

ROMANS

*A Daily Devotional
Study Guide*



LAKESHORE

FELLOWSHIP

www.lakeshorefellowshipchurch.org

WEEK 13

Day 1

Study: Romans 8:18-23

Reading: Ephesians 1:6-14, II Corinthians 5:1-11

Memory: Matthew 5:18

Throughout my married life, there have been times where I have coached teams and played for teams that have traveled to tournaments. Though I loved being with the guys, when I was away I longed to be at home with my wife and my children. This was especially true when I hadn't gotten to spend as much time with my wife and children due to a busy schedule. Just to talk to my wife on the phone during those times was enjoyable, but it wasn't the same as being with her.

Today, we are going to see that the joy and peace that we have been given as believers by the Holy Spirit is just a small portion of the glory that we will experience when this life is over. We will see how we should earnestly long to be home with our Heavenly Father.

What Does the Bible Say?

After Paul's conversion, he faced constant persecution because of the stance that he took for Christ. He described some of this in II Corinthians 11:23-26 as he wrote, "I have been in prison more often. I have been hurt more in beatings. I have been near death many times. Five times the Jews have given me their punishment of thirty-nine lashes with a whip. Three different times I was beaten with rods. One time I was almost stoned to death. Three times I was in ships that wrecked, and one of those times I spent a night and a day in the sea. I have gone on many travels and have been in danger from rivers, thieves, my own people, the Jews, and those who are not Jews." (New Century Version) Though he went through all this, he knew that the glory of eternity would be far worth it (vs 18).

This is because all creation is anxiously waiting for God to reveal His full glory to His children. After the fall of Adam and Eve into sin, the perfect creation that God made became corrupt and could only hope for the day that God would gather His children together to make everything right. When the glory of God is fully revealed once again, the sinful flesh will no longer be corrupt, but will be made perfect before God (vs 19-21).

The whole creation is waiting in pain as a woman preparing to give birth to a child. This illustration described how the earth is painfully waiting in sin for the glory of God to be revealed. Just as a woman will eventually give birth to a child, the earth will eventually see the glory of God once again reign upon the earth (vs 22).

As the earth is eagerly anticipating the glory of God, we as believers also await our glorified state. On the earth we have been given the first fruits of the Spirit. When harvest time arrived, the first fruits were often given as down payments in expectation of a greater harvest. This is similar to how the Holy Spirit has been given to us as a down payment and a preview of what is to come with God for eternity when our heavenly adoption is completed (vs 23).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Are you longing for eternal life, or are you wrapped up in the present world that is all around you? Do you desire the day that you will be with God for eternity, or do you look at death as a somber occasion? Many Christians don't look forward to eternity because they haven't experienced the great joy and peace that God wants them to have in this life. Paul experienced this and he wanted more of it. This type of attitude that Paul presented in these verses is very hard to have in the United States. We have so many possessions and so many earthly pleasures, it is hard to pull ourselves away. Though God has blessed us with many of these things to enjoy, we must be sure that we don't enjoy them at the expense of the joy and peace that comes from God. Obtaining the right balance is not always easy, but ask God to reveal to you how to live a balanced life.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank God for giving you the Holy Spirit.*
- * *Ask God to help you live with the proper perspective on life.*
- * *Praise God because He is the creator of all.*

Thought for the day

Day 2

Study: Romans 8:24-27

Reading: Hebrews 11:1-40

Memory: Matthew 5:18

One of the movies that I enjoy watching around Christmas time is "Miracle on 34th Street." In the movie a man claiming to be Kris Kringle has a trial on his mental state because he says that he is the real Santa Claus. Before he was put on trial, he met a little girl who was taught not to have faith or trust in anyone but herself. After spending much time with the self-proclaimed Santa Claus, she began to believe in him. The court case ended with the state proclaiming that he was the real Santa Claus, but the girl had one final test for him. She wanted a specific house for her family. That was her only request for Christmas. After attending a Christmas party, she had given up hope, but still wanted to believe. As she was sitting in the back of the car saying, "I believe, I believe" she saw the exact house she asked for. She told her mom to stop the car and she ran into the house. Her mom saw it was for sale and not wanting to disappoint her, decided to buy the house.

Today, we are going to see how we as believers have a real hope. We can believe in what God says and have full confidence that God will do it.

What Does the Bible Say?

