sure the ground water remains pure?

These are the things most people are talking about... By and large, they are *not* talking much about concerns like this:

- Is there just one God?                      Can I know God in a more personal way?
- How do I fall short before a holy God? What is sin?
- Is there a way to overcome sin?
- How should I worship God?              How can I please Him?

They are just not asking those questions--unless someone deliberately poses them to them--or, unless the Holy Spirit *prompts* them to ask them. The cynical have ceased to ask these questions--and unfortunately it is the cynical that control the media, most of the political engines and organizations around, the entire entertainment industry, and sadly much of the whole educational environment.

These questions are not asked and pondered by the cynical and the cynical heavily influence the kinds of things the common "Joe" thinks about...

[The wonderful thing is, that God is sovereign and the Spirit IS moving in the hearts and minds of women and men and children...regardless of whether the newspapers and politicians and business community are asking them.]

With all these other questions confronting us every day it would seem to some other preachers irrelevant for to labor over Romans 8... They work at scraping up little solutions to encourage people with, and trying to bolster and shore up people's confidence and hope in man's ultimate "goodness." They do this sincerely. But they do it in disbelief and really, opposition to, the basic truths of the Bible. The Bible does not say that man is basically good. (They would say that this Bible is wrong here). But the Bible says that man stands condemned in sin before a holy God. The Bible says (and has said so for about three and a half thousand years) that THIS is man's most basic problem. There have always been economic, political, environmental, family, crime, health care and food supply problems. But every man, woman and child faces a far more serious crisis. It is the crisis of standing (and living) before a holy God. "Yes, Virginia, there is a God." And there is only one of them. And He has said that He requires anyone who would live with Him and serve Him to be like He is and that is to BE HOLY. Now, standing before Him would be no problem if we *were* holy. The crisis is that we are not. We think the crisis is AIDS. We think it is jobs. We think it is health care. We think it is national security. Those are all important issues but none of these is the BIG crisis...

People are still hungry, spiritually. And when a person gets hungry and finds his way to the Bible, eventually he will find his way to Romans 8. And in that chapter he will find satisfaction for his deepest hungers. He will find answers for his deepest spiritual questions. And when those hungers are satisfied, the economy, the environment, his social and relational needs, and all the other questions which seemed so urgent are put in perspective.

Now, a person must first realize that he or she stands condemned before a holy God. In essence he or she was born that way. That is Christian Theology "Point Number One." Reject it, or accept it.

By the way, I have often heard people say, "Oh, well, I don't think anyone would stand condemned before God if they didn't go out and actually, themselves, murder or rape or steal (and stealing's not that bad anyway). It's only the baddest of the bad who really stand condemned." To that I would reply "what a low view of sin you have; and I understand that. But it is not God's view of sin. And in the end it is God's view that prevails..."

But if a person accepts it, he doesn't have to be depressed about it too long because the Bible says ***There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus*** (Romans 8:1). Yow! Cool! So then, if I am "in Christ Jesus" then I don't have to dread standing before God? Nope--don't have to dread it. So then, what does being ***in Christ Jesus*** mean? It means you are identified as a member of His "body", the church; that you have personally joined the body of Christ, deliberately, by faith, and that you to this day are completely depending on HIS merit, on HIS work on the cross to gain your forgiveness with God and entrance to heaven. Being ***in Christ Jesus*** means that you have made a commitment to Jesus Christ. It might have been when you were 5 or 15 or 35 or 55. It might have been last week or it might have been thirty five years ago; it makes no difference when you made the decision so long as the decision is still in force!

Now we come to the next verse, Romans 8:2, telling us some more about what happened when you became ***in Christ Jesus***. Dear ones, always notice the words and the grammar of a verse; how it is *structured*. Verse 2 begins with ***FOR***. What's it there for?--to tie it in with the previous verse. ***No condemnation now for those who are in Christ Jesus...FOR...*** There is no condemnation BECAUSE of something the Holy Spirit has done. You see salvation is not something which Jesus and the Father planned and the Spirit sits on the sidelines and just spectates as people are saved. No! There is no condemnation BECAUSE of something which the Spirit Himself did (and *still does*): ***the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death***. There is a certain BONDAGE that all non-Christians are enslaved to--it is the bondage of sin. It's like a law--you must do this. Do what? Sin. Every non-Christian is enslaved by sin; not that every non-Christian sins the same way, amount or with the same frequency. But the basic bondage is the same. The result of being enslaved to sin (which all people are according to the Bible) is death. Ultimately that is why anyone dies. Ultimately that is why there is injury, sickness, war; because of sin. Becoming a real Christian *liberates* a person from that bondage. It doesn't mean that they automatically stop sinning. But they are not bound by the ***law of sin and of death*** anymore. They have been liberated from it. How did that happen, you may ask? The Holy Spirit did that. "Really?" Really. "Are you sure?" The Scripture says it right there. You do not *have to sin* anymore. Oh, you may choose to sin. But you no longer have to.

Notice the contrast between what the Holy Spirit does and what NOT having the Holy Spirit does: ***life or death***. To live as a Christian is the most ALIVE you can

get. To walk with the Lord Jesus Christ by faith (because you can't see Him yet), day in and day out,

even though the battle with the flesh is hard sometimes  
even though we are in a spiritual war with darkness  
even though we may be persecuted sometimes—it is still more ALIVE to walk with Jesus Christ and *find* His will and *DO* His will than any lifestyle a person may choose on the planet.

It's better than making lots of money.

It's better than cocaine.

It's better than liquor.

It's better than rock and roll.

It's better than socialism or communism.

It's better than being a devout Moslem or a devout Hindu or a devout Mormon or a devout Jehovah's Witness or a devout *anything* else...

Don't pass verse 2 by without noticing that to have no sentence of condemnation on your head from God; to LIVE in the liberated state of being *in Christ Jesus*, is to be plugged into the *Spirit of life*. There is no finer place to be in with your life!

There's a lot of "LAW" talk you will notice in this chapter. In verse 3 "the Law" is talking about the Law of Moses, like the Ten Commandments. Many people believe that if they're able to keep the Ten Commandments they will eventually find themselves acceptable before a holy God.

Just this week I was talking with a man who said to me, "I believe in the Ten Commandments. I believe in *Thou shalt not kill*. And I believe that "the man upstairs" (as He referred to the Holy and Living God) will not be mad at me since I believe in *Thou shalt not kill*.

One of you was telling me this week about a relative who was telling you, in no uncertain terms, that God never judges anyone. Period.

Well, we may *wish* that certain things were not law, but that does not make it any less true, just what we whimsically *wish*. There is a certain harsh reality to learning how to deal with God. What He says, just *is*. And here He says that trying to live right, by Moses's standards or whatever will not set a person free from the



curse of bondage to sinning. It is *weak*. It can't do it. It takes a sovereign act of God's own Spirit, who is HOLY, to enable a man, a woman or a child to come alive and really live a life which is pleasing to God.

When I was a kid I tried to be a football player. I was strong and fairly big but I could not run fast at all. Try as I may I was always last. The legs couldn't do it. I could sit there and tell them, "Legs! Get moving" And they would say "we're running as fast as we can." And they looked like they were in slow motion. They were just totally unable to move very fast

The person who does not know the Lord Jesus Christ is completely unable to *live for Christ*. They're enslaved in a state of what theologians call TOTAL INABILITY. If you struggle with that idea look at verse 7. The non-Christian, by nature, has his mind set on the flesh--that's where his priorities are; that's where his real love is; his pride is all-important to him--and he MUST be that way. He is *not even able* to subject himself to the law of God.

And God never intended the Ten Commandments to be the way to get to heaven anyway. It is a guide as to how a BELIEVER should live. Martin Luther said that the whole POINT of the Law is to drive us to the cross of Christ. It is in HIM (as we read in verse 3) that the Law-requirements are fulfilled *for us*. It is in HIM that the judgment problem is taken care of. Oh, make no mistake about it, God is a judging God. That is what the crucifixion is about. It's about OUR judgment! And it is the thing we remind ourselves about when we celebrate--I say *celebrate*--the Lord's table! The Lord's table is about Romans 8:1. The Lord's table is about Romans 8:2,3 and 4! Praise God for what GOD DID, for what we could NOT do, for what the Holy Spirit has done...

# DARTMOUTH BIBLE NOTES

FROM THE TEACHING MINISTRIES OF  
DARTMOUTH BIBLE CHURCH



Series: Exposition of Romans 8  
Romans 8:5-11

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.  
Lesson 3 Sept. 11th, 1994

## *How to Please God*

**Introduction** Let me start today by asking you, "why are you here?" I guess there are a number of reasons, and good ones all: you're here because you like to go to church on Sunday mornings; it feels right and you believe that it is something that a person ought to do. You're maybe here because you enjoy worshipping God in this context, the way we worship. You're maybe here because you enjoy seeing your friends or family, being with them here and worshipping alongside of them. Or maybe you're here because you know that it is good modeling for the kids to see you here and you want *them* to know that you believe in God and that you believe in worship. Or, you might be here because you like the coffee.

