

TUTORIAL
3.12

Deliverance Now and in the Future

Bible presenter Scot Keen concludes the discussion on sanctification here in Romans chapter eight. He explains the two types of deliverance for the believer, both present and future.

Introduction

Last time we discussed the believer's relationship to sin and that we are alive from the dead. We also looked at the believer's relationship to the Law, that we died to the Law in order to be joined to Another so we might bear fruit for God. And then we looked at the believer's struggle with the flesh in Romans 7:14-25. Paul realised that his flesh was still present; it was not getting any better and it was not going away. All these truths have built up to the climax of Romans chapter eight, which is Paul's conclusion on sanctification.

Let's briefly review the Christian life principles that we have observed so far. We are identified with Christ, just as like we were identified with Adam (Romans chapter five). Now, we have died to sin and its authority. Sin is still present. It desires to reign but we are not under obligation to let it do so. We have been raised to walk in newness of life. We also learned that neither the Mosaic Law or any other law are God's means of deliverance because deliverance does not come from the Law.

We also found that although we are positionally free from sin's authority, we still need God's enablement to do the good things that we desire and to refrain from the evil that we do not want to do. Remember that Paul said that willing is present, "How to perform which is good, I do not find." Paul cried out in desperation in Romans 7:24, "Wretched man that I am. Who will set me free from the body of this death?" The answer is found in Christ, "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 7:25). He develops his answer later in chapter seven, "Deliverance is found as we walk in the spirit."

Now let's move onto Romans chapter eight. It can be divided into two major sections. Believers are delivered now as they walk according to the Spirit, however they find deliverance ultimately when they are glorified.

Escaping the law of sin and death

Let's begin first of all with the deliverance now as we walk with the Spirit's enablement. Paul says, "Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death" (Romans 8:1-2). You may already be aware that whenever the word *therefore* is used it means that what has been said so far is being summed up, transition into a new section.

Keep in mind that the chapter divisions you see are were not in the original text. Paul has cried out for deliverance, "Who is going to set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord." He then says, "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin" (Romans 7:25). He recognises that his inner-man is always going to desire the things of God, and the flesh is going to always desire the things of sin. "Therefore, there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus for," he explains, "for the law of the spirit of life... has set you free from the law of sin and death."

It is doubtful that that Paul is referring to eternal condemnation here because his explanation in verse two is has to do with how we live our lives now. Most likely when he says there is no condemnation, he is talking about the experience of struggle and defeat that we saw at the end of chapter seven. Believers are set free from that experience when they walk according to the Spirit.

Notice Romans 8:2, "For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death." Paul uses the word *law* here to speak about a principle that acts uniformly. Think about the law of gravity. What goes up must come down. That is a principle that acts uniformly. That is the concept here. And the law that Paul speaks about is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, and it delivers believers from the law of sin and death.

Now I understand the law of sin to be the principle that sin always brings death. We have actually seen this in Romans previously. Paul was trying to live by the law when he said, "This commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me" (Romans 7:10). I take it that Paul is talking about his experience of separation of fellowship with God when he tried to walk in the power of the flesh.

Paul talks about how this law, the law of sin, brings about death, "Who will set me free from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:24). When he talks about sin and death, I think he is alluding to an experience of separation of fellowship. We know that is always going to be the case unless there is a superior law to set us free from that.

Think again about the law of gravity; what goes up must come down. There is another law that supersedes this law and it is the law of aerodynamics. And in the same way, the law of sin producing death can be superseded by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

We are talking about the Spirit of God producing life in the believer, as the believer walks according to the Spirit. We are talking about this walk of freedom that comes through the Spirit's enablement, mentioned in the previous tutorial. We should not serve in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the Spirit. That is how we find life, by walking according to the Spirit.

Now Paul says, "For what the law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did" (Romans 8:3). Which begs a question. What was it that the Law could not do? Well, in the context of Romans, we are looking at a believer trying to live by the Law and trying to be fruitful. But the believer has to be set free from that and instead joined to Another, in order to bear fruit for God.

The Law cannot cause a believer to be fruitful, because the it is about performance. Remember our quote from John Bunyan, "Run, John, run, the law demands, but gives me neither feet nor hands." Now the Law can tell us what is right and it can reprimand our sin, but it cannot enable us to do the right thing. So God did what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh. The problem with the Law is not the Law in and of itself. It is what the Law had to work with that lets it down. God did what the Law could not do, and he did it by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and as an offering for sin He condemned sin in the flesh.

