

The Book of Romans

By Doug Hamilton

Romans Chapter 8: “Our Assurance of Being Justified by Faith”

Romans 8:1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

This is quite a bold statement for Paul to make in light of all the evil in our lives and in the world around us. This is one of the many assurance statements for the Christian found in the Bible. Here are just a few others.

- Philippians 1:6 *For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.*
- Hebrews 13:5 *Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, “I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,”*
- John 6:37 *“All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.*
- John 10:27-28 *“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸ and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.*
- 2 Pet 3:9 *The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.*

Jesus, Paul, Luke, John, Peter and other Bible writers all want us to have assurance of our salvation, for they said so. There is nothing sweeter than knowing we have a faithful God Who is making great attempts to have us in heaven with Him. He is not an old ogre, sitting on a cloud with a bolt of lightning, waiting to put us out of our misery. On the other hand He does not want us to be blind to some of the conditions of this assurance. Chapter 8 of this series discusses these conditions and is titled *“The Assurance of Being Justified by Faith”*.

1) We must give up on the flesh (8:2-8, 12-13).

Romans 8:2-8 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. ³ For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God *did*: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and *as an offering* for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ 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. ⁵ 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. ⁶ For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, ⁷ because 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*, ⁸ and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Paul previously wrote in *Romans 7:6* *But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.* With that already baked in, Paul reiterated the need to die to the flesh. We must remember that these are the same people who were *“baptized INTO Christ”* (Romans 6:3), so we should not be surprised to find them *“in Christ Jesus”* (8:1), for they are IN covenant with Him, having been justified by faith at baptism.

As before in 7:23 when Paul contrasts the Law of Moses to other laws, he again contrasted the Law of Moses to the law of the Spirit. Ezekiel prophesied of this New Covenant to

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come in 36:26-27 “*Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 “I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.”* They came into contact with the water and had an obligation to die to the flesh. If they would not fight the good fight of faith by dying to their fleshly desires, then they would be robbed of the assurance that Paul wanted them to have.

This was what led Paul to say in transition to the next point, *Romans 8:12-13 So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh* ¹³ *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. We must give up on the flesh to have the assurance God wants in our lives.*

2) We must give over to the Spirit (8:9-11, 13-27).

Romans 8:9-11 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. ¹⁰ If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. ¹¹ 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.

Once we have died to the flesh, the way is paved to give over to the Spirit of God. Giving over to the Holy Spirit provides the assurance that we will be raised on that great day of resurrection by the same power Whom raised Jesus from the dead. That makes this an incredible assurance scripture. Lest someone thinks that giving over to the Spirit is some existential experience of emotions, we must allow Paul to continue to speak through the scripture.

Giving over to the Spirit means...

A) Suffering with Christ.

Romans 8:14-17 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. ¹⁵ 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! The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

The use of “*sons of God*” likely goes back to the concept found in *Isaiah 43:6 Bring My sons from afar And My daughters from the ends of the earth...*, referring to the gathering of God’s elect from the four corners of the earth. We are the offspring of God, making us the family of Christ. There is no greater concept of relationship than being in the same family. We are not just *born again* (John 3:5) into the family of God when we were baptized into Christ, but we were also adopted by the same God. We have the best of both worlds when it comes to being in the family of Christ.

Realizing we are of the same family exposes us to the same sufferings. Jesus never said it would be easy in this life. In remembrance of what He went through on the cross only goes to confirm it. We are going to have suffering Jesus said in *John 15:20 If they persecuted Me, they*

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will also persecute you. Do we take this seriously. Suffering with Christ in this world is all a part of giving over to the Spirit.

As the song says, *Oh Lord, You know I have no friend like you If heaven's not my home then Lord what will I do? The angels beckon me from heaven's open door And I can't feel at home in this world anymore.* Don't get to comfortable in this world, for **giving over to the Spirit means suffering with Christ.**

B) Waiting patiently.

Romans 8:18-25 For 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. ¹⁹ For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ 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. ²² For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. ²³ 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. ²⁴ For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he *already* sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

Paul makes reference to the glory which will be revealed to us at a future date in light of the present suffering. Today's suffering can often produce anxiety for the Christian. We are to always be looking forward to heaven in order to take the edge off today's suffering (1 Thes. 4:18). We are required to have patience in doing so.

He uses the term *creation* in contrast to the world to come. This life really does not offer anything worth waiting for and has often been depicted in scripture as such. Isaiah said of this in his writing 24:4 *The earth mourns and withers, the world fades and withers, the exalted of the people of the earth fade away.* Jeremiah also addressed it in 12:4 of his letter, *How long is the land to mourn And the vegetation of the countryside to wither? For the wickedness of those who dwell in it, Animals and birds have been snatched away, Because men have said, "He will not see our latter ending."* Don't put your hopes on anything in this life.