I'm real glad you're here--I'm glad to see you! But there is a more pressing reason that we are all here today, I think... We are here fundamentally because we are interested in pleasing God, and because we think that by being here He is honored, He feels loved, He enjoys what we [by faith] are trying our best to give back to Him. You know, each aspect of our "service" [as we call this 8:30 or 11:00 thing] is supposed to contribute to an overall goal of HIM feeling loved and appreciated. There isn't one piece of a worship service that isn't designed to appeal to God and to give Him pleasure. The singing of songs, the prayer, the reading of His Word, the exposition of His Word, the talking to each other--each of these things is supposed to add a little bit to the overall plan of praising Him; of turning our attention to HIS greatness, His love and His promises. And those *promises*, by the way, are a big part of what we're praising Him for!

So, when we come to the "Word portion" of the service and we arrive at Romans 8, we read about "how to please God." In verse 8 we read a blunt statement by Paul, *those who are in the flesh cannot please God*. Oh. So, what does it mean to be *in the flesh*? It means to be controlled by the sinful nature. And we

know that a non-Christian, an unbeliever has no choice but to be in bondage to the sinful nature. He is enslaved to it. But a Christian who gives in to his sin nature is *acting like* the unsaved. Either person--an unsaved person, or a Christian *acting like* an unsaved person--cannot please God. And it doesn't matter if either of these two people is in a church, tithing his money, or doing any number of other individual acts of religious duty, if he is *in the flesh* he **cannot please God**. Evidently the Roman believers were sometimes falling *into the flesh*. We do too, sometimes--some of us are drinkers; some are smokers; some are into pornography; some of you curse and let the cusswords roll or fly. Some are cynical or embittered or resentful type people. Hey--you know what? We're just like the Roman church! We have been *set free from the law of sin and death* but we take little trips BACK INTO sin and death. It's amazing, but we do it--just like the Romans, evidently.

So, if a person cannot please God by being *in the flesh* how CAN he or she please God? Paul tells us by being *in the Spirit*. Remember I told you that Romans 8 is the chapter which most speaks of the Holy Spirit in the whole New Testament. And the reason why knowing about the Holy Spirit is so important is that it is only by walking in the Spirit that we can please God. Do you want to please God? That's a big question. I do not take it for granted that everyone would say, "Yes, of course." But the Bible's message is that PLEASING GOD IS IMPORTANT. The Bible proclaims that

God IS pleasurable!  
 God demands to be pleased.  
 He can only be pleased through the agency of His Son.  
 There are definite WAYS to please Him.

And the most basic method of pleasing God is to walk *in the Spirit*. Now that is *pretty basic* stuff isn't it? You already knew that (or *did* you?) This message is entitled "How to Please God" and here's how: walk in the Spirit.

In the first part of Romans 8 Paul goes back and forth between what it means to be SAVED and what it means to be UNSAVED. I've noticed a number of what we might call *couplets*, or contrasts:

The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus	vs.	the law of sin and death	vss. 2,6
What the Law of Moses could NOT do	vs.	what GOD could and did do	vs. 3
Walking according to the flesh	vs.	walking according to the Spirit	vs. 4
Those who <i>set their minds</i> on the flesh	vs.	those who <i>set their minds</i> on the Spirit	5
Those who cannot please God	vs.	those who can please God	vss. 8,9

Dear ones, this would all be pretty boring if it weren't RIGHT WHERE WE LIVE. Very few Christians have reached a level of maturity where they no longer struggle with the flesh. In fact, if you feel you are in that category then you have reached a *higher* level of maturity than Paul did because if you read Romans 7 you would see that even at this point in his life he still struggled with the flesh. Most of us *struggle* to walk in the Spirit.

We struggle with knowing exactly what it means to walk in the Spirit. We have an intellectual problem--we lack the wisdom we need. Sometimes we are confused because we are taught conflicting theories of how to walk in the Spirit. There are big, huge ministries around the country and even in our area where the Spirit-filled life is depicted as something quite a bit different than what you are taught here. **I find myself jealous for what I believe it DOES mean to walk in the Spirit. I am becoming easily irritated when I hear a preacher or some Bible teacher teach something which I am convinced is in error about how to walk in the Spirit.**

We struggle to walk in the Spirit because the world "has a say" in our lives. Sometimes we listen to what the world has to say and it strengthens the flesh, the old life.

We struggle to walk in the Spirit because we're pretty good at walking in the flesh. So strong are the skills *we have* at living in the flesh that it requires a concentrated effort and a real heart's desire to learn to walk in the Spirit. But that's what we need to do, dear ones. We need to learn what it really means to walk in the Spirit, to live a daily routine which is pleasing to God, and then after we learn what it means, we need to DO it!

Verse 9 is interesting in light of a little piece of background information: "most Jewish people did not claim to have the Spirit; they believed that the Spirit would be made available only in the time of the end..." They believed that "after the Messiah had come, all those who were truly God's people would have the Spirit working in them" [*Bible Background Commentary*, IVP, p. 429]. But we are persuaded that every Christian on the planet--every *true* Christian--HAS the Holy Spirit living right inside him or her, and that this has been true since the Day of Pentecost, AD 30!

that He has purchased with His death on the cross. There is not one person that He has

*PAID* for their sins on Calvary, that He has  
*EMBOSSSED* with His "ID", whose  
names are *ENGRAVED* on the palms of His hands, [to use an OT expression]

that He has NOT baptized with His Spirit and deposited His Spirit into their very bodies (*dwells in you*, vs. 9). This is the doctrine of the "indwelling of the Holy Spirit." Do you know about this? I hope you can see it plainly certified here in Romans 8. Do you know about it in the "laboratory" of your own life? The true believer in Jesus Christ can sense the presence of God in his or her life, by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

We can sense it by the work of comfort we feel from Him,  
and we know it is the Lord...

We can sense it by the work of instruction we feel from Him, as we learn new lessons and gain good spiritual wisdom, and we know it is the Lord...

We can sense it by the work of guidance we feel from Him as we *strain* to hear His voice and leading in various decisions we are contemplating. And when you make a godly, Spirit-led decision, you know it is from the Lord...

We can sense it by the work of conviction we feel from Him--not *condemnation* when we blow it and fall into sin--but conviction as the Spirit grieves over our decision to sin. And there is no mistaking that *this* is from the Lord...

For those of you interested in theology, notice that the entire Trinity is involved in what's going on in our lives--according to the apostle. And the presence of each member of the Trinity in our lives supports the *doctrine* of the Trinity. Many people in the cults would deny the doctrine of the Trinity, but it is pretty plain to me here in Romans 8.

Finally, in verse 11, there's something pretty exciting! Not only does a person become *spiritually* alive when they become a Christian, but in the future they will become *physically* alive even after they've been in the ground or had their atoms flying around in space. This is not all there is! You're going to get a new body from Jesus Christ, and from the Holy Spirit. The Spirit has some role in the resurrection that is yet coming for all of us.

I think the viewpoint that many Christians have today of what the Holy Spirit is doing is so shallow. I think it undervalues the REAL work of the Spirit in the lives of believers. If you run into Christians who tell you that the BIG THING the Spirit of God is doing is to enable people to speak in unintelligible yet ecstatic language, or that He is lengthening legs and curing damaged spinal columns, and that THESE are the exciting things He is doing--you take them to Romans 8 and get them to immerse themselves in THIS chapter. For *here* is the mother lode of what God's Spirit is about.

He enables us to please God!

He gives new life

He totally changes a person's perspective about living.

He gives joy and peace and a new-found ability to be patient, and good.

He imparts faith itself and then nurtures that faith inside me.

These are powerful things and wonderful things; things which we ought to ponder and *have our minds set upon*. If I can walk around and have confidence that my life is basically PLEASING TO GOD because I'm trying to walk in the Spirit, what can go wrong?

He is wonderful and we worship Him for it. His Spirit is precious and we thank Him for it. Let's determine to walk in the Spirit, to try to hear His voice in our lives. Let's focus on doing things, saying things, going places and entertaining ourselves only with things that honor God. Let's take the whole rest of the lot and toss it in the dumpster, what do you say?

# DARTMOUTH BIBLE NOTES

FROM THE TEACHING MINISTRIES OF  
DARTMOUTH BIBLE CHURCH



Series: Exposition of Romans 8  
Romans 8:12-17

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.  
Lesson 4 Sept. 18th, 1994

## *Getting On With Your New Life*

**Introduction** I think life is a series of chapters, each of which ends and another one begins. You emerge from childhood into teenagehood then into young adulthood, and then you make this life-changing decision to spend the rest of your life with a creature called a "spouse" and then, whoa--you've got a little one around, and THAT is certainly a new chapter! And you keep growing older and then one day one of you dies, and THAT is a new chapter. And with each chapter that opens you might feel somewhat bewildered. The bewilderment for many leads to the question, "Is this all there is?" Even as a Christian sooner or later you will likely be struck with the thought, "is this all there is?" You might look around you and wonder, "Is this all I get for the commitment I've made to follow Jesus Christ?" For some of us THIS is pretty good and a whole lot better than THAT which I had before I made a personal commitment to Christ. But for others, before you came to Christ you were fairly moral and upstanding and maybe even a church-going sort of person (whatever *that* is). But most of you will sooner or later wonder if this is all there is... I want to tell you that "NO", this is *not* all there is!

