

Study 9 - The epistle of Paul to the Romans by Neville Clark TTG 2017

Tonight we are going to consider Ch 8. Given that we are recommencing, it is opportune that we take a short recap just over what we have looked at in the last seven chapters which is the formulation of the apostle's argument as he explains to the ecclesias of the city of Rome just how man might be saved. That is to say, in simple terms, how a righteous God could take an unrighteous man, ascribe righteousness to him without compromising God's own righteousness. That is the method of salvation that God will institute with man. And it is not as simple as putting just down on one page as you can appreciate.

Cast your mind back to the ecclesia that we met some 12 months ago when we first began this series, a very cosmopolitan ecclesia in Rome comprised of Jews and of Gentiles, who were diametrically opposed on just how salvation could be wrought and who might be entitled to it. So the Jew thought, of course, that being a literal descendant of Abraham made him something special, more special than other men, and that the keeping of the Law of Moses was essential for salvation. Well, the Gentile on the other hand could see straight through that and knew immediately that the Law of Moses wasn't essential to be kept to be saved, but that because the Jews had so hopelessly failed to learn even the basic constructions of the Law, he thought that God had cast off the Jews. And to make matters worse in the ecclesia, neither of those two groups had any difficulty telling the other group how they felt. And that is how things are as you begin Romans.

Well, what does the argument look like? The first major section is Vv 16 and 17 of Ch 1, we've got an introduction we've got a conclusion, but V 16 of Ch 1 is the first section, and it is only a couple of verses, but is a section because it is a definition. Man's got a problem. The problem is sin. Sin estranged man from God and then kills him. To solve that, God would enter into the arena of human affairs, and demonstrate his character in his son. If man could identify with that son by his character in his life, then God could forgive him and save him. In Rom 1:16-17, that is called "the Gospel of God," that is the good news of God, that would be the method by which God could save man from sin and therefore from death. Well, the balance of Ch 1 through to the end of Ch 3 is the next section, Man's failure to attain righteousness. When I say "man" I mean all mankind, both Jew and Gentile. This is, if you like, the graphic depiction of man's need for salvation. On the one hand the Gentile world had buried itself so deeply in sin that they had reduced themselves to animals, as you read in Rom 1. On the other hand the Jewish world had so completely decorated itself in self-righteousness that they were no longer recognisable as the children of Abraham. What that meant was all mankind together, Jew and Gentile together, stood condemned before God.

The last portion of Ch 3 through to the end of Ch 5, the Righteousness of God was revealed. That is to say, it was revealed in son. Here is the entrance of Jesus Christ

into the argument the apostle makes. Paul now gets specific about how the righteousness of God actually was revealed. That is to say, it was revealed in a son, and even though man could not come close to living, or copying the example of the Lord Jesus Christ, if he would try, if he would make an earnest and conscientious attempt to do so, then God could forgive man by ascribing Christ's righteousness to him. So be clear, our good deeds, such as they are, even if they are all that good, our good deeds are not what gets us into the kingdom of God. They are what identify us with Jesus Christ, it is Christ's righteousness that gets us into the Kingdom of God. That is the method by which, as I have said before, a righteous God could take an unrighteous man, ascribe righteousness to him without compromising God's own righteousness.

Well, that then brought us to the next section, Chs 6 through 8. The righteousness of God with believers. And here's how that sections breaks down. Christ has certainly opened the door to salvation, but there has to be an identification with him in our lives, and Romans Ch 6 begins to explain how that works. The first step in that identification is baptism. And between Rom 6:1 and Ch 7:6, the apostle gives three examples of the significance of baptism. It is a new life, a new master and a new husband. And in the context of a new husband that he describes as he enters Rom Ch 7, he says that we leave the old husband behind and we cleave to the new. That is, we leave the Law of Moses behind, and we cleave to the side of Jesus Christ, because even though the Law was appointed by God, even though it was holy, just and good, it had limitations. For example, the very entrance of the Law into the world exposed sin. As soon as sin saw a prohibition, it was inflamed and wanted to do the thing that was now prohibited, which it had never considered before. So the Law outlined to man, just how far he was from God but in the very process of doing that, it also inflamed a desire within man to disobey God. That begins then for the balance of Rom 7 an explanation of the conflict in the mind of man, the conflict between flesh and spirit that we all fall prey to, that runs all the way through into Ch 8, the warfare, and therefore as we have it on the screen there, the relationship between the Law and sin.

Well, Rom Ch 8. What happens next. Well, the answer is Rom Ch 8 is the solution to the problem, and the structure is very simple. V 1-4, Christ did what the Law could not do, he gave man a method of salvation which the Law could never do. Vv 5-11, In so doing, he demonstrated the way of Life that God expects from all his children. He saw that way of life in his son, and he expects it in all his other sons. Now the Law ought to have taught the Jews that, I mean, it was a schoolmaster to lead them to Christ, it ought to have taught them a certain form of conduct, but it never did, because they never used it that way. Well, the Law could lead you to Christ, but it could never save you because as Heb 9 says, it could not make the conscience perfect. You could of course keep the Law of Moses without having any internal change. Well, you can't follow the Lord Jesus Christ without having any internal change. That's how Christ triumphs over the Law, you see.

