

Romans 8

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Study Given by W.D. Frazee—December 3,

Thank God it's true. Aren't we glad? Now let's turn to Romans the eighth chapter. Romans 8, beginning with the first verse. I've been getting in recent days, some wonderful blessings, out of this wonderful chapter.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwells in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye hath not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him,

that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waits for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body” Romans 8:1-23.

I call your attention to the fact, that in these verses we have read, there are three “states” brought to view. First, the state of the unconverted man who lives for the flesh, in the flesh, by the flesh, who does the deeds of the flesh, who follows the prompting of his unregenerate, unconverted, human nature.

The second “state” that is brought to view here, is the state of the Christian, who is being led by the Spirit of God, day by day.

The third state, is the glorified state, which Paul says, we’re all waiting with earnest expectation. When there shall be no more suffering, no more temptation, no more conflicts, nothing to mar the joy of eternal harmony with God. Those are the three states.

Now dear friends, we must not confuse those three states. Looking at the last verse, it will a wonderful time, won’t it, when there is no more temptation, when the Devil is gone, when our poor weak human nature is gone; when every thought of the mind, every desire of the body, is in full harmony with God. Won’t that be a wonderful time? Yes.

Now to pretend like we were there already would certainly really be just a pretend, wouldn’t it? Yes. Because we go out here in this world, and we see all around us, as Paul says, the creation itself is under the curse of sin. We look at the thorns and the briars that grow in the fields in the woods. If we’re out there, we may get scratched, if we’re working with the soil, we have many weeds and many pests to contend with.

And then as we walk out in nature, we see evidence of pain and sorrow, we hear some bird in distress, that some larger bird or some animal, makes it its prey. We see men engage in war and strife, not only in Vietnam, but in every part of this world, men are battling. Not necessary with guns, but in one way or another, the whole race is in conflict.

This is the enemy's land. How did it happen? Adam and Eve sinned; they brought down upon themselves and their posterity a terrible arrangement. But notice, Paul says, this is all in hope. Do you know where the hope lies, in this rein of sorrow and sin? I'll tell you friends. It lies in this: That you and I will get sick of the Devil and his program, and leave it forever. That's the hope.

Now these sufferings are not merely the sufferings that we have with thorns and briars. The greatest suffering that the Christian has is the suffering that Jesus had, when He took our humanity. The Bible says that He *suffered* being tempted. He suffered being tempted! And if you and I are called to suffer being tempted, we must remember, that Christ went through all of that for us. He suffered far more, than we ever can. His divine nature, combined with the human, gave Him (mark the point) not freedom from temptation, but capacity to endure a far greater measure of temptation, than we could ever take.

Both in the wilderness, and in Gethsemane, He received the full force of all of Satan's power directed against Him. You and I have never experienced that. God puts a limit on what the Devil can do to us. And with some of us, the Devil is limited very severely, because God *knows* that even (I was going to say) an extra puff of wind, would blow us over.

And so God in mercy holds the Devil back, but God never shuts us off completely from the Devil's temptations; because in this world of sin, we develop character by resisting temptation. We develop character by resisting temptation! But that calls for a certain amount of suffering on our part, conflict of soul. Earnestly seeking the Lord in prayer, resisting the temptations of the enemy, but this is all part of the program.

Christ went through it *for* us, and now He goes through it *with* us and *in* us. And this is eventually to develop a group of people, who are like Adam and Eve before they sinned, and even better. They've reached the point where they will never yield to the tempter—they are eternally secure.

But now I want to go back to the beginning of the chapter, and pick up the blessed thought, that all through this experience of conflict, of meeting temptation, we are released from condemnation. That's what the first verse says.

“There is therefore now [what?] no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus...” Romans 8:1.

Where is condemnation? Condemnation is for the unconverted, the unrepentant, the un-surrendered. The world in darkness and sin is under the condemnation of the law. But when you and I have accepted Jesus, there is no condemnation. No condemnation. Will you read that first verse with me, all of it?

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which

are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” Romans 8:1.

