

Romans 7 vs. Romans 8

by Leonard Ravenhill

Romans 8 offers a message of hope and victory, emphasizing the power of Christ to overcome all things and the importance of living a life of faith and trust in God's sovereignty and goodness.

Duration: 1:33:16

Scripture: Isaiah 55:8-9, Daniel 6:16, Matthew 1:21, Matthew 27:46, Romans 8:1, Romans 8:37, 1 Corinthians 6:4

Topics: "Victorious Life"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the power of Jesus overcoming all obstacles. He uses the analogy of Jesus being like a stone that is being pushed against by various forces, including sin and demons. However, Jesus ultimately triumphs over these challenges with the help of the Holy Spirit. The preacher also discusses the concept of the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which sets believers free from the law of sin and death. He encourages listeners to trust in Jesus' victory, even in difficult circumstances, and reminds them that they are more than conquerors through Christ.

Transcript

Let me say, particularly about the... I don't know where the speech is in this chapter, it's got quite a level, no matter the fact, but... I don't think there's anything much further beyond what I've said and this kind of gets to where Mr. Solheim was talking about a few minutes ago, it cuts you down to size, kind of thing. More than all these things, there are more than concrete through him that love this. The text is a lot easier if it said, just that you're more than concrete.

It's also, if you've done it through, that situation with him and said, well, of course, poor Heather meant this. You know, like you never had another in-law like mine, that's another problem. He didn't mean that, he just said more than concrete and speaking generally.

That's what he said in all these things. And, uh, it's just as good in itself, if you just read the chapter, at least seven times in the chapter he mentions things. Do you remember in, Rodney Winkler's insertion in the greatest poem of love that was ever written? And I was thinking of the thing, Slave of the Living God, the little artist lady, um, the one of our delegates, Emily Wilson Carmichael.

And I've got my son to back some of these books. Emily Wilson Carmichael, she wrote another verse to that love letter, and it's well worth knowing, for the same thing as Slave of the Living God, she wrote, Love of God, eternal love, pour thyself through me. Nothing less than Calvary, love, do I ask of thee.

Pour me, flood me, overflow me. Love of God, eternal love, pour thyself through me. But in that same poem, Paul says, uh, about this love, this divine love, and it is a kind of contentious love.

He says, it dared us all things, it believed us all things, it hurt us all things, it endured us all things. It was about to tell you, I think, that Fred said, I think it was about to tell you that Fred, that they, uh, immediately Adam broke his relationship with God so much more than he got interested in things. I mean, being interested in things ever since.

And I think that as we go on in our Christian lives, very often what God has to do is cut us off from things. He cuts us off from this thing and that thing. When we get saved, it's as if he will give us all the bad things.

You may disagree here, but when we really get saved, it's as if he'll give us the good things. If the good things are the enemy of the best things. See, the word of God says that we have fellowship with, who did it say, fellowship with who? No, no, no.

That's what we thought. As he said, we have fellowship with the Father and with his son Jesus Christ and with one another. See, very often we make fellowship with each other in such a way as to fellowship with him.

So the good is the enemy of the best. This, this meeting tonight, as good as it may be, and I hope God will contribute something to our faith and soul life, uh, spirit life really, but it is no substitute for communion, first of all, with him. Our fellowship is with the Father.

I'm with one another. I'm with Jesus Christ, his son. But I can make fellowship with Sister Mattie over the phone in the morning.

You know, you've got the kids out there. Wouldn't it be great when I got back to school and I can yawn over the phone and hold them at my heart and I can talk to Sister Sue for 20 minutes. Oh, I enjoy that every morning.

I'll sip coffee and talk to her. Well, you couldn't get fellowship much better, could you? Than sitting in a, uh, a lazy boy's chair drinking coffee and having coffee. But, uh, it's a course I could do.

It's again, fellowship with the Father, you see. I'm with his son, Jesus Christ. But again, going back to the, we get involved in things.

So many things, so many things. Paul says again, what things again, to me, I can't think at large, is I'm with Jesus Christ. And there's nobody can tell you, nobody has ever lived this spiritual life after they've made the dream.

You know, I say sometimes, the teachers say, lots of people are looking for a book on six years or less and try to become a saint. Well, there isn't one. But if you find one, please send it to me and I'll make you one promise, I won't read it.

Because it'll be full of nonsense. But I'm not six years or less to become a saint. Uh, sometime, we'll be coming next week, if you want us, but then I'll be away for about a month or five weeks.

Then when we come back, as the Lord wills, we'll sit around. I'd like to make a series of studies because revelation is progressive. All revelation is progressive.

I don't care who you've heard, and I don't care how many times you've sprung on the chandelier to lay flat on your tummy dimensionless. The fact is this, that nobody under heaven, not the apostles, or anybody else, has ever explored all the possibilities of this day. There's still an unfolding.

God has something for us in our day that he didn't have for people's sake. I was saying, westerners' day, or some other day, because they were not living in the atmosphere that we're living in now. I don't think there's a devil who's ever had such a good time as he's having right now, both outside of the church and inside of the church, as far as that goes.

And, uh, there's no such thing. There's nobody this kind of eternity has yet arrived. And I know there's some little ecclesiastic groups that won't let you pray with them because you're not mature enough, you see.

Five years from now, apply again. But right now, you're just not mature enough. You don't know why they're content to stay on earth when they're so mature, but nobody on earth has yet arrived.

I've been a Christian for, I can't tell you how many years, but more than half a century, anyhow. I've been preaching more than 50 years, if that helps you, but I should preach better than I do. But the fact is that with all I know, I know very little.

Revelation's progressive. God is continually, continually developing us, preaching, till we only go to a certain height. The blessing, I don't know, shall we say, the second 15 years is taller than the first 15.

Now, you'd have to lift the roof around here. But they go other ways. They go mentally.

They go emotionally. They go spiritually, we hope. And it is true in the areas of our makeup.

You see, we can't, God is so vast. Next week, I'd like to talk and leave you with it because you can see it over for a few. I want to talk about worship, which I don't think, frankly, I don't think one person in a hundred Christians, maybe even thirty-four Christians, know much about worship.

You see. But that again is another area. Now, here is the challenge to our hearts tonight.

Romans 8 and verse 37. And all these things we have more than conquered through him that loved us. Now, you're looking, but I'm not saying you're cheating.

But if you weren't looking, how does Romans 8 begin? How does it begin? Right. All right. And it begins, no, therefore, that is, therefore, now no condemnation.

How does it end? Crucial separators from the level of God. So the chapter begins with no condemnation and it ends with no separation. But it doesn't say there's no tribulation.

In fact, the whole thing between the two is packed with tribulations and distress, famine, famine, nakedness, fraud. You can't paint a picture. I used to paint when I was younger.

I paint now with a brush about so wide, but I used to paint with a little brush. And I learned one thing at the beginning. You can't paint a good picture without shadow.

You see. And I was always trying to have what Dr. Stallman would call a collective ministry because somebody wrote to us the other day and said, would you come up to our group and it's four or five

hundred miles away from here. We got tired of just, again, not that it's wrong in itself, but when you do it most of the meeting and all the meetings you try and get blessed that's soul-ish.

You can do the same thing on soul train. The thing is that they dropped it a place down where things were beginning to calm down. They came out of a dead church into a lively church with excitement and cheer and you clap your hands and you sing and you look and you clap and you sing It doesn't say that there's no stipulation.

In fact, there's an awful amount of it listed here in this chapter again. Now, what's his first reaction to a text like that? In all these things we are more than conquerors to him that loves us. You know, there's no sharper division, not between night and day, or hardly between heaven and hell than there is between Romans 7 and Romans 8. Now, when you go home, or sometimes, read right through Romans 7, take a pencil, and every time you come to that, you know, that little awkward thing, I, I, I, I, you just put a line under it.

You know, I want to do this, I can't do it, I don't want to do that, I do it, it's not I, it seems irrelevant. Take a pencil and go down and mark everywhere and say, with a red pencil, I, I, I. And then take a green pencil and mark how many times the Holy Spirit is mentioned in Romans 7. You won't have anything to do because he's not mentioned at all. Then you cross over the bridge out of Romans 7 into Romans 8, and take a pencil in Romans 8 and mark how many times the I is there, and it's only there twice, in verse 18 and verse 38.

It says in verse 18, for I reckon, you see, in verse 38, I am persuaded. Now, he can't put any other, he can't put us there, this is personal. But Romans 7, thirty-one times it's I, I, I, I, I, and no Holy Spirit.

Romans chapter 8, nineteen times the Holy Spirit and no I, except on the two red David's where they can't do anything else. So plainly, Romans 7 is a sin-centered or a self-centered chapter, and Romans 8 is a Christ-centered chapter. Or, if you want it in college language, shall we say, Romans 7 is ego-centered and Romans 8 is Christian or Christ-centered, you see.