Please understand that we are not talking about justification any longer. We are talking about sanctification. We are talking about Christian growth and maturity, fruitfulness and things of that nature. The Jews would have been terrified to try to live a righteous life apart from the Law. And while Paul is arguing here that it is possible to live a righteous life, he is clarifying that it is only possible apart from the Law.

God did what the Law could not do. He firstly condemned sin in the flesh (Romans chapter six). Our old self was crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be annulled, or rendered inoperative. Paul is saying, again, that God made it possible for the believer to live a Christian life, a righteous life, and He did that first of all by setting us free from the authority of sin (Romans 8:3). He condemned sin in the flesh. And secondly, He made it possible for us to live a righteous life through the indwelling Spirit. Look at verse four, "So that the requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit." Paul beautifully brings together the things that he has been saying so far.

Notice that he says so *that*. God had a goal in mind in what He did for us through Christ. He did it so we could live a godly life. Paul says, "So that the requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us." What is the requirement of the Law? It is quite simple, as you may remember from the gospels. Jesus summed up all the Law and the Prophets in two commands. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and your neighbour as yourself.

Paul is going to take that and condense it down to one word. He says, "He who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law" (Romans 13:8). So love was ultimately what the Law was aiming for, as was lived out in the life of the Old Testament believer. But there was a problem; the Law would command love, but it did not enable love. There was no indwelling Spirit. But now God has condemned sin in the flesh, set us free from the authority of King Sin, and not only that, but has made it possible for the requirement of the Law, love, to be fulfilled in us.

I think Paul's choice of words here, under the inspiration of the Spirit, is very precise. He does not say the Law would be fulfilled by us. He says it would be fulfilled in us. I take that we are talking here about the Spirit's ministry of producing the fruit of the Spirit, first and foremost of which is love. The Spirit produces love in us which in turn makes it possible for us to live a godly life, something that the Law required but never enabled because there was no indwelling Spirit.

Paul says that this godly life is possible because of what Christ has done, and yet notice that it is contingent on our walk. He says again that, "The requirement of the law would be fulfilled in us, specifically those of us who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the spirit." This lets us know that as believers we have a choice. God desires for us to walk according to the Spirit. If we walk according to the flesh the requirement of the Law will not be fulfilled in us. But if we walk according to the Spirit, the Spirit produces love, and I will be doing what God wants me to do.

That is the essence of what Paul is describing here. God has made it possible for us to live the Christian life when we walk according to the Spirit. Let's define what it means to walk according to the Spirit. First of all, this concept of walking comes from the Old Testament when Enoch walked with God, as did Noah and Abraham. And Paul says that those who live their life walking according to the Spirit will find the requirement of the Law being fulfilled in them.

The idea is that we live our life in dependence upon the Holy Spirit, and at the same time live our life believing that we died to sin and that we are alive to God. We live our lives believing and yielding to the truths in Romans chapters six to eight. That is the major idea that Paul is bringing out here. This walk is idiomatic for one's life, and it is to be lived according to the Spirit of God with God's enablement to live the Christian life. We escape the law of sin and death

by walking according to the Spirit. Who will set us free from this body of death? Christ will as we walk according to the Spirit.

Motivation to walk with God

Now Paul gives us a motivation to live this way, to walk with God in this pattern. Look at Romans 8:5-6. He says, "For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the spirit, 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."

He seems to be referring to worldview here. Their worldview is shaped by God's Word, and as they walk according to the Spirit they find life and peace. Those who walk according to the flesh, they find an experience of death. Why is it that a walk according to the flesh brings death? Take a look at verse seven, "The mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so." When believers walk in the flesh, they are yielding to something that is hostile to the things of God.

Remember Paul said, "Willing is present, but how to perform that which is good I do not find." Paul realised that evil was present and it was not going to go away. That desire to sin is present and it is not going to get better. If you yield to it, then you are yielding something that is hostile towards God. So obviously the result is death or separation of fellowship. Paul encourages believers here to make the right choice and to choose to walk according to the Spirit instead of the flesh.