My friend Sandy Young tells the story (which he says he got from Bill Bright) of a couple who scrape and save to buy a ticket to go on an ocean cruise. It took all their money to purchase the ticket and little was left over for buying food. So they bought some Saltine crackers and chicken broth, which was OK for a day or so. But as they saw all that delicious looking food in the galleys and dining room they grew hungrier and hungrier. "We'll do *anything* at all to have some of that food," they told the steward. And he said to them, "But sir and madam! The meals come with the ticket." *Sermon on Romans 8 11-29-92*

God has not just *saved* those who call upon the name of His Son and then left them alone. The salvation we get (receive) from the Lord when we trust Christ is

COMPLETE! It stretched from eternity past, down TO that day when you made a commitment to Christ ("justification"), on through this Christian life you're attempting to live *now* ("sanctification") and on to eternity future ("glorification"). J.Sidlow Baxter once said, *What God chooses, He cleanses; what God cleanses, He molds; what God molds, He fills; what God fills, He uses...*

So today I want to talk to you about GETTING ON WITH THE NEW LIFE. If you have come to the place in your spiritual life where you know for certain that you are a Christian, you *own* Christ in your heart and you know that the Holy Spirit is working in your life, then you have what we call "new life."

Now, the old life and the flesh seem pretty strong some times. And it is a continuing battle to put down the flesh. But we are not *slaves* to the flesh any more (vs. 12). And we need to DECLARE that fact on a daily basis, privately, to ourselves, and before the Lord. Everyone is *under obligation* to something--either to the flesh or to the Lord. If we walk *according to the Holy Spirit* then what HE leads us to do is to *put to death the deeds of the body* and this infuses us with life (vs. 13). In the Greek this *put to death* is a very strong word and it is just one word: *thanatoute* [θανατούτε], which speaks of a determined and single-minded PROCESS of putting something to death. "Progressively killing the old nature before it kills you" (Elwell, *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*).

You see, we are teamed up with the Holy Spirit in the work He wants to do in our lives. He leads us, we put to death the deeds of the body. Notice that we are not told to put to death the *desires* of the body, but the deeds. I think most of the basic desires we experience are *autonomic*. They just *happen*. But we are the ones who CHOOSE to carry out a desire and mature it into a DEED. In Colossians 3:5 Paul wrote this to that church: *Therefore consider the members of your earthly body AS DEAD to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire and greed, which amounts to idolatry*. We are talking about a sub-category of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, what we call the doctrine of the "mortification of the flesh."

I talked with Lou Parascand this week, and I asked him if he has heard of the phenomenon of "holy laughter." This is something which is getting some attention among Christians right now, and it is claimed to be a new evidence of the working of the Holy Spirit. As Lou and I talked about it, his comment was something I appreciated and I think is biblical--it is what I am saying today: if you want to claim "revival" at the hands of God's Spirit, then show us changed lives. Show us where a person has been freshly putting to death the deeds of



the flesh for Paul says the sons of God are being led of the Spirit in this way-- by the mortification of the flesh.

This is a way you can tell if you're really a Christian or not, too. What do you really want? Do you WANT more holiness in your life? Are you willing to go to battle against those fleshly deeds that might spring forth, and sometimes do? What is your *attitude* about these things? Do we live for today or do we live for tomorrow? Is this all there is, or is there more coming?

Then Paul talks about our IDENTITY in Christ. Yes, dear ones, there is *indeed* more to come! We are not left alone to live the Christian life. We each have a down-payment left with us by the Lord and that is His Spirit. The doctrine of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is a wonderful doctrine. In verse 14 we are told that even as we feel the leading of the Holy Spirit--and primarily that is in the area of the "mortification of the flesh"--we are experiencing the very IDENTIFYING WORK of being in God's family.

What are the evidences that you are you? Your driver's license usually works. Or these days a credit card might be requested. Or in really important situations you may be asked to produce a birth certificate. And that *really* shows that you're YOU. But when it comes to the question "who are you spiritually, vs. 14 says the child of God can point to the work of the Holy Spirit and how He has been leading them in the work of mortification. It is most assuredly NOT a braggy thing. But it is a definite thing.

In vs. 15 we are told that we have not just been put on the block in yet another slave market and sold from one harsh master to another, a picture that all too many of Paul's original readers here could understand. No, we have NOW been bought, yes, but brought INTO the family.

It is the picture of a slave, poor, ragged clothes, downcast brought into the mansion, *outrigged with the family's finest!* And invited to sit in the most comfortable chair. And the family documents are brought out of the safe and this person's name is inked into every line of inheritance, every clause of privilege and also every point of family responsibility. It is BELONGING! Whereas one hour before he was a downcast, ragged, poor, pitiable nobody, now he is a thoroughly credentialed brother and heir of the family.

I like the name of our youth group, *Heirborne*. I like it because it sounds cool, but I like it more because it is radically theological! It reminds of the central

truth of who we are in Jesus Christ, God's own sons and daughters. Now, WE didn't dream this up. It is what the Bible plainly says; how about that!

Also in vs. 15 Paul says, "And another thing--" As children of God, now, you are not a foster child. You are an *adopted* child. There is a big difference, and I know some of you know better than I how big a difference there is. I like Peterson's rendition (*The Message*) of vs. 15: *What's next, Papa?*

When I was growing up I was the only kid in the house. And at Christmas time my folks had this little saying they used to get me all cranked up, "You ain't seen nothin' yet!" And it worked! I would unwrap one present and *wow, THAT's pretty cool*. And they would say, "you ain't seen nothin' yet." And then another and *WOW, THAT's even cooler*. And they would say "you ain't seen nothin' yet," and they were right! And then the climax, and *WOW!* And dear ones, that is the deal here in Romans 8. We've got new life now, and we ain't seen *NOTHIN'* yet!

It is a significant theological point and should not be overlooked that the word *Abba* that Paul authorizes us to use in addressing our Heavenly Father, actually means *Papa* or maybe *Daddy*. This is not just some cutesey ditty, this is an important part of New Testament theology! Our identity in Christ is very important. In vs. 16 again, the Holy Spirit is mentioned--*the Spirit Himself...God HIMSELF* confirms our identity. And how does He do it? This is one of the most mystical verses in the whole Bible! But first, notice that it is entirely possible that Paul is alluding to a Roman adoption ceremony wherein there needed to be witnesses to verify that the legal adoption had indeed taken place... It would be a fitting analogy for Paul to draw! But the Spirit confirms in some marvelous way for the Christian, coming alongside him in his own heart and conscience (*our spirit*) that we are *INDEED* God's children.

What a fabulous thing, dear ones! We do not need to be defeated by the abiding reality of our sin natures. Yes, it's still there and will be until I die. But *THIS IS NOT ALL THERE IS!* Verse 17 says there is more--so *MUCH* more that I do not feel even *remotely* qualified to preach about it! Christians, the Book of Romans says, are fellow-heirs with Jesus Christ Himself. We are recipients of *ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS NOW* and in the future [you ain't seen nothing yet!] we will *SHARE WITH THE LORD JESUS* all the riches of God's kingdom.

But he also says that we must suffer with Christ now, too. We must ride into battle with Him and risk what He risked. The new life that He gives us is superb. But as His fellow-heirs we must ride into battle alongside of Him. We must be willing to suffer whatever battle He leads us into. Are you up for it, dear ones?

# DARTMOUTH BIBLE NOTES

FROM THE TEACHING MINISTRIES OF  
DARTMOUTH BIBLE CHURCH



Series: Exposition of Romans 8  
Romans 8:18-25

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.  
Lesson 5 Oct. 9th, 1994

## *This is Not All There Is*

**Introduction** Satan tells a lot of lies. If you had to guess about what is the greatest lie that Satan has spread in the minds of people, what lie would you select? Would you vote for this one?: "Jesus is not really God." Or how about this one: "You can get to heaven by doing enough good works." I would like to take a stab at what I think the most destructive and clever lie of Satan's, at least in *this* era, would be... I think it is this one: "This is all there is." Coming to believe (as many people today have and are now communicating this to their children), that this life is all there is and that there is nothing *after* this life and therefore there is no need to feel accountable to anything or anyone has a full-effect for destruction on people's minds. Satan loves it. I think he chuckles when modern thinkers and hipsters pronounce that we are basically just super-complex monkeys, scrabbling around for as much miserable comfort and pleasure as we can muster. Let 'em smoke junk, Let 'em copulate, Let 'em drink some beers, Let 'em gamble--we're all just baboons anyway, with a few more convolutions. "We HAVE no significance!" Now, no professor with any discretion would actually *say* that--but the rock and roll song-writers have more courage, I think. They write songs of pointless despair and meaningless hedonism because they discern the message the thinkers are preaching. *They capiche!* (And they know there's money to be made on it...) Satan just laughs, I think. And he says to himself, "I've got them right where I want them. They think this is all there is."

**Romans 8** But Romans 8 blows him away. Because Romans 8 says IN NO UNCERTAIN TERMS that this is *NOT* all there is. And do you know what? I don't think that people *really* want to believe that this is all there is, do you? Even among the thinkers and hipsters who like to *toy* with "this-is-all-there-is" propositions, I don't really think most of them *want* to believe that. And if people make their way

to Romans 8, they find the **notification** that this is not all there is. There is more here "than meets the eye." And, there is more coming--a GREAT DEAL more coming!

