

Jesus, Dallas & NT: Romans 8 Course Study Guide



The course is based on dozens of writings and teachings of two of the most respected and appreciated voices in our post-modern era - Dallas Willard and NT Wright.

In this course key themes and quotes will be presented through interactive teaching, open Q&A, and practical application. A study guide and additional resources are provided for further personal integration and group study.

This free webinar is the 30th course offered by Jesus College (JesusCollege.com) engaging over 2800 participants in 57 countries. We trust the Holy Spirit will bring biblical and insightful teachings through Dallas and NT to guide us further into our central purpose - Christlikeness.

You will be joined by fellow apprentices of Jesus from around the world forming an encouraging, supportive community of inspiration and accountability each week.

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Your “V-I-M”** Participation

We encourage you to make your course experience more than just a free webinar added to your Christian study routine. An intentional discipline for spiritual growth—ideally with a partner—to better learn, apply, and grow in Christlikeness, will provide a launch pad from the sessions.

Here are a few suggestions to maximize this course.

- 1) READ & MEDITATE multiple times on Romans during the course asking the Spirit of Christ to reveal the truth of God’s Word to you.
- 2) WATCH the recommended video before each session. Capture notes from the teaching, read the scriptures referenced, then review your notes again before the session.
- 3) INQUIRE - Bring questions to digest the content and engage the presenters and other students. Linger longer for the “Q&C” after each session.
- 4) RETREAT - As part of your practice, invest one hour weekly solo with Jesus discussing with Him your key discovery from the session.
- 5) REFLECT - At the end of the course, type or write a 300 word summary or journal entry recognizing the impact of the study and the vision of how it can, by God’s grace, form your spiritual growth in Christlikeness.

** V-I-M = *Vision-Intention-Means* — Dallas calls VIM the reliable pattern for spiritual change, or any change. As you envision a life of hearing God and truly intend to want to hear God, you will seek and find the means to practice a life of hearing God. For more on V-I-M, see *Renovation of the Heart*, chapter 5 ([Webinar on the book.](#)) Another rich resource on V-I-M is in the [Life With God Bible](#) Introduction, xxv-xxxvi

2024 Session Schedule & Content

DATE	SESSION*	SESSION TITLE	SCRIPTURE [time mark]
June 25	Session 1	No Condemnation	Romas 8:1-11
Video #1** - Paul & The Death of Jesus - Romans Overview, NT Wright [33:15-44:20]			
Video #2 - "The Divine Conspiracy #6" , "Kingdom Salvation", Dallas [0:00-4:00]			
July 2	Session 2	Life in the Spirit	Romans 8:12-30
Video #3 - "Human Side of Holiness #6" , "Reality of the Spirit", Dallas [0:00-15:20]			
Video #4 - Knowledge of Christ Today #3 , "The Spirit of God", Dallas [45:43-49:43]			
July 9	Session 3	The Inseparable Love of God	Romans 8:31-39
Video #5 - "God is With Us" Dallas [4:30-8:42]			
V#6 - Knowledge of Christ Today #7 , "Work Together for Good", Dallas [42:30-44:25]			
V#7 - "Bringing Truth to Life" (audio only) Session 1, Dallas, Romans 8:28 [14:15-20:45]			

NOTES

* - If you miss a session, want to study more, or teach the material, the recorded sessions + slides are posted in the [Jesus College library](#) with hundreds of free resources including 19 additional ready-to-learn courses from Jesus College.

** - For the links and transcripts for the recommended videos (free on YouTube), see pages 8-22 of the study guide.

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Romans 8 Bibliography

Dallas Willard — *Renovation of the Heart* (28x); *Hearing God* (11x); *The Divine Conspiracy*, (9x); *The Spirit of the Disciplines* (4x) —> see Scripture Index

NT Wright — *The Heart of Romans*; *Paul, A Biography*, 330-331; *The Day the Revolution Began*, 263-294 ("Paul's letter to the Romans")

Watchman Nee — *The Normal Christian Life*, Chapters 7-9

Session 1 - No Condemnation - Romans 8:1-11

The Importance of Romans 8

"One of Paul's most brilliant and profound passages..." Dallas
"Richest, deepest, and most powerfully sustained climax..." NT

Studying Romans

- 1) THEME - The text's main thrust
- 2) CONNECT - The importance of connecting words
- 3) CONTEXT - First century Jewish world in a Graeco-Roman context

Romans Four-part symphony with Chapter 8 as the Bridge

Key Terms & Themes — “Assurance in New Creation...Image...Covenant”

From Romans 7 to Romans 8 — *Who will rescue me?*

"Paul does not live in Romans 7. Paul lives in Romans 8." Dallas
"From Adam's problem to God's matchless answer." NT

Romans 8:1-4 No Condemnation

"We are not talking about forgiveness of sins. We are talking about life!"

Set Free into New Life in the Messiah Jesus

Battle of Flesh vs. Spirit *"Showing sin up for what it is."* Dallas

Romans 8:5-11 The Spirit Gives Life

Two Landscapes: Flesh & Spirit — Torah over to Spirit — Temple Theology

Session 1 Meditation & Application Romans 8:1-4

Vision - What does “freedom without condemnation” look like to me?

Intention - How often do I willfully set my mind on the Spirit not the flesh?

Means - Meditate on and memorize Romans 8:1-4

Videos V#1** - [Paul & The Death of Jesus](#) - Romans Overview, NT Wright [33:15-44:20]

V#2 - ["The Divine Conspiracy #6"](#), “Kingdom Salvation”, Dallas [0:00-4:00]

Session 2 - Life in the Spirit - Romans 8:12-30

Romans 8:12-17 Led by the Spirit

Mortification - death to flesh and live in the Spirit - v. 12-13
From slavery to sonship — New Creation People - King over Emperor
Jesus - John 14:30 - “He has nothing in me.”

Romans 8:17-21 Liberation of Creation

v. 17 [-bridge-] - Inheritance not Heaven — “Glory” dignity, worth, status
“Romans 8 is not about Heaven.
Heaven is important but it’s not the end of the world.” NT

Romans 8:22-27 Groaning of the Spirit

The deep, personal nature of suffering - the world is in pain!
A Vocation of Prayer — the Church exists to announce & lament
The People of God —The New Temple, the New Tabernacle

Romans 8:28-30 Justified & Glorified

Regaining our proper human vocation - Genesis 1, Psalm 8, Rev. 5:10
Our calling not just “for” us but also “through” us “torchbearers”
v. 29 - Christlikeness in the family of God

Session 2 Meditation & Application

Romans 8:17 & 29

1. Vision - What assurance does my adoption by the King provide me?
2. Intention - Is my goal to go to heaven or to bring His glory on earth?
3. Means - Who do I see suffering for whom I will intercede?

Videos V#3 - ["Human Side of Holiness #6"](#) , “Reality of the Spirit”, Dallas [0:00-15:20]

V#4 - [Knowledge of Christ Today #3](#), “The Spirit of God”, Dallas [45:43-49:43]

Session 3 - The Inseparable Love of God - Romans 8:31-39

The Great Climax

"The whole story of Jesus in nine verses." NT, Truett Conference, Waco, 2022

Seven rhetorical questions in verses 31-35 + Two lists of dangers

Worldviews in Rome & Today Dangers in Rome & Today

Romans 8:31-34 "If God is For Us"

v. 31-32 "The coda for Romans 8", NT @ Truett Conference, Waco, 2022

"It is not ultimately about death and life, or the forgiveness of sins.
The whole chapter is about the love of God tying together Romas 5 & 8."
NT, Truett Conference, Waco, 2022

Romans 8:35-39 "Inseparable Love"

"Will to good for all concerned in our presence and our action." Dallas
The difference between love and desire like a love for chocolate cake!

