

L. Romans in Biblical Perspective
The Gospel of God
“The Mind for God”
Romans 8:5-8
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This is God's word inspired, inerrant and infallible. Romans 8:1-8 says [1] *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. [2] For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. [3] For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, [4] in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. [5] For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. [6] For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. [7] For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. [8] Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*

The grass withers, the flower fades, the Word of our God abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

I believe this text positions us as we prepare to take the Lord's Supper. What is the design of the Lord's Supper? Remember these three R's – remember, reflect, and recalibrate. In other words, when we come to the table, the first thing we do is remember. Remember the Lord's Supper in and of itself has a history. The covenant meal in the Bible was not the Lord's Supper to begin with, it was the Passover but we don't celebrate the Passover anymore. Why? Because it has been fulfilled in Christ. Christ is the Lamb, who gave Himself to save His covenant people. Therefore, when Christ went to the cross, the Lamb of God redeems His people and His sacrifice is once and for all. So no longer do we have a meal in which we sacrifice a lamb because the Lamb has been sacrificed, and that is Christ who went to the cross and paid for all the sins of all of His people. He had redeemed us. He took away our sin debt so that we might receive the benefits of His righteousness, which is life ever more. So instead of guilty, we are forgiven, but more than forgiven we are declared innocent because of what Christ has done.

Now He replaces the old covenant meal with a new covenant meal in which there is no sacrifice. There is now the bread and the fruit of the vine, pointing back to the sacrifice that has already been made, that what Christ did in His body when he shed His blood to save us from our sins. So, we now have a new covenant bloodless meal because of the once and for all sacrifice of Christ. Now, but what did they do in that old covenant meal? Remember – I delivered you out of Egypt. Repent – remove the leaven of evil and grab your staff to follow Me and that same profile comes into the New Covenant meal. Remember – the body and blood of Christ for at the cross He set us free from sin's guilt, power, and condemnation because He paid the price for our sins. Now reflect and repent. Where in the areas of our life have we fallen short so that we can confess our sins and then recalibrate.

What is meant by recalibrate? If you know Jesus as your Lord and Savior in your life, not always, but consistently, there is this desire to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord. We want to give Him pleasure with our lives, the One who saved us, but we realize we fall short because while Jesus has removed all of the penalty of our sin and has broken the power of sin so that we

don't have to sin in our life, He has not yet removed all said net present in our life and that won't happen until we go to be with the Lord. Now, on our way there, we are making progress. We are growing. It is not an even progress. Sometimes it's up and down, but the Christian is growing not for grace, but growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ. As we are growing in the Lord, we give thanks to the Lord, but we're not there yet.

Publicly I am not where I want to be in my Christian life, but I praise God I'm not where I used to be. Do you in any way identify with that sentiment? Which one of us are satisfied with our walk before the Lord? If we are satisfied with our walk, then absent is that sensitive work of the Holy Spirit who is showing us where we are falling short and the reality is that we do fall short. Now Praise God, my salvation is not built on what I do. My salvation is built on what Jesus did at the cross. So, praise the Lord for that but that doesn't make me any less sensitive to those areas where I've fallen short. So, I am not where I want to be, but I am not where I used to be.

One of the great things of a moment like the Lord's Supper, when you step back and remember that your salvation is what Jesus did on the cross, then that frees you up to confess your sins. You don't have to cover up your sins. You can confess them because you're not saved by what you do for your saved by what He did. That gives us freedom to be honest, of where we've fallen short. But it also gives me the freedom to take a look and praise God that you're not where you used to be. My growth as a Christian is not because of what I've done. My growth as a believer is because of what He has done at the cross and what He is doing now in my life.

Just as it would be wrong for us to play games and cover up our sin as if it's not there, no, we're free to confess our sins. And He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. It's also right to know that our God takes pleasure as we grow in His grace and we ought to take the time to praise Him for that growth in His grace. Yes, I am not where I ought to be in my Christian life, but I praise God I'm not where I used to be in my Christian life. Dare I add another phrase, and by God's grace, I am on my way to where I want to be in my Christian life. The best is yet to come for the Christian. Honestly, that's why I kind of wanted to hang out here just in a couple of these verses where we've already cracked it open in Romans 8:1-5.

I have just a couple of thoughts to bring us to the Lord's Table. The content I want you to think through as you come to the table is found right here in Romans 8:1-5. Romans 8:1 says [1] *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus*. Therefore, based on what the previous seven chapters of the Book of Romans has shown us, we're lost, helpless, and hopeless, but God being in rich mercy has made a way for our salvation through His Son Jesus. Now Christ has come. You are now in Christ and Christ is in you and you are growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ. Now He wants us to know this; live your Christian life with this rock solid promise in God's Word from God to you.