Now, Romans chapter 7, to me, is a graveyard. Or, if you like, Romans 7 is a funeral march and Romans 8 is a wedding march. Here's a man bursting out with ecstasy, you know, hallelujah, there's no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8, 37 is what? I think Romans, when he says Romans 8, 37, I can do all things through Christ extensively, I put it this way as I was praying the other day, this is an exclamation and jubilation for liberation, you see. We are more than conquerors, he said. Now, what can you do? I mean, if you're dealing in that text grammatically, what can you do? Therefore, we are more than conquerors through him that loveth.

There are only three possible approaches to a text like that. Number one, it's written by a guy I don't know what he's talking about. In other words, let's put it in military language.

Here is a man in uniform. I remember, I'll give my age away, but I can remember before World War I, never mind World War II, my cousin came to our home. He joined one of the crack regiments in England.

He was about six foot two, had a red jacket on and blue trousers, and he was afraid of the landlord, marched him off the street. Boy, I thought he was the king of the world. Oh, I told her, she said, that's my cousin, look at my face, that's my cousin.

And one of the crack regiments heard him in England. He let you know that he was in the crack regiment, and oh, it was difficult to get in. I happened to see him just once after he came home after World War I. He was a wreck.

Boy, he was afraid to stick his head up when he went out. When he came back, he was beaten up. He was sliding his feet, they'd done massive curbs around him, after Schrotner had called his bomb yet.

There was a great deal of difference about the young guy that said, boy, we're going out to fight and conquer and do this, and the man that came on was battle-scarred. Now, the man that said, we're more than conquerors, threw him that loved us into the youngster with his buttons all polished and said, we're going to do the job. He's a man who's face is torn up, his back is bent, he limps.

He's a mess. You say, well, how do you know? You're guessing. No, I'm not.

After all, if they tied you to a whipping post and lashed you 195 times, and that's what he said, he said, five times I was beaten with rugs. Forty stripes saved one. So you make 540 makes 200 on my computer.

Five less because there are only 39. He's 195 lashes. He was in the beach a night and a day, that's 36 hours.

He's in readiness, in fasting, in thankfulness, in tribulation, in distress. He just goes through the whole range of trial and temptation. And what's more, he lists them again in this chapter, because he says in verse 38, I'm persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other scripture.

Now, you can't get much further than that. Even when he's listed all that is, he says, neither things present, nor things to come. In other words, he puts his shoulders back, and if you pardon the rather, what might sound a vulgar phrase, he spits in the face of the devil and says, look, there's nothing that you can invent that can separate me from the love of God.

He's tried about everything, it doesn't work. And I'm so confident in the Lord Jesus Christ that I'm absolutely sure that there's nothing you have that can separate me from the love of God. And there's sufficient grace for me to be more than conqueror to him that loves me.

So first of all, I say, when I talk to it, this is a statement of somebody that's ignorant and irresponsible. Just saying, well, of course, you can be a victim and everything. I don't care whether you live in a palace, or a prison, or a pigsty, or whether you have anything to say to the Jews.

It makes me odd to have victims. It isn't somebody in the field that's saying this. The second thing is to say, well, it's an unbalanced statement of a super optimist.

I mean, you could say to the text, supposing somebody saw the text writing and said, what do you think of that text? Well, it's philosophical, you know. It's a state, it's a kind of guy who says, well, hit me on the chin, it doesn't make any difference. I've still got my brains, you know, we can't beat him anyway.

You could say, well, I don't think it's philosophical. It's theoretical, he hasn't tried it out. Or, if you like, you could say even it's theological.

Or, if you want to come down to it, you might even get down to the first word you say to yourself, at least, well, I think it is, it's practical. Because this isn't some youngster going into war again. It isn't a man that sat

down and started to build a tower and wasn't able to finish it.

It isn't a statement of an unbalanced super optimist. It's an expression of experience. Because elsewhere, he uses the same meaning when he says, I can do all things.

You won't hear much about this, usually. We're so blessed with gifts and other things, we keep bringing the changes, but get off them for a minute. How is it working out in your life? Paul says, I can do all things, not some things.

All things. We are more than conquered through him that loved us. He uses the same word in 1 Corinthians 13, and it's a pretty rough word there, you know.

When he comes to think of that word, it's a difficult word. But he says, what did he say? He says that this love bared us all things, and it believed us all things, and it helped us all things, and it endured us all things. Now, that's pretty comprehensive.

Covers the whole of life, doesn't it? In other words, Paul's saying there isn't a thing that can come into your life on any given level, physical, mental, spiritual. Because if you sort the things out at the end of Roman race, you'll discover he's not talking about things you can see. He's talking about, always, he's talking about things you can't see.

What's so special about it? Child tribulation. Well, tribulation could be physical, but it can be mental, too. Distress could be physical, it could be mental, too.

Imperils of the soul. He can't put a sword through my spirit, but he can put a sword through my body, so I could be suffering physically. This man's trials are not on this level at all.

This man's trials are on a different level entirely. Because as the word of God says, the more money you get, the more possessions you get, all you do is increase your headache. If you owned all the houses on this floor, I don't know what a bed of babies does, I'm not going to ask, but supposing he owns all the houses from here to the end of the street, and suddenly they say, well, there's going to be a tornado, and it's coming right down that street.

Now, if he owns 50 houses, he's got 50 times more worries than if he owns one house, hasn't he? It's been blowing lots of law deals away. I remember once a tornado came up when we were up the other side of Chicago at Rockford, and it happened to hit a Chrysler plant. Well, I think the best way to hit it is, it's going to hit anybody, it's better than hitting four houses.

But you know, it picked those cars up, and it took them right across the road, the tracks, and then found documents out of the briefcase, and it's 20 miles away. It picked us up, and boy, there's a lot of searching for such a thing, you know. Now, some people didn't bother to say, well, I don't own the house anyhow.

This old boy, now he's going to send for the plumbing and do a few things he wouldn't do. He's going to have to rebuild the house, so the whole thing's going to be good. But you see, there are levels of things you can get to some people on, you can't get to other people on.

And it's no good saying, well, oh, but I go, oh, that doesn't bother me. Well, maybe the thing that's getting you down doesn't bother him either. You see, there are temptations and fires and distresses.

A temptation in itself is a big, big, vast area that I'm not going to even get into tonight. All right? Paul, then, in Romans 7, he's got a dark, bleak chapter. It's bonded.

How does he finish? Remember the illustration he uses at the end? At the end of that chapter, he says what? He says, well, I'm tied up to certain laws. Now, if you go through the chapter, you'll find four or five laws in Romans 7. But in Romans 8, there's another law. In Romans 7, one law, warring in his members.

Remember that chapter 8, a different one. Now, I say that on any level that you come to, even if, supposing we end up in concentration camps, which we could do. I won't doubt that at all.

Supposing we lose, the government gets to a socialistic, a communistic state, and we lose all our independent rights, property ownership, and everything else, which could happen. It's happened in other centuries. Why not here? We're heading up pretty fast anyhow.

The Rockefeller's not a guy who sees the best. Supposing we lose all that, and I say to you, we could be more than constant. Well, it sounds a bit exaggerated, because by the beds we're staying over tonight, we don't really know much about tribulation or despair.

Well, of course, we're not going through the tribulation. Praise God. Oh, I see.

Well, you know, there are two things that, amongst others, people don't like to do. Number one, not many of us embrace suffering. If you're in God's suffering, you don't go.

You don't keep running to the dentist and say, I wish he'd yank his tooth out. He has so long since had a tooth drawn out. I wish he'd pull one out.

Let's put a change, you know. I'd like to know that they say, oh, let's keep going and going. We don't want to lose any teeth.

We don't embrace suffering. If we can have, like, and people don't like the suffering. Secondly, we don't like to die.

And if you have a lap, you get out of both of them. Oh, yeah. You don't have to suffer.

You don't have to die. But there's a reason why we don't. The only thing is, it so happens that hell broke out in China a few years ago.

Ah, roughly 25. And I happen to have met a man whose friend was challenged not so long ago coming through Formosa because when he stopped off to see some Chinese and he greeted them, oh, they said, those men in that factory come from Hunan province, like he used to be. And he went in and greeted them, you know.

He's eloquent and he's Chinese. He's an American, but he speaks Chinese like a native. So he goes to these men working, these little yellow men working away there, ironing and doing other things, and he greeted them and they took notice of him.

So he greeted them again and they took notice of him. So the first time he said, oh, I see now. I see.

Of course, you haven't seen me for 35 years and I've got a bit fatter and I've lost my hair, but I'm your pastor. I'm so-and-so. Hit my head.

Well, I was feeling pretty bad. We made about three approaches. So finally he said, listen, I'm Pastor So-and-so.

And he said the man looked with tears in his eyes and said, not pastor. Not pastor? No. Well, what then? False prophet.

