

(Through the Bible) Romans 8

by Chuck Smith

We must live after the spirit to have a fulfilling life, submitting our lives to the control of the spirit and being led by the Spirit of God.

Duration: 1:17:32

Scripture: Matthew 26:41, Romans 7:14 - 8:1, Romans 8:18, 2 Corinthians 4:17, 1 Peter 2:24

Topics: "Through The Bible"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the depth of God's love for humanity. He highlights how God's willingness to sacrifice His only begotten son demonstrates His immense love. The preacher encourages the audience to understand and appreciate the extent of God's love, which surpasses any earthly comparison. He emphasizes that running away from God or fighting against His plans is foolish, as God desires only what is best for our lives. The sermon also touches on the purpose of human existence, stating that we were created for God's pleasure and that seeking after Him brings fulfillment and meaning to life. The preacher concludes by expressing the hope of being freed from the limitations and corruption of our earthly bodies in the future.

Transcript

Let's turn to the 8th chapter of Romans and fasten your seatbelts as we take off. In the 7th chapter of the book of Romans, Paul has come to the realization that the law is spiritual. While he was a Pharisee, he thought of the law as physical, intended to control man's outward actions.

But when he came to the realization that the law was spiritual, then he realized that the law actually condemned him to death because though he had physically kept the law, spiritually he had violated it. And so, he said that his problem was that the law was spiritual and he was carnal. And therefore, he found himself in this dilemma.

Whenever he would intend to do good, evil was present with him. And oftentimes the good that he would do, he didn't do. Many times the evil that he wouldn't do, he was doing.

And yet he was fighting against his own spirit, his own mind. For with his mind in his heart, he wanted to serve the law of God. But as Jesus said concerning Peter, the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

And I think that all of us have experienced that very same struggle. I have not always done for God the things that I would do for God. It isn't that I'm not willing.

It isn't that my spirit is not willing. It's my flesh is weak. And so, Paul recognized his problem.

And he ends chapter 7 with that cry, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this controlled or life controlled by the body. And then he answers his own question. Thanks be unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord is my deliverance.

So he comes now into that life of victory that one can experience while still living in the flesh. If he will submit his life to the control of the spirit. Now, Paul had felt the condemnation of the law.

It had condemned him to death because he had violated that spiritual aspect of the law. Though he had never committed adultery, yet he found that he desired his neighbor's wife. And he realized that the desire was sin.

Thou shalt not desire thy neighbor's wife or anything that belongs to your neighbor. And he realized that he had violated that. He felt guilty.

But now through the work of Jesus Christ, he makes this astounding declaration. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. I think that this particular verse has meant more to me than almost any other passage of scripture.

Because I lived so many years of my Christian life in constant condemnation. Because though my spirit indeed was willing, my flesh was weak. And week after week I would promise God that I was going to do better next week.

Apologizing, repenting for my failure of the past week. God, next week I promise I will read the Bible every day. I will pray every day.

God, I'm going to do better. And I was always feeling guilty because I was always breaking my vow before God. I was not doing those things that I promised God I would do.

And I was constantly feeling condemnation. But there is therefore now no condemnation to those which are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

Now, there is a new law that is working in me. God said to Jeremiah, and I will make a new covenant with the people. No longer written on the tables of stone, but I will write my law in the fleshly tablets of their hearts.

That law of the spirit of life that God has written in my heart. God accepts that which is in my heart. My love for him.

My desires to please and serve him. And God has written his law in my heart by which God now directs and controls even my desires. This new life in the spirit in Christ.

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away and all things become new. And it is interesting how even our desires change so dramatically when we're in Christ.

For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh. He's talking here of the mosaic law, which he said was only just and good, but what it could not do, what could, what was the limitation of the law of Moses or what could it not do? The law of Moses could not make a man righteous before God. So what the law could not do because of my weakness in the flesh, that is because I violated it.

So because of the weakness of my flesh, it could not make me righteous before God, but what it could not do because of the weakness of my own flesh. God sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin condemned sin in the flesh. What I could not do for myself through the mosaic law that is have a righteous standing before God.

God did for me through sending his son in the flesh. That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. So it is not fulfilled by us, but it is fulfilled in us by Jesus Christ.

For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the spirit, the things of the spirit. Now man is composed of three parts, an inferior trinity. He has body, mind and spirit.

The mind being synonymous with the soul, the consciousness of man. The consciousness of man is responsive to whatever controls the man. So if a man is controlled by his body appetites, if a man is living predominantly after the flesh, then he has what is termed here the mind of the flesh.