Now we want to consider verses 18-25 today. And the first thing I would like you to notice is that the term ***the creation*** is used four times in these verses. It is the Greek word KTISIS [κτισις] and here it means everything that God sovereignly created. That includes the earth and everything on it and in it as well as the rest of the physical universe. So, the first evidence in this passage that "this is not all there is", is that there is more to everything around us than meets the eye. To say that it all just happened without a Creator--that it created itself--is really just a colossally *stupid* thing to say. In reality the sun, the moon, the planets, the stars, the ground, the plants, the atmosphere, the chemicals, the electricity, the people, the basic elements that we love to *make* stuff out of, all of this was created out of nothing by God. How did He do it? He just *said* it. Amazing--He just *spoke* it into existence. The NT Book of Hebrews opens up with some interesting words: ***God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things THROUGH WHOM ALSO HE MADE THE WORLD*** (Hebrews 1:1,2). The Creator is none other than Jesus Himself. The Son of God made creation. He designed it. He drew up the plans. Then He spoke it into existence. Dear ones, THAT is Theology 101. Everything that you see, everything that IS, everything that happens has behind it a divine planner. The planner is Jesus Christ. And when He inspired, through His Spirit, his apostle--Paul--to write this letter to the Roman Church, He inspired Paul to talk about how the CREATION--the KTISIS--has been affected by mankind. We are talking about the biggest, baddest environmental issue of all time. We're talking about an issue bigger than Mt. St. Helens. We're talking about an environmental issue bigger than Hurricane Andrew. We're even talking about an environmental issue bigger than the Flood. We are talking about a problem THRUST upon the environment by mankind, the likes of which the environment labors under every day and in every place. We'll get into this more in a minute or two...

But to start out in verse 18 we read that, in Paul's opinion, the stuff we have to put up with in this life is not to be compared to the good stuff that is coming. This is not all there is. A state of ***glory*** is coming when the fact that you were a Christian in THIS life is going to be fully revealed. ***When Christ, Who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him IN GLORY*** (Col. 3:4). Off in the future some place--I can't tell you when--will be an unveiling, a revealing, curtain-time, when everyone and everything is going to see the full picture. This is

not all there is, dear ones, oh no. And *glory* is something we're going to be participating in. *Glory* is a word I do not quite have a handle on. It means the "outshining of all the magnificence and power and beauty and excellence that God is." But I can scarcely guess what that means. Maybe it's something like what Peter and James and John saw on the mount of transfiguration (Matt. 17). But it is coming. And whatever we have to suffer, to endure, to put up with here, is NOTHING compared to what is coming. Now, I don't think Paul means so much things like backaches and credit-damage and rusting floorboards and baldness. I think he is talking about things like persecution, and being chased because he preached the Gospel and people were responding which put the crimp on the local merchants profit margin. And being beaten. And being mistaken for being a false prophet. Things like that. In any case *whatever* we must endure for the sake of Christ is NOTHING compared to what is coming. This is not all there is.

It's going to be like that film that the Smithsonian Institute used to show, something like *To the Tenth Power* where a man lying on a blanket is photographed at 10 feet and then at  $10^2$  feet (100'), then at  $10^3$  feet (1000') then at  $10^4$  feet (10,000') then at  $10^5$  feet (100,000') and so forth all the way to  $10^{10}$  feet which is like from Mars or something (actually it would be 1,893,939 miles away wherever *that* is). That's the idea in verse 18. The *sufferings of this present time* will be like  $10^{-10}$  when Jesus returns. Do you believe that?

And in the next four verses (vss. 19-22) Paul tells us that the whole creation itself awaits this unveiling event. God has set a point in time when TIME as know it will change. We are going to reach the end of this age. Time is not just going to go on interminably, and people evolving into bigger people and space flight introducing us to Vulcans and Romulans and whatever, and on and on off into infinity with no overall plan or God who controls the way the New Agers dream. Not going to happen.

Nope. In fact, in reality--if we cared to see it--the whole creation has been "bent" by sin, damaged by mankind's sin and now is sitting in the "ER" awaiting treatment! And in the whole creation there is an excited HOPE brewing--a quiet tingling as if everyone really *knows* privately that this is not all there is! You know, this is really what we call a "Christian world view." Have you heard that term? Probably everyone has *some* world-view, some basic interpretation of what life means and what existence means. It's not the kind of thing that you think about every day, or the guy across the street thinks about every day. But it is THERE. And the Christian's basic world-view is stated for us here in Romans 8.

We view the whole planet as heading towards an appointed end in history, an end that will be brought upon us by Jesus Christ, Himself. And the metaphor Paul uses (that comes out nicely in Peterson's *Message* rendition of the passage on the bulletin back) is a picture of a woman approaching childbirth. As time draws near, there is an anxious and *accelerated* expectation. There are pains, closer and closer together, and there is much excitement.

In verse 23 we read something about the Holy Spirit. Whatever you notice about how the Spirit works in your life today is just a little piece of the "full package" that you are going to experience in the future. The *first fruits* idea is the idea of a small part of the offering that the OT saints would bring to worship. It wasn't the whole thing--just the first part of the harvested crops. What we enjoy now in the Spirit is only a DEPOSIT, a DOWN-PAYMENT of what is coming. This is not all there is. *Oh what a foretaste of glory divine.*

Paul says believers *groan within ourselves* like a mother in transition. The pain is real. The pain is great. There is one focus--MAKE IT HAPPEN! That's how Paul says we feel about what is coming. MAKE IT HAPPEN. *Even so, come quickly Lord Jesus.*

# DARTMOUTH BIBLE NOTES

FROM THE TEACHING MINISTRIES OF  
DARTMOUTH BIBLE CHURCH



Series: Exposition of Romans 8  
Romans 8:23-27

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.  
Lesson 6 Oct. 16th, 1994

## *The Spirit's "Mystical" Work in the True Believer*

**Introduction** In my humble opinion, the section before us today in Romans 8 is one of the most wonderful and intriguing passages in the whole Bible. As we have said, in addition to whatever else you might find in Romans 8, you find a great deal of truth about the Holy Spirit. He is mentioned about twenty times in the chapter and you get the impression that God wants us to be well-acquainted with Him, and to discern clearly HOW HE WORKS in the lives of Christian believers.

This chapter makes my greatest problems endurable!  
It makes my routine problems ridiculous.

For in these few verses we are given a glimpse at the *deep work* of God's precious Spirit in the hearts and minds of people. As you look at these verses you may ask yourself,

"How do I *know* these things are real?"

"How can I tell that He is, indeed, doing these things in me?"

"Does the Lord *really* understand my needs and how I feel?"

And do you know what? I don't have any simple, clipped, 3-step answers to those questions. For those are some of the deepest and most intimate and most spiritual questions that a Christian can ever ponder. If you are a new Christian you will spend the rest of your life plumbing the depths of these verses. If you have been a Christian for a while you know, I am sure, that there is much yet to learn! If you have been a Christian for many years, my guess is that these verses *continue* to amaze you.

The ministry of the God's Spirit in the life of the true believer is mystical. There is a side of *mystery* to it. The doctrines in these verses can never be fully exhausted or completely quantified. The Spirit is *awesome*, dear ones. He is MAGNIFICENT. And along with all the *gifts* that He gives to believers, and along with His *illuminating* ministry (which only true believers can understand), and along with His ministry of *comfort*, comes His ministry of *intercession*. It reveals what Jesus is like. It reveals what God is like. For God the Holy Spirit is *no different at all* in nature and character from God the Son, about whom we read, ***For we do NOT have a high priest who CANNOT sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin*** (Hebrews 4:16). If you have ever wondered, "Does the Lord *really* know my needs and understand how I feel?" you have that verse in Hebrews and these verses in Romans 8. Let's look now at these verses...

We begin where we left off last week. The spiritual reality of the creation around us is that as a whole, it ***groans and suffers the pains of childbirth*** awaiting the coming of Jesus Christ and the full unveiling of the sons of God (Christians). That is what vss. 19-22 tell us. Our presence on the planet is significant, dear ones. From the divine perspective (and what other perspective, really, is there?) Christians are the most significant people on the planet. We can't wait to find out all the reasons WHY--and neither can the rest of the planet! *Whew!* That blows my mind!

Then Paul says in verse 23 ***and not only this***. I like that! The passage is *building* and *picking up steam*. As time goes on, you and me and all believers alive at any one time are also groaning inside ourselves (privately). We *can't wait* for what's coming. But wait, we must. And sometimes it is hard to wait. Sometimes we hunger and thirst to see Him so bad that we don't think we can last another minute. Do you ever feel that way? Or do you love this world so much that you think maybe you *can* wait? I hope you are impatient. I hope, dear ones, that you can't wait. I hope that you ponder and imagine what it will be like to walk with Jesus Christ. To talk with Him and not be rushed. To ask Him question after question, each inquiry receiving the most fully satisfying answer. To have Him show you things. To have Him introduce you to people and heavenly beings and who knows *what all else!* And Scripture is not silent about what kind of bodies we're going to get. It doesn't say *alot* but it does say (verse 23) that part of what we're longing for is ***the redemption of our bodies***. What does that mean? I don't know! But it will involve getting a new body. I could use a new body; how about you?