All those who have believed in Christ have a special hope that is given by God. The word "hope" in the Bible is not like a wish, but it is more like an expectation based on the promises of God. Believers aren't hoping that God will give them eternal life, but they know He will provide them with the future glory they have been eagerly anticipating. The definition of hope that Paul gives is very similar to the definition of faith in Hebrews 11:1. Hope is based on a promise that has not yet been fulfilled. Though the thing that we hope in hasn't happened yet, we know that one day it will. It is because of this hope that believers eagerly persevere through the trials and persecutions of life. It is this hope that helps drive a believer to continue to take a stand for Christ (vs 24-25).

Just as all creation earnestly awaits in hope for the return of Christ and the revelation of the full glory of God, the Holy Spirit awaits this as well.

He knows that we are living in sinful bodies and he chooses to come along side of us to encourage and help us in our weakness. The Holy Spirit helps us pray as we ought to pray since we can't fully understand what to pray for on our own. The Holy Spirit gives us the faith that we need and also helps us pray for the will of God which our natural bodies can't fully understand. The Holy Spirit intercedes before God the Father on our behalf with a great longing to see us be more like Jesus Christ. The word "intercede" means "to cut in on the behalf of others." The Holy Spirit is cutting in and helping us in our relationship with the Father. These "groanings" that the "Spirit utters" are not some holy babble that comes from our mouths, but they are some type of direct communication between the Spirit and the Father (vs 26).

The Holy Spirit has the ability to do this because He dwells in the life of every believer and knows what we need. He searches our heart and helps us pray for the things that will help us conform to the will of God. Even when we might not recognize what we need, the Holy Spirit knows and is praying to God for us (vs 27).

How Does this Apply to Me?

The passage you read today is one of those passages that can't be fully understood by your simple human mind. How the Holy Spirit, who is God, pleads with God the Father for you is a mystery that you will not be able to fully understand this side of eternity, but you can understand the truth that Paul is trying to teach his readers. This truth is that you have a hope in something that is far greater than yourself. You can rest assured that God will keep His promises for you in the future as well as allow you to know His direction in the present. The Holy Spirit has been given to you to help you and work alongside of you. He gives you the ability to overcome sin and have victory in your Christian life. You don't have to get frustrated when you can't fully understand God and His will for your life because you don't have to. The Holy Spirit knows and will give you the ability each day to accomplish what God has planned for you.

Thought for the day

Day 3

Study: Romans 8:28-30

Reading: Deuteronomy 8:1-16, Ephesians 1:1-7

Memory: Matthew 5:18

There have been times in my pastoral ministry that have been more emotionally stressful than others. As a pastor, I have tried to follow the Word of God and lead the congregation as God desires me to lead, but sometimes the physical results weren't being seen. There were weeks that were very exciting as church attendance was up and some positive things seemed to be happening. Yet, at times, the next week was easily disappointing as attendance would be very low and it seemed that nothing positive was happening. Much of my problem stemmed from the fact that I was focusing on myself and my ministry rather than faithfully accomplishing what God wanted me to do. When I stopped and thought through the situation, God gave me the confidence and encouragement that I needed as I realized that I am His child and He was working things out for His honor and glory regardless of the earthly results.

What Does the Bible Say?

Every believer will face trials and difficulties in life, but through every circumstance we can rest assured because we have a Heavenly Father watching over us. Our almighty Father, the One who orchestrates the magnificent order of the creation, also has a perfect plan for your life. No matter what trials and difficulties you face, God will always be there helping you every step of the way. You can have confidence in Him and the special plan He has established for your life. This is because God has called you to perform a specific task and purpose in life and He allows difficulties to help mature you and prepare you for these tasks (vs 28).

Before the world began, God knew who would trust in Him to be their Savior. In fact, the Bible teaches that God chose believers to be His children for a purpose. This purpose is to be, act, think and live like Christ. This is so that the world would not only have the example of Christ to lead them to Him, but would have the example of all the children of God (vs 29) (Note: The doctrine of election has caused great debate for years, and is

something that we can't fully understand. We know that God wants all men to be saved, but all men are not saved. God has given all men a choice to choose to accept or reject Him. How these balance out will never be fully understood by man on this side of heaven).