What do you mean a false prophet? I never told you the wrong thing enough? Oh, yes, you did. Oh, he said I used to have a banner and I used to teach the heritage. But the man said, look, you told us? Sure, but you told us the Russians were going to come and invade this country and rape the women and break in the banks and burn the churches and tear our Bibles up.

But just as they come over the border, you're going to be raptured and you're going to see your churches smoking and you're going to see blood in the streets and you're going to see your Bibles being torn up, but the Lord won't let one hair of your dear little head to suffer. You're going to be pulled away and raptured. The man said the only thing that happened was my dear wife was torn out of my arms and my children were thrown in church.

My church was burned and my Bibles were torn up, but there was no rapture. And maybe I mentioned this before, the man in Canada is 70-odd years of age. He went through the Russian Revolution.

And he told me that the fundamentalist pastors were the greater heartaches for the Christians than the Communists were. Because they told him it was coming. They said the Zao will be murdered, the streets will flow with blood, you'll lose all your rights, it's going to become a prison camp.

Antichrist is going to reign and John says to the many antichrists, the only thing is you'll be raptured and you won't see it. But he said I happened to live through the Revolution. You see, very often we see through our American lenses, if I had yellow glasses on tonight everything would be yellow, if I had blue glasses everything would be blue.

And one of the dangers of teaching, and I never tried to do this, God help me, I don't have to brainwash people. You've got a head, you've got a mind, and remember the word of God says that for your own master, your family, your folk, you have to live according to the life that God gives you. Now if you think there's going to be a rapture and you're going to get out, all right, but supposing you miss it and you end up in a concentration camp, and you don't chew at me for one thing, you might be arguing with some other pastor or somebody else and say, well why won't we condition? You see, because God's business isn't just to make us happy, God's business is to make us holy.

The reason I'm saved and from the time I'm saved until I die, God is knocking me into shape, in my judgment, for a position to rule with him in the millennial age and to rule with him in eternity. And we're not all going to be the same. Rule over five cities, rule over ten cities, rule over one city.

Heaven isn't going to be the same for everybody. Some are going to be beaten with many stripes and some with few stripes. But I think I've said this before, let me say it again, that sometimes I think that the sign of God's blessing in the Old Testament is prosperity.

That's what gives of God's blessing in your life, prosperity. But in the New Testament it's adversity. Isn't it strange that the greatest man that ever lived after Jesus, I think the greatest brain was the Apostle Paul, and never once did he desire a material thing.

It says, could you bring my clothes? I'm sure in this jail if you could bring it it would be pretty helpful. But what does he say? He says, I want to fill up the sufferings of Christ. I want to still live like Jesus Christ.

I want to bear burdens in the day. And he says, I've sorrow of heart, I've great sorrow of heart. He talks more about sorrow and anguish and burdens for the lost world.

In fact, in Romans 9 where he says, I could wish myself a curse for my brethren, that doesn't sound like quite jubilation. Now there's no doubt about it, he had joy because he expresses that. But you see, he's not hopping on one leg all the time.

As I said today, you've got two feet. Now it's an economic day and Jews are getting scared for themselves. Why don't you hop on one leg? And when you've worn that shirt, hop on the other, you know.

I mean, you don't have to go around on two legs, that's because everybody else does it. It's a silly habit, nobody knows why we do it. But anyhow, you say, well no, no, we've got two legs, we just keep balance.

Sure. Sure. And this is the whole secret of the spiritual life, keeping balance.

Not shutting that thing out, not taking too much of everything, but by the grace of God, in the spiritual kingdom, keeping a balanced life. All right. Romans then, chapter 7, is darkness and Romans 8 is light.

Romans chapter 7 is a funeral march, Romans chapter 8 is a wedding march. Romans chapter 7, he says, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me? From what? The body of this bed, what's he talking about? You know, there are a hundred and twenty different types of crosses, from the cross on which the Prince of Glory died, as Isaac Ross said, when he wrote it before Wesley's day, he wrote where the young Prince of Glory died. There's a cross like that, we call it the traditional cross.

There's a cross like a letter C, where a man was crucified and his head was knocked back. There's a cross like a letter X, where they stretched a man up, his arms and his legs, and stretched him out. There's a cross which was a tree with just a big copper pipe, and they pushed a man's body on and turned him around and left him hanging at whatever angle he thought that.

But the most cruel death, maybe, of all that the Romans had was to take a man who had murdered a man and hang him to the body that he murdered. They would lay the corpse on the ground, they would lay the man on top of it and tie the living hand to the living hand, the living leg to the dead leg, the trunk to the trunk, the head to the head, then stand him up and say, go on, carry that body. And he carried that dead body.

Now that's the most pernicious, horrible death. Because when he went to sleep at night he could try and find a place where he could at least stretch out, and when he woke up in the morning, he woke up looking into his glassy eyes of a corpse, and before long what happened? The death in that body began to wash his own body. Now that was the most cruel death.

And Paul said, I have in me a body of sin. Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Well, if you read old Scopes, he was the only person that knew everything, of course, apart from the Lord, but if you read Scopes, you'll discover he says, well, a corpse has no way of deliverance. Well, then there may as well be a Mormon, or a Jehovah's Witness, or a Buddhist, they say there is no deliverance from sin.

Because you don't get into trouble when you preach salvation to be saved from sinning, from your sins, it's when you say that you can be saved from sinning. And doesn't it say in Matthew 1.27, after he called his name Jesus, that he should save his people from their sins? You see, sin and righteousness, they mutually exceed each other. If you put light on in this room, the darkness goes out.

If you turn the light off, the darkness comes in. You can't have them both, you have one or the other. Now, of course, you hear people say, I mean, it sounds so holy, doesn't it, to say, oh, well, you know, as good as we are, we are, we're saved and we're through, with the Spirit and the Lord being good to us, but you know, all our righteousness is a filthy rag.

Oh, come on, why don't you read a bit lower down in the chapter? Everybody quotes it as a holy thing to do. But I happened to read a book that you read, called the Bible, and it says in the first essential of John that he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. It's not imparted righteousness, imputed righteousness, nearly, it's imparted righteousness, because to use another analogy, a corrupt tree can't bring forth good fruit.

And a rotten tree can't bring forth good fruit, and a good tree doesn't bring forth bad fruit. Now, well, you say that sounds a bit like sinless perfection. No, no, it's not sinless perfection.

It's not that it's impossible for us to sin, it's possible for us not to sin. Let's go on a minute. He says, well, here I am, I'm in bondage.

Call it the old nature, call it what you like. No, he just says in the next chapter that in all these things, in the body, in the spirit, things present, things to come, he's just taking the devil's head on every day, or you live in a house where he's present. Martha and I often stay in a home that we shared over in the Bahamas, and we've got presents, and we have a couple of yachts, and we have a cook, and we have everything laid out, and we can talk for the day.

I'm not sure I'd like to go live there. But it's very nice, the meals are served up, everything's gorgeous. And, you know, sometimes I look at those folks and they say, oh, I've had such a tiring day today.

Well, they're certainly writing texts all day. I mean, you get, you know, you get very demanding, very tiring. And you eat dinner with a lady who says, oh, my Lord, my Lord, and I thought she was going to die.

I looked at Martha and I said, well, what's wrong? Oh, I just realized, you know, I've given away a quarter of a million dollars in less than a year, and I'm not sure I've given it all wisely. Well, I thought she hadn't because she hadn't given me a dime. You see, if you're really not sincere, you know, it's not very difficult to talk about victory, but whenever you wish to have, I mean, the lady comes in and says, would you like to call me? Which would you like? How shall I do the stakes today? What is your name? Oh, just a minute.

Let me see. Today we have Martha, say what do we have? So Martha writes the menu out. They have a store.

They just go to the store and anything you want. They just ask you to say, would you like fish? Would you like this? Would you like... And I think sometimes, boy, it's a pretty easy life compared to some people I know who are meeting trial and difficulties, a widow that has two or three children, or somebody who's pregnant. There are so many levels on which people live.

Now, it would be easy to say to those people, well, Romans 8, 37 says in all these things we are more than comfort. Right. All right.

He says we have a body of... that keeps him in bondage. Oh, wretched man that I am. I'm treated.

Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Hmm? Well, you see, Mr. Rayfield, if you went down the chapter in Romans 8, verse 8, it says, David, when the flesh cannot please God. There you are, you see. Aha, you see.

Now, that torpedoed your argument, doesn't it? You've got me tied up back there, that little hole in the wall, and I'm so small I can get through it. I'm getting out through here where it says, David, when the flesh cannot please God. Now, just before you go through the hole, would you let me read verse 9? Because it says, here, not in the flesh, but in the spirit.

Now, how do you get on? Hmm? That's all that's going to be saying to me, to these poor people. They're not in the flesh. They're in the spirit.

You say, Mr. Rayfield, what's this I've got? I've got a suit. What's your suit covering? My flesh. Well, then, you're still in the flesh.