Emmanuel: God is with Us! New Temple People

"The Assurance Letter - God raised Jesus from the dead, so nothing else can separate us from His love." NT @ Truett Conference, Waco, 2022

Connect Romans 1:1-5 to 8:38-39 *"I am loved, therefore I am."*

Session 3 Meditation & Application Romans 8:38-39

1. Vision - What does God's inseparable love look like and feel like to me?
2. Intention - How does desire play out in my inclinations over love?
3. Means - *"Jesus died for me! We must take time with this in prayer and meditate on passages about God's love for us."* *Life Without Lack*, 151

Videos VV#5 - ["God is With Us"](#) Dallas [4:30-8:42]

V#6 - [Knowledge of Christ Today #7](#), "Work Together for Good", Dallas [42:30-44:25]

V#7 - ["Bringing Truth to Life"](#) (audio only) Session 1, Dallas, Romans 8:28 [14:15-20:45]

Video #1 - [Paul & The Death of Jesus](#) NT Wright [33:15-42:35]

“Romans Overview”, Part 3 @ Pepperdine University, 2016

Romans 6, 7 & 8 - Paul tells the whole Exodus story again. [33:15]

Romans 6 - They are slaves and they come thru the water and they are free. We think it's about baptism and holiness. It is but he is talking about it in language coming through the water.

Romans 7 - Mt. Sinai they get the Torah and they break it and they are a mess ever since. That's Roman 7. Only he tells the story in such a way to make it clear as many Jews would agree then and there is when Israel gets Torah and sins and worships the golden calf, they recapitulate the sin of Adam. He's told that story in such a way as Israel's story and Adam's story jangling against one another. That's the problem, the problem of Sinai.

Romans 8 - [34:25] What happens next in the Exodus story is they are led to the promised land - the inheritance - by the pillar of cloud and fire that come and dwell in the Tabernacle to take them to the place God has promised. Romans 8 is about being led by the Spirit to the inheritance, because my friends, the inheritance, as I am sure you know but it worth being reminding ourselves, the inheritance is not heaven. The inheritance is the whole creation redeemed and restored and rescued from its corruption to decay. In the Bible, the whole world is now God's holy land. So much Christian thought just misses out on that point. But that's what Romans 8 is about.

How has that happened? ref:Romans 5:20 [35:20]

Many Jews will say today Israel's vocation is to show the world how to live.

Romans 7:13 - “It was sin that did it that so it might become exceedingly sinful.” Why did God give the law...The more Israel struggled to keep the Torah, the more sin had it in its grip. The answer is in...

Romans 8:1-4 - *“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus for what the law could not do because it was weak in the flesh, God has done by sending His own son in the likes of sinful flesh and as a sin offering, he condemned sin the flesh.”* This is “penal” - there is no he condemnation. It is substitution - there is no condemnation. It belongs within the Israel narrative, the Passover narrative, it belongs in the the New Creation narrative not within a shrunken moralistic language of the works contract in which, *“I got it wrong, I need to be punished, so God punished*

Jesus instead.” Notice Paul does not say, “God condemned Jesus” but “condemned sin in the flesh of Jesus.” We have belittle that and then have preached lots of illustrations of the belittled version we’ve got.

This, then, is the real substitution—Jesus defeats the enemy alone. In the garden, he says let these people go. Jesus knows he has to go into darkness alone. Sin does it’s worse to Him. The Gospels tell the story of how all the evil in the world converges on Jesus... “this is your hour of darkness”, not that we can go to Heaven or behave properly...but so we can be the new Temple. He says in 8:9-11, “...life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.” This is Temple language. (Colossians 1 & 2) The Spirit is the presence of the God dwelling in the family of God in Christ and dwelling specifically Christian by Christian and the results is resurrection. Spirit is the Lord and giver of life. Paul is picking up the Temple which is destroyed will be rebuilt. The Spirit leads God’s people to their promised inheritance.

Romans 8:31-39 - *“If God is for us, who can be against us?”* [39:25]

Paul draws out the theme of the unbreakable, unstoppable love of God.

“Nothing will separate us from the love of God which is in the Messiah Jesus our Lord.”

This is so much bigger than we have imagined. We naturally shrink it. It’s difficult to tell the whole story which has got the Israel bit in it. We have to live with it and find fresh ways of saying what Paul says, as opposed to our late modern, post-Kantian, semi-platonic versions of all of that. Because what we have in Romans 1-8 is not the platonic heaven but the New Creation. It is not simply an analysis of the human plight of I got it wrong, now God punishes Jesus, and I got it right. It is idolatry we worship forces in the creation - money, sex, power. We give ourselves to them, we give our allegiance to them, and they come back in charge and you can’t get out of it because it’s got you in it’s grip. “Sin” with the capital S (the force of the powers) works through “sins” with a small “s”. But when forgiveness of sins (small “s”) happens, then the grip of the powers is broken. Christ the victor over all the powers because he has accomplished forgiveness of sins. It’s not either/or. The theology of Western world over the last half century at least, thought it was either/or. Paul holds them together. Because, we are called to be the Royal Priesthood by worshipping the true God seen incarnate in Jesus seeing the divine glory on the cross in Paul as in John. We are thereby enabled to be the Royal Priesthood, the kings, the priests, the ones who sum up the praises of Creation, the ones who bring the stewardship and loving wisdom of God to the world. All this generates this vision of Jesus’ death in which God condemned “Sin” by Jesus dying as the representative substitute.

[End of Video clip #1 @ 42:35]

Video 2 - ["The Divine Conspiracy #6"](#) Dallas Willard [0:00-4:00]

“Kingdom Salvation”

The Gospel of the Kingdom

So what is the gospel? The gospel is you can trust Jesus. That's it. That's the simplest form of the gospel.

But not something he said about social evils. Not something he did to secure your forgiveness. That's all in there. But those are not the gospel. The gospel is Jesus. His availability. Put your confidence in him. Come under the rule of God. God at work in your life.

Life of Coherence

Now see, all of us have this in bits and pieces at least. But there is a coherent whole here, of finding our life in the Kingdom of God. And, we've talked about Matthew 4:17; we've talked about Matthew 6:33.

Romans 8:1-14 - *"Walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit"* [1:10]

I haven't said much about Romans 8:1-14. *"There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walked not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh God did by sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh..."*

And showed up sin for what it was. Right. And the result of that is those who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit, see they have deliverance over sin. That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.

Now then you have to settle in your thinking, is that imputed righteousness, or is it also imparted righteousness? The Ryrie way of setting it up is, that's imputed. We fulfill the law because we trust Jesus who died to pay off our sins, and we owe nothing to the law. That's the way that's read.

Life of the Spirit

You read it that way, you can't make any sense of what follows, in Romans 8 because Romans 8 is not talking about forgiveness of sins. It's talking about life.

It goes on to say - it goes on to contrast the life of the flesh and the life of the Spirit. They that live in terms of the flesh, it's hard to translate prepositions like “kata”, but I think if you put it in terms of, they that live in terms of the flesh, verse 5. “Those who are according to the flesh”, my version says, “But who live in terms of the flesh, set their minds on the things of the flesh.”

