

## St. Paul's Letter to the Romans

Collect for Pentecost- Whitsunday

O GOD, who as at this time didst teach the hearts of thy faithful people, by sending\* to them the light of thy Holy Spirit; Grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort; through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the same Spirit, one God, world without end.

**Amen**

Romans 8:1-13

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, indeed it cannot; and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

But you are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although your bodies are dead because of sin, your spirits are alive because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you. So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh for if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live.

I. The Tone of the Letter Changes –

A. From the darkness of slavery into the light of freedom in the Spirit

B. Liberation is from the Spirit through the Son – Note Trinitarian Theology

1. The new freedom does not mean that slavery to sin has been destroyed

2. Nor does it mean that those who live in Christ are immune to sin or the effects of sin

## II. The Son of God coming into the World

- A. Breaks the grip of sin and death by inaugurating the life in the Spirit
- B. Under the law it is our spirits that failed, now it is with Christ Spirit that we have freedom
- C. The culmination of the coming of the Christ is the Sacrificial Death for us

Note: why is there a crucifix in many manger scenes? Memento Mori

1. Jesus takes upon himself the sin of the world to be an offering for that sin
2. Jesus who knew no sin, still embraced the effect of sin so that we who failed under the Law could be saved
3. The righteousness that the Law required but we could not achieve was given to us a free gift of God

We are saying of course, I know that, but remember that there is at this time no Nicene Creed.

- D. The righteousness that we have received in Christ is not of our own doing, but solely from the effect of his Sacrifice
- E. Paul notes more new theology as he describes life in the Spirit:

“The transforming power of the Holy Spirit to move us from the fleshly existence to the Heavenly realm, while still living according to the flesh” This is Baptismal Theology

## III. The Two Ways – Flesh and Spirit

- A. This teaching is very similar to the teaching of the Qumran Community – body and souls are not separate as the Greek Philosophy taught, but are two possibilities for existence.

The Greeks thought that the body bound the soul and that the soul was only free when the body was gone or tamed through rigid self denial (Stoics). What the Qumran Community taught and Paul is saying is that we are both Body and Soul united and that we live simultaneously as both. This will later influence the understanding of the Resurrected Body in Paul's writing and in Christian Theology.

## B. The Outline of the Argument

1. Vs. 5,6 death and life are destiny of existence
2. Vs. 7,8 – existence in the flesh and the result
3. Vs. 9-11 – The contrast of living in the Spirit

## C. The relationship with God or lack of relationship makes life or death inevitable

D. Paul reminds Christians that while they are in the flesh they are Spirit filled and so living with the Spirit allows them to lead a life that is pleasing to God. The Spirit is the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the Dead See Corinthians 15:42-45

*So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.*

## IV. More Pauline Theology

A. Sin has left an abiding mark on the human person – the legacy of Adam

B. Righteousness is the key to eternal life – man (Adam) is incapable of achieving

C. God's faithfulness is realized in the Son who is obedient unto death and confirmed in the Resurrection

D. Paul evokes Moses in the comments concerning death and life.

*"See, I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you this day, by loving the LORD your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his ordinances, then you shall live and multiply, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you are entering to take possession of it. But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you this day, that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land which you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live,*

*Deuteronomy 30:15-19*

**Is Paul telling us that the Promised Land is not about a specific geography, but a state of being?**

## Romans 8:14-17

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

### I. The Theme of this Section 5-8 is repeated

A. The Hope of Glory is still present even with the sufferings of the present age.

B. In the reality of suffering, believers encounter the Spirit of God

1. Sharing in the Sonship of Christ

2. This way of suffering is linked to the suffering of Christ

C. This adoption of sons is linked to the notion of Israel as a child of God in the Jewish tradition

D. The adoption is a hidden fact, but to believers (Read No Circumcision) but is confirmed in that the Spirit allows them to enjoy this status with the ability to endure the trials of the present age

E. The status as Sons is also reflected in the liturgical practice of addressing God as Father. Abba (Daddy)

### II. Life in the Spirit is further defined

A. We pray with the Spirit – God Spirit testifies to our Spirit

B. This life makes us not just Sons, but inheritors of the promise realized in the Resurrection

C. Final argument – The seed of Abraham (Justified by Faith which is reckoned to him as Righteousness) - adopted Children of God through Jesus, who became of our flesh and now co-heirs with Christ in the Eternal Life of Resurrections, by the power of the Cross

## Romans 8:18-22

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now;

I. The Whole Creation groans for Redemption – This is a starting statement with unprecedented reality in Greek/Roman, Persian, Jewish or other ancient Near Eastern Philosophy

A. But the fact is that it makes perfect sense as a logical progression of what Paul has been saying – Sonship, coinheritors, the relationship with the Creator and the created.

