

**Romans Study**  
**Session 13 - Romans 8:12-27**

In the last session we saw some of the grandeur of grace as it pertains to the life of a believer and the mountain top of that vision was that there is no condemnation from God to those who have placed their faith in His Son, Jesus Christ, for salvation. The essential mark of salvation was seen towards the end of that passage when we are told that a person belongs to God when the Holy Spirit indwells them. Without the Holy Spirit's presence in a person's life, that person is still lost but once the Spirit takes up residence in person's life, that person is forever changed. It is the Spirit who gives genuine life to those who come to Jesus for salvation and He is the seal that God not only owns us but that He will also keep us safe for eternity despite what this life throws at us.

Now as we progress, Paul moves forward with the activity of the Spirit in the life of a believer. Since we have the assurance of total acceptance by God attested to by the fact that we as believers will face no condemnation, we can live lives of assurance and hope brought about by the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. In fact, Paul is going to detail three specific ministries that the Holy Spirit performs on behalf of all believers. These three ministries are essential to a Christian living the abundant life which God desires all to experience (John 10:10).

The three ministries of the Holy Spirit which are mentioned in our passage are: mortification, attestation and intercession.

The question arises after the first 11 verses as to what is our responsibility in response to all God did on our behalf? These first two verses emphasize human responsibility but what we see is that it is only through the Holy Spirit that any believer can hope to accomplish these obligations. Thus, cooperation with the Spirit is essential as rote determination of the human will cannot see this through to the end.

**[Romans 8:12-13]**

Q: According to vv. 12-13 what is our obligation after justification? *(It isn't put in positive terms at first but negative - we are NOT to live according to the flesh - thus positively we are to live according to the Spirit.)*

Q: What is the result of living in the flesh? *(v.13 - death)*

Q: What does living in the Spirit accomplish? *(v.13 - it puts to death the deeds of the body)*

This is the ministry of mortification. Mortification means to make something dead. In this case only by the indwelling Holy Spirit can a believer put the death the works of the flesh. We are not able to do this on our own.

**[Romans 6:11-14]** - This passage and 8:12-13 are saying basically the same thing. They both describe mortification. What is interesting is the Paul gives this statement in chapter 6 which is the desired process and outcome of mortification before he gives the how it has to be accomplished in chapter 8. Chapter 6 is the picture of the ideal whereas 8 is the roadmap of how

to get there.

Q: What difference do you see between the two passages? *(The Romans 8 passage describes how to do it - through the power of the Spirit whereas the passage in chapter 6 just relates what it ought to look like when done. Listen as there may be more differences seen by participants.)*

The negative side of mortification is that we put the deeds of the flesh to death. The positive side - what we are to actively do in order to make this happen - is that we preoccupy ourselves so much with Christ that there is no room in our lives (minds or hearts) for the flesh.

Q: According to v.13, what is the outcome or result of mortification? *(life is the result of living in the Spirit)*

This is why a Christian cannot do this himself. It is the activity of the Holy Spirit pouring the life of Christ into us and filling us so that instead of being preoccupied by self and the world we are preoccupied with Christ. Life in the Spirit is living on a different plane of existence than living in the flesh. Instead of being tied to the world we are voluntarily choosing to live with our minds on the things above which is empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Q: What does it look like to be preoccupied with Christ? *(This is the process-side of sanctification. Living out and enjoying the fruits of the Spirit, seeking the Spirit's leadership in every facet of life, expecting God's hand to be present in times of trouble, etc. Lots of different responses.)*

Paul then moves on to the second ministry of the Holy Spirit on the behalf of believers. This is the ministry of attestation - or proving our status as "belonging to God."

### **[Romans 8:14-17]**

The Holy Spirit confirms the new identity of believers as sons of God. In order to be successful against the flesh, one needs to be assured that he has been claimed by God and equipped with His infinite resources. It is not only possible to know that you are saved, God wants those who are saved to know it and rest in that fact.

### **[I John 5:13]**

It is important to differentiate the ways in which the New Testament uses the phrases "sons of God", "children of God" and "Son of God". In the book of John, the only person referred to as a son of God is the Lord Jesus. He alone has a unique place as the only begotten of God and God the Son. However, the other New Testament authors use the phrase "son of God" to refer to believers. As we see in this passage, Paul also used the phrase "children of God" and "son of God" interchangeably. However, it is important to note that these phrases only apply to those who are born-again believers. Paul uses (Acts 17:28) the term "offspring of God" (or "children of God" in some translations). The key is that phrase is being used as a general term for all humanity. It is accurate to say that people are God's offspring in the sense that He created

us and gave us life. It is not accurate to call just anyone a child of God or son of God who does not have the Spirit of God indwelling them. These are special terms used for those who are born again and led by the Spirit. It's interesting that Paul uses both terms in this passage as the "children of God" emphasizes the family relationship while "son of God" emphasizes the legal standing of a child.