Not only did God call us to be His children, but He also declared us to be justified. There was nothing we could do to erase the sin debt which we owed to God, but Jesus Christ stepped in and paid the debt for us. His blood has allowed us to be declared righteous before God. This salvation that was given to us also will one day allow our vile bodies to be transformed into new, perfect bodies in which we will spend eternity with Jesus Christ. Because of the work of Christ, we will be in utter bliss for eternity (vs 30).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you sometimes catch yourself focusing on the here and now? Do you let your emotions control your service for God and your view of God? Do you let difficult times discourage you from your service to God? If you answered "yes" to any of these, you are not alone. Each one of us will struggle with these things in our lives because we are human. As humans, we need to understand the importance of trusting God for all things. We can be confident of the fact that even in the most difficult situations that God is still in control and He is working in ways that you can't see or understand. In fact, when you look back on your life you will have to admit that you have grown the most during tough times. God knows this and has a special plan for you. He allows things to enter into your life to help mold you to be the most usable vessel for Him.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank God for the difficult times that come into your life.*
- * *Ask God to help you trust in Him at all times.*
- * *Praise God because He is all-powerful*

Thought for the day

Day 4

Study: Romans 8:31-33

Reading: Psalm 27:1-6, Job 22:1-30

Memory: Matthew 5:18

When I was in high school I played in a soccer game that I will never forget. The wind that day had to be blowing at least 40 mph and was blowing straight towards one of the goals. During the half that our team faced the wind, we only got the ball past the half line a few times. We learned quickly that kicking the ball in the air would do more harm than good. If we kicked it hard enough and high enough, the wind would literally cause the ball to go backwards over our heads.

Today, we are going to see how God is on our side. Just as the team that had the wind at their back dominated that half of the game, we can dominate over any opposition because of God.

What Does the Bible Say?

God chose every believer to be His child before the world began. As we chose to express our faith in Him, He chose to justify us and to glorify us by transforming our lives and making us His children. After Paul finished explaining this in verses 29-30, he then asked what a believer's response should be as they realize what they have in Christ. As he did often in the book of Romans, he answered his own question with another question. These questions weren't asked because Paul was curious, but were asked in order for Paul to prove his point. The answer to the first question was given in the second question and the answer to the second question was obvious. He wanted his readers to understand that if God was on their side, they had nothing to fear. By stating "who can be against us," Paul wasn't saying that the believers would be free from opposition. He was living proof of that. Instead, he was telling the believers that God had the power to overcome any opposition, and, because of this, they had nothing to fear (vs 31).

Paul continued his argumentation by using questions in order to get his readers to understand that God loved them with an indescribable love. The same God who was willing to send His own Son to die for their sins would

surely give those who trusted in Him all the power and ability they needed to have the victory in their Christian lives. Not only does God give us the faith and grace that we need to be saved, but salvation is just the beginning of a wonderful life that we can have in Christ (vs 32).

Many believers struggle with guilt because they fail to understand the grace of God and the power of justification. Though God will chastise you at times to bring you back to Him, He doesn't hold your sin against you. God knew you were a sinner when He called you and He still chose to justify you. The phrase "bring any charge" was a legal term that described how a lawyer would place an accusation against one who was on trial. Any accusations made against believers for their sins in God's court will be thrown out because Jesus paid the price for your sins once and for all (vs 33).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you often feel discouraged and defeated as a believer? Do you let your mistakes and failures get you down? Do you listen to the lies of Satan when he tries to convince you that you are a failure? When these thoughts creep into your life, take some time to meditate on today's verses. God, knowing all the sins that you would commit, still chose you to be His child and declared you to be righteous before Him. You don't have to walk around in guilt and shame when you sin, because God still wants to give you victory. You don't have to feel that you can't overcome sin because God will give you all the power you need to overcome. You don't have to fear what people say or do to try to hurt you or discourage you because God is on your side. The Creator of the universe is giving you all the power that you need to accomplish His plan on this earth. You simply have to trust in Him and obey His leading.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank God for choosing you in spite of your sin.*
- * *Ask God to help you trust in Him.*

Thought for the day

Day 5

Study: Romans 8:34-39

Reading: II Chronicles 20:1-30

Memory: Matthew 5:18

Several years ago, when I was pastoring in Wisconsin, the Green Bay Packers were playing in a playoff football game on a Sunday evening. The end of the game was to take place at the same time as our evening service, so I decided to video tape the game and invited the congregation to watch it with me after the service. As I went to the house to get the video tape, I turned the TV on and saw that the game had just finished and the Packers had lost. I didn't tell those who were going to watch the game what the outcome was, but decided to let them see for themselves. As I watched, I began to question whether or not I had seen the score right because it looked like the Packers were going to win. In fact, the Packers had forced the Philadelphia Eagles into a fourth down situation in which they needed 26 yards for a first down in order to stay alive. The questions in my mind were soon put to rest as Philadelphia made a spectacular play and obtained a first down and eventually won.

Today, we are going to see how our lives are like that game. God has promised us the victory, but at times we think the victory He promises seems impossible.

What Does the Bible Say?