That is to say, that's what they think in terms of. Flesh here is what you can do in your natural human abilities. You individually and you socially. That would mean that you would look in your planning of your churches and your own life, you would simply expect things from natural sources, and that would be all. Those who are, who live in terms of the Spirit, “kata”, they mind the things of the Spirit. If your mind is set on the flesh, the outcome is death. The mind set on the Spirit, life and peace. And he goes on to develop that you see. It's talking about life.

[End of Video clip #2 @ 4:00 = 4 minutes]

Video 3 - "[Human Side of Holiness #6](#)" Dallas Willard [0:00-15:20]

“Reality of the Spirit”

Now, the reality of spirit is what we have to talk about. And the great temptation, of course, is to be seduced by the visible landscape**. And if you get seduced by the visible landscape you will live in death.

[** “Two landscapes” in this 17-session series - Video #2 @ 2:25, 6:15, 8:53, 17:10, 26:58, 28:38; 48:10; #4 @ 40:40; 58:00; #5 @ 56:10, 57:55; #6 @ Intro, 7:05, 33:29, 38:55; #7 @ 11:48; #8 @ 58:25, 1:04:20; #10 @ Intro; #12 @ 11:35; #13 @ 21:00, 23:00, 24:30; #17 @ 18:00]

Romans 8

So, to start us off good, let’s just turn to Romans 8 and watch how this develops:

“There is therefore now no condemnation, the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.”

Now, when Paul speaks of a law, here, he’s talking of a kind of *regularity*, he’s *not* just talking about the law in the sense of the Ten Commandments and so on. The law of sin and death is the regularity of sin bringing death. That’s the law of sin and death. The law that is in my members. Chapter 7. The law...that’s the *regularity*, in my members. And so now he has found himself incapable of doing anything other than what the law that is in his members says. Do any of you remember the one law that defeated him? It was the last of the Ten Commandments, “*Thou shalt not covet.*” And he found he could not do that. Paul was an alpha dog going for the big things and he was resentful of others who seemed to be doing better than him. And he tried, and he tried, and he tried, but he could not defeat that one thing: covetousness. I think it’s probably because covetousness is not an external action and he thought he could manage the external stuff. And by the way you want to read all of this. Read the first part of—I don’t want to turn there now — but be sure at some point to look at the first part of Philippians 3 where he talks about the things he had to be proud of: an Israelite, Benjamite, circumcised, go all down the line what a Jewish person would put on their vita and he got down to the part about coveting and he couldn’t do anything about it.

Now, of course, he realized that the other stuff wan’t worth anything anyway — *really*. And so that’s a marvelous passage because among other things he shows you the extent to what flesh is treated as good, and flesh is the natural abilities, what you can accomplish, or what can be accomplished by

natural abilities. And it's not bad. Flesh is not a bad thing; it's when it gets out of place that it becomes bad. So now he says, "*What the law could not do...*" Now law means the law in the Old Testament. "*What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh.*" The flesh had limited abilities, your natural abilities are very limited. "*God did by sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and showing sin up for what it was, defeated it in the flesh in order that the requirements of the law might be fulfilled in those of us who...believe all the right things.*" Is that what it says? "*Who walk...*"

Now obviously there's an important connection between believing the right things. We were talking about that earlier about the role of faith in integrating us through the reality. [#5 @ 47:50] So having the right beliefs is very important but the walk is where you find deliverance. Now watch this, "*...who walk according to the flesh...*" The preposition *kata*. Prepositions are slippery things. They leave a lot of room. I'm inclined we might get better the sense here if we would say *in terms of* instead of *according to* and you just experiment with that and you, at least most of you are scholars, and you check your Greek and so on so you can think about that. But I think, who walk *in terms of* the flesh—don't do that, but, *in terms of* the Spirit. So those are the ones, now, who step into a life where there is deliverance in response to the prayer at the end of chapter 7: "*Who will set me free?*" Okay, there's an answer, and that answer is what we just read, "*The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.*" What's that? Well, remember a law is a regularity, it's a regular order. And Paul is using that sense of law in addition to the sense of law—and some of your translations will capitalize law when it's referring to the Mosaic Law. So it's a regularity...now there is a regularity in Christ Jesus that defeats the law of sin and death.

Now, I want to enlarge on this next verse, "*Those who are in terms of the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh.*" (v. 5) Set their minds on the things of the flesh. That's what defines living in terms of the flesh is to have your *mind* set on those things and we're back to the two landscapes** here now, okay?

The Two Landscapes

[7:05]

The visible landscape and the invisible one—it isn't a perfectly accurate way of drawing the line because, for example, subatomic particles will turn out to be invisible but they at least are components of what is visible. And so visible/invisible you have to take it in a common sense way. If you're going to live in terms of the things you can see are the things that are accessible to sense perception, then you're going to get one kind of outcome and it will be one of death because, as we have learned already, the things that are not seen are eternal and the things that are seen are temporal, okay? So now if

you set the Lord always before you [Psalm 16:8], right, your mind is set on the spiritual.

Are you beginning to see how very often this shows up in scripture? And the verses I’ve quoted—a whole set of verses—and now I’m giving you one we haven’t worked with thus far out of Romans 8, but I want you to please make the connections. “If you even be risen with Christ, etc.” [Colossians 3:1] The visible and invisible and so on. See, this is all a part of a story and the story is that the spiritual world is the real world. That’s the real world in the sense that it is most fundamental. It is what the visible world depends on, okay? So, faith comes in now as perception of the invisible world. Faith is a kind of perception. It’s the ability to make the spiritual world present to yourself in a perceptual manner and I know that’s...I’m going slow because I know that’s challenging. But if you read the great theologians of the past, [in] nearly all of them you’ll come to something like this. One of the most helpful things, I think, that Wesley did was to bring a new understanding of faith where it is a kind of perception of reality. Now that’s what then enables you to act on the spiritual world and it enables you to not divorce faith and knowledge. It is a kind of awareness of the world that is unseen. Someone had a hand up. Yes.

Question: [10:20] Would you equate the spiritual world is the Kingdom of God? Or would you say that there is...

Dallas: Well, I would want to be a little careful there because there’s a lot of God’s Kingdom that’s created. So you have to distinguish the parts that are created from the parts that are not. Actually, nature is a part of God’s Kingdom and, of course, God is a part of only in a kind of extended sense. He’s the one that has the Kingdom and so you have to, I think, be careful with that. Obviously God is a part of his own Kingdom. But he’s the ruling part and not the ruled part. Now, in the spiritual world there are some interesting cases of things that are not in the Kingdom of God and so “*we don’t battle against flesh and blood*” as Paul says. [Ephesians 6:12] Our battle is in the spiritual realm and that’s a very important part of the world which God allows not to be in his Kingdom—at least for a while if you take Kingdom as the range of God’s effective will which I’m recommending to you. So this is pretty deep theology and you have to be careful with the language.

Okay, now just a little more here in Romans 8, [11:50]

“Those who are according to the flesh or in terms of the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh.” (v. 5)

Now, see, that defines those who are living in terms of the flesh—the only thing they can think about is the natural abilities of human beings and all of their hopes are placed on that. And, for example, you get in some religious context—I’ve been in many of them—where it was obvious everyone was simply counting on the natural abilities of human beings.

