

Romans 8:18-39

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1. Verses 18-25 describe our odd situation as Christians - we are justified and given the Spirit (the firstfruits) so we are already redeemed, BUT we live in a mortal body and world replete with suffering that has not yet been fully redeemed. In this hybrid "already/not yet" existence there are two realities - we are eager for the final fulfillment but called to be patient with our present situation and live full lives within our current situation. As with any tension, it is easy to become unbalanced on one side or the other. Which side do you tend to fall toward when you become unbalanced? That is, do you tend to get overwhelmed by our present weakness, sinfulness, and the pain of this life, or do you tend to downplay our current weakness, sinfulness, the pain of this life? How does this unbalance manifest itself? What are its implications?

Bonus question: In his commentary on Romans, Stott characterizes this already/not yet condition as Christians being "half-saved". Would you Like this term on Facebook or not (why)?

Bonus Bonus question: It is the whole creation that will be redeemed, not just humans. This takes redemption out of the realm of ethereal other-worldly heaven and into the realm of concrete this-world "extreme makeover". Is this easy for you to bear in mind on a daily basis or is it something you commonly forget (given that the common, cultural conception of heaven is up, out there, and other)?

2. Verses 26-27 describe the Spirit's roles in our praying. What are these roles? What do they tell us (remind us) about ourselves? Do you commonly have these things in mind while praying (if not, how might it help if you kept these things in mind)?
3. Verse 28 is a very popular verse that is often misinterpreted. What are some ways that it is misinterpreted (by others of course)? What is the best way to interpret this verse?
4. Verse 28 must be read in conjunction with verses 29-30. Verse 29 starts with "For", so it is inherently linked to what preceded it - verses 29-30 are meant to explain verse 28. Specifically, verses 29-30: a) explain what "good" means in verse 28, and b) emphasize the certainty of God's work in us. How do these verses do these two things?
5. Verses 31 and following emerge out of the perspective established in verses 28-30. They are words of reassurance. What is Paul addressing here - that is, why are his readers needing to be reassured? These concluding verses of the chapter are some of the more powerful in all of Romans. Which of the following parts speak to you most

strongly (and why) - "If God is for us, who can be against us?", "Who can separate us from the love of Christ? (twice, once expressed almost poetically)", "We are more than conquerors"?

6. These verses at the end of Romans communicate that once you commit to God through Christ, He not only loves you now, but He loves you for the rest of your life and throughout all eternity (dramatic pause to let this sink in). Tim Keller notes that this reality is the case no matter how much "bad stuff is going on inside of you" (that makes you think "How can God love me") and no matter how much "bad stuff is going on outside of you" (that make you wonder if God has abandoned you). What gets in the way of this assurance of God's love for you (more "bad stuff inside" or more "bad stuff outside")? What needs to happen for you to deeply feel (emotionally) and understand (cognitively) the truth of this assurance? What happens when you grasp, even for a moment, this truth?
7. The Big Picture (pulling it together, with some overlap in what we have covered already tonight): The Spirit plays a central role throughout the part of chapter 8 that we are studying. Identify three roles played by the Spirit . Then, reflect on how the proper Big Picture for our daily life is to remember these roles that the Spirit is playing.

Concluding Big Picture statement: Stott notes that Romans 8 starts with "No condemnation" and ends with "No separation". Both are due to being "in Christ". These bookend reassurances highlight the secure place that one is in as a Christian. Is Romans 8 great, or what? (This is a rhetorical, not a discussion, question)