No, I'm not. Because there are two different words in the Greek for flesh, past and former. One means this flesh, but the other means a fleshly nature, a lusty nature, a greedy nature, a bitter nature, usually called the carnal nature.

Now, in Romans 13, Paul says, there's a lot of laws he mentions. Let's make him do them. He says, I serve God with the law of my mind, because I realize everything that God says is good, and I share God's view on these things.

But wait a minute. He says, with my body, I serve the law of sin. You say, well, exactly.

It's the law of sin. It's the body's sin. No, no, no.

What did you say? This body of mine, I don't care how sane you are, I don't care if you do more miracles than this human or anybody else. Other things being equal, apart from the law of coming, you're going to pay the same penalty as Adam. Does it say? As in Adam, all die.

And my body is going to serve the law of sin, because the law of sin is death. And my body is going to die unless the Lord comes. Now, it would have been wonderful if we never had to have death, wouldn't it? I suppose it would have been like Enoch, go for a walk.

As the old preacher said, he got so near to heaven, the Lord said, well, Enoch, we've been warned, don't turn back and go. Come in with me. And so maybe that's it.

They walked so close to heaven, he said, come in. But otherwise, I'm going to serve with this body. I'm going to serve the law of death.

But then he has another law warning in his letters, which he calls the old man, the old lie. And he says, I'm bound to it. Like that man, he's bound to that dead, rotten corpse.

I've got a rotten corpse in me. Who shall deliver me? Well, most people say there isn't one. All right.

What does he say in verse 2 of chapter 8? The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. Now, dear brother David, he got away on a plane and came back. We're supposed to go to Europe and I'm supposed to go teach 400 students and I'm not sure whether we're going to go or not.

There's an awful lot involved in it. But one thing, honestly, I hate flying. I don't like flying.

I'm used to the birds. I don't like flying. But, you know, when I do get in a jet and that thing takes off at about 150 miles an hour or 120, something like that, it lands at about 150, 160.

You know, if I was to take, if I had a feather and I just took that feather and threw it up in the air like that, well, these glasses don't weigh much. But if I pull them up, they'll come down. All I have to do is if I say go up, you know, they won't even go up for me.

Isn't it awful? I can't even go up enough. Look, more they come down, see. Well, they don't weigh much.

A fraction of an ounce. A jumbo jet weighs what? 25 tons anything? Shall we say 40 tons full? And that thing goes off the runway and off it goes away. My glasses won't do that, but that monstrous thing that weighs 100,000 times or a million times that, it does.

Why? Well, you know, when a jet's coming down, I sometimes see them coming over our house. We put all the gas on. No, it just comes out.

Why? Because if he comes down and he's going slow, he's fighting a bigger law of gravity that wants to pull him to the ground and not let him go that way, but go that way, you see. So the only thing he can do is put all the power he has on and he puts the thrust and you can feel it in the plane, can't you? It goes like that. And he puts the flaps down.

In other words, he's trying to make that plane come down steady, steady, steady like this. But as far as he goes, gravity pulls and pulls and that's the sickliest part. It's harder than flying it.

It's harder than getting it off the ground. It's to get it down and beat the law of gravity and make it safe. That's where most accidents start.

Why does it do that? Well, you know why it goes through the sky? It has a greater law inside of it than the law of gravity. The law of gravity is pulling that way, but that law is going that way. So what he does, he's put the power on and then he's got steam, but he's not steam, but he puts the power on and it beats the law of gravity.

So Paul says, the law of this world is the law of sin and of death, but I'm made free by the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus which is in me. And while the Holy Spirit of God has control in me, I can if I will. My will must be in it as well, because God never makes anybody slave in the sense that he dominates you like that.

You still have a free will. As I say, you can be as spirit-filled as you like. The Holy Ghost won't lift you out of bed tomorrow morning at four o'clock.

And then he called us, when, dearie, was it Sunday? All our folk call us after midnight. We just freeze all day. If you're going to call us at least call us at eleven o'clock, but I found out why, because you see, the deepest song rate is after eleven until eight the next morning, so all my friends call after eleven.

These people called from Texas the other night and this man is quite a wealthy man, he's a well-to-do man, he writes very godly. In fact, maybe, I don't know, I have more insight than he has, but he says, you know, my wife has been asking certain questions about a certain portion of Scripture and he said, now she's making kind of covenant with the Lord and she gets us every morning at five to pray because this is something she's entered into. Now God didn't mean to do that.

He just decided she was going to spend her time a little more profitably. And I tell you, you see, your day is divided into three eights. Eight hours you work, eight hours you sleep, what do you do with the other eight hours? You're not carrying a second job, what do you do with the other eight hours? On the same basis, you live sixty years, you sleep twenty, you work twenty, what do you do with the other twenty? Now, don't you get the idea that all Christians die happy? They don't.

They don't. What the people are saying, so the spirit dies and there's a blue brink nearly, what? Because they suddenly realize how much time they've wasted, how much money they've wasted, how many opportunities. And when I was a kid, my mother didn't used to sing Mansion Over the Hilltop, she believed it, but it wasn't written.

But she used to sing things like, will there be any stars, any stars in my crown when at evening the sun goes down? When I wait for the blessed in the mansions of rest, will there be any stars? And I'm glad I have a mother that always seemed eternally conscious. She sang things all along that line. Now again, you've got eight hours a day, eight you can sleep, eight you can work, eight you can lay.

Sixty years, twenty you sleep, twenty you work, what do you do with the other twenty? The Holy Spirit isn't going to make you be a saint. Reading the Bible will not make you a saint. You've got to put it into your bloodstream.

You've got to practice it, work it out. You ever think of how many kids that go into Bible school, a school that comes over the last twenty years or twenty-five years that know the Bible and some of them are as godless and indifferent and unconcerned about spiritual things as they could possibly be. You see, your will has to go into it, you have to cooperate with God, because there's certainly a bound line.

The flesh, that is, thinking about natural appetite, clothes, eating, other areas that the body can be in, there's a constant pull, just like that plane is having a constant pull against gravity, but it goes on because there's a greater law in the plane than there is in the law of gravity. Now then, the same with the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. He says, it made me free from the law of sin and of death.

Now, if you went through the chapter, you'll find at least eight different laws in Romans that I'm not going to bother about, but just as I'm just particularly here about these two. The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free, it's loosened me, it's given me power over these other laws that are around about, that did have dominion. But he says, the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free.

The previous verses, there's no condemnation. Well, thank God we're free from condemnation. I think it was Martin Luther, I was thinking of him today, was having, you know, he had such a melancholia.

Have you ever discovered that most of your days of ecstasy are in church on a Sunday? Huh? And your low points are on a Monday when you're not there. Well, if that's true, then you're living on the church, you're not living on the Holy Ghost. Because you ought to be as holy as a washcloth if you don't love washcloth, sorry.

By the electric washer, as my mother was, by the washer when she was a little girl, she would wash me and hang them out to freeze or something else. If I live on atmosphere, then if you take me away from that atmosphere, my Christianity goes loose. But if the law of the spirit of life lives in me, shut me in a prison, I'm as happy as if I'm in church, clapping my hands or singing or seeing somebody new.

I'm living on him, not on the results of him. You see? But Luther was having one of his trips of melancholia and he said, the devil came, you know, if you go to, is it Wittenberg? And they show you there a mark on the wall, a black spot where he picked up his inkwell and threw it at the devil. He saw the devil there and he let go until I missed him.

I wish I'd hit him, but anyhow, I missed him. And there's a mark on the wall. But he says, one day Satan came in and I turned around and he's written right from the roof, the ceiling, down the wall, across the wall and down by the wall, he's written all my sins.

And I watched him and he filled this wall up and then he filled this wall up and then he started writing on the ceiling and he half filled that and he said, I said, eventually, well, what are you doing? Oh, he said, I'm writing all your sins up. I said, a few more to write. He said, well, write them.

Finally, he said, Satan wrote, continued writing for a while and he quit. He said, now what? He said, well, nothing else to write. Oh, there's one thing to write.

No, no, no, no, no. He said, I've written everything. No, you haven't.

Well, he said, what do I write now? He said, you write it all from all, the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, sanctified from all sins. He said, there is, now no condemnation for the sins that I have committed in the past. Now, that doesn't mean I'm going to have an easy time at the judgment seat.

As I said the other day, and I think Todd was right, and you'll see these big boys that you think are big boys and big preachers and famous preachers and famous evangelists, keep your eye on them when we get to the judgment and see how many men who stand erect at the judgment seat of Christ. As Todd has said, I don't think many of us will. He said, there are so many possibilities of grace.

There are so many areas of grace that we could mention here in this chapter. All right, let's come out of Romans 7. Romans 7. You know what Milton wrote? He wrote two classics, didn't he? Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained. Now, ladies, fasten your seatbelts a minute, because I'll tell you something.

