

## IX. The Holy Spirit in Biblical Perspective

### *Led by the Spirit*

“The Holy Spirit’s Witness to the Triumphant Grace of Christ”

Romans 8:28–39

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April 17, 2016 – Morning sermon

This is our final study in Romans 8. Our text for this study will be Romans 8:28–39 but I will start out by reading Romans 8:28–30. This is the Word of God and God’s Word is the truth. Romans 8:28–30 says [28] *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. [29] For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. [30] And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.* The grass withers, the flower fades, God’s Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

In an introduction I always try to find a way to make sure you understand the relevance of the particular text of God’s Word and how it applies to your life. In an NFL game the 2-minute warning is at the end of the game but for a preacher the 2-minute warning is at the beginning of the sermon. You have about two minutes to convince everyone that it is more profitable to listen than to start coloring in the zeroes in your bulletin. So here is how I’d like to start off. If you have never been attacked by Satan or had to deal with guilt, shame or fear then you don’t need this sermon but for anyone who does fall into that category, I am in the greatest text in the Bible. I know some think all preachers say that about the text they are preaching on but for the last seventeen years I’ve been regularly saying that about this text.

If you consider the 66 books of the Bible as great compositions then I would tell you in my opinion while they are all great, I believe the Messiah is the book of Romans. In the book of Romans as the Messiah the great Mount or Mountain of the Himalayas, the hallelujah chorus is Romans 8:28–39 which is my text for this study today. The last time I did a series on this, twenty years ago in Charlotte, North Carolina, it took me fifteen sermons to cover these verses. That ought to be pretty discouraging if you think I’m going to do it in one today but I am because while I’m not going to the depth of this text I’m going to show what this text says about the Holy Spirit’s life of assurance to the believer because that is the context. That will be all I will focus on in this study but perhaps Lord willing I’ll be able to do a series on the book of Romans to do this text justice at that time. I will do it intentional justice today.

Last year our theme was Thy Word is truth and this year it is about the Spirit of God. Those are like two lifelines from the risen Savior. The risen Savior by the Spirit of God has given us His Word and then He gives us the Spirit of God so that we understand His Word. Put no confidence in the flesh for it is the Spirit who gives life; My Words are Spirit and Life. We are looking at the ministry of the Spirit this year and our key verse is Romans 8:14 which says [14] *For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.* We have spent eight studies in this magisterial, regal text of the book of Romans chapter 8 which is devoted to giving you this ministry of the Holy Spirit from the triumphant, supremacy, sovereignty and sufficiency of the risen Christ.

We have learned many things about the ministry of the Holy Spirit from this text but what is the Holy Spirit shouting or whispering or both to your heart as you live for Christ in a

broken world? I want to give you four things in this study based upon a promise from God affirmed by the Holy Spirit from His Word to you. We have learned that the Holy Spirit brought us from death unto life and from condemnation to salvation. We have learned that the Holy Spirit is with us and we're never alone so we should never live as if we're on our own or alone. He will never leave us nor forsake us. We have learned that He has enlisted us in the army of God to fight the enemies of God whom Jesus has already defeated. He has brought us into the family of God so that we are sons of God, titled inheritors of the Kingdom of God in Jesus Christ. We are in a groaning world. The world is groaning, our bodies are groaning and the Holy Spirit is groaning in words too deep to be uttered as He intercedes for us to Jesus, who now intercedes for us. The Holy Spirit whispers to us in the mountain of intimacy and shouts to us in the valley of adversity and suffering whereby we shout 'Abba Father.' In the midst of suffering the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit and we cry out 'Abba Father.'

From this concluding section in Romans 8 I want to give you four assurances from the Holy Spirit to you and it all begins with a promise. The promise that Jesus made and keeps is found in Romans 8:28–30. It is something that we know. Let's look at those verses again. Romans 8:28 says *[28] And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.* Is there anything out from under the sovereign reign and control of King Jesus? No. What about death, sickness, hell and rebellion? Jesus is sovereign over all and at work over all. Jesus is drawing straight lines with crooked sticks everywhere you look. Our God is over all things working them together for good.