And what happens next in Rom 8, vv 12-17, he describes what real sons look like,

what real sons look like. Of course, they are copies of Jesus Christ. But there's a problem, and the problem is this. Sin fights back. There are two enormous forces both vying for control of this body. One is Jesus Christ, and the other is sin, and the problem is that sin lives here, that's the problem. So sin fights back, and what the apostle does, from V 26 through to the end of the chapter is he gives three pieces of advice to us to alleviate the suffering that is caused by sin. Vv 26 and 27, Divine assistance in prayer. Vv 28-30, Providence in life. Vv 31-39 Assurance of the kingdom, that is the, the guarantee of salvation.

Well, that brings us into Rom Ch 8 and the first thing to observe is that Rom Ch 8, just perhaps as you have read these opening verses, Rom 8 is an absolute continuation from Rom Ch 7. And I have tried to illustrate it like this on the screen, here's a copy of your Bible and I have just coloured in two words, or two groups of words, one red, one blue. The reds are all the flesh and the blue are all the spirit. This is the duality of conflict in your mind. And the warfare that the apostle spoke about, this autobiography that he gives towards the end of Rom Ch 7, rolls straight into Rom Ch 8, you see. End of V 1, Flesh vs Spirit. V 2, the law of the Spirit vs the Law of Sin. V 4, Flesh vs Spirit, V 5, Flesh, flesh, spirit, spirit. You can see the conflict that is happening. Now that conflict in Rom 8 is simply a continuation of the conflict that began in Rom Ch 7 between the Law of Paul's mind and the Law of sin and death in his body, you see. My point is, that the chapter break doesn't help us, I mean it might be a useful enough section break, but it is really not a chapter break, and it ought not to be there.

What you are seeing you see as you open Rom 8 is two completely different modes of thinking which are locked in mortal combat. So serious was it, that at the end of Ch 7 and v 25, the Apostle makes this overwhelming confession. He says in the last half of V 25 "So then with the mind I serve the Law of God but with the flesh the Law of sin, that's what I've got to contend with for all my born days, he says. That's the conflict I am up for. And so severe was that conflict in his life that it drove him to despair because no matter how hard he tried, you see, he was not able to get his flesh to follow the lead of his mind. He knew what he should do but he just didn't do it, and every day, sin would win battles against him, which led him to the point of exasperation in V 24 of Rom Ch 7, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death." So that's how Ch 7 concludes. I've got a warfare. I am losing the warfare, I can't do it by myself. Who is going to deliver me? The Answer is, Jesus Christ, and Ch 8 commences the solution to the problem. "Therefore," Ch 8:1, you see, "There is therefore," immediately linking us to Ch 7. "There is therefore now, no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus who walk not? It would appear to say that if we are in Christ and walk after the flesh but not after the spirit our sins are not condemned by God. Well, let's be careful. It is not saying that God doesn't condemn sin. Psa 7:11 says that he is angry with the wicked every day. What it means in V 1 is that there is no ultimate condemnation for sin in our lives, for those in Christ. Why? Well because we have forgiveness. So there is no ultimate condemnation, we don't fall prey to the just judgment that comes upon sin if we are in Christ because we are forgiven. And in the last half of the verse it goes on and says "Who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit," and you've got to be aware

that those words are not actually there in the best manuscripts. Now those words are not wrong, so that phrase, "who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit," they are not wrong, because the exact words appear at the end of V 4, those very same words, but the translators have added them to V 1, to perhaps, add context to V 1, otherwise V 1 might appear to read that there is no condemnation for sin at all. The problem is that adding those words to V 1 changes the emphasis of V 1. You think about it, if we read v 1 without those last couple of lines, we read "there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." What's the emphasis? The emphasis is "being in Christ Jesus." Being in the Truth, identification with Christ. As soon as you put those additional words in it completely changes the emphasis from identification with Christ to obedience, doesn't it? Because the emphasis all of a sudden becomes walking not after the flesh but after the spirit. As I say, that's not wrong, the concept is not wrong, but it does change the basic emphasis of V 1, and the point of V 1 is a point about identification, not about our walk, that all comes later on. Christ is the one that solves the wretchedness, you see, of Ch 7 and V 24, that's the point.