Now notice Paul says, "Those who are in the flesh cannot please God." They cannot please God. And you could study this further if you like, but for now notice there are two different prepositions that Paul uses. He talks about *according* to the Spirit and he talks about *in* the Spirit. Two different prepositions. All believers are in the Spirit, but not all believers consistently walk according to the Spirit.

Paul says in verse nine, "You are not in the flesh but in the spirit, if indeed the spirit of God dwells in you." And I think he is saying why in the world would we walk according to the flesh, when God says we are not in the flesh? Why not rather walk according to the Spirit, because we are in the Spirit? In other words, why not live consistently with who God has made us in Christ? Paul is arguing that we should be motivated to choose to walk according to the Spirit.

Notice that the believer is under no obligation to the flesh. "If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. But if the spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his spirit who dwells in you" (Romans 8:10-11).

As an encouragement, think about Christ when He lay in the tomb. He was dead and the Spirit of God gave life to His mortal body, and the Spirit of God gives life to our mortal bodies also. Whenever you doubt whether or not the Spirit of God can enable you to live the Christian life, just remember the resurrection. The one who raised Christ from the dead gives life to your mortal body now when you walk according to the Spirit. You are I are under no obligation to the flesh. "So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh- for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die" (Romans 8:12-13). Look again at the phrase *under obligation not to the flesh*.

When I was twelve years old, I remember going to a basketball game with my dad at Rupp Arena, which is where the Kentucky Wildcats play in Lexington Kentucky. We were watching a high school tournament ball game. Clay County Kentucky got to the final game which was totally unexpected. They were a Cinderella team that just happened to make it to the final game. Everybody in this arena stood on their feet waiting to see how the game would turn out. And I stood up on my tip toes beside my dad with excitement, trying to see the game. Then I heard a voice behind me thundering, saying, "Sit down!" I felt a chill of fear flow through my body, and I slowly started to sit down. I looked over at my dad and he looked at that guy, then looked at me and said, "You don't have to sit down." I realised, "That's right, I'm not obligated to this guy. I obey my dad."

I see the same thing here in Romans eight. Pauls says, "You are under obligation not to the flesh." We have sinful desires. And Paul says we are not under obligation to them. Here's why. Look at Romans 8:14, "For all who are being led by the spirit of God, these are sons of God." Because of our identity as Christians, sons and daughters of God, we are set free from sin's dominion and we are not obligated whatsoever.

In fact, Paul says, "If you live according to the flesh, you must die." He is talking to believers. Note that he is not talking about eternal death but, as I've been saying, an experience of separation of fellowship. And when the believer yields to the flesh, Paul says, "I refuse to call that life. It is not life as God intends."

"We are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh- 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." As the believer chooses to yield to the Spirit of God, the desires of the flesh are nullified (not carried out to execution), so we put to death the deeds of the body, but remember we do this by the Spirit.

I love the terminology *if you, by the Spirit*. It is my responsibility, but it is His enablement, "If by the spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live." So there is our motivation to walk according to the Spirit.

A glimpse of glory

We finally get a glimpse of glory in Romans 8: 15-17. Paul brings up the idea of sonship in verse fourteen and elaborates, “For 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!’” This walk that the Spirit is leading us as believers is our birth right. It is ours as believers. So, “We cry out, ‘Abba! Father!’ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.” In fact, Paul says, “If...we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.”

Deliverance through glorification

Paul is making a transition here. He is moving from deliverance now to our ultimate deliverance, when Christ comes back and we are glorified. Paul has talked about being delivered now by the indwelling Spirit. Now he is going to talk about being delivered ultimately through glorification. We are now in the second half of Romans chapter eight, specifically in Romans 8: 18-39.

Paul touches on the hope of redemption. Notice where this is going. I realise I just said this, but I will say it again. Paul wants us to realise we have deliverance now, but we not going to have deliverance ultimately until we are glorified. We need to be realistic. Although we have the first fruits of the Spirit and the enablement to live the Christian life, there will always be a struggle at some level until we are glorified.

The hope of redemption

More on the hope of redemption. Paul says, “I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.” Paul proceeds to lift our eyes away from the here and now and the present sufferings towards eternal glory. And by doing that, he motivates us to be encouraged to keep living for Christ, knowing that we are not going to be here forever.