Or is mindful of fleshly things or body needs. And this is the state of the natural man apart from Jesus Christ. It is that body consciousness.

And you talk to the average person apart from Jesus Christ and they're going to be talking to you about things that relate to the body. They're going to be talking to you about new recipes, exotic new desserts. Or they're going to be talking to you about drinks.

Or they're going to be talking to you about sex or things that relate to the body appetites. Because that's where the mind of natural man is. Because the body is in control.

What he is thinking about constantly are those body needs. The body drives. But when a man is born again by the spirit of God and the spirit then is in control in his life, that man then is concerned with spiritual things.

And he's going to be talking about God, his relationship with God, the work of God within his heart, the work of God's spirit, how to please the Lord, how to serve the Lord. And his conversation is going to be addressed to spiritual things. Now the man who lives dominated by his body appetite is living like an animal.

Because animals are body controlled beings. They do have a consciousness that is constantly absorbed with their body needs. And any man who lives controlled by his body needs is living as an animal.

And that is why the humanists today are so certain that they are related to the animal kingdom. Because they look around and they say, well, look at that baboon over there. All he thinks about is his body needs.

He's only concerned in feeding himself and of procreation and so forth. And he looks a little bit like me, I guess I'm related to that baboon. And he feels a close affinity to it because the baboon is living just like he lives.

But a man whose spirit has come alive and who is living after the spirit realizes that he's not related to the animal kingdom, he's related to God. He was made in the image and in the likeness of God and it was from that image that he fell. But he seeks to relate himself again to God because he is living after the spirit.

And so Paul declares, they that are after the flesh are constantly mindful of the things of the flesh. But they that are after the spirit then are mindful of the things of the spirit. But then he went on to declare the mind of the flesh or the carnal mind is death.

That is spiritual death, which biblically would be interpreted as separation of man's consciousness from God. Man classifies death as the separation of man's consciousness from his body. When the EEG reads flat for 24 hours, they say, well, there's no brain movement or brain activity at all.

Let's pull the plug and see if anything happens on the monitor. And they pull the plug and you begin to have an oxygen deprivation. And so the heart no longer is being pumped artificially.

And they watch that. Monitor, because if there is any life at all, then the brain will start searching for oxygen and you'll see a little bit of movement and quickly they'll plug it back in and say, well, we thought he was gone, but there's a slight movement. If the thing just stays flat.

They say, well, he's gone. There's no brain activity. The consciousness is gone.

He's just dead. But the Bible says that if you, if your consciousness is separated from God, that is, you don't have a real consciousness of God that you are dead because your consciousness is separated from God. And so the mind of the flesh is death because it is a consciousness that is separated from God.

It's absorbed with the things of my own body and those needs. Whereas the mind of the spirit is life and peace, spiritual life, which results in that glorious peace because the carnal mind or the mind of the flesh is enmity against God. It's opposed to God because God has declared that the spirit is superior to the material and that man ought to be more concerned with the spiritual realm than the material realm.

Now, man today, humanism and all is saying just the opposite. Communism is saying just the opposite. Man ought to be more concerned with the material realm than the spiritual realm.

And so the conflict between man and God, because God tells you that you ought to be putting the spirit first. And so they that have the mind of the flesh find themselves at enmity with God. For the mind of the flesh is not subject to the law of God and neither indeed can it be.

So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. This to me is an interesting statement because so often men are seeking to offer to God the works of their flesh and seeking that God would accept the works of their flesh. But God will no more accept the works of your flesh than he would Cain's who sought to offer to God the works of his flesh and was rejected by God.

But it's interesting how that we so often find ourselves in that place of seeking to offer to God the works of our flesh. But they that are in the flesh cannot please God. Now, when we get to the book of Revelation, chapter four, and God is there upon the throne surrounded by the 24 lesser thrones of the elders and those cherubim, those angelic beings are worshipping the eternal God, the creator, and are saying, Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, which is, which was, which is to come.

And the elders fall on their faces, taking their golden crowns and casting them before the glassy sea before the throne of God. And they declare thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor for you have created all things, listen carefully, and for your pleasure they are and were created. Like it or not, God created you for his own pleasure.

That's the basic purpose for your existence. Now, man is twisted that and he somehow feels that he should live for his own pleasure. But the Bible tells us that if a person is living for their own pleasure, they're really dead while they're still alive.