Now notice, Paul in the entire book of Romans, is seeking to make clear to us that we reach that experience, of no condemnation, not by our human works, but by our faith, our belief in Christ.

Now this is so foreign to most of the experiences that we have in life, that sometimes it’s a major accomplishment, to reach the point of understanding it—it ought not to be—just simply believing God. But most of us, when we want something done, we go about and do it. If you ladies want a meal cooked, why, you get in the kitchen there, stir up the flour and the other things, and pretty soon there’s a meal. If a man wants a garden, he goes out here and gets busy, and stirs up the earth and puts the seed in.

Now all of these have lessons for Christian experience, but there is something, my dear friends, about this point of righteousness by faith, without the works of the law, it seems to be difficult for many people to understand and to experience. That’s why so much of the Bible is concerned with seeking to explain it. And so this morning, we want to study it a bit more. And the better we understand it, the simpler it will be, not more complex, very simple.

Jesus died for us, He took our place, and now He offers to give us His righteousness, having taken our sin. And if His choice is our choice, then we are accepted in Him, and His life, stands in place of our life. And so the third verse says. What the law could not do, Jesus did. What couldn’t the law do? It couldn’t make us right; it couldn’t save us. Why couldn’t it? Well, Paul says it was weak through the flesh. There was nothing wrong with the law—the law is holy and just and good, as he says in Romans 7:12. But no law can give us power to obey it; it can tell us we are wrong, it can point out our imperfections. But oh something else apart from law must step in and make us righteous, something else must pay the debt, and that is what Jesus did.

Now notice that third verse. How is it done? God sending His own son, His own dear Son, all He had; in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. The margin says, by sacrifice for sin. In other words, because of sin, death came upon the race. Jesus took that death in His own body; He met the tempter and overcame. Then He died, the just for the unjust. What was it all for?

The fourth verse, will you read that verse with me?

“That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit”
Romans 8:4.

And then in the following verses, he continues to show the difference between the flesh and the spirit. Now let us understand clearly what he means by the flesh here. He means the physical body, with its natural cravings and desires. There's an interesting comment here in the book, *Adventist Home*, page 127.

“The lower passions have their seat in the body and work through it. The words “flesh” or “fleshly” or “carnal lusts” embrace the lower, corrupt nature; the flesh of itself cannot act contrary to the word of God. We are commanded to crucify the flesh, with the affections and the lusts. How shall we do it? Shall we inflict pain on the body? No; but put to death the temptation to sin. The corrupt thought is to be expelled. Every thought is to be brought into captivity to Jesus Christ. All animal propensities are to be subjected to the higher powers of the soul. The love of Christ must rein supreme...” *Adventist Home*, page 127-128.

Alright, now let's look at that. The flesh then is our body, with its natural desires or with unnatural desires that have been acquired and cultivated. For instance, suppose that here's a man that has been using tobacco for 40 years. Now he doesn't get a cigarette this morning. 10:00 o'clock comes. Ordinarily he's been used to smoking one, two, three packs a day. How does he feel by 10:00 o'clock if he hasn't had any cigarettes? He'd be frantic wouldn't he? Yes! There's a craving of the flesh.

Alright, now, can he be delivered? Yes. He can be delivered. Now some people think, that the only way they can be delivered from something like that is to have God miraculously counteract the affect of those 40 years of tobacco using, and make that man so that his body is just like it was, before he began to smoke. God sometimes delivers people from the cravings for tobacco by a miracle, and it's a wonderful thing when He does it.

I remember an experience when I was in Ogden, Utah, many years ago. A man came out to see me one morning, who had been attending our evangelistic meetings, and he had a cigar in his vest pocket. He was the superintendent of the switching yard, there in the big Ogden railroad center. And before he left, we knelt down together and prayed to the Lord. And the man told me afterward, he never had a craving for tobacco after that. I was going to say, that last cigar was that one in his vest pocket, but he didn't use that one. So the last was the one before that. He was completely delivered.