And we are *awaiting eagerly for our adoption as sons*. Whether you can articulate it like this or not, if you are a true believer, that of the Holy Spirit that you now have (only the *first fruits*, dear ones, only the *first fruits*), compels you to hunger for the full package! You know that on the day He returns you will receive ALL of your adoption papers. He takes full possession of you and some sort of ceremony awaits us!

Psychologists and counselors write much and speak much about the problem modern people have with feeling like THEY BELONG to someone or something. Singers write songs about it. Novelists write books about it. Filmmakers make movies about it. People struggle to feel like they are really AT HOME, much of the time today. Even Christians grapple with feeling accepted, desired and needed. (That's why I find it so gratifying when someone wants to join our church--they must feel accepted and like they *belong*--like this is home for them; at least a church home). But in the deepest places in the heart of the believer resides this anxious longing to be REALLY home.

We are waiting for the day of adoption, and the Spirit of God somehow whispers to us (just as the *first fruits*) that "Hang in there--it's coming. He is coming. He is coming." AND WE LIVE LIVES CLOTHED IN HOPE. Sometimes we don't see a lot coming to pass

(although I believe that some believers so much long after seeing Him that they manufacture "evidences" of His presence).

I want to see Him too. Man, I want to see Him so bad... But for now we must live BY FAITH. And in this dispensation, our meat and drink is HOPE and sometimes that's all the provisions we have! We *live on hope* and that's what Paul is talking about in verse 24. If we HAD IT ALL NOW, how much faith would we need? If all you had to do was to attend some prayer meeting where everybody just intently asks God to appear in front of them, or to dispatch an angel to appear in front of them, or to perform some miraculous thing in front of them--and He just did it like some *heavenly genie*; where would the faith be in that? No; *waiting*, groaning, anxiously longing, and waiting some more--*that* all requires faith. And having the Holy Spirit right here inside me, *alongside me* (as the apostle John viewed the ministry of the Spirit)--His abiding presence with me as I struggle with the waiting--that builds my sense of *hope*. And hope I have, dear ones--do you? You and I need to *persevere in hope* (verse 25).

You see, hope goes along with not yet seeing Him; with not yet *getting* everything that you want from Him and expect to receive from Him. Paul's logic is plain--*if we hope for what we do not see* (that's me; is it you?) *with perseverance [steadfast endurance]* we eagerly wait for it. And it is in *the hoping* that we get some of our Christian joy.

There's a unique hope that's there on Christmas Eve that has disappeared by Christmas night! From Thanksgiving Friday to Christmas morning we hang in there! We know what's coming. We *persevere*.

The doctrine of the perseverance of the saints is a precious doctrine. All true believers *WILL* persevere. But not all people who *claim* to be believers DO persevere. Some give up. Some stop hoping. It happens. I hope it will not happen to you.

If you are a true believer in Christ, Paul's *tone* in verse 25 applies to you: a confident statement that you are set--whatever happens--"I will keep waiting, by myself, if need be." This word in Greek is unusual for its *voice*. It is the present indicative *middle* voice of the word for *wait eagerly* [*apekdechoumetha*, ἀπεκδεχουμεθα]. The middle voice is rare in Greek and hard to nail down its precise equivalent in English (for we have no middle voice). The closest we come is to say that in the middle voice, the person is doing something BY HIMSELF; in a solitary fashion. You and I quietly, privately, in a solitary fashion, in personal worship of the Lord Jesus, wait eagerly and excitedly for His coming, and for the "curtain to go up."

I think Christians are restless. I think non-Christians sometimes see that too and mistake it for crankiness or surliness; but we are restless. Real, bona fide non-Christians are not restless. They are content to go about their lives "grabbing for the gusto", bopping from one party to the next, getting what they can out of life for themselves, protecting themselves, and so forth. They are not waiting for much of anything, other than that next paycheck or that next vacation or that next thrill. Christians are different. We are restless. We aren't *where* we're supposed to be. We do not belong to this world and this world can see that, some times--and they *tell* us so!

Some times Christians feel weak, too. Some times we lift up our eyes to the sky, try to pray and find it just sky. We *want* to talk to God. But some times we just don't know what to say. Do you ever have times like that? Sometimes--maybe these are those times when you are particularly burdened about something--fatigued,

spiritually speaking--and you hunger so bad for the Lord's presence, but you just can't put it into words. Dear ones, verse 26 says the Spirit works then too. And marvelously. He mystically *intercedes with groanings too deep for words*. And in verse 26 the Greek simply says (as the NASB plainly translates it for you) *the Spirit helps our weakness*. There are times when we feel weak in prayer, when we *are* weak in prayer. Sometimes we don't even know HOW to pray, what we're supposed to say to God. He comes alongside to help. God, the Spirit, does the talking to God, the Father. How does that work? I don't know. I don't know what words He uses--it is wonderfully mystical and holy, but it is REAL, and verse 26 says it happens for true believers--for adopted children. The Spirit uses language imperceptible, not understandable to believers, themselves, but right in line with what God wants to hear (verse 27).

Now, when does the Spirit do this? Well, the Book of Romans is not the Book of I Timothy. It is not a personal book--it is a general instruction manual on Christian doctrine. And so, even though I think Paul probably had many deep, difficult times of ministry struggle, I believe he was intending to say that *anytime* you are weak in prayer, the Spirit is right there. You do not have to be an apostle.

God searches through your heart and His Spirit "joins us in the birth pangs, as eager for the new creation as God's children are" (Keener, *Bible Background Commentary*, p. 431). Dear ones, the work of the Holy Spirit is awesome. We are in wonder of it, but dear ones, make no mistake--it is real. Have you sensed it? Do you believe it?

Let me sum it up for you:

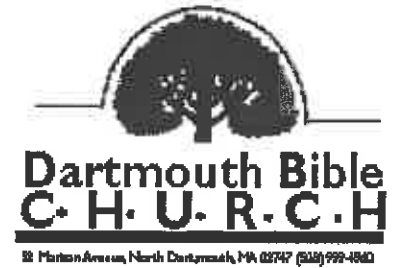
- 1 All true believers are given the Holy Spirit at the moment of conversion.
- 2 The major on-going work of the Spirit in the true believer's life is to intercede for him or her with the Father, the Son being right there too.
- 3 The nature of that interceding is mystical; it is wonderful; it benefits us in incalculable but very real ways--we sense His perspective of things, we sense His control and power over our lives, we sense His acceptance and love of us, we sense that we cannot escape Him since the Spirit is right inside of us, right down to the last breath.
- 4 He knows our weaknesses and compensates for them. When we cannot pray or do not know what to say, somehow the Spirit says it for us and the Spirit does not mess it up or waste words. He speaks on our behalf exactly according to God's will.

In that song we sang *Be Still for the Presence of the Lord*, no song better expresses what I wanted to say in this message. A song like that is not just a groovy tune, it is about a very deep truth of the Spirit and it should not be sung carelessly.

May His Spirit search your heart today, intercede for you, and truly encourage you.

# DARTMOUTH BIBLE NOTES

FROM THE TEACHING MINISTRIES OF  
DARTMOUTH BIBLE CHURCH



Series: Exposition of Romans 8  
Romans 8:28ff

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.  
Lesson 7 Oct. 23rd, 1994

## *Good, from the Hand of the Sovereign God*

**Introduction** So what is the Book of Romans about? Here's a key-word way to remember what Romans is about: PAID IN FULL (see WTB overhead). In Romans we learn about how our debt has been paid in full by Jesus Christ.

"Romans has probably been the object of more intense study by more highly intelligent and motivated individuals than any document in human history--the scholar Godet has said that **there has never been an important spiritual movement in the church that cannot be connected as CAUSE AND EFFECT with a deeper knowledge of the truths of this book**" [James Montgomery Boice].

One of the things that I have learned to love as I've grown up (I wouldn't have cared about this sort of thing as a teenager), is stained glass. I notice a nice piece of stained glass. Many old homes in New Bedford have in the stairway, a window of stained glass. Fairhaven High School has some beautiful stained glass windows. If you go to the Christmas Tree Shop you see as you enter all these "sun catchers" which are stained glass. At my graduation from high school, we had our baccalaureate service in the National Cathedral in Washington D.C. It is a beautiful place. Renée and I visited it again a few years ago and learned that five of the stained glass windows in it were made by Lawrence Saint, the father of missionary pilot Nate Saint (martyred in Ecuador in 1956). "There are two ways of looking at stained glass windows--you can examine each pane or piece of glass individually, looking at the way they're each fastened together, or you can stand in a quiet church, letting the sun shine in through all the pieces, bringing the *whole* to life in glorious detail. With this portion of Romans that we enter today, we're approaching the conclusion of what scholars consider the *doctrinal* portion of the letter. And it is like standing back with the Apostle and looking at a beautiful stained glass window.

With this portion of Romans, we bathe ourselves in the glorious glow of the FULL PICTURE of God's great salvation...the pieces, in detail, are God's foreknowledge, predestination, His CALL, justification, sanctification and glorification, and they all fit beautifully together" into God's great plan of salvation [Stuart Briscoe, *Communicator's Commentary*, pp. 175 ff.] The end result is "the good" towards which God is moving our lives.