Why? Because you are not answering to the very basic cause of your existence. God created you for his pleasure. Now, careful note of that, because they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

Thus, if you are living in the flesh and after the flesh, your life is doomed to this emptiness and frustration because you are not answering to God for the very basic purpose of your existence. And so if I want to have a fulfilling life, a meaningful life, I must live after the spirit. But then Paul goes on to declare to the saints of God, ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit.

If so be that the spirit of God dwells in you. Now, if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his. So those who have been born again, that born again is actually being born of the spirit.

When Nicodemus said, how can a man be born again when he is old? I can't return again to my mother's womb and be born. Jesus said that which is born of the flesh is flesh, but that which is born of the spirit is spirit. Don't marvel when I say to you, ye must be born again.

Even as you have all had a fleshly birth, we are here. It is just as necessary that you have a spiritual birth for man by nature is alienated from God. And it is only through the second birth, the spiritual birth, when man's spirit comes alive, that man really understands what God intended when he created man.

For God did not intend that man should live after the flesh and be a slave to his flesh, but God intended that man should live and walk after the spirit. And so you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit of the spirit of God is dwelling in you. But if any man doesn't have the spirit of Christ, then he is none of his.

You really don't belong to him unless you have had that second birth, the spiritual birth, which we term born again. Then you really aren't a part of God or his kingdom. And if Christ is in you, then the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness.

But if the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also make alive your mortal bodies by his spirit dwelling in you. In other words, even though I am still living in this body, I can begin to experience victory over my flesh. I don't have to live as a subject to my flesh anymore.

I can begin to live in victory over the flesh because of that same spirit that raised Christ from the dead. It makes me alive in him. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors not to the flesh to live after the flesh.

For if you live after the flesh, you're going to die. But if you through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, then ye shall live. So it is through the help of the spirit that we put to death the deeds of the body or that they become subservient and the spirit becomes dominant.

I see the Trinity of man in a storied area, upper story, middle story and lower story. And the natural man I see as body in the upper story ruling the mind in the middle story always. But in the case where the body is uppermost, the mind being controlled and dominated by the desires and the needs of the body and the spirit dormant or dead.

Now, through the new birth, there is an inversion and man becomes then spirit, soul and body or the spirit and the mind now being dominated by the spirit, which is in control and the body down here where God intended it to be no longer controlling, no longer ruling, no longer exercising its hold over me. But now the body appetites under the control of the spirit as God intended them to be. And so we by the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body and thus experience spiritual life.

For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God. Now, this should be to each of us tonight a very searching verse. And upon reading this, it is important that each of us now make a personal inventory and evaluation and ask ourselves the question, is my life led by the spirit of God? As you look at your life, can you honestly say, yes, my life is led by the spirit of God? We are told to be careful lest we deceive ourselves.

We are told that our heart is deceitful and desperately wicked. Who can know it? And thus, this kind of a verse should be a very searching verse and one that we should allow to search out our hearts today. Am I led by the spirit of God? For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

There are a lot of people today who are making claims to being sons of God. How can I really know that I'm a son of God? Because I will be led by the spirit of God. But if I'm being led by my flesh and dominated by my flesh, then I'm only fooling myself if I say I am a son of God.

For you have not received the spirit of bondage, that is, that bondage to our flesh any longer, a slave to my own appetites. But I have received the spirit of sonship, adoption, whereby we cry Abba or Father. They are both words for Father.

And so the spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. You see, God is a superior trinity, the Father, Son, and the Spirit. Man is an inferior trinity, spirit, soul, and body.

And man meets God in the area of the Spirit. When the woman in Samaria said to Jesus, Our fathers say we're to worship God in this mountain. You say we're supposed to worship God in Jerusalem, as does Stanley Goldfoot.

Her question to Jesus is, Where do we worship God? And Jesus said, Woman, the day is coming and now is when they that worship God neither worship in this mountain nor in Jerusalem. For God is a spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. God is a spirit.

So the place I meet God is the place of the Spirit. Now, if I am living body, soul, and spirit, then I have no fellowship with God. As long as I am being dominated by my body, appetites, and all, I have no fellowship with God.

Because God will not deal directly with my body. If I am ruled by my body, I have the mind of the body, which is death, spiritual death. But when I become inverted, born again by the Spirit of God, and I am spirit, soul, and body, now the superior trinity of Father, Son, and Spirit is joined with the inferior trinity of man in the area of the Spirit, and God's Spirit is bearing witness with my spirit, then I am a son of God.