But let me tell you something else that happened in that same city. Ogden is quite a railroad center, and we baptized three railroad men in that series of meetings. All of them gave up tobacco. I still have the old pipe of one of the men, an engineer. One had served for many years on the railroad, and he was, during his remaining years, he was serving as a night watchmen. And he was a slave to tobacco too, but he gave his heart to God, and gave up tobacco.

But he still had the cravings, more than once. And he would come to baptismal class, and weeks went by. I'd grip his hand and I'd say, "Brother Worley, how is the battle going?" "Alright", he says. "Are you on the winning side?" "Yes." He says, "When I feel that craving come over me, I send up a little prayer to Jesus, and He helps me."

Now which one was having victory? Both of them were, both of them were. One by a miracle, that took the craving away, the other by an equally wonderful miracle, that gave Him the power to resist the craving, and refuse the tobacco. Do you see friends? Now which one would you like to have? Oh, you'd like to have the experience of the first man, wouldn't you? Yes. Yes, I think nearly everyone would vote for that; we're just that soft. But dear friends, let me tell you something. I won't say that it always works out this way, but it did in this case, and it happens more times than I like to think about.

That second man that had the craving and had to resist it, he was faithful till the day of his death. His widow is still living out in Colorado, and I heard from her indirectly through her pastor not very long ago. And Brother Worley died triumphant in God. He never went back to the tobacco, even though he had those cravings. The first man, I am sorry to say, after several years of deliverance, he went back, not only to tobacco, but to a lot of other things. Isn't that pitiful friends? Isn't that pitiful?

I don't know why it is, but sometimes we do not seem to value that which comes, (shall I say) so easy. Too bad, too bad. Not that we can earn salvation by our efforts, but oh when we meet that craving day by day, and *resist* it everyday, that builds what? Character. It builds character, and one way or another, character must be built. And if God sees fit in His mercy to relieve you of some craving, thank Him for it, but remember, you need all the energy you can get from Him, on some other point, on some other question. Maybe it'll be in the matter of losing your temper, maybe it'll be on something else.

Thank God, friends, whatever your problem, the victory is in Jesus. But also remember this: The flesh is not going to lead you into the kingdom of God. The flesh is not going to lead you into a holy life. Your body and mine, because of generations of sin, back of us, we have within us cravings, propensities, attitudes, desires, which lead away from heaven.

Somebody says, "Oh, not tobacco, I couldn't stand the smell of it." No, that's not your problem. Your problem may be the temptation to indulge in a lot of rich foods, full of fat and sugar that build up the cholesterol, and predispose the body to strokes and coronary attacks. Is not the temptation to over indulge in food, just as real a physical craving as the temptation to use tobacco or whiskey? Certainly, friends.

And the flesh, one way or another, is going to assert itself. One way or another, it is going to make a problem for us. Now some people, it's no temptation to them to turn down the sweet thing or the fat thing. They naturally enjoy something else, but

maybe their problem is that they lose their temper easily, they get mad. Is that a physical matter? Very definitely friends, very definitely. It's a part of the flesh. It's a part of these brain cells up here and our attitude of mind.

So we need not, I repeat, expect that the flesh is going to, by a sudden miracle, get to the place where every morning we wake up and all day long we just have beautiful loving thoughts, no problem, no temptation, we never want to do any bad thing, and we always want to do the good thing. That's the way it's going to be in *heaven*, friends. That's the glorious experience ahead. Here in this flesh, we groan, that's what we read here, we groan.

But that doesn't mean that we have to be defeated, and this is the great lesson of this chapter. It doesn't mean that we have to be in condemnation. It doesn't mean, as that craving comes over us to use tobacco, or that craving to eat between meals, or that craving to eat a lot of rich foods, or that craving to lose our temper. It doesn't mean that we have to yield to those, and it doesn't mean that we have to—how shall I put it? It doesn't mean that we have to just keep kicking ourselves all day long; feeling that we're the scum of the earth, and that we're defeated, and that we don't amount to anything.

Now the flesh is that way, that's true, we can look upon the flesh as the scum of the earth, it is. But my dear friends, we must cease to identify ourselves with the cravings of the flesh. That's what Paul is talking about here.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” Romans 8:1.