Well, of course, V 1 then creates an obvious questions, doesn't it? How is it possible that there is no condemnation in Christ? Now I told you it is by forgiveness, well V 1 doesn't say, that, it just says there is no condemnation for you if you are in Christ Jesus. How, V 2, because the Law of the Spirit of Life, in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death, that's how there is no condemnation in V 1. Now what does that mean? Well, we are made free in Christ, that's why, that's how, V 2, we are free, free from what? It says free from the law of sin and death in V 2. Well how? Why, by forgiveness. We are made free because we wont be subject to the condemnation of V 1. Well all that is a little bit complicated, what is the law of sin and death? And for that matter, at the outset of V 2, what is the law of the spirit of life? Well here is the simple answer. You can understand V 2 very easily by comparison with Ch 7:25. There are two laws, in V 2. The law of the spirit of life, and the law of sin and death. Two laws, and there are two laws in Ch 7:25, the law of God, and the law of sin. So let's pick those apart. The law of the spirit of life in V 2, what is it? Well it is called the law of God in Ch 7:25. What is that? It is the gospel, it is the truth. Now here's a quote you will know, but listen carefully to the words, John 6:63, "The words that I speak to you," Jesus says, "they are spirit and they are life, John 6:63. So you see the law of the spirit of life is the words that Jesus spoke, it's the gospel, it's the truth. That 's what he is saying here. And you know from John 8:32, that the truth shall make you free. Free from what? Free from death because the truth offers forgiveness, you see, so there's the freedom which is offered by the law of the spirit of life.

So V 2, "The truth in Christ Jesus has made me free" free from the condemnation of V1, "of the law of sin and death," now what is the law of sin and death? Back to Ch 7:25, the law of sin. The law of sin and death is the law of sin, and if you go up a couple of verses to V 23 of Ch 7, you will find that that law of sin resides in our members. So it is not the Law of Moses, this is the law of sin and death, it is the law of sin in our members. What's that, it is the ruling impulses of our human nature present in every one of us, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of

life. So they are the two laws of V 2, so if I was to rephrase V 2, bit of an oversimplification, but for your benefit, I could say it like this. That the truth in Christ Jesus has the power to forgive us for the sins caused by our members. That's what V 2 is really saying.

V 3, "For what the law," now this is now the Law of Moses in V 3, "what the law of Moses could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." Now you might immediately make the leap between the "condemned" of V 3 and the "condemnation" in V 1. We are under no condemnation in V 1, or no ultimate condemnation for our sins because of Christ's sacrifice in V 3.

But V 3 is a tricky verse, and it is going to need a bit of explanation so what I have done is I have pulled V 3 apart phrase by phrase to put it on the screen. Now when I talked about this in my family only 24 hours ago I said, 'Is this very difficult?' And it seems really simple but as soon as I started to ask myself what each phrase of this verse meant, I found it hard to prove. And then, of course, digression, you may be aware that this verse is used by advocates of clean flesh to prove that Christ is in our likeness, but not quite like us. Or by advocates of Andrewism to say that he destroyed a part of him called 'sin in the flesh.' All right, the point is, that it is a 'wrested verse,' even in the brotherhood. What does V 3 mean. On the screen, it is really very simple, "What the law could not do." Let's pause there for a moment. There are actually a lot of things that the Law couldn't do. For example, it could not give eternal life, because it was never meant to. It was meant to expose sin, it didn't have any means to forgive sin, and it certainly didn't give eternal life, at best it could give you long life in the land. But that's not what it is saying here.

There is something else the Law couldn't do. The issue of what the Law couldn't do in V 3, is whatever it came to do, it couldn't do because of the weakness of man. Well the Law couldn't give eternal life, that's not the weakness of man, that's the weakness of the Law, so what is V 3 saying, "What the Law could not do." It's true that the Law never promised eternal life, but the point here is because of man's conduct it couldn't even do what it was intended to do. The Law was meant to be a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ, but because of what man did with the Law, it didn't even achieve that. When Christ came to the Jewish world in the first century, they didn't recognise him. They had the oracles of God in their hands for 1500 years. So the Law didn't even do what it was meant to do because of the weakness of the flesh.

What was this weakness of the flesh? What did the Jews do with the Law? Well Number 1, they didn't keep it, they didn't keep it. Number 2, They instead changed it, they used it to decorate themselves in self-righteousness, they used it to make themselves better than other men. Number 3, not only that, but the Law itself provoked sin, it inflamed sin, and made the Jewish conduct even worse. Therefore the Law that came to teach men the need for Jesus Christ, and show them the gift

between themselves and God, failed on every count, because of the weakness of the flesh. Therefore God acted. He sent his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh. Well, Gal 4:4 says "He was born of a woman" so he was the son of God and the son of man, and he had our nature. And Heb 2:14 that I am quoting there, it makes four points about the identification of Christ with our nature. "He, also, himself, likewise took part of the same flesh and blood as children. It is emphasised four times that Christ had our precise nature. He came in the likeness of sinful flesh. "Sinful flesh," that doesn't mean flesh itself is a sin, your flesh leads to sin. It is only called 'sinful' because it is full of all the impulses of sin. You read this sort of language in V 5 of Ch 7, "The motions of sin which are in our members, or the passions of sin. It is these three lusts of 1 Jn 2. God sent his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin," or as the margin says, "by a sacrifice for sin." Jesus Christ was a sin offering. "He condemned sin," now there's good one, how did he condemn sin? Well he condemned sin by his obedience, does that make sense to you? Look at Heb 11:7, "Noah condemned the world by building an ark." Noah condemned sin by his obedience. Christ condemned sin by obeying what God said, you see, in the flesh. He condemned sin in the flesh, that is to say, where sin resides. He resisted sin in its own territory, in his body, because he had a body just like yours and mine. Well, that's Rom 8:3, "What the Law of Moses could not do in that it was weak through the conduct of the Jewish people, God sent his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh," sin-prone like the rest of us, "to become a sacrifice for sin and by his obedience, condemned sin where sin resides," that is in his own body. He fought the very same warfare as Paul fights in Ch 7, and he won it. This is not so hard, actually, V 3. Well now you can see it.