And thus I am united with God and joined with God, and I have fellowship with God in the realm of the Spirit only when the Spirit is uppermost. And my life is being ruled by the Spirit, and thus I am being led by the Spirit, and in that I have then this joined together with God in the Spirit as his Spirit is just bearing witness with my spirit. Not bearing witness with my intellect, not bearing witness to my body, bearing witness to my spirit where I have joined with God that I am the child of God.

And how glorious it is to walk in the Spirit, to be in union with the Spirit of God, to be led by the Spirit of God, and to have that glorious assurance of God's Spirit bearing witness to mine, and, hey, you're a child of God. Now if I'm a child, then I'm an heir. I'm an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him that we may also be glorified together.

Children will dream. And when I was a child, I spent one summer in a home in Montecito where my aunt was a maid. And the people who owned the home had gone to Europe for the summer, and so I went up to spend some time with my cousin.

And oh, what a fabulous time we had as we lived like rich boys. Seven-car garage and all kinds of fancy cars, and we'd go out and sit in them, you know, and pretend that we were driving them. And the little kid there had a whole room full of big little books, and you young people won't understand that at all.

But oh, man, Tailspin Tommy and the whole bit, it was so exciting reading every night. He had one of the most fabulous electric trains, huge one. They had their own stables, their own pools.

And after that time, I used to think, wouldn't it be wonderful if someday there would be a knock on the door and there would be a lawyer there and say, your uncle that you happen not to know, who happened to be one of the wealthiest men in the world, died and you were left his fortune, you know. Oh, boy, I'd go up and get me a house in Montecito like that one where I stayed, you know. What fun it would be to be an heir of some wealthy person.

How glorious it is to be an heir of God, a joint heir with Jesus Christ. The kingdom of God has become mine. I'm an heir to God's kingdom.

I shall live in that kingdom, that kingdom of light and love, joy and peace, an heir of God, joint heir with Jesus Christ. Then Paul said, I reckon that this present suffering is not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed. As a Christian, we will experience suffering because in reality, we become an alien in the world in which we live.

This world that is dominated by the flesh, dominated by men who are dominated by the flesh. We are a minority group. The majority of the people in the world are living after the flesh.

We are aliens because we live an entirely different lifestyle as we live after the spirit, one that they cannot understand. And when a person can't understand you, you always become a threat to them. So Jesus said, rejoice when you're persecuted for righteousness sake.

Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad. Great is your reward in heaven.

And so Jesus in the hour of suffering or persecution points us to the glory of that kingdom that we're going to experience for eternity. We are told concerning Jesus who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame. Yes, he suffered, but as he suffered, he was looking forward to the glory

of the kingdom and the joy of being able to redeem lost man.

And so in suffering, we should not be looking at the suffering, but at the glorious kingdom that shall come when our Lord comes to claim his own. For the present sufferings are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed. Paul in writing to the Carithanians after telling them the whole 10 yards that he had gone through, the many beatings and stonings and shipwrecks and imprisonments and all.

He said, but this light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh an exceeding eternal weight of glory. This light affliction, I was beaten five times with rods and stoned three times and drug out of the city. They thought I was dead.

And I was hanging on to a part of the ship for a night and a day out in the middle of the Mediterranean. And, you know, light affliction is just but for a moment, but all I'm going to have an eternal weight of glory. I reckon that the suffering of this present time is not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed.

For the earnest expectation of the creation is waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God. Now, unfortunately, there are those radical groups that take a verse like this and a phrase manifestation of the sons of God, and they use it to build a whole pernicious doctrine. And this doctrine has a way of cycling it.

It becomes popular about every 40 years, 30 years. Maybe the last time it was popular is 1948 and it's beginning to get popular again. So 30 years span 35 years.

This doctrine of the manifestation of the sons of God is sort of a heady kind of a doctrine. It surely appeals to a person's flesh, you know, because basically what what this doctrine declares is that the whole world is waiting for you. To be manifested as the sons of God.

That there's going to come in the last days, a great power of God's spirit upon the church, and God is going to manifest himself through you, his church, and you're going to have all you're going to be endowed with all kinds of supernatural powers. And you're going to go over to Moscow and you're going to start pointing at the tanks and they're going to start dissolving. And you're going to go through the hospitals and empty them all.

And the whole world is just waiting for you to be manifested. And so the idea is to let's all just sit and just get perfected and get the church perfected so that God can manifest himself in the perfected church. And this is in reality, the second coming of Jesus Christ.

That he's not coming physically or bodily, but he's going to be coming in his church to be manifested through his church to the world. And the whole world is just groaning and travailing as they're waiting for you to be manifested. Sounds pretty wonderful, doesn't it? The powerful finger.