That's the thing. I illustrate it this way sometimes. Suppose a truck drives up here from Sears Roebuck. A man gets out, he says, “I have a package here for Herb Atherton.” And you look at that package and you say, “Well I didn't order any package from Sears Roebuck.” Well, here it is, it's got your name on it. The charge is \$5.00. If you didn't order it, do you have to take it? But if you take it, what? You have to pay for it, precisely. That's the thing.

Now, when the flesh begins to rage upon you, any of these temptations to sin; when the Devil comes around and says, “Here's the package”; “Here's the cigarettes; or “Here is the bottle of whiskey”; or “Here is the chance to tell your neighbor what you think of him—lose your temper and get mad.” There's the package. Do you have to take it? No, you don't have to take it. You can say, “Thank God, my choice has not ordered that, I refuse delivery. I'm not going to pay for it and I'm not going to take it.”

The Devil may slyly suggest, “Oh, but don't you want it”? Don't argue with the Devil, don't admit you want it. Your *choice* is what rules your life, it isn't your *wants*. Say, “Jesus, I know that you've died for me, and I have chosen You. I have chosen to

be led by the Spirit instead of by the flesh. Dear Jesus, help me to keep listening to the Spirit.”

Now you notice how I read here that we are to put to death these animal appetites, these human selfish cravings, just by saying no to them. Now mind you, that doesn't mean to become aesthetic and gloomy and fanatical. To get the victory over appetite, it doesn't mean that we have to quit eating. Jesus fasted 40 days to break the hold of appetite, but He's never asked you and me to fast 40 days. Some of us sometimes get a blessing by missing a meal occasionally, but that may either be a physical or a spiritual matter.

The point is friends, Christ has gained the victory for us, and we're to accept that victory, and moment by moment refuse the cravings of the flesh, which are out of harmony with His word.

That doesn't mean that we can't sit down and enjoy a good dinner together. Oh, no. Jesus ate when He was here. He ate with publicans and sinners, and the Pharisees derided Him. And they thought He ought to fast like John the Baptist's disciples sometimes did. They accused Him of being a winebibber, you remember. But He wasn't. He was never extravagant, He was never intemperate. He ate temperately. He ate at the right time and the right way. He wants us to do the same and enjoy it.

Concerning the early church it says: when they were filled with the spirit of God, that from day to day they broke bread and ate their food with gladness and singleness of heart. No, there is no foolish fanaticism about any of this righteousness by faith, or about living the temperate life. It means to enjoy that which is good and proper.

But remember, if you depend upon your body, your natural cravings, your natural disposition to set the limit, and to decide what you shall do and not do; Paul says that you will never have this life that we are studying about, because the carnal mind is what? Enmity against God, it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

That's what's wrong with these so-called holiness movements. They claim, (some of them) that they have reached the place where they are sanctified holy, therefore their desires, their cravings are holy, and therefore it's alright do what they feel like.

That will be true in the kingdom of God, friends, when Jesus comes. We'll never crave a wrong thing; never want to do a bad thing. And so therefore there will be no battle, no struggle, no conflict. It'll be safe to do just what we feel like doing up there.

It'll never be safe in this world, friends, to just follow every idea that comes into the mind. Every thought, every craving, must be measured against the standard of God's word, and we must listen to the voice of the Spirit. The Spirit and the flesh, in this chapter, are set in contrast, one against the other. The people of this world follow the flesh; the people who are born again, follow what? The Spirit.

Oh friends, I pray that this morning, God will help us to accept the release from condemnation, which comes not at the end of the Christian life, but at the beginning. For oh, the good news of the Gospel is, that all through these experiences in which we battle with the flesh, we are covered by the righteousness of Christ, covered by His righteousness. And that means, as this first verse says, that there is *no* condemnation.

I was in court not long ago, as I listened to the witnesses and listened to the judge and listened to the attorneys. It was all very interesting and instructive. And ah, my friends, what a moment it is, when the judge makes a decision. One man is turned loose, as I saw the other day, another man, sent back to jail, as I saw. Who decided it? The judge decided it.