We Southern Baptists, some years ago, discovered that if you use a large mellow pink envelope you’ll get eleven point something more in the offering. Well, okay. But if you wind up trusting large mellow pink envelopes instead of little bitty white ones what is your faith in after all? It’s in the flesh. Now flesh is not bad but if you start trusting the envelopes instead of God, then you’re in real trouble. But many of our religious organizations run by utilizing people who know that if you send a certain kind of an appeal out to a certain population you will get a certain percentage back and that will translate into a certain amount of money and then you’ll be able to run your show.

Okay, that’s real knowledge, nothing wrong with it, unless you wind up trusting that. And then your mind is the mind of the flesh instead of the mind of the Spirit. Just, simple illustrations.

“Those, who are according to the Spirit, they mind the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace. The mind set on the flesh is hostile to God because it does not subject itself to the law of God; it is not even able to do so. So those who are in the flesh cannot please God.” (Romans 8:5-8)

Now, he goes on to say, “Well, of course, you have a body.” That doesn’t mean you’re in the flesh. Otherwise the way to get out of the flesh is to die. But what he’s saying is, “It’s okay, your body also can be quickened by the Spirit.” And now then, the body takes on a spiritual function and that’s actually its fulfillment, that’s what it’s made for. Now he says, to people who are very much alive, *“You are not in the flesh but in the Spirit when, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you,”* (v. 9) and then he goes on to develop that theme and I won’t take any more time for it because I hope the point is now made.

[Video section ends at 15:20]

Video 4 - [Knowledge of Christ Today #3](#) Dallas Willard [45:43-49:43]

“The Presence of the Spirit of God” — Romans 8 [45:43]

Now, I want to just remind you at this point of what Paul says in Romans 8. In Romans 8, the great difference between Romans 8 and what comes before it, is the presence of the Spirit of God. It is the Spirit that solves the problems of humanity that are laid out in Romans chapter 1 through chapter 7. And in Romans chapter 8, the Spirit of Christ moves into human life. And now then we have those wonderful words, *“There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit”*. Now just think of flesh as all of the natural human powers. There's a cut off point, what you can achieve by yourself without special assistance from God's Spirit, is flesh. Flesh is often very nice. And if you study Philippians 3, for example, you see Paul talking about all of his nice flesh. And it's pretty good. You may recall, he says in that passage, *“If anyone thinks they have a right to boast in the flesh, I've got more”*. And then he begins a list of credentials. And then he says, I count all of that as dung. Now, we can't use a proper word for that in our language here, it's not fitting in church. A better word is offal, and offal is awful, but dung will have to do us here. That's flesh as far as compared to Christ is concerned. As Paul says, in Romans 8, *“the law was weak through the flesh”*. Why? Because the law is tied to what we can do, our own abilities. It can't bring us to our own aspirations of goodness and wholeness. He says,

“The law was weak for the flesh, but the Son came into the flesh, and met us that those who then walk according to the Spirit, can do the good, and the right, that is set forth in the law. For the mind of the flesh”, he says, “is death. But the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace”.

And that discussion of the Spirit, now, is where we turn when we come to Christ and the knowledge we have living interactively in the Kingdom of God. That's knowledge of the Spirit. The reality of the Spirit is confirmed in our life as we act with it in seeking the Kingdom of God and finding it. So, “Seek ye first the Kingdom of God”. [Matthew 6:33] What does it mean to seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness? They all go together. You seek the Kingdom of God by finding what God is doing, and acting with it. That's how you seek the Kingdom of God. I'll say it again. Because I find that we love the song, “Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God”. Wonderful song, but how do

you do it? And are we ever supposed to actually find it? Or do we just seek it? And the answer is, we're supposed to find it. And we can. It's a very simple thing. Seeking the Kingdom of God means to find what God is doing and act with it.

Now, the simple and most obvious part of that is just think of all the things God says is good and right, and invest in that. That's how you seek the Kingdom of God. And as you do that, it will be in His kind of righteousness. And His kind of righteousness is spelled out, as we said last evening — [\["Holiness" series session # 1 @ 44:10\]](#) pervaded with agape love. So where we are, the Kingdom of God is there. We find it where we are by determining what God is doing in that place, and acting with that, and not on our own ideas and devices.

[Video clip #4 ends @ 49:43 = 4 minutes]

Video #5 - “[God is With Us](#)” Dallas Willard [4:30-8:42]

“How do we know?” @ Westmont College

Romans 8 - Paul here is carrying out the theme of the transformation that comes when people are given new life in Christ. He starts with those very famous words, *“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”* (**Romans 8:1**) And it goes on to build a picture of what it is like to live in Christ. Among the high notes are, of course, the 28th verse, *“All things work together for good to those that love God that are called into his purposes.”*

Then he goes on to build the position, the wonderful position that people are in who are in the hands of Christ. Finally, he culminates that by saying,

35 “Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or trouble, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? 36 Just as it is written:

*“For Thy sake we are killed all day long;
We were considered sheep for the slaughter.”*

37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth...

[Dallas - and you can finish the list with whatever you want to put on there that scares you. None of that, he says,]

...is able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Now that’s what we want to think about is not being separated from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. I hope you will think with me that it is not a matter of God not stopping, Christ not stopping loving us from a distance. That God in his heaven or Christ seated at the right hand of the Father will keep on loving us no matter what. I think you should understand the statement as active present. Nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus. That is the presence of Christ in our lives and our presence in His life. In that position, then you are perfectly safe no matter what may happen. Your safety is secured. This world, this universe, is a perfectly safe place for you to be no matter what happens. That’s a good basis for mental health because you have then no grounds to fear. You are

able to be at peace no matter what comes your way. Because you know that no matter what happens, God is there with you and He will take care of you.

And so, for example, as the 23rd Psalm says, speaking about walking through the valley of the shadow of death, but in general, *“I will fear no evil...”*

Now, can you tell me why I will fear no evil? *“Because Thou art with me.”*

The sufficiency of God to the individual is the basis of our security, it is the basis of our mental health, it is the basis of our godly character - the fruit of the Spirit, it is the basis for anointing for service to accomplish whatever it is that God wants us to accomplish.

[Video #5 ends @ 8:42]

Video #6 [Knowledge of Christ Today #7](#) Dallas Willard [42:30-44:25]

"All Things Work Together for Good"

In the light of this then we can understand how all things work together for good.

"All things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purposes." [Romans 8:28]

Now you you would have to put a further dimension of life in order to make that come out right. But, that dimension is there. And God's intent for us is that we should learn to live this life in such a way that as we go on our character, our abilities continue to grow. And, the reality of a life that conforms to his teachings like in the Sermon on the Mount or elsewhere, is just there. And that's how we learn that His yoke is easy and His burden is light. We learn it as we learn this life. It isn't easy unless you have the life.

It's easy for a happy person to be happy, isn't it? Not easy for an unhappy person. Very hard. And that's the secret. You see, we're being transformed, we're being caught up in this, and the result of that is that the moral dimension of our life fills out increasingly because our understanding is greater. Our joy is more full. Our confidence in who we are and where we're going is established by our experience of the Kingdom of God as we go from day to day. And as we do that, then the various parts of our lives become transformed.

