

accusations fall upon deaf ears in heaven, because Jesus' work on the cross paid our sin debt in full; therefore, God always sees in His children the perfect righteousness of Jesus. When Jesus died on the cross, His righteousness (perfect holiness) was imputed to us, while our sin was imputed to Him at His death. This is the great exchange Paul talks about in 2 Corinthians 5:21: *'God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.'* That took away forever our sinful state before God, so God can accept us as blameless before Him.



2.6 Conclusion

- No wonder Paul concludes this part of his letter to the Romans with these majestic words: *'For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'* (Romans 8:38-9)
- Paul would argue that God loves us so much that He has done everything to make it possible for us to be on His side and with Him for ever. When the tough times come, as they did for the Christians in Rome, will we remember: *'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?'* (Romans 8:35)
- In our daily battle between the forces of good and evil, We need to remember that:
 - We are on the winning side.
 - What it cost Jesus for us to be there and finally
 - *'If God is for us, who can be against us?'* (Romans 8:31)

3. Questions to consider at home

- 3.1 *'We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him'* (Romans 8:28) Would you agree with Paul?
- 3.2 Why does Paul want his Roman audience to know that *'God is for them?'* (Romans 8:31)
- 3.3 Why is the death of Jesus so important to us?
- 3.4 What are the implications for us of Jesus being *'raised to life?'* (Romans 8:34)
- 3.5 Why does Jesus need to *'intercede for us?'* (Romans 8:34)

Matthew Street 6th November 2022



The St J's Group

Romans 8:28-39 - What side are you on?

Passage, Talk Notes and Questions

What side are you on?

1. Talk Passage – Romans 8:28-39

[28] *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. [29] For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.*

[30] *And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.*

[31] *What, then, shall we say in response to this? 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, along with him, graciously give us all things? [33] Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. [34] Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. [35] Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? [36] As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered 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 convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, [39] neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

2. Talk Notes

2.1 Introduction

- What side are we on? Knowing what side we are on is vitally important in life. We wouldn't for example if we were a Manchester United fan, sit with the Everton fans, whilst a match between our side and theirs was being played. We would probably not drive a car with Irish number plates into a staunchly loyalist part of Belfast and expect there to be no reaction. Likewise, as white anglo saxons, we might exercise some caution if we were to venture into a black neighbourhood, whilst on holiday in the States.
- Paul is asking his audience in Rome what side they are on in the spiritual battle that is going on inside each of their hearts and our hearts. Are we with the forces of evil or are we with the forces of good?
- Earlier in this letter Paul makes an amazing claim. He states that: *all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*" (Romans 3:23). Paul is saying that all of us actually start

BAD

GOOD

Which side are you on?

on one side. We start with the forces of evil, but that God never wanted this to be the end of the story. God longs for relationship with us and for us to be with the forces of good.

- Paul makes another amazing claim by stating that: *'God is for us'* (Romans 8:31)
- In fact God was so keen for us to be with Him that he *'did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all'* (Romans 8:32)
- Paul claims that Jesus has:
 - i) Paid the penalty for our sin, by dying on the cross: *'Christ Jesus, who died'* (Romans 8:34)
 - ii) He was *'was raised to life'* (Romans 8:34)
 - iii) He *'is at the right hand of God'* (Romans 8:34)
 - iv) *'interceding for us'* (Romans 8:34)

2.2 **'Christ Jesus, who died'** (Romans 8:34)

- A story is told about a young man caught speeding:
 - It wasn't just three points for him but an appearance in court – he was doing 54 mph down a 20 mph road.
 - At the magistrate's court, to his shock, it is his own father who is sitting in judgement – he hasn't been in touch with his family for over 5 years, he walked out after his mum disapproved of a relationship he was having.
 - The case is heard and it is quite clear that he is guilty. The magistrate hands down the maximum penalty, 6 points on his licence and a £1000 fine.
 - He doesn't have the money to pay the fine or the increased insurance costs that would follow as a result of the 6 point penalty on his licence so he realises that his days of driving are probably over.
 - He is about to leave the court when his dad walks over to him and gives him a hug. "I still love you son" he tells him "but justice had to be done" and hands him a cheque for £2000, more than enough to cover the fine and the increased insurance costs and they both part company.
- Paul wants the Romans and us to realise two important things:
 - i) That like the young man in this story we have sinned. We have put 'I' on the throne of our lives and done things our way. We have allowed the forces of evil to reign over the forces of good in our lives.
 - ii) God is so *'for us'* (Romans 8:31) that He pays the penalty for our rebellion by dying on a cross for us. Let us not forget that Jesus was God with human flesh on!
- A Christian therefore is someone who knows that despite having broken the rules and deserving punishment God still loves them – the father in the story still loves his son – and God still loves us his children – God wants to be in relationship with us.

- Christians know that it is God who has made all the movements – just like the young man in the story, we are unable to pay the fine for our punishment: *'For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering.'* (Romans 8:3)
- Just like the magistrate in our story God does not compromise his justice but he pays the price personally. That is what **GRACE** is all about **God's Riches At Christ's Expense**
- Because of what Christ has done on The Cross Christians live in the knowledge that their wrongs have been forgiven. This doesn't mean that they suddenly become perfect, far from it but it means that they never forget what it cost – it cost God his one and only Son.
- This is why Paul can write to the church in Rome and affirm in no uncertain terms that *'there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus'* (Romans 8:1)

2.3 **'was raised to life'** (Romans 8:34)

- Paul now moves on to make another key claim about Jesus that he *'was raised to life'* (Romans 8:34)
- Two important truths flow from this statement:
 - i) Firstly, Paul was claiming that on Easter Sunday Jesus had been *'raised to life'* (Romans 8:34) in his resurrected body. Jesus is the first person in history to do this. Jesus is the prototype or first fruit of what all of us have to look forward to – That we too will be resurrected and given new bodies. Paul states in verses 51- 54 of 1 Corinthians Chapter 15: *'Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: Death has been swallowed up in victory'* – This is the prize at the end of the race that we all can look forward to.
 - ii) Secondly, like each of the disciples, Paul was emphasising the claim that Jesus was alive. Paul had personally met Jesus on the road to Damascus and he knew, that like him, each one of us can, if we want to, get to know Jesus personally and have an ongoing relationship with him.

2.4 **'is at the right hand of God'** (Romans 8:34)

- In Acts 1 verse 9 we read: *'After Jesus said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.'*
- Where did Jesus go when he left earth? Paul argues here and elsewhere that Jesus returned to the glory He had before His incarnation to carry on His role of King of kings and Lord of lords. He went back to fulfilling His eternal role as the second Person of the triune God. He returned to His rightful position of being *'at the right hand of God'* (Romans 8:34).

2.5 **'interceding for us'** (Romans 8:34)

- As part of His eternal role as the second Person of the triune God, Paul argues that Jesus is *'interceding for us'* (Romans 8:34)
- While this old earth continues to be "won" for Christ, Jesus is the Advocate for Christians, meaning He is our great Defender. This is the intercessory role He currently fulfils for those who are His. Jesus is always pleading our case before the Father, like a defence lawyer on our behalf.
- Jesus is interceding for us while Satan (whose name means "accuser") is accusing us, pointing out our sins and frailties before God, just as he did with Job. But the