Listen. Have you been sent back to jail, or are you free? Who decides it? God decides. But He decides it on the evidence. If you choose to follow the flesh, you're in bondage. And whether following the flesh, (mark the point) whether it means just giving way to the cravings and doing anything you feel like doing, or whether it means, through the works of the flesh, trying to build up your own righteousness, the end result is the same—you're under bondage. But oh, if you come to the Judge and say, "I know that I'm guilty, I know that I've sinned and broken that holy law. But oh, I believe that Jesus died for me, and I present His death instead of my death. I present His sacrifice and I choose to be His. Oh Father, give me that Holy Spirit, which will lead me away from following the ways of sin, in Thy righteous way."

As long as that choice is our choice, my friends, the Judge says, "You are free, you don't go back to jail." You don't have to stay there in prison until you work out your time. You go *free*, free in Christ. Notice again please that 15th verse.

"For ye have not received that spirit of bondage again to fear..." Romans 8:15.

What does that "again" mean? The second time. You were in bondage before you accepted the liberty in Christ. You're made free now; don't go back to the bondage. Let me read you a comment on this. This is from the *Bible Commentary*, Book 6, page 1077.

"The spirit of bondage is engendered by seeking to live in accordance with legal religion, through striving to fulfill the claims of the law in our own strength" *Ellen G. White Comments, Book 6, page 1077.*

This is what the Pharisees did; this is what Martin Luther did for a while, until the Lord helped him see something better. You remember Martin Luther going to Rome to try and find holiness and righteousness. You remember him going up that staircase in Rome, kneeling, kneeling, each step, kneeling there, and saying his prayer. But partway up those steps, the voice of God spoke to his soul, in the words of Scripture. "The just shall live by faith" and he never went on to the top of that staircase. He got up

from his knees, bounded down those steps. What a sight it must have been in Rome!
And the reformation came, as the result of that.

Ah, my dear friends, what a reformation can come in our lives, in our experience, if we will learn that same sweet and blessed truth. There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. Do not let the Devil fasten the label of sin and unrighteousness upon you after you have chosen Christ. Admit, of course, that your human nature is weak and faulty, but do not accept the delivery of the Devil's packages.

But now somebody says, "Brother Frazee, this is all very good, but suppose I fall?" Well, suppose you do? Suppose you do. How many of you here know how to play the piano at least a little, may I see your hands? Hold up your hands, I'm not going to ask you to play; I just want to know something. Well, nearly half this audience know how to play at least a little on the piano.

That's fine, now may I ask another question? And be real honest. Did any of you that never made a mistake learning to play the piano? I want you to stand. You know, I think I'd be safe if I'd offer a \$10.00 bill to somebody that hadn't made any mistakes playing the piano. I think the only people who could get the \$10.00 bill would be those that never went near the piano, what do you say? Right?

Now what do people do when they're learning to play the piano do they make mistakes? But do they stop? No, they go right on. Now this isn't all there is to the Christian life, what I'm illustrating with the piano, but there's a very important lesson in what I've just said. And that is friends, if we make mistakes, we should ask Jesus to help us, and get up and go on, and not feel that He has kicked us out. The teacher is not going to kick us out of the studio because we make mistakes. The more mistakes we make, the more we need the teacher, right. And His fund of patience is unlimited, His mercy is wonderful.

"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to
fear; but the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba,
Father" Romans 8:15.

The Father is not going to kick us out. If we in our weakness wander away, He's there to take us back and fold us in His arms of love. I'd like to hear from somebody this morning that is thankful to God that there's no condemnation. Please don't any of you tell us how bad you are; that won't help us. Tell us how good He is; that will cheer us. What's your note of courage this morning?

[Testimony service follows.]

Now our Father, we commit to Thee the preaching of Thy word. May the seeds that have been sown in every heart be watered by Thy Spirit, that it may spring up and bear fruit to eternal life. May each one who knows Thee, share the knowledge of Thy

love with others. If there are any that do not, oh may they knock at the door that it may be opened. May they seek that they may find. We ask it in Jesus name. Amen.

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