



Welcome to Grace Communion International

July 26, 2020

SERMON

**WE ARE
MORE THAN CONQUERORS**



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SCRIPTURE READING

ROMANS 8:26-39 (ESV)



“26 ¶ Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

27 And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

Romans 8:26-39 (ESV)



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“28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

29 ¶ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

30 And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.”

Romans 8:26-39 (ESV)



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“31 ¶ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

33 Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies.”

Romans 8:26-39 (ESV)



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“34 Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

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

36 As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.””

Romans 8:26-39 (ESV)



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“37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers,

39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Ro 8:37-39 ESV)

Romans 8:26-39 (ESV)



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THESE ARE THE TRUE WORDS OF THE LIVING GOD

THANK YOU FATHER FOR YOUR LOVE AND FOR
SECURING OUR VICTORY IN JESUS!

AMEN



The whole of Romans 8 is so rich in meaning! The same is true about the Scripture reading of today. It is impossible in a short sermon to cover everything contained therein.

During today's sermon we will touch on some of the the highlights.

It is almost like going to a gold mine where there is so much gold one does not know where to go first. It would be so easy to linger just in a few verses. What is contained in these verses could be a series of several sermons. It is so very rich because this is God's inspired word through the pen of the apostle Paul.

What God tells us in these verses describes our human nature and our weaknesses and also the awesome hope found in God's Eternal Son, Jesus. It is the continuing story of God's love for us and of the richness of his grace.

“26 ¶ Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

27 And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”

(Ro 8:26-27 ESV)



The apostle Paul acknowledges that we are weak. We live in a world that is filled with good and evil. On the one hand, we see heroic acts done by human beings and, on the other hand, we see repulsive and disgusting evil which the apostle Paul calls the mystery of lawlessness or the mystery of iniquity in 2 Thessalonians 2:7.

The morning and nightly news focuses mostly on this mystery of lawlessness.

Furthermore, we human beings are flawed as a result of taking of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil which is reflected in our trying to manage our world apart from God. Even after conversion, remnants of these flaws remain in our physical life. These flaws which the Bible rightly calls sin, this spiritual illness will only be completely removed and cured at the resurrection or when Christ returns, whichever comes first.

The lawlessness of this world weighs heavy on our hearts and minds. Seeing through a mirror darkly, we do not know how to pray as we ought.

However, there is good news: (next slide)

1- Even if we do not know how to pray, the Holy Spirit is there to sustain us. He intervenes for us.

2 – Not only we grown because of the condition of this world but the Spirit of God also groans and sighs. Our sighs and desire for an end to this iniquity/lawlessness is rooted in the Holy Spirit who resides in believers.



We have a profound desire and longing for our world to get better soon. As we look at our present world, events all over appear to be getting worse. This has been the reality for every generation before us. In our generation, signs of evil seems to be on steroids.

I am reminded of the massacre of the Huguenots (French Calvinist Protestants) in France in 1572, who were killed in a massacre which began on August 23rd and 24th. They were executed mostly by Catholic mobs. It is estimated that between 5000 and 30,000 people were killed in France during a short period of time. (See Wikipedia and other sources for references to this sad event)

Bombarded by all this negative news, our spirits are dazed. As we pray, it seems that God is delaying his answer. However, as the Holy Spirit intercedes for us with groanings that are too deep for words, we realize that we are not alone.

In the midst of all this display of good and evil, the Holy Spirit helps us.

He gives us the patience to wait for the renewing of all things as promised by God.

He also gives us the strength to actively live in this world without being part of the world. In fact, we live as strangers awaiting the return of Jesus.

In our waiting, the Spirit of God helps us to live as his ambassadors on this earth. We carry a priceless treasure in our hearts. We are the temple of God, the apostle Paul tells us.

God gives us the strength to live purposefully with courage in this dying world. He pours his love into our hearts so that we can love him, love (agape) our neighbours whether they pleasant or not.

His agape-love poured out in our hearts also helps us to love our believing brothers and sisters in this world. The world will know that we are disciples of Jesus by showing love towards one another in the church. **“By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (Joh 13:35 ESV)**

“10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 11 For who knows a person’s thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.” (1Co 2:10-11 ESV)

In Christ, our prayers are heard. We can keep on to this hope of a better world because this hope again is rooted in Jesus. He is the full expression of the love of the Father for us.