That opening statement in Romans 8:28 tells us something. When He takes time to make a promise to us here we automatically know that we're in a world where all things aren't good. He doesn't say all things are good but that things work together for good. You might be thinking but I'm a Christian. Even as a Christian you'll get sick and you'll die if Jesus doesn't come back first. You'll probably go through a loss of a job, loved ones getting sick, disappointments, discouragements and people will fail you. You live in a broken world and a broken body and this is not your best life now. That is why the Holy Spirit doesn't let you get a fascination with this age but you look to the age to come while you live faithfully in this age. While you are living faithfully in this age there is brokenness all around you but God has promised that in all this brokenness He is working all things together for good.

That promise is only for a specific group of people. It is not for everybody. That promise is for believers in Christ. In the Romans 8:28 it says all things work together for those who love God. Who are those who love God? It is those who are called according to His purpose. So those who have heard the Gospel call and by the Spirit of God has said 'no' to sin, 'yes' to Jesus, 'no' to rebellion, 'yes' to surrender, have a promise that all things work together for good. We call it the doctrine of Divine Providence. Our God is orchestrating everything, even that which is against us and our short comings and failures. He is at work and is not hindered by the sins of men and women and the brokenness of this world. He is accomplishing His masterpiece to His glory, working in and through the lives of His people through the victory of Jesus Christ risen into glory.

This glorious truth and promise is for those who He has foreknown. Now some will tell you that this means God in eternity looked down into the annuals of time and said 'Who is going to trust Me as Lord and Savior?' and based on that knowledge He decided to predestine them to be called. That is not what His Word says. It doesn't say what He foresaw but it says whom He foreknew. That is the same word describing marital intimacy. Abraham knew Sarah. In Ephesians it says in love He predestined us to adoption as sons. Out of God's unmerited,

uncaused, unsought love from eternity, God's loving purposes were placed upon you and then He predestines, that is predetermined the orchestration of His creation. Accidents don't happen in this world. God called and appointed things to happen. God works through everything. We serve a glorious God working rationally, emotionally and volitionally through men and women to accomplish His purposes and then working in you so that we have eyes to see and ears to hear that you might come to Christ.

In other words, there is a reason to sing Amazing Grace. It wasn't that I was a pretty good guy and then Jesus got me over the hump. No, we were dead in our sins and our God called us from death unto life. Romans 8:29 says [29] *For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.* He is working all things together for good not so that you can get the good of this world but so that you can get the good of becoming like Jesus. You are becoming conformed to the image of His Son. The Son who saved you from your sins to Himself is now using everything in a broken world by the power of the Holy Spirit at the unstoppable, unbreakable Word of God to frame you, mold you and make you increasingly to be like Him and to transform you to bring you to be with Him. He is doing a glorious work even in the midst of a fallen world, in your life.

Romans 8:30 says [30] *And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.* Do you get the picture here? John 3:16 says For God so loved the world He gave His only begotten Son and when His Son went to Calvary on that hill and saved His people from their sins, His Son now brings many sons to glory. Those who are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God to Christ and to glory. He called these sons from death unto life, from death to the Savior, from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of our God. He hasn't merely forgiven them but He has declared them innocent because in Christ He took away their sins and then from Christ He gave them His perfect righteousness so that they're clothed in His righteousness. They no longer have the sentence of condemnation for now the sentence is justification. They are no longer guilty but innocent. Why? It is because He has removed our sins and given us His righteousness and then those He justified He glorified.

Do you see the five steps here? Foreknowledge – predestined – called – justified – glorified – from eternity past before we ever existed God loved us and God sovereignly decreed all of those things that would bring us from death unto life. Praise His Name! Then God in time calls us to Himself through Jesus. Then He justifies us and makes us right with God and then puts God right within us which is the Holy Spirit. Then He glorifies us from eternity past into time into eternity future. Notice something – not one is lost. Romans 8:30 says [30] *And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.* The same 'whom' you start off with here is the same One that stays with you always into eternity future and Jesus says "Father, I lose not one." This same Savior is not stopped by a broken world. He overcomes everything to redeem His people to make us to be with Him and to be like Him on the way to be with Him. That is the promise you have but you are in a broken world so now what is going to happen?