Paul mentions, “The sufferings of this present time.” Those are things that naturally happen to us living, first of all in a broken world, and secondly, as believers living in a world that is hostile to our faith. If you look at Paul's catalogue of suffering in first and second Corinthians, you will know that Paul is not making a thoughtless comment. He suffered as much or more than anyone may ever suffer. And yet as Paul considers that, he says, “It's not worthy to be compared with the glory that's going to be revealed.”

Let's move onto verse nineteen, “For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.” *Sons of God* is a phrase that refers to all believers. Paul pictures creation standing on its tiptoes, nervously

biting its fingernails, waiting for the canvas to be lifted in order to see the beautiful work of art, which is the revealing of the sons of God. In other words, creation longs to see our glorification.

That begs the question, why would Paul picture creation as wanting to see our glorification? “The creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God” (Romans 8:20-21). Paul is alluding to Genesis chapter three. God included creation in the curse, so that it could also be included in redemption. He subjected creation to futility. And the idea is frustration of purpose, that creation, as beautiful as it is, does not live up to its full potential. It's futility now.

C. S. Lewis in the Chronicles of Narnia described it this way. It's always winter, but it's never Christmas. What a more melancholic, depressing picture. Always winter, but never Christmas. Others have said that creation sings in a minor key. It is a beautiful world, but it is not what it was and it is not what it will be. It was subjected to futility in hope that it would be set free from its corruption into the glory. Look at verse twenty-one, “That the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.” So God included creation in the curse so it could also be included in redemption. Creation waits for the believer to be delivered.

Paul says, “For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body” (Romans 8:22). These are amazing statements. Paul says that creation groans. It is waiting to be delivered. And then he says, almost in disbelief, that even we ourselves, “We... having the first fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves.”

It is almost unthinkable that the very sons of God would experience the same thing. But he says yes even us, the ones who had the first fruits of the Spirit, experience this groaning. And this concept of the first fruits of the Spirit reminds us that we have a taste of the future now, but the final picture has not come.

We are delivered day by day, as we walk according to the Spirit, but we will ultimately be delivered at glorification. So creation is longing for our deliverance, and we too, the ones who have the first fruits of the Spirit, wait eagerly for our adoption as children.

Now we have already seen in both Romans and Galatians that we are adopted, we are sons and daughters of God. So when Paul says we are waiting eagerly for our adoption, he means we are waiting for the “redemption of our body”

(Romans 8:23). He's talking about the completion of our salvation. We have been justified, we are being sanctified and we wait eagerly to be glorified. We are waiting for the redemption of our body.

Paul says, "In hope we have been saved." We are saved in hope. There is more to come and so we anticipate the completion of our salvation. "Hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what he already sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it." Paul says hang tight, it is coming, just keep trusting God and one day your salvation will be complete.

So far we have discussed creation groaning, the believer groaning waiting to be delivered, and not only that, but also the Spirit groaning on our behalf. Paul speaks about the ministry of intercession when the Spirit of God is praying for us, even when we are unaware of it, and at a loss as to how we should be praying ourselves. God is active on the part of the believer.

The certainty of our hope

We finally arrive at the certainty of our hope here in Romans 8:28-39. Paul says, "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 these two phrases *those who love God* and *those called according to his purpose* are used interchangeably. We are simply talking about believers. Paul says we know that God causes all things to work together for believers. This is something we know by divine revelation, not through experience, and Paul is so confident of it that he says *we know*.

When Paul says *all things* it means that it is all inclusive. Whatever believers face in their life, God uses it ultimately for their good. It is not saying here that everything is good, or that God causes everything, but it rather that God causes everything to work together for good.

For those of you who like to bake, think of it this way. When my wife makes a cake, she puts two or three sticks of butter, flour and raw eggs into a bowl. None of those things would probably be tasty alone. The raw eggs, flour and stick of butter are not good in and of themselves, but they can be made into something that accomplishes good.

Paul says that God causes all things to work together for good for those who love God. God is at work in history to use the trials of life, the persecutions we face, the discouragement, whatever it might be, to accomplish good. But what is meant by good? I think we frequently try to fill that in with our own expectations of what is good, when in reality the good that God has in mind is conforming us to the image of His Son.

Look at Romans 8:29, "For those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to become conformed to the image of his Son, so that he would be the firstborn among many brethren." You firstly notice the phrase *those whom he foreknew*, which is another conversation in itself, but whatever the case, we know we are talking about believers. And what did God predestine these believers for? To be conformed to the image of God's Son. Because God predestined believers to be conformed to the image of His Son he is going to use all things towards that end.