[Video clip #6 ends @ 44:25]

Video #7 - “[Bringing Truth to Life](#)” Dallas Willard [14:15-20:45]

Session 1, “How You Go Wrong in Sanctification” (audio only)

That is by trying to be sanctified. Sanctification is a side effect of something else. It’s a side effect. And you know, we have suffered so badly in our traditions from people who wanted to define sanctification in some way that it would come actually under human control. And it always winds up in the righteousness of scribes and Pharisees where it has to do with externals of various kinds. what you would do and what you don’t do. Boy, would it ever effect that but you don’t go at it in that way.

Sanctification comes from living in the truth and that comes from taking in the Word of God. “Thy word is truth.” So don’t make up one of your own. Go to the one that is already here, in Jesus and in His word. And listen to those words. And you take the personal Word who is Jesus through the pages of the Bible, the written Word and you put the words into practice. Ok, that’s how it works. If you want to step into the realm of the Kingdom of God, you take Jesus’ words from his primary message, which is “Turn, for the Kingdom of the Heavens is now available to you, it’s at hand.” That doesn’t mean it’s about to come. It’s right there. “Turn, repent, for the Kingdom of the Heavens is at hand.” Matthew 4:17 and on and on. He’s the one who issues the invitation. That’s the first word we put into practice. What do we do? Turn. We enter the Kingdom of Heaven. How do we do that? By relying on Jesus. Because he is the King of the Kingdom. He is the one who issues the invitation. And here he is now in the world, all over the place. Certainly the most famous and in the world. He said, *“If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me.”* Well, that’s still going on. We have not made it to the ends of the earth yet.

One way of looking at it is Colorado Springs is the end of the earth. It depends on how you go. But, there are a lot of places in Colorado Springs who have not heard about the Kingdom of God. There are a lot of churches that have not heard about the Kingdom of God. The primary place for discipleship evangelism in our world today is the American church.

Hmm, did I same something naughty? And I know from my own experience how hungry people are. Light bulbs go on all over the place when you come in and explain it in a way that Jesus presented it and in the context of Jesus the person. And it is such good news because what it means now is you can enter the Kingdom of the heavens. So, I like to say, if you want to go to heaven, don’t wait, go now. It’s here. There are a lot of stuff is here to that

isn't going to be here later. You can enter the Kingdom of the heavens and when you do, you take his teachings and begin to put them into practice.

For example, when someone hits you on the cheek, you turn the other one. Don't think of that as something terrible to do and if you do, it will probably ruin your life. That's a part of the good news because when you're hurt, you can remain vulnerable because you are in the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God is a perfectly safe place for you to be.

That's why Paul says in Romans 8:28. Remember? "*All things work together for good, [not to everybody] but to those who love God and are called into His purposes.*" That is, they are doing what he is doing. That's the English of that.

Everything works together for the good. Not everything is good. It didn't say that, did it? It didn't say everything was good. Thank goodness it did not say that because that'd be a lie right there. It says everything works together with everything else for good. By the way, it didn't say for best. You might be able to think up something you think is better or best. What it means is everything is redeemable no matter what happens. That's why this Earth, with all of its troubles, is a perfectly safe place for those in the Kingdom of God.

That's why Jesus said, "*Don't worry.*" When you say, "Don't worry" to most people, they think of images of Alfred E Newman with an arrow through his head saying, "Who me, worry?" come up. It sounds ridiculous.

Paul said that too.

"Do not [e]be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and pleading with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which that passes understanding, will set a guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." [Philippians 4:6-7]

You don't write a check on that account unless you are the person who is loving God and called according to His purposes. Then you can write a check and sign it. This is not Pollyanna-ish, positive thinking, whatever you want to call it. This is reality.

[Video/Audio clip #7 ends @ 20:45]

~ Romans 8 - Additional Dallas Willard quotes ~

~ ~ ~

- [“The Human Side of Holiness”](#) Session 1 of 17, part 1

Q: [39:20] I guess one of the main passages that make me feel like its impossible to get to that place is in Roman 7 where Paul says I do what I don't want to do, and just, understanding like, Paul, who was so advanced in being content and he still had that struggle, and so...

Dallas: So you didn't go on to **Romans 8**? Do you *remember* **Romans 8**? Now there's a systematic body of interpretation of **Romans 8** that cuts it's tie to **Romans 7** because **Romans 8** proceeds to talk about exactly what **Romans 7** was about. *“There is therefore now no condemnation”* and they read that as forgiveness. There's no guilt.

“And those who are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit or the Spirit of life that is in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death.” (Romans 8:2)

Now what was **Romans 7** complaining about? The law of sin and death. *“That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled”* — and you interpret that positionally, having to do with forgiveness — so the law is fulfilled in you that in the sense that now the price has been paid for all of your sins. See, the interpretation of that passage that most people have leaves them stuck in **Romans 7**. And they don't look at Paul's actual life and see that he didn't live in **Romans 7**. He didn't live there. He's talking about a passage of life in which he found that he could not, by his wonderful ideals and principles, as a Pharisee and sincere follower of the Law, he could not do it.

Now, it's really important that you brought this up there because you know this is one of the things that sort of hangs over us and there's a deep truth in it because you cannot do this in your own strength. You can't do it. It's absolutely impossible. But glory be to God you don't have to live in your own strength. In fact, you were not even made to do that. You were made to live in the strength of God. See, we needed grace before we sinned. Adam was living by grace. Now, I know that's twisting your categories a bit I'm afraid, but think the thought: if man had never sinned, they would have lived by grace. So now you have to get grace over here where it has to do with life and not with failure. The point of grace is not to patch up failures, though it does that. It is to give you the life you were meant for, and that life is seen in Genesis 1:26. You know the Bible does not begin at Genesis 3? The story does not begin at the fall, it begins at creation.

Okay now, I threw out a lot of things like that, you may want to come back and talk about. You may want to respond immediately, but these are really the fundamental issues because in the minds of most people.

Let me tell you a story about *Renovation of the Heart*. When it first came out the people who had to represent the book to the booksellers, the bookstores, could not represent it to them because it suggested it was actually possible not to live a life of defeat. And they were so hung up on the idea that **Romans 7** is the story of the Christian life. Real life story, right here in Colorado. But you see, it's reflective of this attitude that you're meant to live in defeat. Now, let's once and for all say that we're not talking about perfection in any legalistic terms because you are finite and you live in a world that's gonna tear you to pieces at every chance it gets. You better not plan on that. At least you won't need to worry about it for a while.

So, you focus on particular things, the things that Jesus taught and learning how to do that. And legalistic perfection does not matter anyway because we've already been ruined on that count. And that is one thing where grace has to come in and say what God said in effect to Abraham. "Abraham, you're a goof up. But you trust me. And I'd rather have that." "*Abraham believed God and God counted that as righteousness.*" [**Romans 4:3**] Now that meant that God resumed his relationship with Abraham on a different basis and a better one.

By the way do you remember what Abraham believed God for? Do you remember the story well enough? What did Abraham believe God *for*? He believed God for a *baby*, a male heir. That's the issue. And it was a big one because this was going to be a miracle. And Abraham's life with Isaac is one of miracle, of trusting God for what was *impossible*. See? That's the *trust* that stands as the basis of your relationship and my relationship to God. That's trust. That's reliance on the Kingdom.