V 4, "That the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit." But the law of V 4, is once again the Law of Moses. But here's the thing, what is the righteousness of the Law of Moses? And the answer is, it is the righteous requirements of the Law of Moses. The RSV says, "That the just requirements of the Law might be fulfilled." Question: What are the just requirements of the Law of Moses, what are the righteous requirements of the Law? It is simple, in one verse, Rom 13:10, "Love is the fulfilment of the Law. The righteous requirement of the Law of Moses was to love God and to love your neighbour, Rom 13:10. And this is the explanation, you see, of why Paul had such an agony of mind in the previous chapter. You think about it, in the normal course of life, in your life and my life, if a person really loves something with their mind we might naturally expect their body to follow, or to respond accordingly. So perhaps you love chocolate. Well your body will run down to the shops and buy chocolate, maybe you will buy two blocks of chocolate. Perhaps you love music, your head will naturally incline towards that music because you love it, and that principle of course is true of everything. So long as what you love is compatible with your body, and this is the problem you see, in Rom 7, because Paul loved something that was foreign to his nature. You and I love something which is foreign to our nature, and even though the Apostle's mind had fallen in love with the truth, his body would not under circumstances come under its jurisdiction. It was a wretched condition that he found himself in as he explains it. And the problem is, that that is exactly the problem that confronts us. The more we know, the more we love the things of the truth the keener and the sharper the conflict becomes between our mind and our body. And the more the mind cleaves to the things of God, the more the body tries to undermine that, and tries to subvert that,

and everything it stands for. That's why, that's why the wisdom of the world, the entertainment of the world, the materialism of the world, the business of the world, that is why it is so attractive to us, it is native to us, isn't it? It is as simple as that, it is native to us, so of course, you don't have to try to fall in love with the things of the world because we are made of that stuff, we've got a natural inclination towards those things.

Here's the problem, V 5, "They that are of the flesh do mind the things of the flesh. They that are after the spirit do mind the things of the spirit. For to be carnally minded is death." Margin? 'For to mind the flesh is death.' "And to be spiritually minded," Margin, 'Mind the spirit,' "Is life and peace, because the carnal mind is enmity against God, it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." You see, Paul's problem, and our problem, he loves something which is not native to his flesh, and his body will not be brought under control of the Truth under any circumstance, because it rails against it with every fibre of its being. But what does that mean to you and me when we read those four verses, Vv 5-8? Well it means this, if we were to use worldly arguments to justify things, worldly standards to measure ourselves by, if we are given to worldly pursuits in our spare time, we've got to understand, that V 8 says, it is displeasing to God. So think about all of the decisions we make in our lives. I mean the consequential decisions we make in our lives. Think about what we do with our spare time. Think about what our personal goals might be, and ask yourself how those things line up between Rom 8:8, because when Christ comes and asks us what we have done for him, what we have done for his truth, what we have done for his ecclesia, that's exactly the conversation we are going to have. Did we please God or didn't we. Were the decisions we made pleasing to God or weren't they and it is all based on whether we are minding the flesh or the spirit. What is our inclination in the making of our decisions. Now I don't want to labour the point, It is not a complicated point, and you can see the point, but it has got to be said. Unless everything we do and ever major decision we make can be reconciled back to this book, we are at desperate risk of falling prey to the carnal mind. And never underestimate the carnal mind.

Now understanding that and the nature of the conflict that has rolled out of Ch 8 and Ch 7 into Chapter 8, helps enormously when you come to V 9. Rom 8:9, look what he says. "Ye are not in the flesh but in the spirit, if so be that the spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Now as you can see, just by reading this verse, this is a verse which has caused a lot of confusion, not especially in the brotherhood, but amongst the churches, because we've got a lot of 'spirits' in this verse, we've got 'the spirit,' then we've got 'the spirit of God,' and then we've got the 'spirit of Christ.' This of course is the basis of the Pentecostals' suggestion that the Holy Spirit power, somehow takes over the mind of a believer, and helps them live the truth, and of course, the translators here have put a capital 'S' on spirit to signify that, three capital 'Ss' in this verse, none of which are justified, or can be justified. But just look at the first line or two of V 9, what's it really saying? "Ye are not in the flesh but in the spirit. You know the context of that debate because that is exactly what you have just read in the opening verses of Ch 8 and the closing

verses of Ch 7. He is merely continuing his description of the warfare between these two commodities of flesh and spirit. We are talking about a fleshly mind and a spiritual mind when we come to Ch 8:9.

