

Romans
Chapter 8:16-39
“The Power of Deception”

All scripture references are from the NASU unless otherwise noted

Calvary Chapel Fellowship of Enid
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Verse 15, as we saw in last week’s study, says that we’ve been adopted into God’s family, but with that, the process of adapting us to that family begins.

And that process of adaptation often comes with some groanings as we’ll see this morning.

So pick it up with me please in ...

Verses 16-18: During the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said to His newly minted disciples ...

Matthew 5:11 "Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. 12 "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great ...

As Christians, we are an ever-increasing minority. I know the poles tell us that over 80% of all Americans identify as Christians, but answer me this ...

Q. If 80% of all Americans are Christian ... how come group prayer in the workplace is so rare?

Q. How come, in this government, called a democracy ... organized prayer and Bible study isn’t allowed in public school?

Q. How come our, so called, representatives of the people ... are fighting tooth and nail to be allowed to kill more and more babies under the euphemism of “The right to choose”?

Call me a skeptic ... but I say again ... we are the minority ... and as such, our ideals and priorities will be out of step with society. And the truth is, there will always be suffering for those of us who choose to be different.

The Old King James puts it this way ...

Titus 2:11 ... the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; 13 Looking for

that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; 14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. KJV

You remember what it was like for that peculiar child on the grade school playground ... they suffered persecution ... because they were different. Well now that's you ... or, at least, it should be.

Which is exactly why Jesus counsels us to "**count the cost**" (Luke 14:28) of a Spirit-led life before we say "Yes" to it.

But Paul goes on to encourage us that the suffering that we might experience here, at the hands of those persecuting us for being different in Jesus ... that suffering ... isn't worthy of being compared to the eternity that God has planned for us.

As He reminds us in ...

2nd Corinthians 4:17 ... momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, 18 while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Verses 19-22: When God placed Adam in the Garden of Eden, the two of them enjoyed a very special relationship. Adam walked with God and talked with God as one would a close companion.

However, when Adam sinned, for the first time, he stood before God as his judge. And this is the judgment that God pronounced ...

Genesis 3:17 ... "Because you ... have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life. 18 "Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field; 19 By the sweat of your face You will eat bread ...

As we're told here in **verse 20** of **this morning's text** ... the creation was subjected to futility.

Q. So, what exactly is this futility that creation's subjected to then?

Psalm 96:11 Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; Let the sea roar, and all it contains; 12 Let the field exult, and all that is in it. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy 13 Before the LORD, for He is coming ...

As man fell ... so too the rest of creation. And just as the fall of man had a profound effect on his relationship with God ... so too with the rest of creation. And that creation, just like man, longs to have that unhindered fellowship with God restored.

One day the stars and the trees, alike ... will, once again, praise the Lord without the present-day restrictions of their futility ... and creation yearns for that day.

Verses 23-27:

Q. So, what's the practical side of the Spirit's moanings and groanings on our behalf? What's the purpose? What's accomplished by it?

Well, let me ask you this ...

Q. When a brother or sister comes to you and says, "Please pray that I get this job." -- Do you do it? -- Q. Do you pray that they get the job? --

Q. Do you know that that's the right job for them? – No, which is precisely why we need to Spirit's groanings. We need Him interpreting our prayers and translating them to God as they ought to be.

Because, as Paul says here ...

... we do not know how to pray as we should ...

Q. Just how disastrous would it be if there was no intercession for our prayers? – As Pastor Chuck used to say, "Our prayers should be direct to God, but should never direct God."

In **Jeremiah chapter 47**, the nation of Israel was going through some difficult times, so the prophet was praying that the Lord would bless them. But as he was praying ... the Lord spoke to him and said in a classic King James voice ... "**Jeremiah, quiet thine self!**" (**Verses 6&7 KJV**).

God was reminding Jeremiah that he didn't understand what he was praying for and He went on to say that His plan was to use a military conquest of Israel to turn them from their idolatry and spiritual harlotry.

So, the Father said, "Jeremiah ... hush! You're praying in the wrong direction."

Praise God, that on this side of the cross of Christ, we have the Holy Spirit to take the prayers we've submitted to Him and turn them into exactly what they need to be before they reach God's ear.