Now, we come to the Kingdom through Jesus—we're gonna talk a lot about that because if you got kingdom without Jesus you ain't got the Kingdom. And if you got Jesus without the Kingdom...why worry about where you got Jesus? Cause a king usually does not come without his Kingdom. And, so, the picture of Jesus as the sacrificial victim, *alone*, is not accurate. It's not accurate. That's why the resurrection is so important. And Paul says, you'll remember in 1 Corinthians 15, "*If Christ is not risen, your faith is in vain; you are still in your sins.*" [v. 14]

Now that's a verse that we need to think deeply about because that's what we're talking about — getting out of our sins. If the only issue was Christ

suffering on our behalf is to get our guilt taken care of, you will not find any place for the resurrection. It will become an addendum of some sort. But if you understand that redemption includes your life now, and that comes through your union with the risen Christ in his Kingdom, then you can see the broader picture that Paul is talking about. If Christ is not risen, he’s not a part of my life. If he’s not a part of my life, I can’t deal with it. And I am stuck in **Romans 7** with all the right beliefs and total inability to deal with life.

Okay, how are we doing here with this? Are we all in agreement this is a good thing to do? Do you think that if I could teach someone to do what Jesus said it would be a good thing for me to do?

~ ~ ~

- **“The Human Side of Holiness”**, Session 4 of 17, Dallas
[“Love as Life” part 1](#)

“Put Your Confidence in Jesus, the Whole Person”

Live with Him as His disciple now in the present Kingdom of God.

Matthew 6:33, **Romans 8:1-14**; Colossians 1:13; John 3:1-8

Now you do that by faith and response to God’s action. The new birth is from above. And by the way, it’s the same place that Pilate’s power was from. You remember when Jesus was standing before Pilate and Pilate said, “Don’t you know I’ve got the power to kill you?” And Jesus said, “You wouldn’t have any power at all if it wasn’t given to you from above.” That’s the same place that the new birth comes from. It’s not “born again”. “Born again” is actually a biblical term, but it’s “birth from above.” And what were you...what were we talking about? *“If you then be risen with Christ, set your mind on things that are above”*, that’s the invisible landscape. That’s the invisible landscape.

“Set your mind on things from above where Christ sits on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth because you are dead.” Colossians 3:1-2

That’s the good news. That’s the good news!

~ ~ ~

- **“Bringing Truth to Life** - Session 4, Dallas
[“The Bible as an Indispensable Source of Truth”](#)

* Paul - **Colossians 3:17** - [We quoted it this morning](#) [7:10]

“Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.”

Learning to live in the Kingdom of God is living in the power of God.

II Chronicles 16:9 - *"Eyes of the Lord run to the whole Earth to find the hearts of those who are completely set on him."*

Romans 8

"What shall we say to these things, if God is for us, who is against us?"

"The Word of God has gone out across the Earth."

What grinds on me as an academic is how history refuses to write the great missionary movements.

* St. Boniface - Cut down the great sacred tree in the Northwoods. They later killed him. They gave their lives.

* One of the greatest missionary movements out of Korea

A story of *"If God is for us, who can be against us? He did not spare His own son..."*

When we talk about the Kingdom of God, that's what we're talking about.

"Jesus Christ who was raised is seated at the right hand of God."

That's what is present in the Bible. That's what makes it a subversive book. That's why people want to control it. The Word of God that lives in the Bible does not submit to control by human beings. That's why it is not a denominational book. Nearly everyone wants to claim it.

If you think you've really got it nailed, all you have to do to find out you don't is to keep reading the Bible. It is a subversive book. We don't come in arrogance in pride, we come to it in repentance and humility.

~ ~ ~

● **Bringing Truth to Life**, Session 4, Dallas

["The Bible as an Indispensable Source of Truth"](#)

Jesus brings us along. The Sermon on the Mount is not list of laws. It is a list of pictures of the life of someone who is living in the Kingdom of God. These are people who have stepped beyond performance. Now the issue they know is personal transformation. That's love. That's I Corinthians 13. The teachings about the progression of the soul in II Peter 1, Colossians 3, **Romans 8**. It's an open secret. This is the level of the Fruit of the Spirit not the works of the flesh.

This is why they are not all stated the same way.

Luke 6 does not read like Matthew 5-7.

Colossians 3 is not exactly like Ephesians 4 & 5.

~ ~ ~

● **“Human Side of Holiness”** Session 8 of 17, Dallas
[“Transformation of the Body & Habits”](#)

[1:04:31]

Okay. So now, these are important things to think about because you remember one of the things they they have in **Romans 7** is, *“It was not me, it was the sin that dwells in me.”* Now, that *can* be a realistic approach to dealing with the problem which is what it is in **Romans 7 & 8** because he goes on to deal with the problem in **Romans 8**, and actually he was dealing with it in **Romans 6** before he got to **Romans 7**. And it’s a wonderful development to see how that works.

~ ~ ~

● **Healing the Heart, “The Soul”** [Session 5 Part 2](#) Dallas

[17:20-19:20]

The law is such a beautiful and tender thing. And we want to understand that it is a grace. Law is not opposed to grace, it is a grace. Here is how it works:

~ *Upon our confidence in Christ and sincere intention, we are able to walk in the ways and reality of the Kingdom of God upheld by grace.*

We can do that. I say again, it won’t happen without our decision to do it. It won’t be imposed on us.

~ *The Son and the Spirit in our lives make it possible for “the requirements of the law to be fulfilled in us who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”* **Romans 8:4**

You don’t live in **Romans 7**, you live in **Romans 8**. And what that happens, the broken depths of our soul are reintegrated in a life in union with God, the eternal kind of life. The soul heals. That’s how “the law of the Lord is perfect restoring the soul.” Now, of course, the Good Shepherd restores my soul, right? That’s part of the same picture. These aren’t contrasts, these are part of the same picture.

It’s like setting a broken limb. You put it back in position, you hold it there, and it heals. And you will progressively see people who engage with Christ this way with intention beginning to heal. And things begin to go right.

Sanctification is a condition of life where we are established in relationship with Christ.

~ ~ ~

- [“Incarnation and Celebration”](#) Dallas’ only Christmas sermon
“The Humble King brings Freedom”

“Humble King,” I love that phrase, humble king. Now, he brings the power of God into this system. And right in that system, sets us free. **Romans 8** – “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.”

~ ~ ~

- [“Incarnation and Celebration”](#) Dallas’ only Christmas sermon
“Defeating Sin in the Flesh”

Christ has come into the flesh and defeated sin in the flesh. So that passage [**Romans 8:1**] that goes on, now, from “for those who are in Christ Jesus, there's no condemnation. They walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit,” [KJV]... goes on to say, “for the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and of death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh...” [**Romans 8:2-3**] Alright now, I think we're on verse four there somewhere about [v. 3] **Romans 8**. “What the law could not do...” because you see, if you trust the flesh, even the law can't help you. See, if you trust Christ, then the law is wonderful. And that whole passage on the flesh and the spirit in **Romans 8** is so important in understanding how redemption through incarnation works. “For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did. By sending his son in the likeness of sinful flesh,” he put him right in the middle of it... “and for sin,” or because of what sin was, “he condemned sin in the flesh.” That is, he showed up what sin really was by coming in the flesh and defeating it by the power of God. What that means simply is he didn't have to sin.

~ ~ ~

- [“Bringing Truth to Life”](#) Session 1, Dallas [7:35-12:25]

Romans 8:4 - *“Law was weak in the flesh...showed up sin for what it is in the flesh...Righteous might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh.”*

Flesh is not bad until you make it your god then it is death.

“Walk after the Spirit” - The Spirit of truth will guide you into all things.