As Romans 8:1 says there is therefore now, not if you do pretty good, but now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Today every one of us is in one of two places spiritually. We're either in our sin and under its dominion and condemnation, or we are in Christ by faith and repentance. If today, by God's grace, you are in Christ this text says there is therefore not any single condemnation. There is no possible condemnation for you. Why? Because Jesus has paid it all. There is no way that the judgment of the wrath of God that rightly falls upon sin can fall upon you because it's already fallen upon Christ for you. This is not a promise that's based on the work He's doing in you, through you or on you. This is a promise

that's based on the work that He did outside of you on His Son and in His Son at Calvary. That's where our assurance resides. It is in Christ alone that we have this promise and this assurance.

Here's a little word of encouragement. When we get through Romans 8 we will be picking up speed but I can't just get through Romans for this is your life in Christ. It's not a life you live for Christ to get assurance. He gives you assurance in Christ to live the life. He starts in Romans 8:1. He doesn't put the assurance at the end of Romans 8 for He puts the assurance at the beginning because of what Christ has done and its efficacy has been affirmed through the resurrection of Christ. Therefore, he says, there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1) and now He's going to build on this blessed assurance where Jesus is mine. It's like an avalanche of refreshing water. Now, I know I just mixed metaphors because water isn't an avalanche but I did it on purpose. It's an avalanche of refreshing water of life.

When I take people on our study tour in Israel, everybody gets worn out in 11 days and so I pick the time for us to have a rest in the desert, the lowest part of the earth right there at the Dead Sea. That's a great place to get rest. It's about 110 degrees. Seriously, we will take the morning off so they can enjoy the Dead Sea and the waters. This one place that we go to has a tepidarium and a caldarium. Then there is this thing called the frigidarium. That's the coldest water that has ever existed in all of humanity. Now, if you want to know if you've got heart trouble or not, just jump in, because if you do, your heart will stop, I promise you, right there somewhere. I mean, it is unbelievably cold. But I love to just get in it. Then it has this waterfall that starts and it gets heavier and heavier and flows and flows. It's so refreshing. That's Romans 8.

I want you to hear this assurance coming from the Son of God; There is therefore now no condemnation for those who in Christ Jesus for what the law could not do, God did in His Son and you're forgiven in Christ. How do I get in Christ? Here's the avalanche. Not only has the Son of God provided the foundation for your assurance, but the Spirit of God provided your emancipation. You were dead, enslaved in sin and He set you free. Here was the Son of God, providing in His redemption your justification. Then the Spirit of God came upon you with the Word of God and set you free in regeneration. You were born again and you came from death unto life. The law of the Spirit set you free. What that means is the principled power of the Spirit of God set you free. You were under the law of sin and death, but then the Spirit of God set you free from the law of sin and death to the law of life and peace. Now you're in Christ.

He's not going to stop there. Here is where I want to make a couple of comments on that will lead us to the Table for then comes the avalanche of blessing through the mind of God. He's given you new thinking, a renewed mind. He's not only given you a new heart. He's not only giving you a new record. He is giving you a new mind. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind so that you may prove that which is good and excellent before the Lord (Romans 12:2). Worship Him with the renewed mind.

Then He's going to talk to you about the adoption of God. You're not only born again into the family of God. You're adopted into the family of God. You are sons of God. Now, ladies, please don't get upset with me. I am a pastor. You're thinking I ought to say sons and daughters. No, I ought not to and here's why. Sons is a legal term, and you have to read it in the context of the first century. Daughters didn't inherit, but every one of you, male and female, have the legal inheritance of being joint heirs with Christ as sons of God. He has put you in that status of joint heirs with Christ.

Then He's going to go to another blessing that we don't think is a blessing, but it is a blessing and I hope you will understand it's a blessing and that's this; suffering for God in this world. Then He's going to go to another place and that's the promises of God for you in this world. You're going to hear verses like and we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28). Then we'll get ten of the most marvelous verses that I call the Hallelujah chorus in the Bible and those are found in Romans 8:31-39 – nothing will be able to separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus (vs 39).