There are two aspects of conformity here. There is gradual conformity, sanctification, as we have concluded from Romans chapters six to eight. For example, Paul says in Galatians that he is labouring until Christ is formed in them. That is what sanctification is about, becoming more like Christ. There is gradual conformity, and there is also final and ultimate conformity. Paul goes on to say, "Those whom he predestined, he also called, he also justified, and he also glorified." All things ultimately work together towards God's good end of making us like His Son. In fact, it is so certain that we will become like Christ that he says, "Those whom he has justified, he also glorified."

There is an argument here for eternal security which I think is very strong. My counterargument to losing your salvation would be, if you could lose your salvation, wouldn't you agree that you would have to have salvation to begin with? Of course people would say yes. You have to have something before you can lose it. In other words, you would have to be justified, and then fail to be glorified. But what does Paul say? Those whom He justified, He also glorified. Every believer will be glorified, every believer is secure in Christ, so those whom He justified he also glorified. Our salvation is a certainty, and God will accomplish that in our lives.

Not only that, but nothing can separate us from the love of God. Paul says, "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?" (Romans 8:31). And it is not that Paul is actually looking for someone who is against us, but the idea that if God is the one who is for us, then it doesn't matter who is against us, because God is God. "He who did not spare his own Son, but delivered him over for us all, how will he not also with him freely give us all things?" If God has given Christ for us, He is surely not going to stop short of completion. He has already given His Son on our behalf, so He is going to freely give us all things with Him.

In fact, talking to believers he says, "Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies" (Romans 8:33). If the supreme court has declared us righteous before God, who can bring counter-charge that? Of course the answer is no one. "Who is the one who condemns?" There is no one who can condemn believers because we have been justified. "Christ Jesus is he who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of

God, who also intercedes for us.” So, Christ is interceding for believers. The highest Judge in the universe has declared us righteous, so we stand secure.

Moreover, Paul says, “Who will separate us from the love of Christ?” And then he asks several questions, “Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” Paul thinks through every possibility that someone could give, every counterargument that might emerge. And Paul says, “In all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through him who loved us.” His synopsis is, “For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Catch what Paul is saying. Sometimes we can be sceptical. Sometimes it can take a lot of convincing for us to become assured of our eternal security in Christ. Paul thinks of every possibility that someone might offer, and then, just to make sure he covers all the bases, he says, “Nor any other created thing.” No created thing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ.

If no created thing can separate us from the love of God, what else is left? Only the uncreated eternal God. And what has he said? He says He is for us. God the Father is *for* us, and He gave His Son for us. God the Son intercedes for us. God the Spirit is making groanings too deep for words; the Triune God is for us. We cannot and we will not be separated from the love of God.

And this is the exclamation point on Paul’s description of sanctification. If believers are going to grow, they need to know that they are not growing towards acceptance and security. They are growing as accepted and secure people. And as they struggle and fail, they are struggling and failing as people who are secure in Christ. And that sets us free to grow in Him.



DISCUSSION POINTS

Deliverance Now and in the Future

1. What is meant by “the law of sin and death”?
2. What is meant by “the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus”?
3. What are the “two factors of freedom”?
4. Who finds the deliverance spoken of in Romans 8:1-4?
5. What benefit comes to the believer because God has “condemned sin in the flesh”? Why did God condemn sin in the flesh?

6. What is the significance of the wording in 8:4 “in us”?
7. Walking in the Spirit results in...?
8. Walking in the flesh results in...?
9. What does Paul mean when he says “If you live according to the flesh, you will die?”
10. What is meant by his statement, “If you, through the Spirit, put to death the deeds of the body, you will live”?
11. What does the term “adoption” speak of?
12. When will this futility be lifted?
13. When Paul speaks of our “hope” he is referring to...?
14. Why was creation subjected to vanity/futility?
15. God is working all things together towards what goal?



ACTIVITIES

Deliverance Now and in the Future

Scenario for Romans 8: A friend asks you how they can find deliverance from a sin that they have struggled with for some time. How do you help them from Romans 8? Make sure you explain what it means to walk according to the Spirit. Also, explain how future hope impacts present choices.