So the spirit therefore in the second line of Verse 9 is simply 'spirituality,' or a godly disposition. All right, but then the question is, "if we are not in the flesh but in the spirit, we are so, if so be the spirit of God dwells in us, and if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is not Christ's." Well, what is the spirit of God and what is the spirit of Christ, and are they different to the spirit, that is, the spiritual mind of the second line, or are they same? Well, lets talk about the spirit of God. What do we know from this chapter about the spirit of God? Well, what you find in V 14 is this. "As many as are led by the spirit of God are they are the sons of God." So the spirit of God, whatever it is, this spirit of God creates sons. Well, James 1 and V 18 tells us "that of his own will begat he us by the word of truth." And so it appears as though the spirit of God here is in fact "the word," because the word is that substance that creates sons. Well then, what about the spirit of Christ? Well you have got a parallel idea, V 9 is the very parallel of V 10 and this answers the question. You've got the spirit of Christ spoken of in V 9 and then v 10 goes on and says, "And if Christ be in you the body is dead because of sin, and the spirit is life because of righteousness," he says. Well all right then what does it mean 'If Christ be in you?' Well, Gal 2 and verse 20 says, "I am crucified with Christ," Paul says, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." So the spirit of Christ is just spirituality, isn't it? It is just the same as 'the spirit' in the second line of verse 9. So reading verse 9 again, making our substitutions, "Ye are not fleshly but spiritual, if so be that the word of God dwells in you. Now if any man have not spirituality, or a spiritual disposition, he is none of his," you see? That's what verse 9 is saying. And all the way through this chapter, as you have seen before, and as you will perhaps appreciate after these verses, 'the spirit' here is either a reference to the word which creates sons, or to spirituality, a spiritual mind.

There are two exceptions, one is in verse 16, and the other is in verse 23 which are both references to the Holy Spirit gifts. In the first century of course, V 16 tells us that the Holy Spirit was a witness to the credentials of the believers, Acts 15:8 says that when the Gentiles came to the truth, God who knoweth the heart, bear them witness by giving them the Holy Spirit. V23, speaking of the first fruits of the spirit is also a reference to the Holy Spirit gifts because Eph 1:14 says that the Holy Spirit power was an 'earnest,' or a 'down-payment' of our inheritance, a taste of the power of he age to come. But neither in verse 16 or in verse 23 do we have any hint that the Holy Spirit, even though it is talking about the gifts, that that Holy Spirit is necessary to operate on the mind of a believer to create spirituality. The world alone is sufficient to do that.

Well verse 17 then, "And if we are children, if we are children, then we are heirs. Heirs of God, joint heirs of Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified together." And if you just cast your eyes down those verses, here's the ultimate application, "If we are spiritual, if we cleave in our minds to the thinking of

the Spirit and eschew the things of the thinking of the flesh, we become children of God. And if we are children, then we are heirs, joint heirs with Jesus Christ.” Now what does that mean? It means he will share his kingdom with us. We will become co-rulers with Christ in the kingdom age, that’s what verse 17 is saying. But can you see in the middle of verse 17 the presence of sin. I mean, this is the hope we have and the fact that God has a son, who in his own way was perfect, and if we emulate that, we become sons ourselves, but it is not without a fight. “If so be that we suffer with him, we might also be glorified together,” he says. And there is sin, you see, poking its head up in the middle of verse 17 because it won’t come without pain, because everything we are talking about, aspiring to here, is hostile to the bodies that we own. It is not native to us to be sons of God, and therefore, sin is going to fight every step of the way, tooth and nail. As a consequence then, Vv 18-25 Paul talks about the effect of sin, which, of course, is suffering. Sin is going to try to stop you from becoming a child of God and that’s going to cause a degree of suffering, not only in your own body, but in the world in which you live which has all but given itself over to sin.

And the Apostle gives the antidote to that, he says, ‘All right, suffering is going to happen. Sin is not going to like it, it is almost like you are performing surgery upon yourself trying to take something out of your body which has got tentacles running all through it and you are just dragging it out bit by bit, and there is nothing painless about that.’ He says, ‘how do you get through it?’ And the answer is ‘By a vision of the future. A vision of the future.’ Look at it, verse 18. “For I reckon,” he says, “I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” The sufferings of today don’t remotely compare with the glory of the future. You know that’s exactly the antidote the Lord Jesus Christ used. Heb 12:2 “For the joy that was set before him he endured the cross and despised the shame.” So he also looked at the future to mitigate the sufferings of the present, didn’t he. In fact verse 19 goes on and says, and we are not alone, by the way, we are not alone in the suffering we endure now. All creation suffers, “The earnest expectation of creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.” So all creation is in earnest expectation. You know those two words are one word in the Greek which means ‘the watch with anxious and persistent expectation.’ And what is creation watching for? “The unveiling of the sons of God.” Here is JB Phillips, so here is a free translation which, if you like, paints the picture of verse 19 if not completely accurately, “The whole creation is on tip-toes to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own.” Now why?

