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The Benefits that Flow from Christ

In Robert Murray McCheyne's famous hymn, we read these words:

“When this passing world is done, when has sunk yon glaring sun, when we stand with Christ in glory, looking o'er life's finished story, then, Lord, shall I fully know, not till then, how much I owe.

“When I stand before the throne, dressed in beauty not my own, when I see Thee as Thou art, love Thee with unsinning heart, then, Lord, shall I fully know, not till then, how much I owe.

“When the praise of heav'n I hear, loud as thunders to the ear, loud as many waters' noise, sweet as harp's melodious voice, then, Lord, shall I fully know, not till then, how much I owe.”¹

These words are so important for the child of God for we are so ignorant of the benefits we have received in Christ.

Isaiah 64:4, “For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.”

In other words, much of what God does and gives us in Christ is beyond our comprehension this side of the grave.

In Revelation 21 and 22 we read of John's struggle at describing the incredible home that awaits God's children — truly “Not till then shall we fully know how much we owe.”

Romans 11:33, “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!”

After spending eleven chapters detailing the glories of redemption, Paul can only end it this way — standing in awe of the unfathomable ways of the Lord.

Brothers and sisters, as we glance at the eternal God's plan for us, we are at a loss to fully comprehend it, must less appreciate it! And yet, that isn't to say that we cannot come to a fuller understanding of the blessings that God has in store for us.

¹ From the *New Trinity Hymnal* #600

1 Corinthians 2:10, “But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”

However it is to say that even as God's children we never will fully understand them — certainly not in this age.

And so there remains confusion in the church as to the nature and content of the benefits that are ours in Christ. Are they earned? Can they be lost? Do all receive them? Or are they reserved only for some? What specifically are they? What do they consist of?

Many of these questions are addressed in the chapter at which we are looking.

Romans 8 specifically describes the benefits that flow from Christ. Romans 8 outlines eight benefits.

- Romans 8:1-4a: No Condemnation.
- Romans 8:4b-8: Fellowship with God.
- Romans 8:9-11: A Transformed Life.
- Romans 8:12-13: A New Priority.
- Romans 8:14-17: Sonship.
- Romans 8:18-25: The Promise of Glory.
- Romans 8:26-27: Help in our Weakness.
- Romans 8:28-30: Assurance.

I want to introduce you to this incredible chapter by simply noting two truths regarding the benefits that flow from Christ.

Conditioned Upon Salvation

First these benefits are conditional.

Romans 8:4, “That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

Romans 8:9b-11, “Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.”

Romans 8:13, “For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”

Romans 8:17, “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.”

Each of these verses point to a condition. Each verse presupposes A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD or salvation. Salvation is the requirement for receiving the benefits of this chapter.

In fact, we see this in the very first verse.

Romans 8:1, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

When we read “therefore” we immediately are drawn back to a previous truth. And what is that truth? Though clearly referencing the entire seventh chapter, nevertheless it is seen in the final, climatic end:

Romans 7:24-25, “**O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.** So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.”

Thus the reference of the “therefore” in Romans 8:1 is the deliverance we have received in Christ! Having been saved from a body of death through the work of Jesus Christ, “There is therefore now NO CONDEMNATION...” See, the benefits outlined in this chapter are based on the fact of SALVATION. Notice further:

Romans 8:1, “There is therefore now no condemnation **to them which are in Christ Jesus**, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

Those who are in Christ Jesus receive the benefits of “no condemnation.” In fact, if we trace the “IN CHRIST” relationship throughout this chapter we see it alluded to no less than six times.

- Romans 8:1, “for those who are IN CHRIST JESUS.”
- Romans 8:2, “For the law of the Spirit of life IN CHRIST JESUS has set you free...”
- Romans 8:9b: “...but if anyone does NOT HAVE THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST [i.e., are not in Christ], he does not belong to Him.”
- Romans 8:10: “And if Christ is IN you...”
- Romans 8:17: “And if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs WITH CHRIST...”
- Romans 8:39: nothing, “...shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is IN CHRIST JESUS our Lord.”

And so, it is clear that Paul is speaking here of those who are IN CHRIST — those who have been saved by His cross and transformed by His grace! Thus, the CONDITION upon which the focus of this chapter rests is SALVATION IN CHRIST — which means that if we are going to experience the benefits of this chapter we must be “In Christ.”

Now this leads to a very obvious and yet important question: Are you “In Christ”? Do you have a personal relationship with Him? Have you been saved by His Cross?

The benefits of this chapter are conditioned by it!

If you answer, “NO!”, then you need a Savior. Jesus Christ — God in the flesh — died on the cross for the sins of His people. And that means that if you are one today who recognizes that your sin rightly deserves the wrath of God then you can go to God this day and ask Him to forgive you on account of the work of Christ on the Cross. And Christ will indwell you!

2 Corinthians 5:21, “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

If you would like to receive forgiveness on account of your sins go to God in prayer and confess your sin and rebellion. Acknowledge that without Christ, you are doomed. Ask God to forgive you on the basis of Christ's work on the Cross. And Jesus Christ will come into your heart, and you will be a partaker in the Benefits described in this chapter!

And yet, for **THOSE WHO DO HAVE A RELATIONSHIP** with Christ, do you realize that the benefits of this chapter are yours with no strings attached?

See, the **ONLY** condition mentioned in this text is “Salvation.” Thus, if you are a child of God, the condition has been met and these benefits are yours!