He wrote Paradise Lost after he got married, and he wrote Paradise Regained when his wife died. That's just a historical fact, and I don't know why I'm not connecting the two. It's actually factually true, you know, that he said he did that.

So, you know, Romans 7 is really Paradise Lost. Romans 8 is Paradise Regained. He's entered into a full living relationship.

Now, why, why, why, why, why, why is this man so sure about this thing? In all these things we're more than conscious. And, dealing with results. You're not dealing with the origin, the source, the exciting thing is Christ lives within me.

There's nothing greater this side of eternity. Christ lives within me. Now, the Holy Spirit, and I want to stress this, I say it to myself often, so why shouldn't I talk to you as well? But I say this very often to myself, you know, the Holy Spirit is totally incapable of doing anything that's small.

He made the world that we live in. He created Jesus in the matrix of the Virgin Mary. The spirit of heaven that raised up Jesus from the dead.

There's nothing more exciting than that. I know a young man who bought some books of Parker's, and I got an illustration of Parker's not long ago, and I amplified it a bit myself, you see. Hey, as I said to the folks Sunday morning there, if I said to you, when was the first countdown in history, you'd say, now let me see, Kate Canaveral, oh, whoa, just a minute, if you're talking about Kate Canaveral, you've missed it by two thousand years.

The first countdown was the resurrection moment. Satan was smart enough to know that when Jesus went in that tomb, Jesus said, destroy this body, this temple, and if you do, I'll raise it up again, but he spoke of the temple of his body. Now Satan said, if we can keep Jesus Christ there, we can damn every man that's ever yet lived or ever will live.

There's no other way of salvation. Now here's Satan, he goes in and Jesus is lying on a slab, and Satan touches him and he says, he's as cold and dead as that slab. There's only about another hour to keep him there, and if we do, because as I said last week, you're not saved by the death of Christ.

I don't care how much theology you read, we're not saved by the blood of Christ. I don't care how many hymns you sing about it. They're two parts of a whole.

Jesus must do more than die, he's got to rise again from the dead. That's the key, that's the key. Because I live, ye shall live also.

If the tomb could keep Jesus Christ, I couldn't have resurrection life, and resurrection life isn't something I'm going to have when I shuffle off this mortal toilet, Shakespeare said. I should have resurrection life in me now. I'm only going to have the same life in eternity that I have now, minus this body, at least a body that will be changed, likened to his glorious body.

But here's Jesus, he's dead. Satan says, now we've got an hour to go, and he gets a bit restless and he says, we've got ten minutes to go, but I'm not feeling too comfortable, that man Jesus did so many tricks. You know, he could pull another one and I'd be flunked if he did.

Now what can I do? You can see they put Jesus in and they've got a stone over the tomb, and they've got wax over the stone, and they've got seals over the wax, and they've got soldiers over the wax, and over the stone, and over the seals. So he's just about tied up. And Satan says, no, that's not good enough.

I'm going to do something. I know what I'll do. I'll roll all the sin of the world against that stone.

Now he's not going to ship that. All the sins of all the men that ever lived against that stone? No, not even Jesus Christ could do that. He could raise the dead and do things, but he'll never move that.

And then he says now, you know, still I don't feel comfortable. Five more minutes, he's going to settle the thing forever and ever for a million milleniums of time, trillions of years. And this is the crux of it all.

You see, Paul builds a pyramid like that, fourteen epistles if you include Hebrews, and he turns it all over and he balances it like balancing something on a fine point like this. And he said, look, all that Jesus did is virgin birth and his death and his miracles. It all is balanced on this one point, his resurrection.

And if he doesn't rise from the dead, Christianity collapses. All right, so you've got Jesus in the tomb, you've got the stone, you've got the wax, you've got the seals, you've got the soldiers, you've got the sin of the world. There's only one other resource I have now.

Bring every demon in hell. So he shouts down the caverns of hell, every demon in hell, as a matter of the third part of the heavenly host, tell all right now, put your shoulders to that stone and hold it there. Now you've got the stone and you've got the wax and the seal and the soldiers and the sin of the world and every demon in hell against that stone.

And he says now, now this is the most vital period in all human history and I'm going to count. And at the end of that count, either he wins or we do and he goes down 8, 9, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3. And just when he got to 9, the Holy Ghost went in and quickened Jesus because that's what this chapter says. The spirit of heaven raised up Jesus from the dead and out he comes, you see.

And he shattered death. And he not only shattered his tomb, he shattered my tomb because he said, because I live ye shall live also. You remember Jesus went to the tomb and that woman impetuously said, well, you don't care about my brother.

If you did, you'd just come in here and he'd be walking around and he's dead and he stinks. We've been in that cemetery three days. I don't know why.

And Jesus says, well, let's go to the cemetery. What, take some flowers? Well, I just had to see the grave. And when he gets there, he says, roll the stone away.

See, some things God won't do for you if you do it yourself. Roll the stone away. And I often wonder how Jesus said it.

It must have been thrilling. Jesus just stood there and he said, Lazarus. How did he say it like that? Or do you think he bellowed like Gabriel's trumpet? Lazarus, you know.

And he just said, Lazarus. Lazarus got up and walked out. G. Campbell Morgan said he had to say Lazarus because if he'd said come out, the whole cemetery would have come, you see, and it wasn't time for them to come yet.

He just said Lazarus come forth and Lazarus came forth. So you see, when he came forth, he was like a lot of us. He didn't have liberty just because he had life.

He still had grave clothes on him. We've got millions of believers still have grave clothes on them. Loose him and let him go, he said.

Cut the grave clothes off. Then they cut the grave clothes. He's emancipated.

Now, why is this man so confident? I can do all things through Christ, which friends of me. We are more than conquerors through him that love us. Do you know why? Well, first of all, he says in verse 15, we not receive the spirit again of fear, but we receive the spirit of adoption whereby we cry out to our Father.

Isn't that lovely? That should be the first ground of my confidence. I'm a child of God by faith in Jesus. Now look, he goes a bit further and he says, verse 26, emphasizing the spirit.

The spirit helps us out in services. We know not what we should pray for as we are, but the spirit maketh intercession for us. And the next verse, the spirit, because he maketh intercession for us.

And then leap right across to verse 34. Jesus is at the right hand of the Father, who also maketh intercession for us. I love it.

If you were a real Pentecostal, you'd have shouted hallelujah anyhow. But I thought, what more could you have? You have the Holy Ghost making intercession and you have Jesus at the right hand of the Father making intercession for you, whether you're washing dishes or scrubbing the floor or batting the baby or doing a business deal, he's still there living to make intercession. And all you have to do is switch to him in that moment and he's still there.

He's never off duty. You see, they said to those Christians, the epistles of the Hebrews is written to people who are getting a bit shaky and at every rise to be. If you read Eric Thor on the arena of faith and see the background, you see, somebody says to a man, Isaac, you haven't been to the synagogue, I know there's a temple, you haven't been for a few months.

He says, no, I joined the Christians up that back alley there. Oh, come on, come on. Now, you know that Jesus never rose from the dead.

I mean, how come nobody ever saw him except your little gang in that little room, you know? I mean, why didn't he appear to somebody? I mean, it's a private thing. You know it's not true. Now, just a minute, just a minute, Isaac.

You see, there's a high priest going into the temple. Look at his beautiful garment. Now, you know, Isaac, you don't have a temple and you don't have a high priest and you don't have a law and you don't have a prophet and you don't have sacrifice.

Well, you're in bad shape. I mean, isn't it silly going up that back alley talking, you say he hears you and he can't see him. Boy, it's a funny religion.

I could go and get and see him. I like an altar and I like a priest with a garment on. Somebody saw the pope and said, why did he call him father when he dressed him like mother? But why does a priest wear a garment down to his throat? I mean, I'd like to see that.

And he wears a breastplate with the twelve tribes on and one of the tribes is my tribe. It has my name on there. At least my tribal name is there.

And you don't have anything like that, do you? And you don't have anybody like Moses. I mean, Moses, oh boy, he's our great prophet. He gave us the ten commandments and he did this, that and the other.

And the Christian sees he's getting under the weather and he's saying to himself, no, I don't have Moses and we don't have a law and a prophet and we don't have blood and sacrifice and we don't have a priest that goes in every year and that we don't have a high altar and we don't. And they said, hey, wait a minute. Have you said everything? Yeah.

Sure, sure, you don't have a leg to stand on. He said, no, I don't need one. I've got a chair to sit down on.

Let me tell you what my position is. You say that we don't have a priest that goes into the holy place every year. You see, your high priest has to go into the holiest place of all once a year for the sins of one people.

And he has to take blood. And he has to find out whether he's accepted or not. But you see, my high priest, he entered the holy place years ago, once, in his own life.

He doesn't have to do it over and over every year like you do. And you say, you were talking about Moses. But you know, Moses failed.