Verse 28: Such a familiar passage ... God loves us and He knows our frames and has all power ... so it kinda makes sense that He'd work all things together for our good.

But what I'd like you to note this morning is that ... we all know ... that works all things together for good.

Q. Did you catch that at the very beginning of the verse ... it says that “all believers know that God works the circumstances of life for our good”? – We know it! That's remarkable!

Q. But if that's true ... if we all know that the things that happen are for the greater good ... why do we so often behave as if we don't know it or as if it's not true? – Listen ... you won't like this any more than I do, but in honesty ... when we start whining and crying about life ... most often ... it's for sympathy and attention.

At least, that's what I do. And I'm sure that it's an inherent weakness of your flesh as well.

But we really need to actively guard against that ... because it so misrepresents God and His love and His power and His involvement in our lives.

He works all things ... all things ... not some things ... not even most things, but all things together for good and because we know that, we ought to behave like we do.

Verse 29: Now, some people trip over **this verse** because of the word “predestined”. But note what it is that's predestined here ... it's not the eternal destiny of each person ... rather it's that those of us who've chosen Heaven as our eternal destiny ... be conformed to the image of Jesus. He's predestined us to be Christlike!

It says that God knew ahead of time which of us would choose to follow Him, but it, in no way, indicates that He made that choice for us.

I pray that God's foreknowledge is comforting to you and not scary or in some way ... unnerving. Personally ... I love that fact that He knows the end from the beginning.

He knows, not only the events of tomorrow, but even what thoughts I'll entertain. He knows exactly what decisions you'll face and what decisions you'll make.

He knows when you're gonna catch your next cold and what your next raise will amount to. He also knows if you're going to choose to follow Him when you leave here today or if you're gonna foolishly forge your own path.

Verse 30: Here's where your mind can start to bend a little. The challenge is to think outside of earth's time zones. To see time (or the lack of it) as God does.

That means no yesterday and no tomorrow. That means that words like before and after ... make no sense at all! It means clearing the clocks and calendars from our mind!

So ... now that you're in God's time zone ... notice that **this verse** is written in the past tense and yet God's writing about things that have not yet happened ... at least, they've not yet happened here on earth. But that's really what predestination is.

He foreknew the choice we'd make for Christ and predestined those who would choose Him to be conformed into His image.

And then it says that because of our choice for Christ ... He also called us.

Q. So, what's that mean? – Simply that He calls us out of this world. In fact ...

Q. Who remembers the Greek word for church? -- Ekklesia" (ek-klay-see'-ah), which means a calling out. So, by our confession of Jesus as Lord and Savior we're called out of this world and its ways and we're joined, not only to God, but also to God's family ... the church.

Then He goes on to say, in **this same verse**, that we we're, not only foreknown and predestined and adopted and called out, but we're also justified.

Q. Remember? – Made just as if you we'd never sinned ... we're justified!

And, as if that's not enough ... then He says we've also been "glorified"!

All of it written in past tense!

Q. So then, let me ask you this ... how sure is your salvation? -- It's so sure that God speaks of your heavenly glorification in the past tense ... as if its already taken place (**2nd Corinthians 5:1-9**)! I'd say that's pretty sure!

Q. But how can that be ... when it seems so far away from the perspective of earth time? – Because to God, all earth time, is just one Giant Now!

In God's eternity there are no walls between the past and the present, nor between the present and the future. In fact, there's no such thing as past or future in God's realm ... to Him it's all one Giant Now! He see it all right in front of Him.

Now Paul launches into a series of questions ...

Verses 31-33: So often it seems like everyone and everything's against us ... and Paul's not arguing that fact. His point isn't that we would, in any way, avoid challenges or opposition in this life, but that we would walk through those things victoriously.

If you've given your life to Christ Jesus, then God has declared you justified! He's declared me justified!

Therefore, rejoice if Satan wants to bring a charge or accusation against you, because

he's wasting his time!

Verse 34:

Q. Remember what we read last week in verse 1 of this chapter? –

Romans 8:1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

So, Paul's asking a question here only for emphasis because it's already been answered ... "Who will condemn us? – No one because in Jesus there is no condemnation!"