Q: What have believers not received according to v.15? *(a spirit of slavery leading to fear)*

Q: According to our passage in Romans 7, what were Christians previously bound to? *(the law)*

Q: In what way did the law lead to inspiring fear in humans? *(It pointed out our faults and shortcomings and transgressions. With those laid bare, it condemned us to judgment so we lived fearful of God and His eventual wrath being poured upon us.)*

So one way in which the Spirit makes our salvation known to us is that we will enjoy a freedom from the fear of condemnation and wrath from God. There is no longer a fear what comes after death as there is no fear of eternal condemnation.

### **[Galatians 5:16-18]**

In Romans, there have been two shepherds presented. The law was the first shepherd over our souls. Its purpose was to lead us to Christ. It had no power to save us but this first shepherd pointed us to our need for Christ and led us to Him and His saving power. However, once we accepted the grace of God, the Law hands us off to our new shepherd, Jesus Christ, the Great Shepherd, who guides us, through the power of His Holy Spirit, into the truth and empowers us to live the life of Christ. Notice that the leadership of the Spirit does not involve a new type of bondage. Since the Law led to sin, sin seduced us into bondage to itself so that we found it to eventually be a taskmaster leading us by fear. Yet the Spirit persuades us without manipulation or dark motives. We are led by the Spirit, not enslaved to the Spirit. This is because we are now a part of God's family. We belong to God Himself.

Q: In v.15, what type of spirit are we said to have received? *(a spirit of adoption)*

Q: What does adoption do? *(It brings a child into a family that was previously not a member of that family.)*

In v.15 the word "father" is used twice. These are the same word just in two different languages. "Abba" is Aramaic while "Father" is Greek. Abba is an affectionate way to describe our relationship to our Heavenly Father as the Aramaic word is that used by a young child (like "Papa"). The word "Father" in the Greek is the typical word describing the responsibilities and roles of a father to his family. This double wording is probably done by Paul to imitate Jesus' use of this double wording. The word "cry" means "croak" (like a bird or other animal) and is the deep sound of the heart or raw emotions that have no true corresponding words. This is the Holy Spirit's cry from our hearts to the Heavenly Father - similar to Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. Thus it is the Spirit Himself who is attesting that we belong to God and we

know this through His crying out to Father through us. The spirit of adoption we received is yet one more attestation of belonging to God fully.

**[Galatians 4:4-7]**

It is crucial to understand the nature of this spiritual adoption. It is like justification in that it bestows a certain legal standing that was not held before. Adoption is a pronouncement that is never repeated again. It has permanent validity. This action is grounded in the loving purposes of God towards us and His grace. In Roman society, once a child was adopted, it was a permanent status. The adopted child could not be removed from the family and could not be cut out of any inheritance. This pictures God's great love for us. He loves us so much that He took the step to invite us into His family and share eternity with Him.

Q: In v.16 what does the Spirit do? *(He bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God)*

**[Deuteronomy 17:6]** - Two witnesses were required to prove any point. Here we have two witnesses, the Holy Spirit and our spirits (which were made alive at the moment of our justification), bearing witness that we belong to God and are His children. The word "testify" in v.16 means corroborate by evidence. (We telling the same story as the Holy Spirit.)

V. 17, in the Greek, details to us the extreme level of identification we have with Christ after our salvation. There are three words in this one passage that mean "jointly". In the Greek, the prefix "sun" is added to a word and that word then means "jointly ....." or "together with ...".

1) joint heirs with Christ - we share in the same inheritance as Christ receives from God. He did all the work and we believed on His work and will share in those rewards forever.

2) joint sufferers with Christ - we will experience pain jointly with Him. The things which bring pain to God's heart will bring suffering to our hearts as well.

3) joint glory with Christ - we will be exalted in the company of heaven with other believers.

