

Romans 10 - Free at Last

We are now at the end of the first of three sections of the book of Romans. Paul covers the disconnect between the demands of the Law and salvation in the first section. In the second section, Paul will explain that just because we are focusing on salvation without the Law that doesn't mean that the people of the Law, the Jews, have become irrelevant. There will be a great eschatological message in that section. In the final section, Paul will deal with the practical application of the Law.

In chapters 1-7 of the first section, we were convicted of sin but by God's grace, we were saved and free to serve Him, even though we struggle with the flesh. Now, this first section ends with an exclamation point in Romans 8 as Paul explained that after all this, the only thing left is the resurrection and our glorification. Dr. Martin Luther King in his "I Have a Dream Speech," expressed his hope for the day when people would base their worth on the content of their character instead of basing their power on their minority status. In that day, they would say, "Free at last, Free at last, Thank God Almighty we are free at last!" However, when we reflect on this more deeply, we realize that in this life freedom is fleeting and there will always rise up those who want to control your life. When we consider Romans 8, this should make us look forward to when we will be in glory because it is only then that we will be able to truly shout, "Free at last, Free at last, Thank God almighty we are free at last!" At that time, we will truly be able to shout "Glory!" What we will truly have, is a glorified body.

1. Christ, our resurrection -

The basis of expectation is the fact that once you have accepted Christ as your Savior, you are one with Him because you are *in* Him.

Rom 8:1-2 *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are **in** Christ Jesus, who

walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

2For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

We have received the *spirit* of adoption.

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

We are going to look at the *adoption* later, but it means *to be placed as a son*. This is not referring to becoming a child of God in salvation, although it is certainly true that when you get saved you do become a child of God. Later, down in vs. 23, Paul gives the definition of *adoption*. Specifically it refers to the resurrection of the body. This is how Jesus became the *first* born among many brethren.

Rom 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

It could be said that we do not actually have our own resurrection, but that we participate in His resurrection. That is why Jesus so pointedly said "I **am** the resurrection." When Martha expressed her faith that her brother Lazarus would be raised up in the last day, Jesus said,

John 11:25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

We will be raised up because Jesus *is* the resurrection, not just that He will raise us up. If you are one with Christ then you are predestined to be conformed to His image.

2. The glorified body -

When I contemplate the glory of Heaven, I, quite frankly, cannot totally imagine it. I understand that there will be streets of gold and the tree of life in a beautiful city. I know that Jesus will be the light and glory of Heaven. It doesn't bother me that I can't totally image it because:

1Cor 2:9-10 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

Some people poke fun at a caricature of Heaven where everyone sits around on clouds singing all day. First of all, that beats falling in a bottomless pit screaming for all eternity. Lest anyone wonder if that remark is intended to frighten someone into Christianity, let me remove all doubt: yes it is. The very idea of Hell should be sobering. When someone takes offense at that idea, the problem they are really addressing is the use of Hell to control people's lives. They imagine going to church and being warned that if they don't do what the church says, they are going to Hell. That is the furthest thing from the truth in a doctrinally sound church. What the *Bible* really teaches is that salvation is guaranteed forever. Once you are saved, there *is no* more threat of Hell. If you are guaranteed Heaven because Jesus saved you, then the Bible teaches that you can't be threatened with Hell if you don't conform. Some of those who complain that Hell should not be used to scare people show themselves to be hypocrites because they will then "celebrate" Halloween in as hellish and scary a way as possible. When Hell is considered properly, it should be scary but only to the point of letting someone else, Jesus Christ, take care of it for us.

Singing in Heaven is not such a bad idea anyway. As you sing the hymns from week to week, you might find yourself worshiping God as you sing them in your personal life. It sure beats

"singing" the words of this world's current culture!

Ps 98:4 Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise.

