

**Romans 8:28-39**, Living Free in Christ Pt. 6  
Preached @ Harambee Church by Pastor Mike Gunn on **May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

*“For if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”*  
**Romans 8:13**

*“...we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. 3 Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.”*  
**Romans 5:2b-5**

*“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*  
**Romans 5:8**

*“...by making life easier for ourselves in minimizing the nature and seriousness of our sin, we become greater victims of it. We are in fact not healing ourselves. Those who say that they already feel bad enough without being told about the corruptions of indwelling sin misread the path to peace. When our people have not been taught well about the real nature of sin and how it works and how to put it to death, most of the miseries people report are not owing to the disease, but it's symptoms.”*  
**John Piper**

### **Intro**

We have been looking at Romans chapters 6-8, and studying how the gospel transforms us. It is important to review what we don't mean, and what it is we hope you are hearing.

### **What We Don't Mean**

1. That you can live in perfect victory over sin on this earth
2. That cleaning up your life is the clear path to God
3. That sin is always manifested outwardly
4. That you can overcome sin without God
5. That holiness or righteousness is something you work harder for

### **What We Hope to Say**

1. Sin is far worse than its symptoms
2. Our Motivation and power to transform comes from God alone
3. That we have been freed from the oppression and power of sin in our lives, but the presence of sin remains in reality in our “Flesh”
4. That there is no condemnation for sin in Christ Jesus, and we are freed to love God and others without being motivated by guilt or need.
5. That the resurrection is the single greatest event in human history, and the backbone for the Christian faith

Last week we saw how life's circumstances (Heat) effects our walk with the Lord, and our growth in His grace. Too often we respond in sin to negative and positive events in our life, which lead to the stuff that is going in our lives (Thorns). What we saw last week is that God can uses and meets us in our struggles (The Cross), which helps us cry out in a different way to our Father; “Abba Father” (Fruit). This is all a process that includes every aspect of our lives, and not just the times when things are going well. Today, Paul finishes up this great section reminding us of the purpose of all of our trials (And our life for that matter), and how nothing imaginable can separate those in Christ from His love. We are the bride of Christ, and He is not looking to divorce.

### **From the Head...**

We are either living according to the “Flesh” (Our self-saving, god-mitigating self), or we are living according to the Spirit (Grace, forgiveness, justification). Our passage reflects on the reality of our lives when we begin to doubt God's love and acceptance of us during hard times in our lives. It is a grand reminder that “*There is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus*” (**Romans 8:1**). Our salvation is wholly the work of God in our lives, and not our own mechanisms that often fill in the “Gospel Gaps,” that take place of the real gospel of God's grace in a person's life.

### **It is God's Sovereign Will That Guarantees Our Growth (Romans 8:28-32)**

It is by the Spirit's help (Which intercedes for us (**Romans 8:27**) that we can view perspective from God's eyes during trials. We see God's intent for every one of His people; “*To be conformed to the likeness of His Son.*” This will bring us ultimate joy, and God can and does even use our trials to help us achieve this purpose in our lives. Verse 29 tells us that it is because of His love (“Foreknew” is in the context of love, and has the idea of an intimate, loving knowledge) that He “Predestined” us. Check out the reality of the believer's future hope:

**Who** = “Those He foreknew

**What** = “He predestined to be conformed to His image of His Son”

**Why** = “That He might be the **first born** among many brothers,” and so His people would be glorified. This is a clear chain of events that God produces and predestines by His mercy and grace in the lives of the believers.

### **What , then shall we say in response to this?**

This is where it all hinges on this doctrine of predestination. Our comfort and hope is in this reality, not our own strength, and religious ways to feel righteous. It simply isn't up to you, but up to the God “*who didn't spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all.*” When we are struggling with the heat of life and our own spiritual growth, we can realize that God is using our circumstances for His purposes, which lead to our glory. God did not spare His own Son for this purpose, why would He spare us of the heat in our lives?

### It is Christ's Work on the Cross That **Secures** Our Growth (Romans 8:33-34)

**“Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen?”**

No one! It is God who justifies!

### **“Who is He that condemns?”**

No one, because “*There is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus,*” and Jesus Christ has already died for that, and has risen from the dead, and is “Interceding” (Just like the Spirit; **Romans 8:27**) for us!

### It is God's Unending Love That **Motivates** Our Growth (Romans 8:35-39)

**“Who will separate us from the love of Christ?”**

What heat can drive us from God, or even God from us? Nothing can, because “*We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.*” Once again, those in Christ can persevere, because of God's love being made in us. It is God's love that pays for our sins, and it is God's love that secures our salvation. All of life's heat is only a means to an end, and that end brings us great hope.

### **...to the Heart**

A heart that is working its way to God can only become bitter when God appears to have not given it all of its desires. After all, “*We have worked so hard for Him, why doesn't He respond?*” The fact is, saving grace enables us to see our trials through the eyes of eternity, and helps us realize that even God Himself has suffered greatly because of sin, and it is His love that has secured our salvation and forgiveness. It is because of His love that that He rescues us from eternal heat, but allows us to be refined by the heat brought about by sin in this life. Has life's heat caused bitterness in your walk with the Lord? Are you able to see beyond your current predicament? Can you love God in spite of this? If you can, this is purely an act of the Spirit in your life! Praise God!

Next week's verses: Next week, we will take up where we left off in our Study of John, and our verses are **John 11:1-46**

Books for further reading: *Commentary on Romans*; Martin Luther; *A Rereading of Romans*; Stanley K. Stowers; *The Mortification of Sin*; John Owen; *Romans: An Interpretive Outline*; David N. Steele and Curtis C. Thomas; *Romans: The Righteousness of God*; Adolph Schlatter

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