Q: Trick Question: How much of our salvation depends upon our own works? *(none - it depends entirely upon the completed work of Jesus Christ on our behalf)*

Q: How much assurance do our own actions give us that we are saved? *(none - we did nothing to earn our salvation and it is brought forth in this passage that we are assured of our salvation by what the Spirit has done in us.)*

The reason I bring this up is that there is truly no room for doubting one's salvation. The Spirit is the One who assures us of our standing before the Lord or convicts us of our lack thereof. He calls us to look away from ourselves to our Heavenly Father. This is the "cry" of v.15. It is the cry of an established relationship calling to someone who is known and loved - our Heavenly Father by the Holy Spirit indwelling us. Remember, this section deals the Spirit's ministry of attestation. This is it in practical terms. We know God and He knows us. We belong

to Him and have been adopted into His family and thus can enjoy a love relationship with Him. There is no reason to doubt the existence of this relationship.

Q: Why should our assurance of our salvation never be based upon our own works or actions? *(This is a trap to do so. God's Word is clear that it is the Holy Spirit who attests to our right standing before God and our adoption into His family. To base it upon our own efforts is to take our eyes off Jesus and place them upon ourselves. While we might feel good about ourselves when we are doing well, when we falter or fail, we begin to doubt and that's from the devil and not God. God desires us to know we belong to Him not matter how we act.)*

Q: Think about it. What are some ways in which the Holy Spirit proves to us through these ways that we belong to God's family? *(many answers: that we are concerned about the lost as God is (before our salvation we didn't care about the lost at all as we were lost), that we show concern for other people as God does - in fact we share His perspective on matters of life, we find that our hearts hurt for what brings hurt to God's heart, etc.)*

Before Paul gets to the third and final ministry of the Holy Spirit, he takes a little detour. In this last section Paul brought up one of favorite themes which is the believer sharing in the sufferings of Christ while living this life in the world. The life of a Christian is wrought with suffering, especially as we more closely identify with our Lord Jesus. So, to help believers see the truth about the suffering that will be experienced in this world, he points out how our current sufferings compare to the future glory which is to be revealed. He is going to weigh on the scales the present sufferings to the true and lasting values of Christ. In that light he shows that the sufferings of this life are light compared to the splendor to come. In this section Paul moved beyond just the redeemed to also all of creation.

### **[Romans 8:18-25]**

While we don't know much about the inheritance that we will share with Christ upon His return, we do know that we will be included in the radiance of His glory which is to come. The English had a hard time properly conveying just how excited and anxious believers can be about the coming of the Lord. The words in the Greek are very rich and specific.

In v.19 the phrase "anxious longing" - means to watch eagerly with outstretched head. It's the picture of guy watching his team play in the Superbowl sitting on the edge of his sofa with his head stretched towards the TV. He's holding his breath waiting to see if his team scores on a big play. He's not paying attention to anything other than the game. The word "wait" means to eagerly and fully expect something. It's not waiting to see if something will happen but rather when and how glorious the event will eventually be.

Q: What is creation anxiously awaiting? *(v.19 - for the sons of God to be revealed. See I Thessalonians 5:16-18, I Corinthians 15:50-58 for more on the sons of God being revealed to creation and the entire universe.)*

Creation is being personified here to express the desires of those who await Jesus' return

and the full restoration and salvation it will bring.

Q: What does v.20 say that creation was subjected to? (*futility - uselessness*)

Q: Though this passage doesn't give the direct answer, why was creation subjected to futility? (*due to the sin of Adam and the rest of mankind - See Romans 5:12-21.*)

Q: What does creation hope for according to v.21? (*that it will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the children of God*)

V.22 has two more words that have the meaning of jointly (the "sun" prefix in Greek).

1) groan - to moan jointly - to suffer a common calamity - such as 9-11 for us.

2) suffer - to experience pangs together but it also carries the meaning of sympathizing in the expectation of relief.

Creation is said to be suffering with saved humanity and expecting relief at the same time that God brings it for saved mankind.

Here's the summation of vv. 18-22. God created the world and everything in it and declared it very good. That meant that it was more than capable of doing its job which was to host God's highest creation, man. God gave dominion of creation over to man. Yet, man turned against God and sinned. When this happened, creation fell, too. It suffered the same fate as man in the sense that it no longer worked as it had been designed to work by God. Sin led it to become limited compared to what God designed and created it to be originally. However, creation, being personified here, looks forward to the time of deliverance from this frustration imposed upon it by the fall. The pangs of childbirth anticipate the age of renewal of all creation. **[Matthew 19:28]** - The time of the regeneration - this is the same things mentioned by Jesus.