Sad that people even give the time of the day to such a doctrine. For Paul tells us in just a little bit what the manifestation of the sons of God really is. And that's the problem.

These people never read the context. They just grab the phrase that they want out of a verse and never bother to look at the context of that particular verse. And we'll see it in its context in a moment.

For the creature that is man was made subject to emptiness, not willingly, but by reason of him who has objected the same in hope. When God created man, he created him incomplete. More ways than one.

When God created Adam, God said, it is not good that man should live alone. He's not complete. Let's make a woman in order that man might be complete.

And gals, we're just not complete without you. We frankly confess it. God saw that there was no companion for man.

Man was not complete. It is not good that man should live alone. And so God created the woman that man might have completeness, companionship, love and beauty.

And God brought her to man and she became his wife. But there's another incompleteness of man. There is another emptiness in man.

And this emptiness only God can fill. Dr. Henry Drummond, who wrote that classic book, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, declares in that book that there is within the very protoplasm of man, those little tentacles that are reaching out for God. Man was made for God.

Man can never be satisfied until he is in union with God. Man is incomplete without God. There's a basic emptiness of man apart from God.

And so the creature, God created him subject to this emptiness by reason of him who created him, that he might be subjected in hope. God created man with this emptiness so that man would seek after God to find that fulfillment and meaning for life. And he has subjected the same in hope because, or for we know, because the creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

One day I'm going to be freed from this old body, from this bondage of corruption, and I'm going to come into that glorious liberty and freedom. For we know that the whole creation is groaning and travailing in pain together until now. Not only man, but all of creation is groaning under the curse of sin.

And not only all of creation, but ourselves also, which even have the first fruits of the spirit. Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption to it, the redemption of our body. That's what he's talking about, the manifestation of the sons of God when I have a redeemed body.

In writing to the Corinthians in his second epistle, chapter five, Paul said, for we know when this earthly tent, our body is dissolved. That we then have a building of God that is not made with hands, that is eternal in the heavens. So then we who are still living in these bodies do often groan for we ourselves also groan within ourselves.

We groan earnestly desiring to be delivered from what? From this old tent in which I'm living. Not that I would be unclothed or an unembodied creature, but that I might be clothed upon with the body, which is from heaven. For I know as long as I'm living in this body, I'm absent from the Lord, but I would rather be absent from this body and to be present with the Lord.

So the same idea that he is presenting here is presented there in second Corinthians five of that groaning, earnestly desiring to be freed from this body. That is limited and restricted and often seeks to bring me into bondage, the bondage of corruption. And so we ourselves groan.

We who are in these bodies do often groan earnestly desiring to be delivered, to move out of them, not to be an unembodied creature, but to be clothed upon or to move into that body, which God has in heaven.

Now, interesting, Paul is comparing or likening this body to a tent. And whenever you think of a tent, you don't think of a permanent place to live.

We had to live in a tent for two years, our church here. And it had its, you know, qualities, I guess it had its interests. It had its smells of those old kerosene heaters.

And of course, the tent blew over and it had holes in it and it got awfully cold at night and there were disadvantages. It was a glorious day when we moved out of that tent and into this new sanctuary. And we were able to sit not on those hard metal chairs and not walk on the black asphalt and not have to be subjected to that loud noise of those blowing heaters and smell the kerosene.

But we were able to sit here in the upholstered pews, walk on the carpets and enjoy the comforts of this more permanent home. Now there is a likening, but it falls short because that house that God has for me in heaven is eternal. That new model or that new body that I am going to get is going to be my eternal house.

Right now I'm living in a tent, this body. It's transient. Hey, it's beginning to have its problems.

The threads are getting a little old. Beginning to rip a lot easier. When it rains, it's starting to leak.

It's getting uncomfortable. And we who are in these bodies do often groan earnestly desiring to be delivered, not to be unembodied, but to be clothed upon with a body which is from heaven. Jesus said, let not your hearts be troubled.

You believe in God, believe also in me. For in my father's house, there are many mansions and I'm going to prepare one for you. And if I go and prepare one for you, then I'm going to come again and receive you unto myself that where I am there, you may be also.

Now, what do you picture when Jesus says that colonial style surrounded by beautiful gardens? I really think that Jesus was talking about what Paul was talking about in second Corinthians five. That mansion is that new body that he's prepared for you. I'm going to move from this tent into that new mansion, into that new building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Now that new body doesn't grow tired. It doesn't require sleep. Therefore, if I had a new mansion, I wouldn't need any bedrooms.