I mean, he did bring him to the promised land, didn't he? No, no, but he didn't. But Joshua did. Yeah, but that's true.

Joshua brought you into the land, but it says that he couldn't bring you into rest. You know, we lay the evangelist priest on Matthew 11, 28. Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

That's a great text. No, it isn't. That's only half the text.

There's a bridge there you cross to the other half, and then it says, after you've said, come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest, take my yoke upon you, and learn of me. For I am meek and lowly at heart, and ye shall find rest. He's already given you rest.

Oh no, there's another rest. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of the promised land. But they did not enter in.

There's only one thing, which is the opposite of faith, really. They did not enter into the promised land because of one thing. They couldn't believe.

Unbelief is the greatest enemy that we have. It isn't possible. It isn't reasonable.

It isn't rational. And so we start rationalizing and reasoning, and all the time the devil's got us where he wants us. But this man says, well, Moses brought you so far and dropped you.

Joshua brought you so far and couldn't get you through. But you know, Jesus, my Master, my Lord, he not only brought me out of Egypt into the promised land, but he's brought me into rest. You say that we don't have a temple.

But we do. He says, where is it? He says, you're looking at it. What do you mean, you're looking at it? He says, well, I'm the temple of God.

I'm the temple of God. A church, people say, you go to church. How can you go to church when you are the church? To them, the church is stained glass windows and the steeple.

That, no, they call it the church house, if you like, but that's not the church. The church is his body. The church is this redeemed company that he's purchased with his own blood, and he's come to enjoy by his spirit.

Now, do you wonder that this man says, well, after all, I'm sure living in the area of victory, because there's no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, I'm protected in justification by his death. Therefore, I'm more than conqueror over my past sins. He's a propitiation for my sins.

The resurrection is a proof of the fact we have an advocate with the Father. Now, if I'm safe in justification, I'm safe in representation, because he's living at the right hand. And on top of that, it says that Jesus lived to make intercession.

So I'm safeguarded by his ascension as well. I'm justification and ascension through Jesus, and protection, because he's at the right hand of the Father. Do you wonder that he says I can be more than conqueror through him that loves me? And then I'm safeguarded by intercession.

I was talking once with, well, the editor of Decision called me one day, Dr. Sherwood, Sherwood Worthy, he's with the rest of them in Switzerland tonight. And he said, Len, I want to come and talk to you. So he came to my office and we talked for a few hours.

And in the course of talking, he said something about Billy that he loved very much, and surely Billy's a great guy. And I said, you know, Sherwood, a few years ago I used to think, boy, I wish I didn't have any people praying for me as Billy Graham has. I said, I've just been in Australia, and some ladies, four old ladies came up, and they said, you know, we pray for so many people, the first person we pray for every morning is Dr. Billy Graham.

So I said, well, that's very nice. Sherwood Worth says we estimate that two million people a day pray for Billy Graham. So I said, well, that's wonderful.

But I said, it doesn't bother me a bit. I said, I used to think I'd like that, but it doesn't bother me any more. He said, well, what do you mean? Well, I said, does it say, even in the amplifier, does it say if two million of you will agree that touching anything in my name is to be given to you? No, no, it doesn't say two million.

How many does it say? Two. Well, I said, if I've got two people ready to make intercession, for me, with God, I've got as much of Graham as it is two million, because God isn't on the side of the army, is he? God has always worked in a minority. The Church always has been a minority, and it will be a minority, and I was thinking of Dr., what's his name, Harold Kuhn is presenting one of the papers in Switzerland these nights.

He told me about it a while ago, and I remember he said a while ago what's really stuck in my mind, and I enjoyed it. He said, remember that Christianity wasn't served up to the world on a silver platter. Christianity was born in a sophisticated, totalitarian world.

It was a sophisticated world. Without being ruled, you know, even in those days, you can read history, women went to the celebrity balls in the seats of poplars. Nothing new under heaven.

Oh, yes, yes, I can show you that, I can show you that in print. There's nothing new under heaven. They lived it up.

Christianity was born in a slave system. There were at least six million slaves in the Roman Empire, and maybe the world population wasn't more than twenty million, and there were six million of those twenty million were slaves. The Bible says nothing about slavery except that they were masters.

So Christianity was born in a foreign atmosphere. It was born in a totalitarian, a sophisticated world, a totalitarian world where the Roman Empire had spread, and it's like an octopus, it's underworld, and it's good. And this was a man writing in the middle of that that said, in all these things, we're more than conquerors.

Through him that loved us. I'd like to say this and wind it up. What did he say? I'm afraid that neither death nor life.

Well, maybe we haven't got too many problems about death that we haven't got there yet. But he said neither death nor life. Now this is where the problem comes, isn't it? People say, do you think you could die for the Lord? I thought many times I could die right on the spot.

Living probably was the problem, not dying for him. Many a person could drop down under the log and say, Lord, I'm ready to go. The children drove me up the wall today.

My husband's come home unemployed and he had a wreck with a car. Oh, Lord, could you come tonight and get us all out of this? I mean, that would be the easiest way out. But that doesn't make character, you see.

And so he says that in all these things, whether it's death or life, all principalities, all powers, these mysterious powers up in the heavenlies that we're fighting right over. And this is why Mr. Nixon and these other guys can't win anyhow. Because we've come right up to the end time and these principalities are fighting more fiercely than ever.

And I don't believe it's a political situation we're in, as rotten as Watergate may be. It's a spiritual power that we're up against. It's the last great onslaught of the enemy.

And then he says, nor height, nor death. Hmm? Do you ever get into deep? Oh, yeah, we get into depth. You hear people say, oh, I get into the depths of despair, I get into the depths of doubt.

Well, I don't think there's anything wrong in it. After all, it's old school. And if he decides to put the lights out and let you sit in the schoolroom in the dark, so what? If he decides to withdraw this thing to test you as to whether you love your church, or love a group of people, or love something else more than you love him, he's going to test you somehow to see if your love is because he's generous to you and good to you and kind to you.

I make a safe guess, I've just got this good book here, I'm going to read it, the Gulag Archipelago by Sultan Hinson. An exposure in which he says is about, what, 600 pages? I don't think I'll read them all tonight, my wife will say it's too late. But I'll get into it.

Sultan Hinson says that right now, the condition of people in Russia is worse than under the Tsars. And that's why I've written this book and that's why they've kicked him out of the country. Maybe your opposite number, my opposite number in Russia tonight, I'm going to shirt through his back, and maybe all he's had is a bag of bread today and a cup of bean soup and some things that normally you want to give to the pigs, but that's all he's had to live on.

Isn't it amazing how patient God is? I mean, if I were doing God's job, honestly, I think I'd change a few things around. If he'd let me have control for about 12 hours, I think I'd change a few things. Don't you think it must have been a heartbreak at times for Moses to be back on the desert? 40 years? Good heavens, how many tens of thousands of people died in that 40 years? God, why didn't he send me back and let me do the job? They're dying every day.

I got a report today, probably thousands have died. But Moses sat on the backside of the desert, and God let the people die by the thousands, and he didn't hurry up. You know? It's a strange thing, what things

God does.

And what about when he takes you into the area where it is dark? You know, I love to think of where it says, nor height, nor depth, not any other creature, all those depths. Do you ever say, Lord, take me in the dark just to prove yourself to me? No, I like to walk on the sunny side. I like to walk in the garden with the flowers, and I like to reach for this, and I like people, I like meetings.

Boy, I can't get to it. Say, George, are you going tonight? And I'm always glad when he says, no, I'm too tired. Boy, I don't wait for the meeting.

Well, that's all right, nothing wrong with it, but if you forget the meeting to get your back into condition, then you can't be living on him. You're living on meetings. And if the meetings go, some of our faith might be shattered.

Look, here, let me put it, I like to put it this way. Here's Joseph, he lives up here. His father sends him to Dothan to his brothers.

When he gets to Dothan, they put him down in a pit. They pull him out of the pit, take him down into Egypt. He gets into prison.

He goes into Egypt, and they put him in prison. He gets in prison. The bottom falls out.

He prays for a couple of guys. They both get out of prison, and God leads him in. He's only 17, and he didn't come out until he was 30.

You see, Jesus didn't minister until he was 30. John Baptist didn't minister until he was 30. Joseph didn't do anything until he was 30.

Joshua didn't do anything until he was 30. A priest in the Old Testament couldn't minister until he was 30. It worked that out.

But here he is, he's in prison. Down, down, down. Lord, he doesn't let me stop it.

No, just one more stop. Stop it. No, I decide to let you go a bit further.

Well, this is the bottom. No, no, a bit further still. Well, Lord, oh Lord, there's nobody around here.

I mean, there's only a couple of wicked men here in the Old Testament. That's all right. And then he's left for 13 years.

But then he starts going up and up and up and up until he gets on a throne where he and the king sit together. Now, we don't mind sitting on the throne, but brother, it's a stripping business with her. Lord, fill me, but the Lord says, well, just a minute.