~ ~ ~

- “Humans Side of Holiness” Course Session 6 Outline
 [“Reality of Spirit”](#)

“There is therefore now no condemnation, the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.” Romans 8:1

Session Theme — “You are spirit - unbodily personal power -
 living in the spiritual realm of the Kingdom of God.”

Romans 8 - Life in the Spirit

Temptation - seduced by the visible landscape vs. “Regularity” of Jesus life

The Two Landscapes — *Setting our minds on the things of the Spirit*

Faith is a perception of the invisible world to make the spiritual present.

A Spiritual Person — *Life dependent upon the Kingdom of God*

What is Life? Initiation • Direction • Sustenance from the Spiritual World
 Dallas’ insightful commentary on the Book of Hebrews

The course theme restated: “*Coming to the Place Where We Could Actually Teach People to Do the Things That Jesus Said.*”

What is Spirit? John 4:24, Hebrews 12:9; Exodus 3:14

“Unbodily Personal Power” Deuteronomy 8; Genesis 1:26

Q & Dallas The bodily death of Jesus? That’s why we have a Trinity!
 Jesus operating in the spiritual landscape.

The Body & Death John 11 & 8

To do what Jesus said, we have to understand what we are.

Personal Meditation — Romans 8:1-5

Application for Kingdom Power Training —> V-I-M

Vision — How difficult is it for me to see the spiritual landscape?

Intention — Where and how do I find myself seduced by the visible landscape - “lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, pride of life”?

Means — Fast this week to set my mind, to feast on the invisible landscape and select Romans 8 as scripture to guide your spirit.

~ ~ ~

- [“The Book of Acts Session 2”](#) (audio) - Dallas Q&A - “No Condemnation” [1:15:28]

Q - “Condemnation” in John 3:17-18, **Romans 8:1-2**

DALLAS - **Romans 8** condemnation is the condition described in **Romans 7** - Paul cries out, “Who will deliver me?” **Romans 8** is the answer.

John 3:17-18 - Includes the condemnation of **Romans 7 & 8** but it is more like “they have judged themselves” by the position they have taken. They have shown who they are. You come up against Jesus and you get a good look at him and say, “This is not it.” Very few people do that by the way.

“Wrath” is a consequence. The primary condition of Romans 1 is not “wrath” but it is the condition of these people, they have been given over to a reprobate mind. A reprobate mind is a mind that doesn’t work. They wind up doing these stupid things.

* It’s so heart breaking to see how people who think of themselves in love come to hate one another. Pain in divorce and so on. How awful.

~ ~ ~

- [“Battle Between Flesh & Spirit”](#) [34:00]
Dallas Willard at Calvin College

Romans 8:1-2 - *“No condemnation to those who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”*

“Who shall deliver me?” (Romans 7)

“The law of the Spirit has set me from the law of sin and death.”

“The Law, weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own son.”

“He condemned sin in the flesh.” He showed it up for what it was right in the flesh.

Jesus came with normal human desires and lived in a world that was organized around human desires. Living, dying and rising there, He showed sin to be the fraud it is that the righteousness of the law shall be fulfilled in us who walk not in the flesh but after the Spirit.

“after the Spirit” - after “kata” - I like “in terms of...”

(Prepositions and adverbs are hard to make sense of.)

Fleshly minded is death. Spiritually minded is life and peace.

All of that passage of **Romans** builds out of that context.

8:14 - *“Through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the flesh then you will really live.”*

You don’t mortify the deeds of the flesh through the flesh. That has been the perpetual failure of the church to understand that. We think, *“We don’t worry about circumcision anymore.”* You know, all the Pharisees aren’t dead. It is a useful exercise to think of all the forms of circumcision that we

still practice. It’s a real good exercise to make a list of them. Think of the the things that amount to very little that we make such a fuss over and determine who’s in and who’s out by looking at these.

You can not mortify the deeds of the flesh by the flesh. You have to bring in the Spirit of God. When you do that, you have a lot help. Christ moves in. The human spirit or will is brought to life now because it is rooted in God where it is supposed to be. As that happens a new power takes over - the capacity to regard DESIRE with some indifference.

“So I didn’t get what I want. So what.”

“Well, but what I want is very righteous.”

You can take care of that but the issue is not, *“I didn’t get what I want.”*

You can stand for what is right without standing in the flesh. That’s a great freedom that comes to us.

The basic nature of sin is to trust oneself and one’s own abilities.

~ ~ ~

- **“Postmodern Holiness”**, Dallas, Azua Pacific University [14:25]
“Biblical Holiness” [the video is no longer on YouTube]

Not focused on behavior. A matter of being not doing, being from a different world. Drawing on something that is out of this world. “In the world but not of it.” “Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war in terms of it.” Holiness comes from “God is other”.

“Do not love the world or the things of the world.”

We’ve thrown off the idea that “worldliness” is bad.

Man’s World is not from the Father but is from the world.

The world is human ability and flesh organized historically and socially into a system where people use their natural abilities to get what they want. It is organized around desire and lust.

“The one who does the will of God abides forever.” (I John 2:17)

Paul - “Flesh and the Spirit” (Galatians 5)

“What the Law could not do, God did by sending His Son and in the flesh, defeating sin that the law might be fulfilled by those who walk not in the flesh but in the Spirit.” (**Romans 8:3**)

Alternate realities and holiness is drawing your life from the other reality.

Not just human arrangement like so much of the old. It was inadequate to the needs of the soul. That’s why you could be holy and not from another world. Often holiness was another form of meanness. If you look at it and think, “this is pitiful.”

The great danger - if you get rid of the old, what is left? Outward conformity to the world as described in I John. It may take the form of

entertainment, sensual indulgence - food, sex, violence, spirituality, ritual that is not necessarily religious but just human.

~ ~ ~

- “**Knowledge of Christ in Today’s World**” #6, Dallas [1:01:08]
[“Moral Goodness and the Degradation of Morality by Desire & Human Supremacy”](#)

Well, this is just a part of the kind of general landslide that we've been in in our understanding of the self. And Paul goes on to say in **Romans 8:4**,

“The requirements of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

You see, that's where spiritual life now comes in to make morality actual, to make it real. Because if you're going to love, you have to have the resources with which to love. You have to be in a position of understanding and feeling and habitual practice that allows you to be someone who effectively wills the good of another. Because if you're not possessed of love down to your toenails, the occasion will come when you are incapable of acting in love. So, it's the transformation of the whole person, by living in the Spirit of Christ, that makes it possible for us to be good persons.

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- **Spirituality and Ministry** - Dallas Willard at Fuller Seminary
[PART 2 OF 34](#) - “Spirituality and the Churches”

OK, now, the first hour we just want to alert you to a lot of stuff and to give the main focus of what we are doing and now then we go back to the details and these at the bottom of page 5 in your notebook is where we will begin.

Spirituality, Spirit and the Human Being as a Spiritual Being—now, you know your New Testament and for that matter, your Old and you know that the human being lives at the intersection of two worlds. Do you not? And perhaps the classical passages on these are 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 and **Romans 8**: up to about verse 13 and you now live at the intersection of two worlds. You have a choice and you have to make that choice. It’s forced upon you.