We ourselves, which have the first fruits of the spirit, we groan within ourselves as we wait for this work of God. That is the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope, but hope that is seen is not hope for what a man sees.

Why does he yet hope for it? When you finally see it, it becomes then a rational reality. It's no longer the realm of hope. Hope is always in something not yet seen.

And so God has subjected us in hope as we hope for that day and we hope for that kingdom. But we are hoping for that which we see not. Then with patience, we're waiting for it.

Now, likewise, the spirit also helps our weaknesses, for we do not know what we should pray for as we ought. But the spirit himself will make intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. So creation is groaning.

I'm groaning. The spirit is groaning, waiting for that perfect work of God. But the spirit's groaning has a purpose within my life as the spirit helps my other weaknesses.

Now, by the spirit, I'm mortifying the deeds of the flesh. By the spirit, I'm receiving that sense of adoption where I'm crying, Abba, Father. For it is the spirit that is bearing witness to me that I am a child of God.

And now the spirit is helping my weakness in my prayer life. Because I don't always know what God's particular will is in a particular situation. And not knowing the will of God, then it is difficult often to pray because it doesn't really make sense to pray against the will of God.

And the purpose of prayer is never to accomplish my will. The real purpose of prayer is always to accomplish God's will. And if I think of prayer as an instrument by which I can get my will done, I totally misunderstand prayer, as do so many evangelists today.

That was never God's intention that prayer should be the instrument by which man can accomplish his will upon the earth. Prayer is the instrument by which we cooperate with God in the accomplishing of his will upon the earth. As Jesus said, not my will, thy will be done.

And that is always the real thrust of prayer. But I always do not know what God's will is. And therein is where the spirit steps in and he helps me and he will make intercession for me with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Have you ever groaned in the spirit? I groan often when I see the conditions of the world around me. I groan often when I see the conditions and needs of people around me. Because often I don't know how to pray.

But he that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the spirit. Because he makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. You know, to me it is such a simple, beautiful thing.

God has made prayer such a simple, beautiful thing. If I don't know how to pray and I want to pray according to the will of God. And here's my friend John over here and I really don't know how to pray for his situation.

I really don't know what God is doing in his life. But I know John needs prayer. God's made it so simple.

I can say, God I bring John before you. Oh, oh. Now God you interpret that.

And you know the amazing thing to me is that God can interpret it as intercession according to his will. That's what we are told here. The spirit will help our weaknesses through groanings which really cannot be uttered.

For he knows what is the mind of the Father and he will make intercession according to his will. Glory. I love it.

Verse 28. And we know that most things work together for good to them that love God. How many times have you interpreted that way? Well, I know, but not this case.

You know, I don't see how in this case. Many times I'm willing to acknowledge, oh yes, God's going to work out good in this. You see, I can see how God can work with you.

Most things do work together for good to those who love God. Not of what it says, is it? And we know that all things. You know, I have found such rest and comfort in this verse when I am faced as I am often faced with situations that I can't understand.

Disappointments, setbacks, things that I just don't understand. And I'm prone to be concerned or worried or get upset. And then this verse will come to mind.

And we know that all things are working together for good to those who love God and are called according to his purpose. And I've rested in this verse over and over and over again. Now, as I have told you, you are not going to always understand your circumstances.

There are going to be many things that will happen to you of which, though you do your best, you're not going to be able to understand it or figure it out. And when you come against that which you can't understand, it is important that you have certain foundations that you can understand and that you do understand and you fall back on the foundations. What do I understand? I understand that God loves me.

How do I know? The Bible tells me so. I understand that God is wiser than I am. I understand that God is in control of all of the circumstances that surround my life.

Thus, anything that happens to me only happens to me because God has allowed it to happen to me. It could not happen to me unless God did allow it to happen to me. And God loves me and is working out what is best for me.

Thus, I can rest in the most uncomfortable places. I rest in faith that God is even going to use this for my good and his glory. Now, if you will just take this and file it up here to where you'll live by it, you won't have to come to Romaine and get his hammer on your head.

You know, things start going wrong. Oh, I've got to talk to somebody, you know. Hey, wait a minute.

God's in control. God loves you. And God knows what's going on.

And God is working, even in this situation, his good purpose in your life for all things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to his purpose. My father was a salesman. For years, he was a sales engineer for the Southern County's gas company.

And then he went into the real estate business and was a realtor here in Santa Ana for many years. And the life of a salesman is a life of feast or famine. And potential great feast.

