

Introduction

As we leave chapter 7, we find a frustrated man wrestling with law of the flesh. As we enter chapter 8, we discover a victorious saint marveling in the law of the Spirit. Leonard Ravenhill makes the following comparisons between the two chapters:

Romans Chapter 8. Read verse 37: "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."
The 7th chapter is a chapter of gloom, the 8th chapter is a chapter of glory.
The 7th chapter is a chapter of condemnation, the 8th chapter is a chapter of emancipation.
The 7th chapter is a funeral march, the 8th chapter is a wedding march. . .
Romans 7 is a chapter on the tomb. Romans 8 is a chapter on triumph. . .
The 7th chapter is the chapter of paradise lost. It's a chapter of depravity. The 8th chapter is a chapter of deliverance and delight. . .
chapter 7 is a chapter of misery and condemnation. The 8th chapter is a liberated soul. . .
chapter 7 is a chapter on a self-centered person.
The 8th chapter is a chapter about the Christ-centered person.

Transition

How does such a transition take place between the two chapters? Chapter 7 says, "I can't seem to win." Chapter 8 says, "*we are more than conquerors.*" By the time Paul reaches the end of the chapter, he declares that there is **nothing** that can separate us from God (vv. 37-39). What makes such a change?

As we learned in the previous chapter, there was a constant warfare. The reason for the frustration of 7:23-24, is because the chapter centers on the self ("I" is used 33 times in the chapter). In chapter 8, the focus is on the power of the Holy Spirit ("Spirit" is used 21 times in the chapter). Again, Ravenhill points out. . .

A wretched, sin-bound man in the 7th chapter and no Holy Spirit. A liberated man in the 8th chapter, and over and over again he pays tribute to the Holy Spirit of God.

As we closely examine this transition of perspective, we find that Paul outlines several perspectives that we must realize, if we are to move from being a victim of sin, to being a victor over sin.

I. The Grace We Experience (vv. 1-13). —*Grace gives us a. . .*

A. New Law (vv. 1-4).

Because of the grace he spoke of in chapters 5-6, we can now live with **NO CONDEMNATION!** What a blessing! The old law of sin and death (7:23), no longer can condemn us. Notice that the old law no longer can. . .

1. Claim us (v.2).

—A higher law now claims us. We are now "*in Christ.*" Paul uses this phrase 74 times in his writings. He finds it to be a glorious truth!

ILLUSTRATION: (Noah in the ark).

2. Condemn us (v.3).

—All our offences have been nailed to the cross (cf. Col. 2:14). The word that is used here is used only by Paul, and in the book of Romans (5:16, 18; 8:1). Notice that it does **not** say that we do not deserve it, but there is none.

ILLUSTRATION: Clean pages when the "books" are opened!

Robertson's Word Pictures. . .

Therefore now (ara nun). Two particles. Points back to the triumphant note in Ro 7:25 after the preceding despair. No condemnation (ouden katakrima). As sinners we deserved condemnation in our unregenerate state in spite of the struggle. But God offers pardon "to those in Christ Jesus (tois en Christôi Iêsou). This is Paul's Gospel. The fire has burned on and around the Cross of Christ. There and there alone is safety. Those in Christ Jesus can lead the consecrated, the crucified, the baptized life. (*emphasis added*)

3. Control us (v.4).

B. New Lord (vv. 5-13).

Verse 1 speaks of no condemnation for those "*in Christ.*" Then, the Scriptures give the evidence of what one who is "*in Christ*" does. Twice this evidence is repeated (vv. 1, 4) which says, "*who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*"

NOTE: The word, “*after*” (*kata*) carries the idea of “according to.” Those who are saved will have a desire to walk in the Spirit (cf. Gal. 5:16-18).

The new law cleared us. The new Lord controls us. The law of the Spirit will. . .

1. Control our mind (vv. 5-7).

—The carnal mind is at “*enmity*” (war) with God (cf. Jam. 4:4).

ILLUSTRATION: Isaac’s mind being carnal when he was more concerned about his food than his faith (cf. Gen. 25:28 & 27:4). God had already told him who was to get the blessing (25:23).

2. Control our motives (vv. 8-9).

—To be pleasing to God (cf. Heb. 11:6).

3. Control our members (vv. 10-13).

—When we are controlled by the Holy Spirit, we will have the power to please and serve God in our “*mortal*” bodies (cf. Rom. 12:1-2).