Q: According to v.23, what are believers said to possess? (*the first fruits of the Spirit*)

The first fruits was a big part of the life of a person who lived under the old covenant. The feast of the first fruits was one of the three major annual celebrations under the law. The theological meaning was that God expected worshipers to acknowledge that everything belonged to Him and every provision for life came from Him (Psalm 24:1). Thus, all the produce that the people grew in their fields, whether it be fruit, vegetables, or grain belonged to God. The religious ritual/offering that went with this belief was that the worshiper was to bring a portion of the first ripe fruit, grain or vegetable to the Temple and offer it up to God. This was an act of faith as it was the only ripe fruit at the time of the offering. Implicit in the offering was the assurance from God that the general, full harvest would follow, the rest of the crop would mature properly and be ready for use. One only gave up the first fruits to God to signify their faith in God as the owner of everything and faith in His goodness to bring bounty in the rest of the crop.

How it applies here is that the gift of the Holy Spirit is given at the inception of the Christian life. It is God's pledge that He will be faithful to bring the process of our salvation to completion - our bodies will be adopted as sons of God, too (*See Philippians 1:6*). Our bodies will be like that of the risen Lord Jesus' body. Our spirits are already adopted into God's family and seated in heaven. Our bodies will follow that same process when Jesus returns.

**[Philippians 3:20-21]** - This describes the work of the Spirit in our glorification.

Q: According to v.24, in what were we saved? (*hope*)

The word “saved” is in the passive voice and aorist tense. This means that our salvation was something done to us (and not of ourselves - passive voice) and that it was completed in the past and the results of that salvation continue on. Our salvation describes a permanent state that never needs to be repeated.

Q: What does hope have to do with our salvation? (*Since we know the end result and state of our lives, hope on this final state is where we need to keep our minds to overcome the suffering we will experience in this life. Remember, this section is dealing with overcoming suffering as we compare it to the glory to come.*)

**[II Corinthians 4:16-18]**

In v.25 the word “perseverance” means cheerful endurance or hopeful patience. The eagerly wait is the same as in v.23. We endure cheerfully at the sufferings in our lives knowing that when we compare them, no matter how bad they are, with the glory to be revealed to us when Jesus returns, we won’t even remember them at all.

Now Paul gets to the third ministry of the Holy Spirit on our behalf. It is the ministry of intercession. It is important to note that this discussion comes on the heels of his discussion of Christian hope.

**[Romans 8:26-27]**

The word “helps” in v.26 means to lend a helping hand together with another at the same time. It is only used twice in the New Testament. The other time is in **Luke 10:40** when Martha pleads with Jesus to tell Mary to give her a helping hand serving all the dinner guests. It is the picture of the Spirit taking hold of us at the exact right time (never late and never early) to help us in our weaknesses. While the weakness could be any weakness of any type, the context brings out that we may have a weakness in our prayer lives.

The word “intercedes” is a picturesque word. It describes the rescue of a person in trouble by another person who just happens upon the one in trouble. It’s running across a person in desperate need quite by accident and taking the initiative to help them out of the mess. It’s like the story of the Good Samaritan and his intercession on behalf of the beaten and robbed man. The Holy Spirit comes upon us in our time of desperate need and acts to bring the relief of God.

Notice that the words of the Spirit are those which are too deep to speak. The word “deep” means unutterable. These are earnest moanings and groanings of our hearts that the Spirit interprets to the Father. Words cannot do the desires and expectations justice. Yet, the Spirit interprets these words to God on our behalf. He’s helping us according to God’s will. So it appears that we often don’t know exactly how to pray. We don’t know our real needs or are unaware of them, yet the Spirit is aware of them as He is God. Since prayers offered in God’s will are answered, the Spirit can lead our prayers so that they are in God’s will and will be

answered in God's time. What is interesting is that nothing is really said about our prayers or how we should pray, just the ministry of the Spirit for us in His prayers. This shows the intimacy of the Holy Spirit in our lives. He wants us to be fully open to and cooperative with Him before our Father so that He can meet our deepest needs.

Q: In what ways can knowing this encourage your prayer life? *(many answers -Being under the influence of the Holy Spirit leads to the elimination of the fear of man. It allows us to not fear when we pray but rather frees us to pray even when we don't know exactly what or how to pray for something. )*

Q: Do you have any questions, comments, rebukes or rebuttals?