B. Is Paul giving life to the inanimate?

II. The nature of Creation – options- what did Paul mean, using commonly understood terminology?

A. All that God created including man

The problem is that this includes sensate and non-sensate – (man and rocks)

B. All that has been created except believers in Jesus Christ

This would seem to be an option, but for the inclusion of the non-sensate. It does separate those who were already longing for redemption, believers

C. The non-human created world (excludes human construction)

This option also includes the non-sensate, but does exclude the constructions of man, thus puts a division between the God created and the man created

D. The human world as a whole

This would include all human beings but would seem to diminish the power of the thought as other parts of what God created would be beyond the scope of this statement

E. All that has been created including the Angelic Powers and Principalities

Although this statement is expansive it also points to a problem. There is no understanding that the angelic world is subject to corruptions thus would not need redemption. This is not to fail to recognize the fallen angel – that angelic disobedience is not possible, but corruption refers to death and the ultimate demise of body and soul for that we have no reliable information from Scripture.

F. The biblical Answer to the Question:

That the Greek word *Ktisis*, creation refers to the entire creation excluding the angelic realm.

1. The creation accounts in the Old testament would lead to this conclusion

Genesis

2. The wisdom literature of the Old Testament would lead us to understand that fate of the created Order is linked to the fate of the Human Person

That we are given dominion over the created order

3. The understanding in Jewish Apocryphal literature that the end times will be preceded with destruction on a cosmic level and destruction to make way the new creation

The prophets have numerous references to the connection between the final outcome for man and the outcome for the rest of creation

III. The Question of When? When will this redemption take place?

A. With Eager Longing – the sense of the immediate

B. Together – that is at the proper time, Referring to Genesis 3:17 the Fall Paul reminds us that this vindication will be shared as the created order and man will both find their vindication together as they fell together

## Romans 8:23-25

And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

### I. Our Groaning

A. The Spirit is the first fruits of salvation

B. These first fruits also cause us to be restless for the completion

C. Hope is the second fruit, born not of surety that is visible, but a knowledge based on faith

This is Paul's definition of Christian Hope – that belief which is based on not what we can see, but on what we know to be true though faith

## Romans 8:16-30

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. And he who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

### I. The Groaning and Operation of the Spirit

A. This groaning is parallel to the other two groans, creation and ourselves

B. The activity of the Spirit is coming to our aid in our weakness

1. The Spirit searches our hearts (The seat of our identity, our faith)

2. The Spirit knows our true intent even when it is contrary to our actions

3. The Spirit also knows God intent for us and thus what we should be seeking, and praying for

## II. The Summary of the Argument about Hope

A. In Jewish tradition the idea is that those who love God are under His providence

B. The idea that God will work all for the Good of all things could be referring back to the groaning of the whole creation

C. The present reality (suffering) is perceived on a conscious level to be negative, but by faith and in Hope we recognize that for us all things, even the negative will allow God's Perfect Will to be expressed

**Another Theology Note:** the theology of sufferings is in this chapter – the linking of our suffering to the Christ and the fact that what we perceive as suffering is preparation. God wins in the end, His will be done. That nothing will in a real sense be negative for us, suffering or death, because God's Will is the present reality and ground of the experience of believers

## II. The Operation of Christian Hope – the clear sequence

A. The five verbs – to show progression

1. God chose
2. God Preordained
3. God Called
4. God Justified

B. The Greek Verb – *Proegno* – to know before

We note this as Anglican Catholics because this is the basis of our understanding of single, but not double predestination. (Calvin) Knowing is not the same as selecting – the verbs show progression not an absolute process. We believe God does know all things, because God exists in the timeless state. We progress through time, which is part of the created order.

## Romans 8:31-39

What then shall we say to this? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies; who is to condemn? Is it Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, "For thy sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I. The Victory of God - This is the basis of our Hope – faith that God will be victorious

A. The sequence of thought in this section

1. If God is for us – who can be against us
2. No separation for God's Love
  - a. Earthly Trials
  - b. Spiritual Powers

B. We end with a hymn of Praise and are reminded to two things

1. Abraham's Sacrifice of Isaac – God spared Isaac, but not His own Son for us
2. The Sense of belonging to God – See I Corinthians 3:21b-23

*For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future, all are yours; and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's.*