I said a moment ago that we should rejoice when Satan brings charges and accusations against us, because he's wasting his time.

But the question that follows is ...

Q. Why would he do that? Is Satan really so dumb that he doesn't know he's wasting his time? -- Well as I read God's Word and seek to understand the things referring to our singular enemy ... I conclude this ... Satan has one and only one tool with which he can have any effect on us as God's children ... and that one tool is deception.

He seeks to deceive us with:

- 1.** Accusations of condemnation
- 2.** With doubts
- 3.** With enticements and ...
- 4.** With fear.

Q. So again ... why would Satan waste time trying to charge and condemn those who've already been justified by the God of eternity? -- Because he knows that if he accuses 100 Christians ... a worthwhile percentage of them won't be a waste of his time ... rather ... his accusations will waste their time!

When Satan brings an accusation against us, we have a choice to make:

- We can stand on God's Word and ignore the lie ... knowing that we've been justified. And when we make that choice ... we waste Satan's time.
- Or we can give consideration to what he's saying or doing ... we can worry and fuss and lose sleep. And when we do ... he wastes our time.

Either way ... there's no merit to the charges ... it just comes down to who's time and energy gets wasted.

Q. If Satan has only one tool that he can effectively use against us ... doesn't it seem

like our defenses oughta be stacked up at that point?

Q. And what's our defense against Satan's weapon of deception? – The truth! A solid knowledge of the Word of God!

Now Paul's next question ...

Verses 35-37: ... we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

We often misunderstand this phrase because we run it through the filter of our own human experience rather than just taking God at His word.

Like all good Christians, I've always been a fan of the Denver Broncos. And you can't be a Broncos fan and not love John Elway. So much fun to watch him play the game. He was a conqueror ... with two world championships to his credit.

Q. But here's the thing ... at what point in a football game is the victor decided? – They don't pass out Super Bowl rings in the 1st quarter ... at that point the winner hasn't been decided. They crown champions at the end of the game ... not halftime.

When John Elway was still quarterbacking the team, he earned the nickname, "The Comeback Kid" because he pulled out so many nail-biters ... decided in the last minutes or even seconds of a game.

And it's through the filter of those type of experiences that we tend to define "conqueror". But that's the very thing the enemy wants, and that the Lord warns against. Because ... as long as Satan can deceive us into worrying about winning ... our efforts will be misguided and very inefficient.

See, the difference is that the Broncos won't be crowned world champions until the last whistle of the 2019 season. But you and I ... we became champions of the universe, the moment we joined the winning team. The game's over and we won. We don't have to wring our hands anxiously or hold our breath awaiting the final score.

We enter the battle having already won in His strength!

Verses 38-39: That is one very powerful and very beautiful passage of scripture!

We are secure in God's love! Nothing in all of God's creation will ever be able to separate you or me from the love of God. Nothing ... because by Him and to Him ... we're already glorified!

Conclusion: Romans chapter 8, begins by declaring that in Christ there is no condemnation. And it closes with the declaration that from Christ, there can be no separation.

What I find so interesting though ... is that in between there ... there seems to be a whole lot a groaning going on ...

Creation groans in **verse 22**. We, as children of God groan in **verse 24**. And the Spirit of God groans in **verse 26**.

Creation groans because of its been subjected to futility.

We groan because we long for Heaven and ...

The Spirit of God groans because He hears our groanings. He groans to make our longing more tolerable ... and will continue to do so ... until that first day of our Heavenly eternity arrives.

In his **first epistle, John** declares ... **God is love. (4:8)**

And in **1st Corinthians 13:5** Paul says that ...[Love] ... **keeps no record of wrongs.** NIV

I keep a record of wrongs ... especially against myself. Other people keep a record of my wrongs. The enemy keeps a record of my wrongs ... but the thing is ... none of that matters.

God's opinion is what matters ...

We groan, in large part, because we've bought the enemy's deception. But the truth is this ... in Christ, we're foreknown, predestined, adopted, called out, justified and glorified! All past tense!!!

So, any and every thought contrary to that ... is deception.