Let me ask you, have you ever had someone call you "old fashioned?" Has anyone ever suggested to you that something about you is out of date, worn out or antiquated? Or has anyone implied or insinuated that something you *believe* has, really, been superseded by more enlightened beliefs? As Christians--whether we're aware of that or not--we are being assessed this way all the time. Our foundational beliefs are under assault often today:

We choose to reject the notion that there are many gods and deities. We are persuaded that there is only one.

We also believe that there is only one mediator between that God and man, that being the man, Christ Jesus.

As Christians we have adopted the philosophy that the Bible--it's 66 books-- are not just classic literature, but that they are uniquely special; so special that there are no other writings on the planet quite like them. We believe that they possess an AUTHORITY unrivaled and unmatched by anything or anyone else around, or in any century of time!

We disbelieve the message we often receive from our society, that THIS IS ALL THERE IS. We say, "No, this is *not* all there is--we know that it is not." We readily admit that we can't see with out eyeballs the future kingdom yet--but we *hope for what we do not see* {and} *with perseverance we eagerly wait for it* (Romans 8:25).

And we believe another *very old idea*: that God actually controls the lives of Christians; that He *has*, in fact, designed a plan for their individual lives; that He is providentially moving them along within that plan, year by year, and that nothing happens to a true believer that is OUTSIDE His overall plan. That's an old concept, isn't it? **Is it out of date?** The first "Spiritual Law" [*The Four Spiritual Laws*, Campus Crusade for Christ] says, "God loves you and offers a wonderful plan for your life." Do you think that this is correct? Believers do. It is an old concept, but it is foundational to who we are as Christians.

This is all plainly stated in Romans 8:28. This verse is one of the most often quoted verses in the New Testament--in fact, it's almost over-used (if such a thing is possible). But I want you to have a good grasp of exactly what it does say. The bottom-line is that, if you are a Christian, God *causes all things to work together for good* for you. You can depend on the basic fact that whatever occurs in your life, or around you that affects you, somehow it is *within* God's overall plan for your life.

Remember, we have just been looking in the previous verses at how the Holy Spirit works *deeply* and intimately within us to intercede *according to the will of*



"Believers increasingly appreciate the ongoing nature of God's craftsmanship in their lives. Even when some of the pieces appear too dark or odd-shaped, they know that God is fitting lives together which will in eternity resemble His Son" [Briscoe]. You see, the goal is not to just be comfortable--it is to be like Jesus Christ. The *good* that will come, is to be made like Jesus.

Notice too, that Paul refers to Christians as *the called*. Divine calling is that act wherein God summons the unsaved person to the point of being saved. In the theology of Paul, there is very little in reference to salvation about the "great powers" of man to rescue himself from his own sin--in fact there is none of that. It is ALL THE GRACE OF GOD. God is a God who *calls* people into a saving relationship with Himself, through the priesthood of Christ. Consider I Cor. 1:9; Gal. 1:6; II Timothy 1:8,9.

I can very much relate to this. If God had not summoned me--I like the concept of WOOING--had He not wooed me back in 1971 and '72, I would not be a Christian today. He, for some reason, decided in eternity past that this little guy, Neil Damgaard, born on December 10th, 1,952 years after His Son was, WOULD have saving faith, WOULD respond to the Gospel, once he really heard it, and WOULD be dovetailed and grafted into His overall plan for the body of Christ. It humbles me, dear ones, does it you?

If you wonder at all whether you, or someone you love is part of *the called* you just have to answer this question: do you love God? And how does someone know if they *do* love God? By whether they obey Him or not. Jesus said that.

***He who has my commandments and keeps them, He it is who loves Me. And He who loves me shall be loved by my Father... And I will love Him and will disclose myself to him... (John 14:21)***

The person who loves the Lord has these things going for him--

- 1 He has God's Spirit living, working and building God's plan within him.
- 2 He is part of a grand, engineering plan that God designed, to be made along with all believers in all time *more* like God's Son...
- 3 He WILL arrive at heaven's gate.
- 4 Nothing that happens, no matter how bad in this short, passing life, happens apart from God's program.



# DARTMOUTH BIBLE NOTES

FROM THE TEACHING MINISTRIES OF  
DARTMOUTH BIBLE CHURCH



Series: Exposition of Romans 8  
Romans 8:29-31

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.  
Lesson 8 Oct. 30th, 1994

## ***What Then Shall We Say? A Mighty God is Our Fortress!***

**Introduction** People react to a lot of things that the Bible claims are true. They reacted to Moses. They reacted to the prophets. They reacted to Jesus. They reacted to Paul and Peter and John. When a statement is made which contains ideas in it which supposedly come from God, people tend to react; sometimes well and sometimes not well. But they do react. Our task is not to avoid reaction. Reaction to things in the Bible is going to happen. The Bible says, for instance, that ***the devil prowls about like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour***. Peter, who wrote that, did not ask for a symposium to discuss whether his ideas might be so--he just said it. I believe it. Each year Halloween becomes more blatantly evil and people become more defensive about it, too.

In the early 1500s the German monk, Martin Luther, was doing a slow burn. He had become fascinated with the Bible and, already being a priest, he wanted to bring more of the Bible to his parishioners. As he did so, he found that many of the things they were doing in his parish and in all the parishes around were contrary to what the Bible teaches. So, he started asking questions. He started bringing the Bible to bear on daily life and on church life. Needless to say, he got in trouble. As he looked into Scripture more and more--and brought the light of Scripture to bear on how things were in the church, he drew a reaction. He was eventually branded a heretic and excommunicated from the church. Nevertheless he continued his own study of the Bible and what we call "the Reformation" began around him and a few other people who had also rediscovered the Bible at roughly the same time.

The Scripture gets a reaction from people, one way or another. When it talks about God and how He works, it compels people to respond. In **Romans 8** we are told some deep things about God and how He works and how He *has* worked already. In

verse 31 Paul wrote *What then shall we say to these things?* And he answers his own question--*If God is for us, who is against us?* Paul is bluntly saying that God is on our side. And since God is on our side it doesn't really matter who is not--no one can snatch us away from Him. It is like in the Book of Psalms when the psalmist says,

*Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil  
for Thou art with me* (Psalm 23:4)

*Then my enemies will turn back in the day when I call; this I know, that God is for me...in God I have put my trust, I shall not be afraid; what can en do to me?* (Psalm 56:9,11)

What we can say to a powerful and sovereign God whose powerful plan has utterly saved and *will* save all who flee to it, is that nothing can harm us! Praise His name!

But verse 31 has asked us to REACT to what he wrote in verses 29 and 30. And in verse 28 Paul said that believers can have the full confidence that nothing which happens to them is outside of God's ultimate purpose for us, which is to make us like His Son, Jesus Christ. Do you want to be like Christ? Do you want to think like Him, to have the same kinds of priorities that He has, to look at things around you with His perspective? It is a big question. THAT is the *good* that all things are working together for.

Now in verses 29 and 30 Paul talks more about the *called*. And it is a *progression* of words that he uses to describe God's plan to make people more like Christ. He says that *the called*, the summoned, the invited, have been *foreknown* and *predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son*, and that what God *also* did to these *foreknown* and *predestined* people was to *justify* them and then will also *glorify* them. FOREKNOWN, PREDESTINED, CALLED, JUSTIFIED and GLORIFIED--five stages. It is Paul's *ordo salutis*, the order of salvation.

Now at this point, let me ask you (as Paul does) *what then shall we say to these things?* Whatever these five stages mean, what do you say to them? Is your reaction as Paul, himself, felt? *Well, if God is for us who is against us?* Or do you react in some other way? I suppose you would like to know what Paul *meant* by those five things... Let me run you through what they mean, biblically:

FOREKNOWN is an interesting word. Some theologians say this means that God "knows in advance" who will believe; that the word *foreknowledge* is the same thing as just knowing in advance. But if that is so, then those places in the NT

where Jesus is said to have been *foreknown* by the Father simply mean that the Father knew Jesus in advance--that the relationship in eternity past between the Father and the Son was only *intellectual*. A better understanding of the word is to look at the two Greek root words  $\pi\rho\alpha$  and  $\gamma\iota\nu\omega\sigma\kappa\omega$  which make up the word  $\pi\rho\alpha\gamma\iota\nu\omega\sigma\kappa\omega$ , to *foreknow*. "Pra" means "before" and "ginosko" means to know, intimately, like in a love-relationship (Adam *knew* his wife). He did not merely know *about* her. He loved her and he knew her intimately. Paul says that God has *foreknown* believers in a wondrous love relationship, from eternity past. It has always been in the mind of God to rescue sinners from death and hell. He didn't *come up with salvation* at the last minute. No, His plan to rescue sinners through the atoning work of His Son was in His mind before earth was even created.