I want to give you the takeaways from Paul's promise from Divine Providence. Romans 8:31–39 says [31] *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? [32] He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? [33] Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. [34] Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more*

*than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. [35] Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? [36] As it is written,*

*“For your sake we are being killed all the day long;  
we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”*

*[37] No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.*

*[38] For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, [39] 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.*

It just thrills my soul to read this, think on it, and reflect on it. The first takeaway is in Romans 8:31–32 which says *[31] What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? [32] He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?* In other words, whatever you need to stay in Christ, be in Christ and finish with Christ, Christ secures for you. All things necessary to know, love and serve Christ have been secured by Christ and delivered by the Holy Spirit into your life.

It is very important for us to get this ‘who’ thing straight. I wanted you to see the four ‘who’s in the text. Who can be against us? Who will bring a charge against us? Who condemns us? Who can separate us from the love of God? Who is the who here? The who is referred to four times. In a sense there are a lot of who’s. The law condemns and brings charges against me. My conscience condemns and brings charges against me. I have adversaries – the world, the flesh and Satan – who condemn me. Paul knew adversaries for he had them everywhere. There is intimidation threatening separation but very clearly the text is identifying the who behind all of the who’s. You have already identified it.

In Zechariah 3 you couldn’t get a more popular guy than Joshua the High Priest when they had returned from Babylon. Joshua the High Priest was a type of Christ. He stands before the angel of the Lord which is a pre-incarnate statement about Christ in the Old Testament. Here comes the accuser, the condemner, the separator, the one who would bring a charge against him, Satan. He has plenty of resource material but there stands Joshua. His position and prestige can’t save him and in fact he is clothed with filthy garments for he is encumbered with his own sin from his head all the way to his feet. Satan brings the accusations, the condemnation, the declaration of isolation and separation and the answer isn’t ‘Joshua is a pretty good guy.’ The answer is that Joshua stands under condemnation on his own under judgment but the angel of the Lord said ‘take off the vestments and clothe him with My robes of righteousness’ and that’s what Jesus did at the Calvary. Our sins went to Him and He paid for them. We are forgiven. Then His righteousness came from Him to us and so we’re clothed with this. We’re not just pardoned but we’re justified. We’re not just forgiven, we’re innocent because we have the righteousness of Christ that clothes us in Christ. That is His glorious work.

So who is the accuser? Who is the who? It is Satan. He has many cohorts in his company of people who would bring condemnation, charges, accusations and intimidations but he is the one we’re focused upon. He is the one who would bring all of it to you and me and it is this who that we are looking at. Now who can answer him? I have good news and that is Jesus Christ. From Him one little word shall fell him (Satan). Our hope is in Christ. If God be for us who can be against us? God has declared out of grace and love, unmerited, undeniable, unbreakable, relentless love, to love you. I am loved by God by His grace and His mercy. Because of that love who can stand against me if God be for me?

Here is the best illustration I have of this. A little fifth grade boy has to walk to school every day. He has to go by a corner where there is a big bully and that bully has a little business going and it's called taking lunch money from fifth grade boys. Every time the bully is there to take his money and to threaten to beat him up every time. After a while he tries to find another way because he is scared to death but one day this little fifth grade boy has a big brother. That big brother plays for a college football team and plays the position of a left tackle. His big brother is about six foot seven inches tall and weighs about 340 pounds. His big brother is home for vacation and offers to walk him to school that day. Do you think his little brother had any problem walking by that corner that day?

If God be for us...it's not saying that no one is against you and Satan is against you but who is he compared to Him who has defeated him at the cross? Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. So the Holy Spirit is assuring you that Jesus Christ is greater and will deliver you from all of your adversaries. Christ is sufficient to defeat any and all adversaries who come against us and that is assurance number one.