Why am I laying such stress on this? Why the big deal?

Because so many of us live as though the benefits mentioned in this chapter are conditional.

Indeed there are conditional promises found in the word of God. The covenant child who honors his father and mother will live a long life on earth, Ephesians 6:2-3. The one who pants for God on God's terms will “take delight in the Lord” and will “ride on the heights of the earth” and will be fed “with the heritage of Jacob” (Isaiah 58:14). But none of this can be said of the benefits mentioned in Romans 8 — they are unconditional!

Indeed! If Christ is your Savior then these benefits are yours today:

- Romans 8:1: “There is therefore now no condemnation...”
- Romans 8:4: “...[you] do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”
- Romans 8:10: “...[your] spirit is alive because of righteousness.”
- Romans 8:15: “You have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, 'Abba! Father!'”
- Romans 8:18: “...the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”
- Romans 8:26: “...the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.”
- Romans 8:28: “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.”

And yet sadly, in spite of these incredible promises, we can be found living defeated, burdened, and heavy laden lives because we haven't done such and such. We see that we still sin. We know we have fallen short of God's glory — and how could God ever bless us!

And yet, do you know that this is right were Satan would have us live? He would have us doubt. He would have us question God. He wants us to be uncertain about the riches of Christ's grace. He wants us to lack confidence in the promises of God.

Why?

Because whether you realize it or not, this impugns the character of God!

2 Timothy 2:11-13, “It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.”

And so for the sake of our walks AND the glory of God let us accept the benefits herein described and “mount up with wings as eagles” (Isaiah 40:31). If you are in Christ, then these benefits are yours!

Granted by the Spirit

Notice the “Spirit” of God is referenced fourteen times in this chapter.

- Romans 8:2, “For the law of the Spirit of life...”
- Romans 8:4b; “...who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”
- Romans 8: 5b-6: “...those who [walk] according to the Spirit, [set their mind on] the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace.”
- Romans 8:9b: “...but if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.”
- Romans 8:11: “But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you...”
- Romans 8:16: “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.”
- Romans 8:23: “And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit...”
- Romans 8:26: “And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness...”

It should be obvious from these references that the THEME of this text is closely related to the work of the Spirit of God! In fact, most commentaries title this section, “Life in the Spirit.”

A Causal Relationship

Well, how does the Spirit relate to the benefits mentioned in this text? Notice just one more passage.

Romans 8:12-14, “Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”

It is the Spirit that enables us to enjoy the privileges of Sonship. From all of this we conclude that the relationship that the Spirit has with the benefits mentioned throughout this chapter is CAUSAL. The Spirit GRANTS or causes/produces these benefits. It's similar to the relationship described in Galatians 5 between the Spirit and His fruit.

Galatians 5:16, “This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”

Galatians 5:22-23, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”

How many of you are responsible for the “fruit” of the Spirit? How many of you at any time can say “I think I'll start loving”? “I think I'll be filled with joy today”?

NONE OF US!

Why?

Because the fruit of the Spirit is just that — fruit that the Spirit of God imparts!

And that is the relationship that we have with the benefits mentioned in Romans 8 — The Spirit is the

One who GRANTS them!

Romans 8:13, “For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”

The Spirit alone is the One who grants the benefit of life! Now it is so important that we grasp this for in spite of what we just saw in the last point, AT TIMES we may feel condemned. We doubt God's good intentions for us. We question whether God could bless a wretch like ourselves.

And this raises the question, “If the benefits of this chapter are Unconditional for the child of God, then why do I have so many doubts?!” “Why don't I experience the benefits more?!”

The answer is not because their presence is predicated by our moral blamelessness — or some other work on our part but because the existential/experiential enjoyment of these benefits comes as we walk by the Spirit of God!

“Experiential” is an important word. Whether one feels it or not, if you are in Christ you are not under condemnation. You also enjoy every other benefit mention in this text. Thus to live as a child of God doubting your salvation and questioning God’s love for His children is to forsake the help that God supplies. You are not testifying to the real absence of the benefits mentioned in this chapter; you are testifying to your lack of fellowship with the Spirit of God.

A Closer Walk with God

How do we remedy this situation? It is remedied by entering into a closer relationship with the Spirit of God.

How do we do that?

You know the answer: By being “Spirit-filled” or “Word-filled.”

And thus, if the benefits outlined in this chapter are going to be the conscious experience of us all, we must constantly submit ourselves to the word of God. This is not simply knowing it, but living it in the Spirit's power. We must constantly pursue our Savior. We must be knowing, learning, and loving Him. We must constantly learn to live moment-by-moment in light of the Spirit — walk with the Spirit.

This is what we must be all about such that we understand that life is NOT about this or that pleasure. Life is not about gaining this or that achievement. Life is not about enjoying this or that relationship. Rather it is about growing in our ability to fellowship with Christ through His word!

If we could just grasp this truth, we would gauge life so differently. Brother B. Simpson put it this way:

“Once it was the blessing, now it is the Lord; once it was the feeling, now in the word; once His gift I wanted, now the Giver own; once I sought for healing, now Himself alone.”

This captures what we must be about as a people of God. We must know the Lord. We must walk with Him. We must enjoy Him to the utmost. We must fellowship with Him in His word. This is the experiential enjoyment of the benefits that this chapter revolves around!

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About the Preacher

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