I mean, he had some nice deals that if he could have just put together, the commission would have just, oh man, you know. And a lot of times you've even put a great deal in escrow. And when you've got it in escrow, you're feeling pretty good about it.

You've got a sizable deposit. It's in escrow. And boy, my commission on this is going to be about \$35,000.

And all right now. And it's interesting. You start spending the commission.

But it's amazing how that sometimes these sure deals can fall out of escrow. And oh, what disappointment. You know, just the bottom is knocked out here.

You know, I had all my bills paid and I became current. And oh, you know, we had the new living room furniture practically delivered, you know, and now it's fallen out of escrow. And oh God, you know, what are we going to do now? And so my dad had a little plaque made with the words, all things.

And he had it there on his desk. So that when some big deal would fall out of escrow, he'd just look at that little plaque, all things are working together for good. I think it'd be good for all of us to make a little plaque and put it on our mirrors or someplace where we're reminded every day that all things are working together for good to those who love God.

Not just some of the things, but because you've been called according to his purpose, you can rest in the confidence that God is in control and all things are working together for good. For whom he did foreknow, he did also predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. So God foreknew me.

That always amazes me, but it shouldn't surprise me because he knows everything. But the thing that amazes me is that foreknowing me, he predestined that I should be one of his children. That's the thing that amazes me most.

He foreknew me and then predestined that I should be conformed to the image of his son, that Jesus might be the firstborn among many brethren. In other words, that we might be made the sons of God. But the firstborn is first in prominence, Jesus, the first in prominence.

But he is the firstborn of many brethren, and I've been born again by the Spirit of God. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called. And whom he called, he also justified.

And whom he justified, them he also glorified. Now here God is speaking of things concerning me that are not yet fulfilled, for you do not yet see the glorified Chuck. I'm not yet in my glorified state.

That is a yet future experience that I am to have. But yet God puts it in the past tense, which to me is quite interesting. But even as he spoke to Abraham concerning his seed in the past tense, because he knew that Abraham was going to have a son, whom he did foreknow, and because God has the foreknowledge, he can speak, as Paul said, of things as existing, even though as yet they do not exist, because he knows they're going to exist.

And so God speaks, and this is what thrills me, he speaks of my being glorified, because God knows he's going to do it. He's going to complete that work in me. He which has begun a good work in me shall surely continue to perform it.

And so I rest in the fact that God has already spoken in the past tense of my future state of glorified together with Jesus Christ. I've got it made. What shall we say then to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? Now Paul asks a series of questions.

If God be for us, who can be against us? Satan is against us. The world is against us. But the idea is, what is Satan and what is the world compared with God? As David said, the Lord is on my side.

I will not fear what man can do unto me. If God be for me, and the glorious truth is this, God is for you tonight. And because God is for you, I don't care what forces of hell may be against you.

They are nothing compared to God. Never think of Satan as the opposite of God. He is not.

Not at all the opposite of God. You can't put them in the same categories. God is the infinite, eternal creator.

Satan is a finite created being. In no way is he opposite of God. He may be opposite to Michael or to Gabriel, but never to God.

Never think of him as opposite of God. And thus, though the forces of hell be gathered against you, they are nothing compared with that power that is available to you, because God is for you. How do I know God is for me? Because he spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all.

That word delivered is speaking of the cross, delivered him to die. And how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? God delivered his son to die for my sins. God delivered his son to suffer, to be despised and rejected, as was prophesied in Isaiah, and to be delivered for my sins.

I didn't fully appreciate that until I became a parent and I watched my own little babies suffer from some of the childhood maladies. And whenever my children would get a fever, would become listless and sick or whatever, it would so tear me up inside to see them in that condition, how I hurt to see my children suffer, how I hurt to see my grandchildren suffer. My little granddaughter tonight has got an ear infection, not feeling well, and it just tears me up how I wish there were some way that I could suffer for her, that I could have that ear infection and I could somehow take her suffering and bear it for her so that she wouldn't have to suffer and that beautiful, sparkling, darling little gal wouldn't have to lie there listless and crying and thrashing in the bed.

Oh, what I wouldn't give if I couldn't take her place and suffer for her. And then I began to realize the pain the father must have gone through to see his son suffering, even more so than his coming himself. As a parent, you'd gladly take the place of your child and suffer for them, but to have to see your child suffer and God delivered him up for us all, how much more then shall he not freely give us all things? God is not reluctant to help you.

God doesn't have to be begged to come to your assistance. God is more willing to give than we are to receive. And God has already demonstrated his willingness to give his only begotten Son, deliver him up.