Then the second thing that is said is who will bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Where are the charges to bring against God's elect? There are no charges. Who can bring them? Satan can't bring them because Jesus has removed the charges. The charges against us were placed on Him and He paid for it on the cross. When He drank the last drop to pay for all the sins of all of His people and then said 'it is finished' that means there are no more charges. They are absolutely paid for. So who will bring a charge against God's elect? The second assurance is Christ is sufficient to erase any and all accusations raised against us.

Here is the third assurance which is found in Romans 8:34 that says [34] *Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.* No condemnation can cling to us. The third assurance is Christ is sufficient to eradicate any and all condemnation that is brought against us. When you read the Bible Jesus makes it clear that He went to the cross to pay for our sins. When He cries out on the cross 'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?' it is in that moment that all of hell, and all of the sins for all His people are coming upon Him where He is drinking the cup of God's wrath that He didn't want to have to drink but He has to so He can get to you the cup that is unfathomable of light, then says 'it is finished', put in the ground and has paid for all of our sins.

That's easy to say but how do we know it happened and how do we know it's satisfied? It is the justice of God. He was delivered up because of our transgressions. He was raised for our justification. The resurrection is God's megaphone – payment made! Jesus is not only raised but He ascended and is at the right hand of the Father interceding for you and me. Are you glad for that? I am! Peter was glad for it. Peter says 'Tho everyone else forsake You I'll not forsake You.' Jesus says "Simon, Satan has requested to sift all of you like wheat but I pray for you. You'll deny Me three times before the cock crows but because I pray for you, you will turn and then you will feed the sheep."

Judas was a traitor. Peter was a traitor three times. What is the difference between Judas and Peter? It is Jesus and His intercession. That is why I love the way that text ends. Jesus not only died for my sins, was raised shouting 'victory' but Jesus ascended and right now is interceding for me and that is the only difference between me and Judas. Jesus is sufficient to eradicate any and all condemnation that is brought against us.

This text is so difficult and overwhelmingly comforting to me and powerful in my life. I believe that Paul is not simply being Christologically precise in the supremacy, sufficiency and sovereignty of Christ and Holy Spirit illuminating so that we understand the Spirit's ministry to

us, but he is being so pastoral. How many of us don't feel that condemnation? Perhaps you haven't been the husband or wife you ought to be or that website has captured your affections even in a moment or your thoughts have gone where they should not have gone or you've been self-protecting, self-preserving and self-absorbed. Then Satan comes with adversity and charges.

It's interesting to note that before you were converted Satan never really wanted us to recognize sin with its guilt, shame and fear when we're in rebellion but as soon as we become Christians he loves to bring it up to us. He wants to be the accuser of the brethren but I want you to know the accuser has been thrown down in Jesus Christ. I John 4:4 says *[4] Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.* Jesus Christ has won the victory over your adversary. He has removed the charges, the condemnation and Satan will continually bring them but Paul says your answer is pastoral for it is not 'repent and do better' but 'repent and remember Jesus Christ.' Shouldn't I be doing better? Absolutely but you do better not to get right with God, you do better because Jesus has made you right with God.

That brings me to assurance number four for Satan loves to isolate us. Romans 8:35–39 says *[35] Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? [36] As it is written,*

*“For your sake we are being killed all the day long;  
we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”*

*[37] No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. [38] For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, [39] 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.*

Have Christians ever been stripped of their clothing or persecuted or gone through tribulation or famine or lost everything they owned because of their faithfulness to Jesus Christ? Certainly they have but nothing has happened to them because they were already dead. We are sheep to be led to the slaughter. I have already died to myself that I might live to Christ. I have been crucified with Christ. You can't kill me for I'm dead and it's Christ who lives in me. I am living unto, for, by and in the love of Christ, not to be loved of Christ but because of the love of Christ. That is where and who I am in Christ. I am loved by Him at the cross and for all eternity. So you can't separate me from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

In all these things we are 'hupernikao'. I tried to use that word on my son when he was playing sports in school and wanted a pair of Nike shoes. I told him it was a Greek word for conqueror and in the Bible it has the Greek word 'huper' in front of it which means super. So son 'Jesus has already made you a 'super nike.' I don't need to pay \$65 for this facsimile.' We are already more than conquerors. Notice it doesn't say if you do good you'll be a conqueror but it says by the love of God in Christ we are more than conquerors through Him who has loved us because *I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, 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 have Christ as Victor! In Christ I am more than a conqueror through Him who loves me and has given Himself for me.