II. Glory We Enjoy (vv. 14-18).

NOTE: When there is a new law and a new Lord, it naturally implies a new life. This is also in accordance with II Corinthians 5:17. In this chapter, Paul discusses many of the characteristics of the new life “in Christ.” However, he says nothing of the new birth. The truth of the new birth is foundational doctrine (cf. Heb. 6:1). The truth of the new life is positional doctrine. In other words, it is impossible for a spiritual “baby” to move from victim to victor. It requires some maturity “in Christ” to become “*more than conquerors*.” Peter says that newborn babies are to desire the “*sincere milk of the word*” (I Pet. 2:2). However, “*strong meat*” is for those who have given themselves to the exercise of the Word of God (Heb. 5:12, 14).

This section of verses (i.e., vv. 14-18) ends with the believer enjoying revealed glory. How does one move from the guilt of sin, to the glory of the Son? As one moves from infancy to maturity, he will discover the great Biblical truth of our spiritual adoption. The truth of the new birth concerns

our relation with Christ. The truth of adoption concerns our position “in Christ.” This truth will cause us to desire to “grow up” in the Lord.

This positional truth reveals three great facts concerning our position “in Christ.”

Remember: The phrase “*in Christ*” is used by Paul 74 times. It apparently is one of his greatest thoughts!

A. Led by the Spirit (v.14).

—The evidence of being a child of God is obedience to the leading of His Spirit.

ILLUSTRATION: God has always delighted in leading His people. In the Old Testament, He led them by a pillar of fire, and a cloud. Today, He leads through His Word. John Phillips aptly states, “*Many believers lack a clear sense of divine leading in their lives*.” Why is that? Because they spend no time seeking His leadership through their daily time with God.

B. Loved by the Father (vv. 15-16).

1. True believers do not live in bondage (v.15a; cf. Heb. 2:15).

2. True believers have confidence (vv. 15b-16; cf. Heb. 4:16). Because of their confidence in the work of Christ, they have a close relationship with their Heavenly Father. (Abba = a term similar to Daddy).

NOTE: Notice that this confidence is Spirit empowered. Phillips points out that the Spirit’s witness is referred to three times in the New Testament. . . He witnesses *to* us (Heb. 10:15; *in* us (I John 5:10), and *with* us (Rom. 8:16).”

C. Lifted by the Son (vv. 17-18).

1. Heirs with Christ (v.17a).

2. Sufferers with Christ (vv. 17b-18).

NOTE: Maturity comes through trials & sufferings (cf. Php. 1:29; Jam. 1:3-4). However, all is not sad! There is glory to come (vv. 18; 30; cf. Mal. 3:17).

QUESTION: Are you enjoying the glory of your position?

III. Groanings We Endure (vv. 19-27).

In this section of verses, Paul reminds us of the hardships of life. It is easy to shout the victory, when you think of God's grace. It is easy to live in victory, when you are on the mountaintop of glory. However, it is here that we learn that moving from being a victim to becoming a victor is not always *grace* and *glory*.

In verse 17, the Holy Spirit revealed to us that suffering and glory are inseparable twins. After all, is not the glory of God's grace best seen in the light of the sufferings of Calvary? The Bible also reminds us that our calling is not simply for salvation, but also for suffering (Php. 1:29; I Pet. 2:21). Modern-day TV preachers would have us believe that being saved is to be delivered from all adversity, trials and troubles. However, the Bible teaches no such thing concerning the Christian life.

How does this truth relate to our current topic of moving from victim to victor? In these verses, we will see that we are not alone in our suffering. It has often been said, "*There is strength in numbers.*" Even the Bible speaks of two being better than one (Ecc. 4:9-12). Our text reveals there is some "groaning" taking place (vv. 22, 23, 26). The word "groan" (stenazo) means to, "*to make (intransitively, be) in straits, i.e. (by implication) to sigh, murmur, pray inaudibly:--with grief, groan, grudge, sigh.*"

Notice the company we have in our suffering. . .

A. Creation groans (vv. 19-22).

When man sinned, it affected all of creation. The Holy Spirit reminds us that creation was an unwilling participant in the sinful fall (v.20).

NOTE: The word "vanity" is a word that means "disappointing misery." Phillips states, "*It describes something which does not measure up to that for which it was intended.*"

1. Vegetable creation — *Temptation centered around a food.*

—Brought the curse of thorns.