We left off yesterday having just walked in to God's courtroom as sinful creatures who can do no good. As Satan puts us on trial for our sin, Jesus Christ steps in as our lawyer (intercessor) and declares that we are innocent of all charges because we have been justified by His blood. It is also revealed to us that not only is Jesus the lawyer, but He is also the judge. Paul made this clear as he answered his question about who does the condemning. Several places in the Scripture Jesus was described as sitting at the right hand of the Father. That position was a position of power and authority and Scripture elsewhere makes it clear that it is Jesus Christ who will act as judge of the earth (vs 34).

Since Jesus will do all of this for us, we can live in complete freedom

as long as we don't lose sight of His love. Many people feel that their sin will cause God to stop loving them and to become angry with them. Their failures keep them from being what God wants them to be because they have the wrong view of God. This is why Paul wanted to make it clear that the love of God for His children will never change. The work that Christ did for you on the cross will never be declared null and void because He loved you while you were His enemy lost in your sin. This is why nothing will separate you from the love of Christ. Though hard times will come your way, and from a human perspective it may seem that God has abandoned you, you can rest assured that He is always there (vs 35).

Paul quoted Psalm 44:22 to remind his believers that God's people will be sought out by evil men for persecution. Though Satan will use his forces to try to destroy the servants of Christ, we can be confident that God's power will overcome his attacks. The word "conquerors" means "one that overcomes." As believers, we do more than just overcome, we also have been promised the victory. We can be assured that nothing will separate us from God and His plan for us. We have nothing to fear as we boldly determine to follow God's leading for our life each day (vs 36-39).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Isn't it nice to know that you have been promised the victory in life? Doesn't a worry free life sound wonderful? You can have what God promised you, but you have to choose to put yourself aside and let Him take control. Paul made it very clear that the life lived for Christ will be full of physical trials and difficulties, but He also made it clear that you have nothing to fear. You can live a life of boldness for the Lord knowing that He is always at your side, upholding you in every situation. You can fight through the negative circumstances that come into your life because you know that God will always be on your side. You can be more than a conqueror, but that type of strength can only come through God. Take time today, and each day, to yield your will over to Him.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * Thank God for the victory He has promised you.
- * Ask God to help you to daily do His will.

Day 6

Study: 2 Corinthians 11: 23-12:10

Memory: Matthew 5:18

****There were a few people in the Corinthian church who had accused Paul of doing what he did for money. He took some time to address this in the passage and revealed that serving Christ was not at all for his personal financial benefit. These people exalted the prideful Jewish leaders and were belittling his ministry. Since the people wanted to compare him with other leaders, he indulged them briefly by describing his credentials as a servant of Christ. These were way different than the credentials of those who sought selfish gain by claiming to be followers of Christ.*

What does Paul say about himself when comparing himself with other leaders (vs 23)?

****This may appear prideful if you take it out of context, but if you read the previous verses, you will see that he does not present this in pride at all.*

How did Paul start to describe his role as a servant of Christ (vs 23)?

List six of the things that Paul had experienced in his ministry of the Gospel (vs 24-27).

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

What did Paul feel daily pressure about (vs 28)?

What does this reveal about his heart for ministry?

How did Paul relate with those he ministered to (vs 29)?

****Paul didn't just preach and take money from those he preached to. He felt their struggles and pains. He cared deeply for their souls.*

What did Paul choose to boast in (vs 30)?

What interesting statement did Paul make in 12:1?

****It is almost humorous that he described all his heartaches and suffering as "boasting." He does this since he had been accused of exalting himself.*

What did Paul say had happened to him (vs 2-4)?

What did Paul say about his boasting (vs 5)?

Why did Paul not want to boast (vs 6)?

What happened to Paul (vs 7)?

****There has been many ideas presented about Paul's "thorn in the flesh," and though we don't know exactly what it was, we know that it was a continual affliction to him.*

What did God reveal to Paul when Paul asked him to take away his problem (vs 8-9)?

What was Paul's reaction to God's answer (vs 9-10)?

How does this passage give a greater understanding to what Paul was describing at the end of Romans 8?

Personal application

What can I learn about God from this passage?

How can I apply what I have learned to my everyday life?

Day 7

Reading: Romans 8:18-39

(Take time to read this passage again, letting the truths you have studied this week sink into your mind. You are encouraged to go online and read it through a few times in different versions.)

www.biblegateway.com

Bible Memory

Matthew 5:1 Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. 2 And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: 3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. 5 "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. 6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. 7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. 8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. 9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. 10 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. 13 "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. 14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. 17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18 For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