**PREDESTINED** To "predestine" something means to "mark it out in advance." It follows that the specific people that God has *foreknown* would be the same people that He *marked out in advance* to **experience** that savior-saved relationship with His Son. Now, if you feel that God can't do that, that He is somehow not allowed to mark anything out in advance, that He must sit and wait and see who will believe like the rest of us, then I must remind you that we're talking about God. He gets to do anything He wants to. He's the only one who *does* get to do that, but after all we're talking about God, Himself. Before I was even saved (*called*) I got ahold of a sermon manuscript by a preacher named Jack Arnold, entitled *Let God Be God*. And it was a sermon about Romans 9 wherein this preacher appealed to reason for people to allow God to be WHO HE IS...

But the predestination has a goal--that we should be *conformed to the image of His Son*. The predestination of some human beings "was in order that the only-begotten Son of God might not be alone in enjoying the privileges of Sonship, but that He might be the Head of a great multitude of brethren--of the company of those who in, and through Him, have been made sons of God" [Cranfield, *Commentary on Romans*]. When you think about "predestination", think about it as a destiny to become like Christ. As one commentator put it, "instead of wasting our time in quarreling with God, or finding fault with His mode of governing the world and especially of His sovereign election of [people] to eternal life, let us give all diligence to making our own calling and election sure" (William Plumer). *Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you...*(II Peter 1:10a).

A *foreknown* and *predestined* person will also be *called*. At some point in his or her life the Lord will invite that person and woo them into faith in Christ. It isn't a divine rape, but it is a marvelous courtship. The Lord CALLS a person and that

person cries out, "Over here!" They *want* to find Him. They have become aware that they NEED a Savior, and Oh, the Savior I've found is wonderful--He's fantastic! He is understanding, powerful; loving and forgiving, yet absolutely unswayable in what He says is right and wrong. He felt the *full force* of temptations, most of which I've only felt a little bit--and He never said "uncle" and sinned.

He took my place on Calvary  
Died in disgrace, upon a tree,  
I was blind but now I see,  
He did it all for you and me. -- Pat Terry

I used to stumble around wondering "what's it all about?" And then He called me and I beheld Him, by faith--Yow! Where did this *faith* come from? ***For by grace you have been saved by faith, and THAT not of yourselves, it is the gift of God...***

Then Paul says that the foreknown, predestined and called people have also been ***justified***. This might just be the most important theological word there is! To be ***justified*** means to be DECLARED RIGHTEOUS. God looked at the great company of the predestined (whom He already loved) and said "RIGHTEOUS." On what basis? Because they *possessed* their own righteousness? Because they intrinsically possessed character like Christ on their own or because they instinctively *acted* like Jesus? Nope. God declared people righteous--those whom He had already loved and previously marked out--by transferring His SON'S righteousness over to their account. Your standing before God is because of Jesus' standing before God. And for you to lose that standing, would mean that Jesus' standing had become inadequate. And dear ones, how likely is that? Not likely. In fact, not possible. Period. That is how Paul can then say that the foreknown, predestined, called and declared righteous and *as good as already GLORIFIED*. They WILL make it. They will reach heaven's gate, and be made EXACTLY LIKE JESUS in character, nature and affections.

What's your reaction? Everybody always seems to respond to the things the Bible says, one way or another. How do you feel about this? Does it humble you? Does it prompt worship from you, as you ponder a Sovereign God? May His sovereign grace become precious to you. May you seek to see more of what the Bible says about His sovereignty. May the sovereignty of a loving and all-powerful God become the *superstructure* of your faith. You may not get all your questions asked right away. But the BIG one is answered...will I make it?

# DARTMOUTH BIBLE NOTES

FROM THE TEACHING MINISTRIES OF  
DARTMOUTH BIBLE CHURCH



Series: Exposition of Romans 8  
Romans 8:32-34

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.  
Lesson 9 Nov. 6th, 1994

## *Innocent and Interceded*

**Introduction** Commitment is usually demonstrated by giving. Words can be impressive and can charm people very well but what really impresses, is when someone gives something that is valuable to them. *Then* you know that they are committed.

You've heard this story, but it is relevant so let me tell it again. The chicken and the pig are out in the barnyard one day and the chicken says, "Boy I sure am tired every morning after laying those eggs for Farmer Jones' breakfast." The pig replies, "Well you may make a contribution, but when I'm involved it's a real commitment!" Meaningful commitment to something generally involves some kind of sacrifice.

And the most supreme sacrifice of all time is what we have again celebrated here this morning in the Lord's Table--the sacrifice that God made so that people might be reconciled to Him. In 2 Cor. 5:18,19 we read these words: *Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.* The big thing that Christianity is supposed to be doing in the world, is reconciling people with God. That's because God made a BIG sacrifice to make it possible. And if you have really met Christ then you have nothing to dread at all. There is no one who can open up the "secret files" and bring out all the dirt that has been covered up.

I think most political candidates need to hear this message. There is so much you hear on the radio in the campaign ads about "Look what this guy did! Look what this lady covered up about her past!" "Vote for me, not him--I've *come clean*. He

hasn't." It is so insulting any more... But when it comes to us, as Christians, we do not need to be afraid of any one accusing us or judging us. That's because of the passage before us today. We have looked at the fact that if God is on our side, what enemy could we have that could harm us?--pretty basic concept. Pretty *powerful* concept!

- Maybe it makes it a little easier to sleep at night, knowing that if a person is a Christian, that his or her whole future and spiritual destiny has already been planned out.
- Maybe it makes it a little easier to face hostility for your faith, knowing that even if someone "gets the goods" on you for something you've done wrong, your position in Christ means that all God sees when He looks at you is the perfect righteousness of His Son.
- Maybe it makes it a little easier if you get sick or are injured, to remember that God gave up the absolute most precious thing that He had in order to win *your* salvation, if you're a Christian.

Paul's *logic* in this passage is INESCAPABLE. It is what philosophers and logic-guys call an *a fortiori* argument: it reasons from the greater to the less, and there is no stronger way to debate [Plumer, *Commentary*]! Look at verse 32 of Romans 8. IF GOD MADE THE BIGGEST SACRIFICE TO GET US INTO HEAVEN, IT ONLY MAKES SENSE THAT HE'LL GIVE US EVERYTHING ELSE WE WILL NEED TO COMPLETE THE JOB OF SALVATION.

What is *all things*? It is all and everything you that could possibly need to live for Christ.

What are some of the things you need to live for Christ and to *keep* living for Christ? How about faith, hope and love, for a guess. How about patience, endurance under stress, knowledge and wisdom in discerning God's will on a day y day basis? How about all the other things that the Holy Spirit can do in your heart and mind and spirit? Would God withhold any of that from you if He has already given the most valuable thing in all of heaven, His only Son? No way! You've got Christ, you've got ALL the treasures of heaven. You've got Christ, you've got all the weapons to wage spiritual warfare. You've got Christ, you've got His courage that He'll give you; His determination that He'll impart to you; His holiness that He will infuse into you over time...

This verse echoes an Old Testament person that was particularly interesting to the Apostle Paul: Abraham. The parallel with Genesis 22:12,16 is too close to be

accidental. I think that as Paul pondered what God did, it reminded him of what Abraham did and how God esteemed that act of willing obedience to sacrifice his son. And, I've always really enjoyed how God didn't actually want Abraham to *go through with* the sacrifice of his son. He PROVIDED another sacrifice. That's how God does things--He makes sure any sacrifice that has to be made, gets made--but He provides the sacrifice Himself. Paul says that God *delivered Him up for us all*. Two things here: *DELIVERED* and *FOR US ALL*.

*DELIVERED* must have been inestimably hard! To watch as Jesus was apprehended, charged, accused, tried falsely, scourged, crucified and then... well, we don't know WHAT terrors and judgment He had to endure from the cross to the empty tomb... it gives me the willies to ponder it. But the Father had to watch it. And in fact, He turned away at one point--at the low point--and for one moment in all eternity, the Son and the Father were separated from one another. The Father *delivered* Jesus up--He turned Him over to judgment. Was Satan around or involved? I'm not sure; perhaps. Surely he gloated, thinking he had won the great victory over the Son of God.

*FOR US ALL* is interesting. Jesus' substitutionary atonement is not just for Jews, or just for one group or another--it is for ALL believers. But, dear ones, it is for believers only. To my thinking, it makes no sense to say that Jesus has been *delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God* (Acts 2:23) for *anyone* who would ultimately reject Him. Would that make any sense? It would be wasted sacrifice. No, Jesus was delivered up for US all, and for us ALL. (See also Romans 10:12).

Now, I love my daughters pretty much. I think that I would sacrifice my own life to keep them alive, if I had to. I love you too. But I don't think I love any of *you* so much that I would give up a daughter to keep you around. I'm not sure I love anyone *that* much. But God loves us that much. Does that do any thing for you?

Now again in verse 33 it is the ELECT that Paul says are innocent of charges and are safe from indictment. Romans 8 is heavy, I know. These are some of the deep things of God. It may trouble you a little, philosophically, to awaken to this Scriptural truth--that God has a corporate body of specific believers in history, whom He has predetermined *will* come to faith. The Bible calls this group of people *the elect*. Now, some Bible teachers say that *the elect* is like a bus. It is the BUS that is chosen of God--a holy "receptacle"--and that is the "church." But He has only

chosen the receptacle (the church), *not* individual bus *riders*, they say. I do not think that this idea does justice at all to Scripture though. I believe that the Bible teaches that God, as a *sovereign* God, decided, decreed and covenanted within the Godhead, exactly WHO and WHO NOT, would be redeemed by the cross. But once again, even though this passage mentions these things, they are mentioned to be an ENCOURAGEMENT.