It is *with perseverance we wait eagerly* (8:25) for the hope of heaven. **Giving over to the Spirit means to be waiting patiently for the hope of heaven before us.**

C) Praying in the Spirit.

Romans 8:26-27 In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groanings too deep for word. ²⁷ and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to *the will of God.*

Jude said something similar in verses 20 and 21 concerning the Spirit. *But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, ²¹ keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.* What does it mean to *pray in the Holy Spirit*? Paul said in Ephesians 6:18 "*pray at all times in the Spirit...*" What does it mean to *pray in the Spirit*?

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In the Old Testament the people of God were often referred to as *groaners* while going through suffering and trials.

- *Exodus 2:24 So God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.*
- *Exodus 6:5 “Furthermore I have heard the groaning of the sons of Israel, because the Egyptians are holding them in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant.*
- See also Judges 2:18; Job 3:24, 23:2, 24:12; Psalm 5:1, 12:5, 22:1; etc.

The point Paul was making was that Creation, the lost world, groans (8:22). The Christians, the saved world, groan (8:23). The Holy Spirit, the Representative of God found in the Christians, groans (8:26). When we are suffering whatever affliction in this life, sometimes we do not even know what to ask. Have you ever had one of those prayers in the midst of your suffering when you do not even know what to say, but at best can only groan? Paul reminded us that the Holy Spirit fluently speaks the language of us, the groaners, and God, the one Who aids the groaners.

Praying in the Spirit is submitting your requests, even the ones we do not know what to ask for, with **COMPLETE CONFIDENCE!** We pour our heart out to God with the full knowledge that the Holy Spirit will intercede on our behalf, fluently articulating it to God the Father. That is one of the most exciting things we could ever have in our Christian walk. **Giving over to the Spirit is to be praying in the Spirit with all trust!**

3) We must give into the victory (8:28-39).

There is a sure victory in Christ Jesus for the Christian. It is this victory which inspired the apostle John to write “*For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith*” (1 John 5:4). It is this victory which inspired Paul to say in 1 Corinthians 15:55-56 “*O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?*”⁵⁶ *The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law;*⁵⁷ *but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.* There is a victory coming our way and there are some things Paul wants us to know about it.

A) It is a predestined victory.

Romans 8:28-30 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.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;³⁰ and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

God already knows the outcome of our victory. He is not seeing it from the viewpoint of something yet to come, but something that has already happened. He saw the plan of salvation through Jesus before the world was even made. He saw our personal victory before we were even born. Our God will not be surprised when you show up before His throne on that last day for your inheritance of heaven. **We give into the victory because it was predestined.**

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B) It is a powerful victory.

Romans 8:31-34 What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us? ³² 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? ³³ Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; ³⁴ who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

What is our victory based in? It is in the historical fact that Jesus Christ came into the world, died on the cross for our sins, was buried and resurrected on the third day. This is the same Son in Whom God said, "*This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well-pleased.*" (Matthew 3:17). God commended Abraham for sparing his own son (Genesis 22:16), but we more greatly commend God on the fact that He did not spare His only begotten Son (John 3:16). Jesus proved victory when He came back from the death and that is what undergirds our power of assurance in Christ.

Who can ever bring a charge against us in this life? When we were baptized into Jesus Christ, we insured the greatest power of our future victory with God. As the song goes, *O victory in Jesus, My Savior, forever. He sought me and bought me With His redeeming blood; He loved me ere I knew Him And all my love is due Him, He plunged me to victory, Beneath the cleansing flood. We must give into this victory!*

C) It is a sure victory.

Romans 8:35-39 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ Just as it is written, "FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED." ³⁷ But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ 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.

We were counted as sheep for slaughter is a reference back to Psalm 44:22. It is a reference to how God has always had to overcome the ungodly in this life. It was true then, is true today and will always be true in this life, but He is in control of the victory.

Have I mentioned that we have already won in God's eyes? He saw us crossing the finish line from an historical standpoint and we need to see that it is a sure victory. That is the attitude we are to carry in this life as we walk in the light (1 John 1:7). As long as we keep hanging onto the coattails of God, nothing can separate us from His love found in Christ Jesus. Not death, not life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor to come, nor powers, nor height, depth or any created being can pull us away. If we are willing to stick with God, He is not going to ever leave us! **We must see that we have a sure victory in Jesus.**

Conclusion:

Christians have every reason to have confidence in their Savior, but there are conditions to this confidence. We must give up on the flesh, give into the Spirit and give over to the victory He has prepared for us. Hang onto Jesus, for the ride will be bumpy, but you will love where the journey ends.