Then if God is willing to do that much for you, the rest is easy. Nothing that you might need could possibly come close to comparing what God has already demonstrated his willingness to give and do for you because he loves you so much. Our problem is that we just don't understand the depth of God's love for us.

How rich, how broad, how expansive is God's love for you tonight? Oh, if you only knew how much God loved you, you would never run away from him again. You'd never try to hide from him again. If you only knew that God's love for you is broader than the universe and God's desires for you are only for your good, and it is foolish to run from God.

It's foolish to fight God because you're fighting against the very best for your own life. The next question, who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? You see, he told me that God foreknew me and because he foreknew me, he chose me. And then he justified me and then he glorified me.

So God elected me. That's what Jesus said. You didn't choose me.

I chose you. God elected me. Then who's going to lay anything to my charge? Because God elected me.

He's already glorified me as far as he's concerned. And who's going to lay anything to my charge? Who's going to make charges against me? Well, Satan does. He's the accuser of the brethren.

People often do. But there's one who isn't making any charges against me and that's God. Oh, how happy is the man to whom God does not impute iniquity.

God doesn't have any black book on me. He doesn't keep a record of my mistakes, my sins, my failures. He's justified me.

He has declared me innocent of all charges. Who is he that condemns? Well, again, Satan condemns, people condemn, and I condemn myself. We are often so hard on ourselves and are in the position of condemning ourselves.

But I can tell you one who is not condemning. Jesus said, I didn't come to condemn the world, but that the world through me might be saved. And he who believes is not condemned.

There is therefore now no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus. Then who is the one condemning? Satan is condemning. But why should I worry about that? The world may be condemning me.

Why should I worry about that? The one who really counts is not condemning me because he died for me. Yea, rather is risen again. In fact, he's at the right hand of the Father interceding for me.

You say, Oh, but I failed God so miserably. Oh, but I've done this. Hey, wait a minute.

You may condemn yourself, but Jesus isn't. He's interceding in your behalf. Oh, if you only understood how much God loved you, that's all you need.

Now Paul tells you a little bit about it. Who shall separate us? From the love of Christ. The next question, actually.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Tribulation. Distress. Persecution.

Famine. Nakedness. Peril.

Sword. As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long. We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

But can the persecution, the peril, the nakedness, the sword, can these things separate me from the love of Christ? No. For in all of these things, we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. It's one thing to be a conqueror.

The Rams conquered the 49ers today. They weren't quite sure though. There wasn't much rejoicing until that field goal attempt was blocked in the last three seconds.

And then they went wild. Then they conquered. All right, we've conquered.

And then was a great elation. Rejoicing. Pretty tense there for a little bit.

But you know what it is to be more than a conqueror? Hey, it's to have the victory in the midst of the battle. While things are still raging around me. While the outcome still seems to be very uncertain.

It's to have the glorious victory and rejoicing. Then that's more than a conquer. And we are more than conquerors through him who loves us.

For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, which are ranks of angelic beings, nor powers, other ranks, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Paul made the case just as airtight as he possibly could put in everything he could think of. And yet some poor, timid soul stand there and quiver thinking God's going to forsake them now.

God surely can't love me anymore. You know, he's through with me. He's had it with me.

Wait a minute. Nothing can separate you from that love of God, which is in Christ Jesus. No angel, no principality, no power, nothing that has ever been before or shall ever come.

Things present, things to come, height, depth, any other created being will be able to separate you from God's love in Christ because God's love for you is constant. It is eternal and it is not predicated upon you, but upon his own nature of love. God's love for me is uncaused by my part.

Therefore, it is a constant and remains. God doesn't love me when I'm good and hate me when I'm bad. God loves me good or bad, for better, for worse, for richer, for poor, in sickness and in health, all the way.

His love is there and constant. Oh, how grateful we are for that love of God for us tonight in Christ Jesus. God, help us to comprehend what is the length, the breadth, the depth, the height, and to know that love of Christ in God has for us in him.

Father, we thank you for your word and for the glorious blessings and hope and strength and comfort that is ours tonight because of your word. How we appreciate this marvelous position that we have in Christ Jesus where nothing can separate us from your love. Lord, thank you.

What can we say to these things? Thank you, Lord, in Jesus' name. Amen. May the Lord be with you.

May the Lord bless you. May the light, the joy, the love, the peace of Christ just keep your life as you walk in the Spirit, being led by the Spirit in close communion with God as his Spirit just bears witness with your Spirit of that glorious relationship that you have as God's child, his heir for all eternity.

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