I'm going to start emptying you before I fill you. Lord, clothe me with your spirit. But he says, before I clothe you, I'll strip you.

Lord, you said you'll give me this and give me the other, but he says, before I give, I subtract. God has some very strange ways of working. It's sure, as the good old book says, that his ways are not our ways, and his thoughts are not our thoughts.

Now, how can you be more than comfortable? Well, let's take just the simple illustration. Take, um, take Daniel going into the den of lions. Boy, it's a nice story, isn't it? I mean, you know, sitting in this nice furniture, it's nice to talk about going to a den of lions.

I enjoy it. But, uh, what about going there? I mean, when they lifted the, uh, the stone off and dangled him on the rope and he goes down into the den of lions. Well, that's a bit rough.

Well, uh, I think when he went into that den of lions, he was a conqueror because he never complained, he never grumbled. I think when he went into the den of lions, all he did was walk around and put his hands and see which had the softest tummy, and he said, well, that's the nerdiest thing I'll get to a beauty rest master down here. So he laid down on the, with his head on the belly of the, uh, lion and he went to sleep.

Now, isn't it strange that he goes into a den of lions, the lord shut the lion's mouth, he goes to sleep, the king goes to his bed, they spray the room, you know, so he'd get no germs, and they sand him with ostrich feathers so he wouldn't get too hot, and the poor king couldn't sleep. He just felt as though his pillow was full of rotten glass and spring had gone in the bed or something, and he gets up and walks around and finally says, let's go back and see Daniel. He goes at two or three in the morning and Daniel hears the rolling of the stone and went, oh, oh, there it is again.

And the king says, Daniel, Daniel, Daniel, is your king ever? He says, well, I'm all right, I'm still alive. Still alive, I've had a lot of business because this is the best sleep I've had for ages, and here you come and disturb me. Now you think the king will be disturbed, Daniel will be disturbed, and the king's sleeping.

But the king's disturbed and Daniel's sleeping. So when they put Daniel in, he's conquered. But when he comes up and they change the law of the state, he's more than conquered.

The three Hebrew children go into the fire. I'm sure if you asked them, would you like to go in the fire, most likely they would have said no. I guess that's what they would have said.

Well, what happened when they got in the fire? Well, all that happened when they got in the fire was the fire burned off them what the world put on them. Because their hands were tied and their feet were tied. And all the fire did was burn the feathers off them.

You see? Sometimes they're going into a circumstance where they're praying, Lord, I want to be more spiritual and I want to be more spiritual. Lord, Lord, please take us away. I can see danger.

And all the Lord was doing was answering prayer. He was going to stoke the fire up so it would be so happy to burn those things off you that are still troubling you. You know, opinions of people and what will they say that you didn't get rid of somewhere.

And the Lord says, I've burned it off this way and I've burned it off that way. Oh Lord, please let me work it out myself. Maybe the pastor knows on Sunday and if I can't, well, I'll write Billy Graham to answer it in this little column.

My answer, you know. Maybe he has an easy way out. Or Peter.

You know, Peter's always talking his head off. And one day he says, Jesus Christ, I want to borrow your boat. I only let him have it without saying a word.

That was unusual for Peter. He's always an answer. So he borrowed the boat.

He says, all right, Jesus, you want my boat? Take it. Now, in my judgment, when Peter let Jesus have that boat without saying a word, he was a conqueror. But when the boat came back filled with fishes to the rim and over it, I think he was more than a conqueror.

Or a stupid example is that Jesus goes to the cross and he's led as a lamb before the shepherd is done. I'm going to write an article one day. I've got a title.

I often get titles before I write an article. I'm going to write an article one day on the perennial challenge to the believer. The perennial challenge.

The challenge that never changes down the ages. You know what it is? Come down from the cross and save thyself. I mean, you made a consecration, but you know that preacher got you all worked up.

And he scared you to death and made you believe you'd go to hell if you died with \$10 in the bank. Now you've got a hundred times more than you already have. And the Lord didn't really mean that.

Now I know you can be worked on. There's no question about it. And that's why I would never ask people to make a commitment in a meeting.

I'd say, you go home and pray about it. In fact, the greatest evangelists I've known don't even make articles. You talk about being New Testament, there's no article in the New Testament.

Where is the one? There But Jesus, when they said come down from the cross and save yourself, he could have done it all right. Again, God's ways aren't our ways. As I said to some people that I know that fill their pockets with facts every morning and go into work, they're saying to you they're going to die on the cross.

The first thing they do is fill their pockets with facts and they throw them from the cross and they shout to the thieves. And I decided, Jesus, let them both go to hell. He didn't testify to either of them, did he? He didn't say a word to them.

A rich young ruler came to him, said he's the richest man of us. Ran. In the middle of the day, which nobody does.

Shows how earnest he was. Nobody runs in the middle of the day in the east. They walk slow.

In fact, they don't go out ever since yesterday. But this young man is so earnest, he comes to Jesus and says, Jesus, let's go on your house. And the young man went away with his head down and Jesus never ran after him.

He went on after him and said, when do you think you're going to go again? Come here, come here, I want you to talk with me a little while about this. You didn't understand what I said, did you? Jesus didn't do that. Just left him.

Did he? But again, the challenge is come down from the cross and save yourself. You know, I mean, you have the, you've been filled with the Spirit. But, I mean, you know, they've scorned you in the office already.

Now don't tell me you've been in a meeting the other night where you were filled with the Spirit and somebody spoke in tongues. I didn't speak in tongues. We were all walking around and beating our tambourines and having a get-together.

That's, that's silly. Because they'll go Saturday night and do this, you know, like they do on TV. I don't know why they call it dancing.

We had a girl in our street that did that 50 years ago and they called it some vltus dance. I took her to an institution. But, you know, when I turn the knob and I see, you know, you never see those kids smiling, hardly ever.

Have you noticed that? On slow train or something, I turn it on and just, just to see sometimes. And you see, oh, there's that, there's that, there's that. And you never see them smiling.

Are you doing it, darling, too? Well, uh, but you see, the thing is save yourself. Don't go out on a limb. I mean, don't tell the in-laws what's happening in your life.

Don't, save yourself, save yourself. We're always trying to save ourselves. And that, that's the challenge.

You know, God told you to live on less money and give some permission. God told you to change your job. God told you to do this.

It looked great in the flesh and excitement of the thing. And you knew it was in the Lord. And I'm not saying it wasn't.

But the challenge is going to come before long down the road. Modify it a bit. I mean, put it in better language.

Be very careful how you present it. And, uh, you know, save yourself. Save yourself from scorn.

Save yourself from humiliation. Save yourself. You're back where you started.

After all, the problem of sin in the Garden of Eden, as far as I know, Adam didn't beat his wife up. Maybe he didn't, didn't mention it, but I don't think he did. And he didn't get drunk.

And he didn't steal anything, in one sense. The first rebellion in the world was when Adam said, I'm going to run my life and not, not make God run it. And sometimes people in church get away with it because we're preachers or they're all prodigal sons and they're not.

I know some people who have more morals and ethics than lots of Christians and not even say. You see, God's first argument with a man is not that he's bad. God's first argument with a man is dead, in trespasses and in sin.

And Jesus didn't come into the world to make bad men good. He came into the world to make dead men live. It doesn't matter if you have a degree a yard long outside of Jesus, a man is as dead and as damned as those guys who are being punished with the way out of prison.

And we look on people sometimes and we argue with them as though this was Chalmers' problem in Scotland. Chalmers preached on the Ten Commandments for about, I don't know, for about two years and he thundered the laws of God and the people sat there like dummies. And at the end of about two years

preaching on the Ten Commandments he realized that maybe the Scottish people are the most moral people in the world.

There wasn't adultery, there was hardly a liar in the place, they weren't thieves, they weren't anything else. He missed the whole thing. God's problem is not that men are bad first.

God's problem is that men are dead. The first thing that was committed by Adam was, I'm going to run my life my way, not God's way. Why did Satan get kicked out of heaven and steal a slab of gold off men's feet as far as I know? He got kicked out of heaven because he said, I'm going to run my life my way, not God's way.

And the finish there, and I'll finish with this, the finish there, until you touch a man's selfishness you haven't got far with him. Any man that's sensible wants his lousy sins forgiven. When you say Jesus Christ, you can't have Jesus as your Savior.

We say, well you take Jesus as your Savior. That's not New Testament. The New Testament is our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

It's about 475 times, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We've divorced the one from the other. We say to people, well you take him as your Savior.

Then a bit later we ask them, say, is he your Lord? Or you should take him as your Lord. You can't really have Jesus Christ without him being your Lord and your Savior. He doesn't want your lousy sins.

What are you going to do with them? I remember an Irishman, a whippy old boy, and he went to a meeting one night. The next night he sees old Mickey coming down the road. So Mickey, he says, hi Mickey.