“28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

29 ¶ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

30 And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.” (Ro 8:28-30 ESV)

GOD'S PURPOSE



God did not create human beings for naught. God did not need to create the universe or human beings. He was completely and utterly perfect in his own being as the one God in 3 person: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He did not need anything.

God's purpose for creating human beings is from eternity. He created man out of love to share in his loving relationship through the man Jesus who was slain from before the foundation of this world. In other words, it's an eternal decision that Jesus would come to the earth to save us the way he did.

God was not surprised when the first man, Adam and his wife Eve decided to disobey and live independently from him.

God had a plan A and no plan B how he would intervene to save us. Conceived by the Holy Spirit, Jesus came in our flesh to this earth to fulfil God's plan to redeem us from sin and death. Jesus' physical genealogy is filled with intrigue, immorality, deception and the list goes on. To make the point, I encourage you to read Genesis 38 where Judah committed adultery with Tamar, his daughter-in-law. Jesus is a physical descendent of Judah and Tamar. Jesus is certainly not ashamed of his genealogy. He came to redeem it, to transform it. He did not try to sanitize it to make look perfect,

hiding its flaws.

Jesus took our fallen flesh and lived perfectly doing the Father's will. He lived a human life, in our flesh, completely sinless.

Jesus took on the disease and the flaw of sinful human nature upon himself. He submitted to the sting of sin which is death. Since he was sinless, death could not hold him. Because Jesus is also God, God the Father reconciled humanity through Jesus.

It has always been God's purpose, that man would be glorified in the man Jesus. In fact, it is God's purpose to bring many sons unto glory. as we read in Hebrews 2:10.

The Bible is clear that when Jesus died, we died with him. When he rose from the dead, we arose with him. That is why it is said in verse 29 that he is the firstborn among many brothers. He is speaking about us! That is good news!

When God opens our minds to this wonderful truth, he loves us where we are as he always has. He is not going to leave us in the state that he found us. His purpose is to transform us into the likeness of Jesus Christ, the son of man, the son of David, the perfect man standing as our High Priest at the very throne of God. Jesus has always been God but now in his person, he has taken humanness. In his one person, he is both God and man, being man as man should be.

When Paul wrote that all things work together for good for those who love God, he had in mind our transformation in the likeness of Jesus. This is God's work in us.

When God opens our minds, we are summoned to enter into life, his life. This is the unmerited gift which we receive. It is not like man's economy where you have to perform to get.

Grace is a free gift from God that he bestows, which he gives to us. We don't have to work to gain God's heart. His heart is already towards us and for us and loving. As human beings, our natural tendency is to approach God from a work's point of view in order to gain something. This is a grave distortion of who God is and how he functions.

Instead of working for his love, we respond to his love. I love the way Alister McGrath says it. (Next slide)

Salvation is grace and ethics is gratitude.

From: Christian Believe for Everyone, THE SPIRIT OF GRACE by Alister McGrath page 51.



I encourage you to read the story of Zacchaeus in Luke 19. In his grace, Jesus noticed and called Zacchaeus by name. Jesus called Zacchaeus and told him, **“Hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today”**. In response to Jesus’ love, this hated and despised rich taxman, for he was a Jew working for the Roman Empire, repented.

Zacchaeus responded to Jesus’ love by offering to generously repay those people he had financially wronged. God’s love is grace. Zacchaeus ethic was gratitude! This is the attitude of all people who love God.

PREDESTINED CALLED JUSTIFIED GLORIFIED

NO ROOM FOR GUILT vs. 30



Predestined: We are predestined to conformed to the image of Jesus.

Called: Jesus is the chosen one. **“Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles.” (Mt 12:18 ESV)**

“and in his name the Gentiles will hope.” (Mt 12:21 ESV)

There is no other way for us to obtain salvation apart from being united to Christ in faith.

Justified: The believer is "made *righteous/justified*" (1344 /*dikaiōō*) by the Lord, cleared of all charges (punishment) related to their sins. (from Biblehub.com Helps Word Study).

Being justified by God means that we are acquitted of all guilt. We are no longer guilty before God. In fact, Jesus has destroyed all guilt because he has destroyed sin and its consequences at the cross once and for all.

This is the truth that we often forget when we think about what we have done in the past, about some sin we have committed which may very well still have real physical lingering consequences. This is a very important point to remember. We are not to look at the physical evidence of the consequences of our sin which we still suffer from but we are to lift our eyes to Jesus.