The fourth assurance is Christ is sufficient to ensure that there will never be any separation from us. I am glad the Holy Spirit is in you and that His Word is in front of you so that when you leave He can whisper or shout or do both in your life because I know when you leave Satan will attack you.

I am so glad for two professors I had the privilege to learn from in seminary – John Murray and Sinclair Ferguson – and their commentaries on the book of Romans that have so drastically effected my heart and life and moved me forward. I know when Adam fell into the sin the next thing you see in Genesis 3 is fear for they fled from Him because they were afraid. They covered themselves because they were ashamed. Fear, guilt and shame is what sin brings. I beg you today that if you haven't come to Christ please come. I'm not trying to get you to be a member of this church for this church can't save you. I want you to know Jesus Christ for He is the only One that can deal with that fear, guilt and shame.

Even after you become a Christian, in these broken bodies, hearts and lives, Satan still tries to come and resurrect that fear, guilt and shame in you. He wants to paralyze you with fear and immobilize you with guilt and shame. So what do you do? You do what Paul did. Did Paul ever feel inadequate in his service to Jesus Christ? Read Romans 7 when he says the good that I would do I do not do for I find myself doing the very thing I don't want to do. Did Paul have accuser? He had accusers, isolators, intimidators, adversaries, Satan before him, against him and trying to stop him. Even those whom he loved and served had left him for this present world. Paul looked upward and he could see his name written on His Hands. My sinless Savior has died. Who will be against me? Who can condemn me? Who can bring charges against me? The Savior has died for me. I am His and He is mine. Nothing can separate me from the love of God in Christ. So when I repent it is not then second step resolve. I repent by remembering the sinless Savior who died at Calvary, who is risen and who is coming again.

I grew up in a Missionary Christian Alliance Church and our Wednesday youth fellowship always was over before the prayer meeting, so then we'd go outside and play a game. We would play King on the Hill and we would Christianize it. The guys who would go up the hill would select a girl to come up and he would protect her on the hill. That immediately led to others thinking those would eventually get married. Inside they were praying to the King. He went to a hill for you. It was Calvary. He brought you up there as His bride. He defeated all your enemies. He has erased all charges and eradicated all condemnation. Nothing can separate you from the King who died for you.

Amazing love how can it be, that Thou my God would die for me. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Allow the Holy Spirit to speak to your heart right now. If this day you want to know that undeniable, unbreakable, relentless, unmerited love of Christ and flee the emptiness of idolatry in this world then simply say 'Jesus I know that I'm a sinner and that You died for me, You rose and are now interceding so Jesus I come.' I love the hymn, Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to the cross I cling, where You defeated my adversary, erased my condemnation, eradicated my guilt and ensured no divorce, no separation. You have made me more than a conqueror by Your love. If you know this Savior as you walk into this world you will be attacked for the evil empire will strike back. Upward I look and see Him there, the sinless Savior who died, rose again, is interceding and will come for me. You are my all sufficient, not just promised Maker, but Promise Keeper, Jesus my Lord, Amen.

Power Point

THE PROMISE - ROMANS 8:28–30

The Unbreakable Five Link Chain of Redeeming Grace

HOLY SPIRIT ASSURANCE #1

ROMANS 8:31–32

LIFE TAKEAWAY

Christ is sufficient to defeat any and all adversaries who come against us.

HOLY SPIRIT ASSURANCE #2

ROMANS 8:33

LIFE TAKEAWAY

Christ is sufficient to erase any and all accusations raised against us.

HOLY SPIRIT ASSURANCE #3

ROMANS 8:34

LIFE TAKEAWAY

Christ is sufficient to remove any and all condemnation that is brought against us.

HOLY SPIRIT ASSURANCE #4

ROMANS 8:35–39

LIFE TAKEAWAY

Christ is sufficient to ensure that there will never be any separation from us.