If God paid the price for people--*whatever* people--(I hope every one here)--who can condemn us, even though we still blow it? In verse 34 the point is more blunt: if Christ, the judge, refuses to condemn us, who can be against us? In Paul's mind and in the Roman Christians' minds there were surely plenty of adversaries, accusing them of all kinds of things. Paul is not paranoid! There *were* people around accusing. But they had no case, since the Great Judge *Himself* intercedes for us. I don't know how the Spirit and the Son both intercede for us--but that is what Romans 8 says isn't it? There is a DUAL INTERCESSION going on for you, right now, if you are a Christian. Jesus is continually showing and offering to the Father His own humanity and substitutionary atonement on Calvary as the pledge He made for us!

We've been singing that new song (to us) *I Will Trust in You*. I like the last line (musically as well as theologically): "I will not be afraid..."

Let me close by pointing out one other thing in verse 34: Jesus is at the right hand of the Father. That's where He is. He is not here, yet. He WILL come again and then *be here*. But right now He is at the right hand of the Father. I don't want Him here yet. I need Him there. I need Him interceding for me day and night, seven days a week, fifty two weeks a year until He DOES leave the throne to return or until He calls me to be there with Him.



# DARTMOUTH BIBLE NOTES

FROM THE TEACHING MINISTRIES OF  
DARTMOUTH BIBLE CHURCH



Series: Exposition of Romans 8  
Scripture: Romans 8:35-39

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.  
Lesson 10 Nov. 20th, 1994

## *Grateful for His Love*

**Introduction** Nothing can separate us from Christ's love. That is the basic point of today's message. I'm not going to *lead into it*; *set you up* for it or *prompt* you to feel your need for this truth. I'm just saying it right up front: nothing can separate us from Christ's love. That is the message of Romans 8:35-39, the final verses in this great chapter of Scripture. And if it is true, can there be any greater thing for which we can be grateful to God? If it is true that nothing can get between me and Jesus' affection, concern and providing for me, then THAT is a truth worth raising up my hands and saying THANK YOU, LORD--and beyond *saying it, feeling it...*

When I was very little there was a fire in my parents' bedroom, the result of a cigarette. I was asleep in my room, but when I was awakened by the smoke and by the commotion of my Dad frantically putting the fire out, I was terrified. I was probably five or six years old. I remember several details of that event, but the most strident picture in my head is my Dad grabbing me out of my bed, bundling me in an Indian blanket (that he had brought me from out West on one of his trips with the Army), and carrying me down the stairs and outside. When it was over, he hugged me and cuddled me and assured me that everything was OK. That feeling, first, of *rescue*, then of assurance and *reassurance* has stuck with me. My overwhelming response was a tremendous surge of gratitude and affection.

That is how Paul feels as he contemplates the love which Jesus Christ had for him and for all believers. It is a very real feeling of having been rescued, placed on safe ground, blanketed (as it were) with His affection and concern. And in the passage before us there are two lists of perils laid out by Paul, NOTHING within

either list--as bad as these things might be--which can successfully sever a Christian from the love which Jesus Christ has for him or her.

The basic problem is that we sometimes THINK that one of these things, or something else, CAN *detach* me from God's caring about me. We experience some difficulty and we wonder, "maybe He doesn't care any more." Our faith can become stretched to the limit and we are tempted to change our theology!

We can be seduced by unbelief into changing our belief that

"God loves me and has wonderful plan for my life" to

"God knows about me (maybe) and has decided to allow evil to beat me up."

As I say, the point of this message is clear--if you are a genuine Christian, nothing can separate you from the affection and devotion of Jesus Christ for you; even if you have to experience one or more of the seven things in the first list, or the ten things in the second list.

In verse 36 Paul quotes from Psalm 44:22 saying that tribulations and sufferings by God's people are nothing new. Abraham was a traveling alien; Joseph spent time in prison *and* as a slave; Moses spent 40 years in exile, herding sheep; David spent years on the run as Public Enemy #1--even *after* a prophet had anointed him as king; Daniel was persecuted as was Jeremiah and other prophets, most of whom eventually lost their lives for the Lord's work. ***All those who live godly in Christ will be persecuted!*** So, in verse 35 he listed seven things, ALL of which he had, himself, experienced (except the last; and *that* was possible at any time) and *none* of which can sever a believer from Christ's love:

<b><i>tribulation</i></b>	pressure from outside sources, real danger because of our stand for the faith
<b><i>distress</i></b>	inner stress that a person can feel--depression, psychosomatic symptoms, "stress"
<b><i>persecution</i></b>	religious oppression, rejection by the religious establishment--something the early Christians and especially Paul were very familiar with
<b><i>famine</i></b>	<i>none</i> of us can relate to this, but many people in other parts of the world are forced to wonder how they will have anything to eat for the next meal. Even wracking hunger cannot come between a believer and Christ's love.
<b><i>nakedness</i></b>	probably means not having enough clothing, which in

*peril  
sword*

our affluence we can scarcely imagine--but again, many Christians in other parts of the world have taken great comfort in this item on the checklist!  
danger--from lawlessness or natural causes  
the most common way for a Roman citizen to be executed should he be convicted of a capital crime--also the most common way for a soldier or civilian to die in war...

It would be good for us to remember this when we are sharing the Gospel with non-Christians or with people who are seeking answers. Do not paint the Gospel too rosily, as if when a person comes to Christ it will be all comfort, pleasure and fulfillment. That would not be accurate and it would not be honest!

In verse 37 Paul says instead of being defeated by extreme hardship, we will turn it around--we are *superconquerors through Him who loved us*. Dear ones, is there anything GREATER than that the true God loves us? Is that worth giving thanks verbally for? I do not know why we must spend our days dodging tragedy and sometimes failing to dodge it... I do not know why God doesn't just automatically remove troubles the first time we ask Him to. It seems, rather, that we must GO THROUGH the storm, ride it out with Him by our side at the wheel and get to the other side of the thing, having conquered the problem by having *survived* it. Some refuse to ride it out. They turn in their badge and membership card, mid-tribulation. They change their theology, mid-stream. But real faith grows as we SEE the work of the Spirit in our hearts AS we go through the tribulation, or whatever. AS we groan and *do not know how to pray as we should*, the *Spirit helps our weakness* even if we must face the sword, famine, and the rest (*none of which ANY of us is facing right now!*)

Notice too, that our victory is *through Him who loved us*, not by virtue of our having loved Him. John tells us that *we love because He first loved us*. Our faith remaining intact is dependent on God continuing to love us.

In verse 38 Paul concludes the chapter with the words, *For I am convinced*. Our faith is rational, dear ones. We look at the facts and we are PERSUADED that there is a God, that He loves us, and that we shall certainly be with Him. And Paul mentions ten, definite *fears* that might get in between a person and Christ's love, or their sensing it:

- death** this is the "biggie." If dying cannot put a wedge between me and my Savior's love, then bring it on! We'll face it and we'll get to "the other side" conscious of the same God, the same Savior, the same promises that we held so precious and built all our hope upon on *this* side.
- life** for some, though (Mrs. Burns?), just continuing on here requires more courage than dying.
- angels/principalities** no spirit being or *any* variety or level of power, including Satan himself, can get between a true believer and the Savior. This is no small thing because we believe that the evil angels and principalities are constantly *trying* to do so. But they cause no more trouble than that which God providentially allows
- things present/things to come** nothing over the extremes of time--nothing known *now* nor anything which *might* or *shall* happen.
- powers** again, angelic or Satanic energies or maybe governmental exercises designed against Christians. Persecution generally tends to *spread* the Gospel, not wipe it out.
- height/depth** nor the extremes of space. You might be afraid of flying or be acrophobic. So what? You might be afraid of going down at sea. If it happened it would be terrifying, but not ultimately so. The raging sea or the horror of being buried alive are no small things. But even they cannot separate us from the love of the Savior.
- any other created thing** in fact the love of Christ is so comprehensive that nothing at all that we might experience is bigger, stronger or more powerful than the love of Jesus Christ for the elect!

Now if you're like me at all, you might be wondering, "So, I *might* have to go through some of these things? I thought I was exempted from bad stuff when I trusted Christ? Paul is not saying this person or that person *will* have to endure these things (although many of the influential believers DID). God's plan is a little different for each individual believer. **But** IF you face these things, you can turn into the wind and face them with full confidence that He has not stopped loving you and that anything you experience has been faced by many believers before, and victory IS possible!

Let's sing these last two verses in the song, *Romans 8:38,39...*

**Romans 8**

**GOD MOVES US  
TOWARD HIS SON  
[causes all things to work  
toward that end]**

**verse 28**

*because true Christians are designated.....*

**THE CALLED** 29

**THE FOREKNOWN** 29

**THE PREDESTINED** 29

**THE CONFORMED (CHANGED)** 29

**THE CALLED** verse 30

**THE JUSTIFIED** 30

**THE GLORIFIED** 30

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**WHAT THEN SHALL WE SAY** verse 31  
**TO THESE THINGS?**