Why is creation, we are talking about the natural creation, why is creation waiting for the revelation of the sons of God in verse 19? What for? Well, you think about it, Vv 20-21 go on to tell you, when Adam sinned, he was cursed, but not just himself, the curse was universal. Humanity was cursed with sin and death. The ground was cursed with thorns and thistles. The animal creation was cursed, so carnivores were born. And you see now creation is waiting and hoping, and creation was witness to the events that took place in the garden of Eden in Gen Ch 3, they were unwilling witnesses. Look at verse 20, “The creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly but by reason of him who has subjected it in hope.” So creation is standing on

tip-toes waiting for the revelation of the sons of God because, he is personifying creation here, but the hope of creation will be outworked when the curse is removed as well. Creation is waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God, because on the day that Adam sinned, he was given a hope, wasn't he? It was the hope of Gen 3:15, that one day a second Adam would come who would reverse the curse. So the curse that creation is now subject to, it heard the words in the garden in Gen 3 of the day that the second Adam would come and reverse everything. And we know creation heard it, because Gen 3:15 was spoken to the serpent, wasn't it. Those words were spoken to creation in the presence of the first human pair. That's the hope that creation has in verse 20, the hope of the coming of Messiah. Not the manifestation of the sons of God so much, but the manifestation of THE son of God, that is the hope that creation is looking for. But in the mean time, all creation is suffering, verse 22. And we know that the whole creation groaned and travaileth in pain together until now, and as we say, creation is on tip -toes waiting for the kingdom to come because the day we get immortality the curse is lifted from her as well. And that causes enormous agony for creation, and so she travails in pain verse 22 says, waiting for the birth of the kingdom age, and the stronger that pain gets the more she wants the kingdom to come, just the same as us. And we see the trouble about us in the world, trouble in the ecclesia, and all we want is for the kingdom to come. And there is purpose in that too. I mean, what would happen if everything settled down. What would happen if North Korea got back in its box. I don't know, if Donald Trump lost the next election and somebody more moderate came in, Putin pulled out of Syria, and everything sort of went down, and ecclesia troubles all sort of dissipated, what would we do? Oh, we would probably build that extra room on the house wouldn't we, maybe take that promotion at work. Very probably take our eye off the "joy set before us," so there is purpose in suffering. There is purpose in the birth pains of creation.

But then, how much comfort do we take in our vision? So there is the vision, there's the vision that the Bible paints before us, how much of a comfort is that to you? Think about the troubles that we are going through, some of us are going through considerable troubles right at this very moment. How much would that vision help you? Well Isa 65:17 says, "Behold, I create a new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered and come into mind." What he is telling us is that the kingdom age will be so supremely greater than the events of today that we won't even remember the troubles of today, like it is unilateral in Isa 65, no matter what the troubles of today are, you won't remember them on the other side of immortality. Well, put it like this, in a figure a little closer to home, John 16:21, we are talking about creation travailing in pain. "A woman, when she is in travail has sorrow because her hour is come but as soon as she is delivered of a child she remembers no more the anguish for joy that a man is born into the world. And all the heartache and the tribulation of the previous nine months evaporates in a week, because she is holding this child. He says, that's what the kingdom will be like. That's what the kingdom is going to be like, because we are going to be born again, aren't we. This is what birth does to the previous nine month's of tribulation. We are talking about a mortal child, What do you think it is going to be like when you are born again to immortality? And look at the language, verse 18, "The glory that shall be revealed in us. V 19, "The earnest expectation," V 21, "The glorious liberty of the children of God," or as Rotherham's says, "the freedom of the glory of the children of God." V

23, “the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies.” I mean, right now, V 15 says, “We’ve got the spirit of adoption,” in V 23, “We will become THE adoption.” Did you notice that? Look closely at verse 23, “Not only they,” that is creation, “but ourselves also which have the first fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves, groan within ourselves waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies.” So we “wait for the adoption, the redemption of our, plural, body, singular.” Why doesn’t he say ‘redemption of our bodies?’ What’s the body of verse 23? Well, it is the body of Christ, isn’t it? It is the corporate body of Christ, it is the ecclesia in immortality, it is the singular immortal bride of Christ, that’s what gets redeemed, in verse 23.

While we wait for the kingdom to come, he says, I will give you three things to help you. Vv 27-27, Prayer, critical, but not always easy, he says I will help you there. Vv 28-30, An assurance of providence. The confidence that God knows what he is doing. And Vv 31-39, An assurance that we will be in the kingdom of God. Three commodities to help you through the presence of stress, he says. You see, it is at moments of extreme suffering that we find prayer difficult. I mean, in extreme blessing we find prayer difficult because we are preoccupied, but in extreme suffering, we might also find prayer very difficult grappling with why this trial might have come upon us, not knowing whether to pray on the one hand for deliverance, or on the other hand for endurance, not knowing where everything will end up, likewise, he says, in verse 26, “The spirit, he says, also helpeth our infirmities. Now what’s this spirit there? What’s that spirit? Well the whole context up until now has been that the spirit was our spiritual mind, or our disposition, or our spirituality. That’s the context of verse 9, that’s the context of verse 16. There is a suggestion in these verses that this is the spirit of Christ, but you read the verses and I don’t believe that makes sense at all. “The spirit also helpeth our infirmities for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groaning which cannot be uttered. And he that searches the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the spirit because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