I can handle the loud part pretty easily. The noise I make when I sing is joyful to *me*. If anyone complains that you sing flat, just explain that you sing on key, you just change the key on a note here and there. Having a "hymn sing" is actually very enjoyable. If you have ever been part of a great church choir, then the idea of singing in Heaven is even more beautiful. It is even more meaningful when you are in a place like a Christian conference and the worship leader begins to direct the congregation and no one needs a hymnal in front of them because they know them by heart and sing them *from* a heart that has experienced suffering *and* victory. You can improve on that thought as you reflect on the martyrs who were put to death with songs on their dying lips as the last testimony for people to hear the Gospel. There is one way to top all of these, and that is with the thought of singing with glorified lips and a glorified voice in a glorified body, in the glorious presence of our glorious Savior.

For those who are not saved, this might not make as much sense, but that is only because they figured out how lost this life is and how glorious Christ is.

Contemplating Heaven might not be that easy, but we can all understand the concept of glorification when we look at the pains of this life and temporal relief we enjoy from time to time.

Rom 8:19-23 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. **[The manifestation of the sons of God is a reference to how the angels are called, for example, the sons of God because they are spirit beings. We will have a new spiritual body.]**

...

21Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. **[The glorious liberty of the children of God refers to the freedom we will have in the resurrected body.]**

22For we know that the whole creation **groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.**

23And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even **we ourselves groan within ourselves**, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body. **[The adoption is the resurrection, we will be sons of God in the sense of one who has a glorified body.]**

Those of us who have experienced more time on this earth are more acquainted with that earnest expectation. Looking at the history both past and recent, it would be naive to think that this life should have any expectation or hope of utopia. Critics have suggested that religion has nothing to offer since so many wars and so much death has been in the name of religion. Actually, no wars or death have occurred in the name of religion. There have always been evil people who have taken advantage of religion. *True Christianity* is the opposite of war; remember the Golden Rule? *Man* perverts the Golden Rule to say, "He who has the gold, rules." In actuality, more people have been killed in wars that have been started by those who *reject* religion in favor of a collective Utopia where if you kill off those who don't conform then you will finally have unity. From time to time when we experience relief after such suffering, we can get an idea of what Heaven will be like.

When you have suffered a loss of a friend or a relative, the expectation of Heaven provides a relief from the groanings of our soul. We can appreciate the relief of the glorified body when we

get a little relief in this life after going through a sickness, or worse, a health crisis.

When God created man, He declared that His creation was "good." He gave us wonderful senses to know His creation. God spoke with man in the garden. Man walked with God. When we have that glorified body, we will not only have glorified lips and voices to sing His praise, but we'll have glorified ears to hear His voice and the glorious music of Heaven. We'll have glorified eyes to behold His glory. We'll have glorified legs to carry us without getting tired.

3. The glorified heart -

We actually have the glorified spirit (mind) now, but the soul will also be caught up in the resurrection. We won't have the temptation of the flesh to pull the old man back into the world. The will of our spirit will work in concert with our soul and an unfettered flesh. Just as we considered the glorified body, our heart will be glorified. This is not the physical heart, but the heart as the expression of our desires. We will have a glorified will and a glorified love.

Rom 8:5-14 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.

6For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace.

7Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

8So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

9But 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.

...

14For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

Won't it be great that you will be surrounded by people who won't be tempted by *the old man* to lie against you or be envious of you? Won't it be great that all your neighbors will have a glorified love and you won't have to ever doubt them?

All of this is only available if you have asked Jesus to be your Savior. The transformation will start in your heart and you will begin to sense the glory of God and the glory of the Bible, the Word of God. If you will start with an honest examination of the impossible things unless there is a God, you could be surprised at what God could do in your heart...but the emphasis is on *honest*.

For those who know Christ in their heart...take time to step back from this life and reflect on that glory to come. Be thankful for it knowing that when our work is ended, there is eternal relief and glory.

Rom 8:18 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.

When we reflect on the goodness of God and that glory in our heart, we can appreciate the glory to come.

1. Christ, our resurrection - Rom 8:1-2,14,29, John 11:25
2. The glorified body - 1Cor 2:9-10, Ps 98:4, Rom 8:19-23
3. The glorified heart - Rom 8:5-14,18