

Our Standing in Grace – Living Spiritually

We have been dealing with the gospel (good news) of God concerning His Son, whom he raised from the dead as it is recorded in the epistle to the Romans. We now come to the great 8th chapter of Romans. Before we go there, let's first consider an overview of how this epistle is laid out or structured. After beginning with some personal remarks, the doctrinal section of Romans begins in Romans 1:16 and continues through Romans 8:39. Chapters 9, 10 and 11 could be considered parenthetical as they deal with Israel (the Jews) and with the Gentiles. Jumping over those parenthetical chapters, we read from 8:39 to Romans 12:1. Chapter 12 on into chapter 15 are the practical applications of the doctrinal section. The epistle then closes with some additional personal remarks.

Understanding this overview, it is clear that Romans 8 is not the beginning of the doctrinal section or even a “stand alone” chapter. It is the culmination of what has gone before in the doctrinal section. So we should do a brief review of what has gone before.

The first few chapters of Romans lay out the deplorable state of mankind. Man is separated from God, without righteousness, with no capacity to do good, unable to redeem himself, with only the capacity to do evil. All (both Jew and Gentile) were declared guilty before God. But God sent His son to be the complete payment for redemption so that the righteousness of God could be imputed unto all and upon all (both Jew and Gentile) who would believe.

This righteousness was imputed because of the accomplishments of Jesus Christ alone. Nothing that any man could do would acquire righteousness. The 4th chapter of Romans gives us the example of

Abraham, who had righteousness imputed to him by believing alone. We then learn in chapter 5 that, because we are justified (made righteous), we have peace with God. We see that God's gift of holy spirit is given. We see that we are saved from the wrath to come. All of this is because of what Jesus Christ did. Rather than condemnation, we have righteousness and eternal life. We have a new nature. We are made partakers of the divine nature.

But that new nature, holy spirit, is in a mortal and corruptible body with the old, sinful nature still present. Chapters 6 and 7 deal with this dual nature and how we are to reckon the old nature as dead and reckon ourselves alive unto God through Jesus Christ. We can walk in newness of life and serve in newness of spirit.

This brings us to chapter 8, where the old nature and the new nature will still be in contrast. The old nature is referred to as "the flesh" or "the body" and the new nature is referred to as "the spirit".

Romans 8:1 – 4

We have previously discussed that the phrase "who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit" is not supported by the texts in verse 1, though it is correct in verse 4. The truth of no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus is not dependent upon our walk, our conduct of life, but upon what Christ accomplished. But, having that righteousness evident in our lives is dependent upon our walk, our conduct. This is further explained in the new few verses.

Romans 8:5 – 7

The words translated "mind", "do mind" and "minded" are all from the same word group in Greek. It is the word *phronema*, which refers to the thoughts of the mind. We might better understand them as "to think about".

Romans 8:8 – 11

When something that has already been established as true seems to then be stated as a condition, the word “if” should be understood to mean “since”. Since the spirit of God dwells in you, since Christ is in you, etc.

Romans 8:12 – 14

The flesh, the old nature, did nothing for us. Remember that we previously saw in Romans that there was none that could do good (Romans 3:12), there was none that was righteous (Romans 3:10), that in our flesh there was no good thing (Romans 7:18). When we conduct our lives in harmony with the spirit, the new nature, we will mortify the old nature. Perhaps it would be good to read something from Galatians here.

Galatians 5:16 – 18

You cannot walk by the flesh and walk by the spirit at the same time. So, when you conduct your life in harmony with the spirit of God, you will not be walking by the flesh. It’s really that simple. (But not always easy). Now back to Romans.

Romans 8:15 – 17

Rather than bondage, this new nature is totally liberating. We are sons of God with this new birth spirit. Perhaps the greatest reality of this can be found in speaking in tongues. That is the proof beyond any shadow of doubt that you are a child of God, with a new nature, a partaker of the divine nature.

Romans 8:18 – 25

These verses are an expansion on the truth that we are going to be glorified. Our hope is much more than just the gathering together.

That is only a starting point. And for assurance, we have the “firstfruits of the spirit”, the “earnest of our inheritance”, “Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

Romans 8:26, 27

The word “likewise” refers back to verses 16 and 17. It is describing things that the spirit does.

Romans 8:28 – 30

God’s purpose in calling us was that we would be conformed to the image of His Son. Not just when we are gathered – but right now.

Romans 8:31 – 39

From here, we jump over the parenthetical chapters 9 – 11 that deal with Israel and the Gentiles and go right to chapter 12.

Romans 12:1, 2

God’s desire is that we be conformed to the image of His Son. That transformation takes place by the renewing of our minds. We then can prove, or demonstrate, what is that good, acceptable and perfect will of God. That certainly is good news indeed.