Now the suggestion that the spirit here is Christ is based upon the fact that V 27 says, “The spirit makes intercession,” and it says at the end of V 34 that “Christ makes intercession.’ Well, what are my answers to that problem? Threefold, firstly, the entire context up until now in Rom Ch 8 of the spirit, is that the spirit is used preeminently of our disposition, a disposition created by the spirit word. But our disposition. Secondly, there is no doubt that Christ is an intercessor in V 34, but no need that he is the only intercession. There can be more than one intercessor in our lives. So, just because it is Christ in V 34, doesn’t mean it must be Christ in Ch 27. Number three, when it says “he” in V 27, it says “he maketh intercession,” but the word “he” ought to be “it,” it is neuter gender, your Diaglott will show you, it is in the neuter, it is not a person making intercession as it were in V 27, it is not Christ, it is an “it.” And finally, if I said three points, I’ve got four, this intercession is by “groaning, groaning,” now why would that be? Why would the Lord Jesus Christ groan, why couldn’t he articulate just what he wants to say. No, no, I don’t think it makes sense at all, brothers and sisters, for this to be the Lord Jesus Christ, what are those verses saying? Well, I think they are saying this. There are times when we don’t know what

to pray for, we might be in distress, we might not know why things are happening to us. So we go to God in prayer, we look for answers but there do not seem to be any answers. We want the situation to end but we don't know if the situation is for our ultimate benefit, we don't know which way to turn, and we are vexed. And we can't put together, we can't articulate the kind of prayer we ought to say, and in that situation, the Apostle says, 'Your disposition speaks louder than your words.' You want to see that? John 12:27, the Lord Jesus Christ himself. "Now my soul is troubled," he says, "and what shall I say? Father save me from this hour, but for this cause I came into this hour" should I pray to be released from the cross, or should I pray to endure the cross, but I don't want to go to the cross, well what should I pray for? Can you see the tension in the Lord's mind, between what his mind knew was best, and what his body wanted to do, and what he doesn't know is whether God has any other way around the prospect of crucifixion. So he doesn't know what to say twenty-four hours before it happened. He said to them, Mark 14:34, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death, tarry ye here, he says to the apostles and watch and he went forward a little and fell on the ground and prayer that if it were possible the hour might pass from him, and he said Abba father, all things are possible unto thee, take away this cup from me, nevertheless, not what I wilt but what thou wilt." You see, he knows what he wants but he doesn't know whether it is the right thing to ask for and he cries "Abba father," the very words of Rom 8 and verse 15. There is nothing magical about that, by the way, God knows what we need before we ask. Jesus said that in Matt 6:8, "Before you call I will answer," God said to the Jews in Isa 65:24, don't you think God can read the minds of his children, and when you can't put the words together your disposition answers for your lack of articulation, that's what he is saying, an enormous help in trial, you see. And the second resort, Vv 28-30, the understanding of God's dealings with man. Look at V 28, "We know, that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

It may sometimes be hard to believe, that all things are working together for good. I mean, think about Joseph, the story of Joseph. He could never explain why things that happened to him actually happened to him. So he's thrown into the pit while his brothers have lunch and listen to him scream. He's sold into slavery, he doesn't see his family for years and years, he's framed by a woman, he finds himself in jail, he doesn't know what he is doing there, month after month, for a couple of years in the cell of a prison, but back in his mind he knows there is a prophecy of sheaves bowing down to him, so he always knew there was a divine plan, but how he was going to go from A to B, he never could have forecast. And did he want to go that route to become the saviour of his brethren? Absolutely not, and of course, it is the same for us, we just don't know why God takes us through this river, or over that mountain, but there is a plan, you see, and this verse proves it, and between VV 28-30, he gives five reasons why we should expect to be in the kingdom of God. The first one in V 29, because God did foreknow us. He foreknew us before we came to the truth. He knew before we were born that he was going to call us to the truth. "For whom he did foreknow, he did predestinate to be conformed to the image of the son that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." So we have been predestinated to stand alongside Christ. You won't be alone in immortality. Now what does that mean, this 'predestinate?' Now I realise we have just done Ephesians perhaps a couple of months ago, now, Eph Ch 1, where brother Grant explained this,

but it is very simple, and when you come to this verse in Rom Ch 8:29. Well what's the temptation? The temptation is to read the word 'predestinate' and to think in our mind that that mean 'destiny' and that God therefore has a certain destiny mapped out for us and therefore we are not our own, we are not in control of our lives, we are going to be in the kingdom or we are not, and it is not up to us, it is destiny. Well the problem is that that is not really reading what it says. You've got to read the whole phrase. God didn't predestinate us he "predestinated us to be conformed to the image of his son" and instead of reading the word 'predestiny' you could read the word "planned," because it really just means 'planned.' God put a plan in our lives, he's mapped out our lives, it is our choice whether we stay on the map. But God has mapped out a pathway by which he will get us into the kingdom of God. It is completely up to us whether we choose to use that pathway, or if we even want to be in the kingdom of God. But he has made a plan, that is all He has done, he has made a plan.