2. Animal creation — *Temptation introduced by a serpent.*

—Brought the curse of crawling on his belly.

3. Human creation — *Temptation was yielded to by man.*

—Brought the curse of death and suffering.

NOTE: However, creation has a hope (vv. 20c-22). There will be a "delivering day" for it (cf. Isa. 11:6-9; Rev. 22:1-3).

B. Christian groans (vv. 23-25).

1. Body — *cursed to toil in sweat & then die.*

2. Soul — *cursed to perish & die.*

3. Spirit — *cursed to be ruled by sin.*

NOTE: However, the Christian has a hope (vv. 24-25). This "hope" does not refer to the redemption of the soul, but to the deliverance of the body (cf. 7:24; Php. 3:20-21). We should be "groaning" in our prayers. Leonard Ravenhill stated, "*I'll tell you the secret of getting revival in the church. Find half a dozen people who know how to groan. You won't have the same church in a year.*"

The "seen" part of our hope is the "firstfruits" of the Holy Spirit (v.23; cf. "earnest" in II Cor. 1:22; 5:5).

C. Comforter groans (vv. 26-27).

The Holy Spirit does not groan because of His sin and curse, but He empathizes with us in our curse.

NOTE: However, even the Spirit has a hope (v.27). He knows that He is getting our prayers through! We have an Advocate (I Jn. 2:1)!

IV. Guarantee We Embrace (vv. 28-39).

A. Divine purpose (vv. 28-30).

NOTE: Paul, in chapter 7, described the struggle of the flesh in attempting to live for God. At the end of chapter 8, he lists some things that contribute to this struggle. Sometimes we refer to such things as “circumstances.” Struggling Christians sometime say, “I could serve God if it were not for. . . .” In other words, they see the circumstances as obstacles to service, rather than opportunities for service.

1. Synergy of purpose (v.28). —*Predestined for Glory!*

—The phrase “*work together*” is from a single Greek work (*senergeo*) meaning: “The interaction of two or more agents or forces so that their combined effect is greater than the sum of their individual effects.”

a. Possess a genuine love for God (cf. Jn. 14:15).

b. Possess a calling of God.

2. Conformity of purpose (v.29).

—To look like Christ! The Greek word is “*summorphos*.” This is predestined by God! Therefore, it is not a matter of “if,” but “when!” We are predestined for holiness! The apostle, John, reminds us that “*we shall be like Him*” (I Jn. 3:2).

QUOTE: “*All that God designed for glory and happiness as the end, He decreed to grace and holiness as the way*” (M. Henry).

3. Glory of purpose (v.30).

—A glorified saint!

ILLUSTRATIONS: ❶ Jacob did not realize this principle. He said, “*Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me*” (Gen. 42:36). ❷ Job no doubt did not understand his sufferings. We can look back at Job and see the purpose. But, he had no knowledge of why he was suffering so.

B. Divine practice (vv. 31-34).

1. God is for us (v.31; cf. Psa. 56:9)!

2. God gives freely to us (v.32; cf. Matt. 10:8; 19:27-29).

NOTE: Notice the usage of the word “*delivered*.” It is the Greek word, *paradidomi*, and means: “*to surrender, i.e. yield up, intrust, transmit:--betray, bring forth, cast, commit, deliver (up), give (over, up), hazard, put in prison, recommend*.” In other words, this is a reminder that no man took the life of Jesus, but He was freely given as the sacrifice for man’s sin! “*For*” (hyper) = “on our behalf.”

3. God intercedes for us (v.33-34).

—The devil is our accuser (Rev. 12:10). God also makes intercession for us! Notice. . .

a. Holy Spirit intercedes (Rom. 8:26).

b. Jesus, the Son, intercedes (Heb. 7:25).

c. God, the Father, intercedes (Rom. 8:34).

THOT: How can a child of God live in continual defeat and discouragement, when the whole Trinity is interceding on their behalf? To live in discouragement is to doubt God’s ability to fulfill His desires in your life. Remember: verse 29 says that we are predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ.

C. Divine promise (vv. 35-39).

1. Problems will come (vv. 35-36; cf. II Tim. 3:12).

2. Victory is ours (v.37; cf. 8:18; I Cor. 2:9; II Cor. 4:15-18).

—Notice the usage of the word “*things*.” What we call “troubles,” God calls “things!”

3. Eternity is secure (vv. 38-39). I AM SECURE IN CHRIST!

Conclusion: Are you a victor or a victim?