That's the average He's pouring on you and right now where he says is if you want to know who is in Christ, they have to be set free by the Spirit. Romans 8:1- says [1] *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.* (How do dead sinners get into Jesus?) [2] *For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.* [3] *For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do.* (How did He do it?) *By sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,* [4] *in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.* [5] *For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.* [6] *For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.* [7] *For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.* [8] *Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*

According to this text, the principle of power, of the spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus. You've been emancipated and born again, and that set you free to come to Christ as Lord and Savior. So now you have justification. There's no condemnation. Now you have regeneration. There is no dominion that can stop you from coming to Christ. You've been set free and liberated by the power of the Spirit. Then what does His Son do? His Son sends the Spirit to bring you to Him. Why? Jesus removes our sin against the law, and then He gives us His perfect obedience and His righteousness is credited to our account. What is the flip of this? Those in the flesh cannot please God. Now flip that. Those who are in the Spirit can please God, but not for salvation. We don't bring saving merit. We cannot save ourselves with our life. But those who are saved are empowered and positioned to live life that can and does give pleasure to God.

I think this is important because, when we come to the Lord's Supper, and rightly so, we're sensitive to our sins, aren't we? But you ought to be sensitive to the fact of this; you're not where you used to be. That means, by God's grace, things are happening in your life that bring the smile of your Father and the first place it shows up is in the fact we have a new and renewed mind. To be in Christ with no condemnation you have to be regenerated, emancipated, and when the Spirit of God comes into your life with the Word of God and you're born again and regenerated so that you can come to Christ as your Lord and Savior, He doesn't leave. He lives in you.

He takes up residence in you and He doesn't do a makeover. He does a takeover. He isn't building a nice little bungalow. He's making you the mansion for the King. He takes up residence in you and now with His presence, not only are you forgiven of all your penalties and guilt of sin and in regeneration the power of sin has been broken, but now we're on a trajectory to kill sin and out of a new obedience we follow Christ. We keep His commandments not to be saved, but we love His law because we love Him and we do it now as an offering of praise to Him. Our Christian life is imperfect, it's uneven, but it's making progress. It's not a perfect progress. It is

not a straight line. It's up, It's down. It's moving forward three steps then two backwards but He's moving you forward. Why? He is perfecting you. He is growing you in the intimacy with your God and that you're growing in that daily intimate walk with Him that you might enjoy Him.

Here is where it starts. He comes, emancipate you. You're born again. You come to Christ, you're justified. No condemnation. There is regeneration. You have a new heart, a new record, a new life and Jesus has sent the Holy Spirit who has taken up residence in your life. This is the last thing I want you to think about; where His presence shows up first is your change of mind. Your mindset changes. No longer is the mind set on the flesh. The word flesh makes its appearance theologically in in the days of Noah in Genesis 6:5 that says [5] *The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the **thoughts** of his heart was only evil continually.*

Someone said this but I don't know who it was but they said 'When you get saved, you start leaving stinking thinking.' What has sin done for you? Why do you want to put your mind on it? What has Satan done for you? Why would you want your mind there? What has the world done for you? Why would our mind go there? Who has saved you and who has come to set you free? Where the spirit of God is there is liberty and the first place it shows up is in our mind. The mind becomes the highway to the heart and the mind becomes the blessing from the new heart. And now the mind is set on the Lord. If you're reading this today and you've experienced that then you're a Christian.

When we come to the Table, I do not want to blunt your sensitivity to your sin. Let's deal with it. We're free to deal with it. Confess it, repent of it, and move forward. But I also want you to take some time to celebrate and rejoice – I'm not where I used to be. God has worked on my mind, on my heart and in my life and it's of Him and to Him. So take these moments to give thanks to Him.

In my study at my desk, I have two drawers. One of the great blessings of being a pastor is like today, these covenant children, I get a chance to build relationships with them, and periodically they'll come and give me things that they've drawn. Many times, they've drawn me. It's a good thing that my self-image is reasonably intact after I see their depictions of me from time to time. Now, some are very flattering. I love people that do stick figures of me, but not all of them are that flattering but I just love to get them. And I have a drawer that I put them in and I visit that drawer on a regular basis just to go back through and talk to them about it also.

I have a second drawer that has drawings that my grandchildren do, but I want you to understand something today. God doesn't have two drawers. He has one and He delights in what you do because of what He's doing in you. In fact, I want to leave you with a verse from Zephaniah 3. Think on this today. I know we're not where we want to be, but just go 30,000 feet and realize we're not where we were and that's because of Him so give Him praise.

Zephaniah 3:17 says [17] *The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.* God doesn't do Presbyterians singing especially when this verse says 'He will exult over you with loud singing.' Let's pray.

Prayer:

Lord bless us as we come to the Table. Our feast is not in the portions that are given for our feast is in Jesus, where these ordinary elements now point us. Prepare our hearts as we sing Your praise, knowing that You rejoice and sing over Your people. God, please give us hearts that hate sin, but also give us hearts that rejoice in the work of grace, in Jesus' Name, I pray, Amen.