Now those first two stages, foreknowledge and predestination, those both occur before we respond, and then we hear the truth. And verse 30 says, we are called, so we come in contact with the truth by that calling. And then we are justified. That's our baptism, that's forgiveness of sins. 'Justified; means 'made righteous,' or forgiven. So that's our baptism and then we are glorified, there's the judgment seat, you see? A five step process. And with that in mind the Apostle now asks a question of his own. What else is there to know, he says, what else could God have done, V 31. 'What shall we then say to these things?' "If God be for us who can be against us. He that spared not his own son but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things," he says. He says in verse 31, "What shall we say to these things," which things? Well, the five things of Vv 28-30. And perhaps you could extend it to all the other things that you have read in this chapter. God's assistance in prayer, the fact that our spirit answers for us in our lack of articulation, the fact that God has provided Christ as the means by which we are saved, but at least it means, in the very first instance, the five things of Vv 28-30.

What else could you think of in addition to those things? What else could you say, what else could be done? Well, he tells you now, from V 31-39, the last picture, and for the courtroom, the courtroom of creation. V 33, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect," and you've got to remove the italics, "God that justifieth? (Question mark). So here's the courtroom of creation, and God's the judge. The Lord Jesus Christ is the advocate, sitting at the right hand of God, that is your defence attorney. You are in the witness box answering for your life, and the prosecution, well, that's sin, and it's going to try to take you in the very opposite direction. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? God that justifieth, the God who forgives, God himself? Well he has already justified us. We've been acquitted, is he likely to judge us again? No, that's the point. Or who is he that condemneth, Christ that died? (Question mark). This is your defence lawyer, is he going to condemn you. No, no, he's on your side, he's in court battling for you. "Yea, Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God and who makes intercession for us," so he is speaking to the judge on our behalf, in the courtroom of creation. This is the defence attorney, the advocate, will he condemn us? How can

he, he's acting in our defence. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ, tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword. This is the prosecution, how good is their case? So this is what is going to come upon you. So you are in the court of creation, this is like the courtroom of life, and the judge is ready to forgive, your defence lawyer is the greatest defence lawyer there has ever been, but these are the bumps in the road, and there are seven of them here, V 35, oftentimes created by sin. And there's sin, thrashing around for dear life at the feet of the advocate but it is not dead yet, and what does sin say? Give up, give up, go back to how you were, it is not worth it, if my ecclesia did that to me, I'd leave the truth, you get better treatment in the world than this, I wouldn't take that from them, I'd resign, I'd take them to court. Sin has got all these great ideas, native ideas, native ideas. Look what the truth is doing to you, tribulation, distress, persecution, if you were like them, none of these things would be happening to you. And you can see, you can see what sin does, because it has got its own plan hasn't it? It is its own king, and the Apostle says, "I am persuaded" in V 38, "that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, things present, things to come, height or depth or anything else in creation, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." There were seven stumbling blocks in V 35, there's ten things mentioned in Vv 38-39, and look at them, the greatest forces in the world, "death and life, angels and governments, present and future, height and depth, all creation," he says, but you know the one thing that is missing in these verses, the one thing that is extremely conspicuous by its absence, and it is the greatest force of all. The judge is on one side, the defence is on the other side, the prosecution is no match for them, what about the defendant? What do you read about the defendant? What about us? If we give up the prosecution is smiling all the way to the grave isn't he? You have got to want it, what is the Apostle's point? Nothing can stop you getting into the kingdom of God, except yourself. Every other force in the world has already been overcome. You are there, unless you don't want to be. What have we seen? So here is the summary of the section, Chs 6 through 8. Having seen the true place of faith and law in the redemption of mankind, a number of questions arise, "Shall we continue in sin so as to increase grace? No," says the Apostle, "in Christ we die to sin and begin a new life." There's the story of Rom 6. "Should we sin because we are no longer under law, then? No," he says, "we now serve righteousness not sin, we are espoused to a new husband" Rom 7, "Well is the law the cause of sin, because it identifies and inflames sin?" He says, "No, by no means, the law is holy. Sin resists the law which only proves that the Law was not sinful." "Well, then, has the Law killed man? No the Law of Moses didn't kill man, there's another law inside of man and that law kills man. The Law of Moses simply showed man the impossibility of a sinless life" but, Rom 8, "Christ has conquered where man could not." If we walk with the disposition of Christ then we will be saved as that son was, but sin will try to prevent this and so suffering is inevitable. But take courage, the suffering of the present doesn't compare with the glory of the future, and what is more God is on our side. Christ is our saviour and nothing in the world can separate us from God's desire to save us, except us.

Transcription by Fay Berry 2017.