And he says, hi Paddy, sure, now it's a great morning. He says, hi, top of the morning to you. He says, I was down at Mission Hall last night.

You were? What does it mean? Ah, it was the greatest meeting. He said, you know, I gave the Lord my pipe. He said, you what? He said, I gave the Lord my pipe.

Ah, he said he doesn't smoke. Well, you know what he meant? In other words, you can take Jesus as your Savior, but not as your Lord. You can't.

You can't. He doesn't want our rotten sins. He wants me.

He wants me. He wants my ego, if you like. Myself.

Me. So he can live and reign in me. He doesn't want to take me to heaven.

That's a friendly benefit. He wants to rule in my life now. We say thy kingdom come.

What do you think about thy kingdom come? What does that mean? Ah, go to bed at night in a millennial age. That's not it. It means thy kingdom come in my life now.

I ought to live on earth as I have already in heaven. That's what Paul says. We are a colony of heaven.

Our citizenship is in heaven. We're a colony of heaven. And as I said last week, it's like living in the American Embassy in England and you go at Thanksgiving, the rest of the English are going on, but in the

Embassy they have the stars and stripes and the big eagle that they have in Turkey and everything else.

The English aren't having anything like that because they don't celebrate Thanksgiving. Well, by the same token, it should be that in the house of God, the house of God ought to be the nearest place to heaven on earth, unless it is your house. Unless it is your house.

My home ought to be a little bit of heaven. My church ought to be a little bit of heaven. My life, I ought to be living now in that relationship with Jesus Christ.

I think of it today. I ought to live every day so that if the thread of life snaps, I could walk right into the presence of Jesus without being embarrassed. Isn't that it? But if life stops like that, I'll walk right up and I'm not going to bloody, bloody him.

There's going to be none of this floppy, silly talk, you know, from his beautiful throne forget it. That's not true. That's the poet's imagination.

That's hymnology, not theology. We want serious, serious, serious difficulty before we get any crowns and any rewards and any royal garments and anything else. One thing is this, we're going to have to stand at the judgment seat of Christ and get it all straightened out.

There's no condemnation for the past sins that I've committed, but from the moment I became Jesus Christ, if I'm really his, I don't only give him my rotten sins, I give him myself, I give him my life, I give him my pocketbook, I give him everything I have. It's his, not mine. And if so be the spirit of God dwells in us like that, then Paul says that we can be more than conquered through him, because as we've read three times, that he dwells in us.

And I don't have to live a victorious life, he lives a victorious life through me. And when I take my hands off myself, he'll do the guiding, he'll do the stopping. He'll say you can go ahead, he'll say hold back.

And my spirit, since I am a spirit, is in communion with his spirit, and most of his spirit will bear witness with my spirit. Not only am I a child of God, but whether I'm to go or whether I'm to stay, that's what you find out working in the life again of the apostle Paul. So we get out of Romans 7 with its bondage and get into Romans 8 with its liberty.

Romans 7 with its slavery, and Romans 8 really with its sovereignty. Romans 7, paradise lost, and Romans 8, paradise regained. Because the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus is indwelling us now.

And it's a whole new ballgame, as you say. Romans 7, self-centred, Romans 8, Christ-centred. Romans 7, I'm in the middle, he's on the outside, Romans 8, he's in the centre, and I'm weighing the circumference.

We're more than conquerors through him that loveth. And while ever we stay in that place of submission and obey him day by day, we live on the victory side. Immediately we step out of that, we step out into defeat.

We start to turn back to bondage, and that's we quickly repent and tell the Lord we're sorry and say, Lord, this day. As you were saying a little earlier tonight, you read the Acts of the Apostles, they have constant replenishing, constant refilling, constant renewing. You see, there is a case, I keep saying I'll stop, and people say to me, well, you said finally, and you went on a good while.

I said, well, Paul said finally, and he wrote three chapters after that, so I'm in good company when I say that. But you know, Romans 12, 1 and 2 says what? I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, we present your bodies a living sacrifice. And these Greeks, as we'll tell you, that word present is in the Aorist tense.

It means something you do once and for all. So I say, if I go, David was away last week. When he came back, he didn't get married to his wife again.

I don't know if that's a relief, but when he goes to the wedding ceremony, when he comes back, he may embrace her, give her a hug and say, my darling, I've missed you, and so forth. But he doesn't get married again. Now, by the same token, if I'm related to Jesus Christ, in that sense, Romans 12, 1 and 2, you present your body.

When I preached on that one, a man came to me and said, look, I do that every morning. He said, don't you? I said, no. Why not? Well, look, if I put my Bible on there and I said, look, that's my body, and this table is, I presented my body, that's my body, I give it to the Lord Jesus.

There's only one way I can give it back to him tomorrow, that's I've taken it off in between. If I put it there and I leave it there, I presented it once and for all to him as a living sacrifice, and he manipulates it and he manages it and he does what he wants with it. Now, if I take it off and self gets in and I start running my own way, I'm going to have to come back and renew that vow and hand it back to him and say, Lord, I'm sorry, I got under self-control again, and I've grieved you, grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, and I'm sorry, and I get back into that relationship again.

And this is why we have our ins and outs, because self gets in and injects what it wants to do and it thinks and somebody else thinks, and before long I get off the fine balance of walking in the Spirit. And it's easy to do, because the Spirit is so gentle. He's a dove, he's not an eagle, he's a dove.

He symbolizes a dove. A dove has no gallbladder. A dove only marries once.

A dove has nine feathers on that wing and he's got nine main feathers on this. And there are nine gifts of the Spirit and there are nine fruits of the Spirit. And even in an energy crisis, doves don't try and get off the ground clapping one wing, you know, or they'd be in a mess, they'd never make it.

They clap them both and get off, but some people always clap one wing, gift, gift, gift of the Spirit. Some people tuck that in and don't talk about it, it's fruit, fruit, fruit of the Spirit. But if you get fruits and gifts going, you're going to make it, you know, you get someplace.

But the old energy wants to get us off kilter and do it by somebody's preaching, if you're not, never through mine of course, but if you're not careful, isn't that right? You will. Somebody will come out, oh it's all this, it's all this, it's all this, we've got past that. I'm always suspicious when people say I've got past that.

Now we should get past childishness for sure. But you see, this is an area, and of course don't mention this, but this has been revealed to us, you know, just to us. But you'd better go back and see what, every time when I do get some literature, you'll be amazed what I get, most of it goes on file 13, you know, that round file.

It's mostly something that's been revealed to us, I mean what I do, I go right to the teacher where he says the Scripture is of no private interpretation. If it's something that we've got, we've printed it this way and it's

only ours, well forget it, it's not genuine anyhow. That's the way you get papacy and that's the way you get these fellows that want to lob it over us.

And this is why I like a meeting of this kind and maybe one night instead of talking we'll just let you ask questions and exchange views and let Jim and any of you make contributions because no man has a monopoly of wisdom. You see, you may know a lot of things I don't know. The Lord has revealed this to you that he hasn't yet revealed to me and so you can make a contribution to my faith as I try and make them to yours.

This is why we build up each other in our most holy faith. And it's a long process. And it's a slow process.

And I remind you again it's a quiet process. My wife keeps talking in the window at night when we go to bed and that we must have more bullfrogs and birds and things around our house. They sing and yell till 2 or 3 o'clock, the most crazy things in the world.

But you know, I often see when I look at those trees, there's about 250 I think, and our lot is about 2 acres. And I look at those big thick trees and you know they grow. And sometimes when the wind blows you hear a branch cracking and go like that.

But you know I'm glad, as I said the other day, I'm glad that when things are growing they don't make any noise. I never get to sleep at night. If 200 trees groaned every time they're growing, brother it would be horrible.

You know, growth is very beautiful, it makes no noise. That light doesn't make a single noise tonight. And if you let your light shine it, you won't have to make any noise.

If you're groaning, people will sleep without making any noise. When is the sun doesn't blast at something and say, you know how much bigger I am in the spirit since I was last here or when I joined this church. You get off your rocket a bit, you know.

If a lady's got perfume on, I don't have it, you don't have to tell me she's got perfume on. And if some people haven't, you don't need to tell me, but by the same token. There are some things so self-evident, and you know, there is nothing more lovely than a holy light.

A life in spiritual health, a life in spiritual strength, a life with spiritualism is the most beautiful thing on earth. Because it's exactly what Jesus came to do, to restore in us and give us more even than Adam ever had. And it's a good thing to look at the end of the day and just check up, have I been more than comfortable? If I haven't, let me not make a note of where I failed and safeguard myself against it next time and plead for strength and grace to overcome that thing next time.

As somebody said, perfection is made up of trifles, but perfection itself is not trifles. And so God will keep adding and adjusting and manipulating and one day inside the pearly gates we'll understand it all and we'll see what happens.

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