

Studies in Romans 1 - 8 (8)

Study 8: Reading – Romans 8 v 12 – 39

8 v 12 – 18 Children and Heirs: v17 *“And if children, then heirs”*

8 v 19 - 25 Creation Groaning: v22 *“the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain”*

8 v 26 – 30 Prayer and the Will of God: v27 *“the Spirit maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”*

8 v 31 – 39 More than Conquerors: v37 *“we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.”*

8 v 12 – 18 Children and Heirs: (compare Gal 4 v 1 – 7)

Paul begins this section by highlighting another contrast between the flesh and the Spirit. The flesh only brings death and we owe it nothing. In contrast the indwelling Spirit (see v9) gives the power to mortify, to put to death, the deeds of the body. We have previously noted that in the sight of God we are ‘*dead to sin*’ (6 v 2), a once for all event at conversion as a result of the work of Calvary being imputed to us. In 8 v 13 we learn that it is the responsibility of every believer to continually “*mortify the deeds of the body*”. This is the present experience for the believer, the conflict within discussed in 7 v 14 – 25. It is possible to be triumphant in this conflict because of the indwelling Spirit.

In v14 – 16 the writer introduces the truth of adoption and that we are “**sons and children of God**”. At v14 we learn that those who are led (no thought of compulsion, but willingly drawn along) by the Spirit “*they are the sons of God.*” This is a position of dignity and responsibility. At conversion we did not receive the spirit of bondage, “*but ye have received the Spirit of adoption*” (compare Gal 4 v 5, 6). As sons we cry “*Abba, Father*” – Mr Vine records: ‘Abba is the word formed by the lips of infants, and betokens unreasoning trust; Father expresses an intelligent apprehension of the relationship. The two together express the love and intelligent confidence of the child.’ If ‘*sons of God*’ describe the dignity of the position ‘*children*’ describes relationship, born into the family of God at the new birth.

In v17, 18 we are not only ‘*children of God*’, but ‘**heirs of God**’. The benefits of children include being heirs, entitled to an inheritance. Paul adds “*joint heirs with Christ*”; all that is rightfully His, we as ‘*children of God*’ will share. The normal experience of the children of God is suffering, and this is not something that should come as a surprise. The Lord Jesus suffered and the world is hostile to Him and his followers, but says Paul “*the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us*” (compare Moses in Heb 11 v 26)

8 v 19 - 25 Creation Groaning:

v19 – 22 **Creation is groaning.** The thought in v18 of suffering and then glory is continued and applied to creation. Creation is affected by the fall of Adam and waits expectantly for the day of its redemption, “*for the manifestation (the revealing) of the sons of God*”. Currently, Paul says, v22 “*the whole creation groaneth*” as a result of the fall of Adam. When Adam sinned not only was it disaster for mankind, but creation also was cursed Gen 3 v 17 “*cursed is the ground for thy sake*”. In v20 we learn that “*the creation was made subject to vanity*” i.e. emptiness as to results. This state was not the desire of creation, but came about when Adam sinned. The ability of creation to meet the full potential placed in it by the creator has been frustrated. We noted in Rom 1 v 20 that the wonder of creation declared “*His eternal power and Godhead*” and yet this is a frustrated and cursed creation. However in v21 there is hope, “*the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption*”. On that day, when the sons of God

shall be revealed, creation will burst forth in all its splendour fulfilling the potential placed within it by the creator Isa 35 v 1 *“the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.”*

As the creation groaneth and waits expectantly for its redemption, the apostle teaches in v23 – 25 that *“we also **with patience wait** for it.”* We, the children of God, possess *“the firstfruits of the Spirit”* (compare Eph 1 v 13, 14). The full harvest, our full inheritance awaits *“the redemption of our body.”* The exhortation in v25 is that *“we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.”* In the world the experience of the children of God is often suffering, but as we anticipate future glory *“we with patience wait”*. The word patience means endurance, abiding under; it is a patience that grows under trial (see exhortation in Rom 12 v 12).

8 v 26 – 30 Prayer and the Will of God: (or perhaps better the Spirit and will of God). In v26, 27 we see the activity of the Spirit in the life of a believer. The believer can not “with patience wait” without the help of the Holy Spirit. The word help has the meaning ‘to give assistance by sharing a burden’ (see Luke 10 v 40). We require the ‘help’ of the Spirit as *“we know not what we should pray for as we ought”*. We do not fully know the will of God for our lives or how to express ourselves so that prayers are appropriate for our complex needs, but the Spirit knows, understands and helps us in prayer.

v27 ends with reference to *“the will of God”* – I Thes 4 v 3 *“For this is the will of God, even your sanctification”*. In these verses in Rom 8 where sanctification is considered as the effect of salvation the apostle teaches us more concerning the will of God. Firstly, we can be assured that *“all things work together for good”*. Although we may not understand *“sufferings of this present time”* we can be assured that all is in the control of our God. We are included in the will of God for we *“are the called according to his purpose.”*

Notice a few things from v29 and 30. First, **God is sovereign**; it is God who is acting, God who predestinates, who calls, who justifies and will ultimately glorify (see Eph 1 v 4 and Rom 9 v 11). How true the words of 1 John 4 v 19 *“We love him, because he first loved us.”* Another point to note is the **will of God for us** as described in v29 *“to be conformed to the image of his Son”* (compare 1 Thes 4 v 3). In a future day, when we are glorified, we will be like Him in his spiritual body, but we should be like Him in his moral character now.

8 v 31 – 39 More than Conquerors:

The will of God is unstoppable; nothing can hinder its progress. In these verses the apostle asks 4 questions and gives the victorious answers.

1. v31 *“If God be for us, who can be against us?”* The evidence that God is for us is given in v32 *“He that spared not his own Son”*. If God has given the greatest gift of all, His Son, will He not *“freely give us all things?”*
2. v33 *“Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?”* If the righteous God has justified us, who can condemn? (see Rom 5 v 1)
3. The third question is closely related to the second v34 *“Who is he that condemneth?”* No one can condemn a believer whom God hath justified. The Lord Jesus, the one who died and rose again, is at the right hand of God and maketh intercession for us (see 1 John 2 v 1). The Spirit interceded on our behalf in v26 and at v34 the Son intercedes for us.
4. v35 *“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?”* In v35 and 36 Paul tells us that *“the sufferings of this present time”* can never separate us from the love of Christ. Indeed, says the apostle, *“in all these things we are more than conquerors”*. In v38 and 39 Paul states that not only current sufferings, but nothing else *“shall be able to separate us from the love of God”*. This is the great victorious conclusion to Paul’s thesis on the gospel, his declaration of ‘God’s method of making bad men good’.