There is no more reason to look at our past with guilt and shame. Like the apostle Paul, we can acknowledge our past. We can objectively look at it without guilt and shame. Jesus has taken that part about himself. He has freed us from it.

This is an important point to remember when shame and guilt assault our minds and fill our thoughts.

Because we are united to Jesus in faith, we know we are God's beloved, forgiven and free.

Glorified: One of the meanings of this word is **"to exalt to a glorious rank or condition"** (from Biblehub.com Helps Word Study).

Because Jesus is already glorified and because we are in him, from God's point of view, we are already glorified. We are already sitting with Jesus in the heavenlies. **"4 ¶ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."** (Eph 2:4-7 ESV).

This is the hope of all those who are called right now and who love God – our sure hope. We will see the reality of this ongoing miracle of transformation at the resurrection.

When we stop and meditate on this reality, it changes our whole perception about God, ourselves and others. We have been called now. All humanity has been chosen in Jesus Christ from before the foundation of the world! This is a reality to be experienced by all who come to faith in God's eternal Son. God in his wisdom knows when to reveal this truth to people he loves.

Is this too hopeful? As God's people, we ought to have the same desire God has (next slide)

"1 ¶ First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and

thanksgivings be made for all people, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. 3 This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." (1Ti 2:1-4 ESV)

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4 who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (1Ti 2:1-4 ESV)



“33 Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies.

34 Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.” (Ro 8:33-34 ESV)

**NO POWER TO CONDEMN
GOD'S ELECT**



Sometimes the memories of our past are so vivid, so real that we have difficulty detaching ourselves from them. We need to remember at those times, there is no condemnation for those who are in Jesus.

The condemnation, whatever the source, is not real. It is only the product of our imagination and worry. These ruminations do not change what Jesus has done at the cross.

There is no condemnation at the throne of God of his beloved who receive by faith his gift of grace and place their trust in Jesus’ sacrifice for them.

The words of Jesus are true, **“I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.” (Joh 17:4 ESV).**

Jesus, the firstborn from the dead, who has never given in to evil, has completely conquered evil. He is the last Adam sitting in the throne of God. He intervenes for us, prays for us continually.

He is the perfect man at the right hand of God who has been given all power and

authority. Isn't that amazing?

“35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

36 As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.” (Ro 8:35-37 ESV)

INSEPARABLE



What is this quality of God that makes us inseparable from him?

It is the love of God in Jesus Christ!

There is absolutely nothing that can separate us from the love of God, as the apostle Paul points out in the following verses.

Through Christ and in Christ, we are more than conquerors! (Next slide)

“37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers,

39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Ro 8:37-39 ESV)

**NOTHING CAN SEPARATE US FROM
THE LOVE OF GOD**

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1 – Death nor Life: the apostle Paul said that figuratively that he died daily (1 Corinthians 15:31).

Living in Christ certainly has many challenges as we face the many attractions and perils of this life. Life presents many temptations we need to ward off. Simply waiting patiently for the hope presented to us is a challenge. We are called to persevere in Christ whatever life may presents.

2- Nor Angels nor Rulers: this is not referring to good angels . It is referring to the devil and to the cosmic powers over this present darkness and over the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places as Paul tells us in his epistles to the Ephesians.

3 – Heights and Depths:

Heights means that which is lifted up (hubBible.com). This is referring to the highs and lows of life. There are times where we might be exalted by the world. Remember Jesus when they wanted to make him King. Jesus never lost sight of his mission on earth. He knew his kingship came from the Father and not from men.

Or the story of the apostle Paul when in faith, he told a crippled man to stand up and

walk. The people in Lystra began to refer to Barnabas as their god Zeus and Paul as Hermes (Acts 14). They elevated them on a pedestal. They never let that go to their heads. They never lost sight of whom they were serving! There are times when we may be seen very positively by the world. We are to always humbly remember that we are servants and children of the living God.

There are other times, rather than feeling elated, we may feel depressed and desponded like Job. There are times we lament because of what we are living through. There are many Psalms of lament. In fact one of the books in the Bible is called Lamentations. Those difficult time will not separate us from the love of God either.

4- **Nor Anything Else in God's Whole World** (Phillips translation). Nothing, absolutely nothing can separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord. That is why we are more than conquerors as we respond to his love and remain in Him.

Let us pray in thankfulness and praise!