That theme of course is also picked up in **Romans 8**. Now here you are at the intersection. “While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.” So one of the things you have to get used to is

looking at things you can't see. [3:42] That is a practice that you learn how to live in and now. In this course, one of the things that we try most to do is to take a passage like that and try to make sense of it. How do you look at things which are not seen? Hmmmm? So, now we will be talking about things on that and what I am hoping is that you will help me stay honest and if I don't say something helpful about a phrase like that, then I hope you will get after me. Now, I can't guarantee you that I can say something helpful about it. I can guarantee you that I will try and it is the challenge to me constantly to make sense of that in my own life. How can you look at what is not seen? [4:39]

Now, your hope lies in doing that because if you don't do that, then all you've got is that stinking vessel and I am telling you, it's not going to go for long. Having arrived at the advanced stage of 76, I have an awareness of that which I did not have even a short while ago. So, it's important to master this. "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." I don't want to take time to go there now and we will undoubtedly be driven to do that but please cross reference with that **Romans 8:4-7**. And we will go back to that.

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- ["Transformed by the Renewal of the Mind"](#), Video 1 of 7

Romans 8:5 *"living in the terms of the flesh mind the things of the "flesh"*

"Flesh" (def.) - "natural powers of the human beings."

"World" (def.) - "the flesh organized historically and socially"

The mind and the spirit is what characterizes those who live in terms of the Spirit. The Spirit is primarily God.

Spiritual Transformation (def.) - *The process of moving from the conformity to the world to the conformity to the Kingdom of God.* [01:55]

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- ***The Divine Conspiracy***, Chapter 3

"What Jesus Knew: Our God Bathed World" (continued)

Session 8 (p. 79-91) - "Fill your mind with the spirit is life" - **Romans 8:6**

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- **“Healing the Heart”, [Session 4A](#)**, Dallas [24:30]
“The Body and Social Relationships”

The quickening that comes when we turn our will to God and born again that reaches to our body also.

Romans 8:7-11 - *“...the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, 8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. 10 If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.”*

To be in the flesh means to live in terms of the body. That’s what it means. If you are living in terms of the body, you can’t please God because you have not put Him in the right place in your life.

Now watch, [Dallas reads 9-10.] Now you’ve got a new force other than your natural bodily abilities and energies. Those are working. You have a new force.

[Dallas reads verse 11.] It will be something that you know because your body is different. The potential energy that becomes available to you is not just the natural abilities of your body. But now there is a power at work in you to quicken (it means to give it life) the body. Quicken means to add a new life. Life is an activity that is self-sustaining, self directing, self-initiating. So now there is something moving you and it moves your body. Your body becomes different as you are indwelt as the temple of God.

Now the body, in its role as your power pack, is something that God created and He set it up in such a way that as you live your character and your experience becomes a part of your body. Simple cases of that are like learning to write. Remember learning to write your letters in school? Remember how hard it was? Then, after a while, you didn’t even think about it. That’s the wonder of being a created being as God created you, is that you don’t have to think about everything you do. Now, that’s good, when it’s good, and it’s bad bad when it’s bad. This is a major part of our difficulty. When our character and experience is not good, then evil acts automatically in our bodies and our bodies together in society. This is the condition that we

have to deal with. That’s why so much of human life seems like it is out of control. It is. Indeed, human government is normally impossible to any great extent just because of evil that is present in human life.

That’s what Paul means when he says the body is dead because of sin as I just read. It’s cut off from the only life that enables the body to act as it should.

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- **“Healing the Heart”**, [Session 4B](#), Dallas [3:15-6:45]
“The Body and Social Relationships”

That’s helpful if we are looking at Him whose Spirit dwells in us and can quicken our mortal body. You see, it’s the picture of our world and our body and who we are that makes us hopeless. It might just be the deliciousness of dissecting someone with our tongue. That’s addictive too. What it has to do there is the person who gossips is experiencing a feeling of superiority and intimacy. That’s the power of gossip, it is superiority and intimacy. Check it out. Check out all of this stuff I am telling you.

Because, we’ve got to live real life and often there is envy, or covetousness or just malice because things get more and more complicated. To just be able to step free from that. That is something we can do. Until we learn about the removal of all that’s inside so, like Jesus, we can say there’s nothing in me that that appeals to. That’s where I want to get. I want to get to place where there’s is nothing in me that the delicious opportunity to contemptuously dissect someone, maybe because they don’t like are or appreciate me because that isn’t in there.

That’s what Paul is talking about when he talks about “mortifying”. Mortify means to kill off. Like a mortgage, it is something you kill off by degrees. Then you take it out and burn it and say, “Hallelujah!”
Mortification is a primary part of the spiritual life in the New Testament. That means we allow the things that are wrong in us to wither and die. And Pauls says, in **Romans 8:13** - “... if you through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, you will live.”

He is not talking about the things of the body in the natural sense. He is talking about the deeds of the body that is saturated in the wrong stuff. Living out here in a social world, where there is so much in you that people can just come by and grab you and make you dance like a puppet on a string because of what’s in you. Often goes back to the way we were treated

or other children treated us in grade school or younger. That’s where the habits come from.

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- **“Hearing God”** by Dallas Willard

Four Phases/Forms As “Priests & Kings” Exodus 19:6; Revelation 1:5-6)

What does this involve? How do we experience this?

1. Blind Faith - Past experiences, faith in the faith of others or abstract reasonings that tell us He simply must be here. But the only way He is present in our lives is our conviction - almost a mere will that it shall be so. (p. 62)
2. Sensing God’s Presence - A very powerful sense, feeling or impression of God’s presence. A sense of God’s presence is frequently verified through the judgment of a worshipping community - *corporate sensing*. (63)
3. A God Who Acts - Extraordinary events or powerful effects...beyond natural powers to accomplish. (65) Life with results beyond the natural always depends on intimate interactions between us and God, who is therefore present. Acts 14:27; John 14:17; **Romans 8:11** (66)
4. Conversational Relationship - How can we be friends with God if this [above] is all there is to it? If God were personal, would He not also talk with us? (67)

A framework for personal development - “led by the Spirit” **Romans 8:14**

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- [“Spiritual Formation and Salvation”](#) Dallas at Wheaton College [55:25]

Once we’re clear that the issue is no longer merit. but life, that grace is not opposed to effort but to earning, this responsibility to stand, to be firm, and all that would involve, should cause no problem. We are quite prepared to hear the ceaseless admonitions to action set down in scripture, to welcome them as best we can, learning as we go, Paul’s admonitions to, “put off the old person and put on the new,” now present themselves as what they are, something we do. He says, “Mortify the deeds of the flesh.” (**Romans 8:13**; Colossians 3:5) That is for us to do. Now, you will not do it on your own. And in **Romans 8** he talks about, “If you do mortify through the Spirit, the deeds of the flesh, you will live.” (**Romans 8:13**) Mortification is accomplished by the Spirit of God in us. But that’s something we are to do.

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- *The Great Omission*, by Dallas Willard - “Human Nature”

“When we come to new life in Christ, our bodies and their deformed desire system do not automatically shift to the side of Christ, but continue to oppose him.” This is why Paul speaks of ‘putting to death the misdeeds of the body’ (**Romans 8:13**) and disciplining his body. (1 Corinthians 9:27) (p. 83-84)

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- [Spiritual Disciplines](#), Dallas at Gordon Conwell (audio only on YouTube)

Q - 37:45 - Sounds like the goal is to change ourselves. The disciplines serve to get in touch with God.

DALLAS - 38:10 - That’s the way we change ourselves. When Paul says, “*Put off the old person*”, that is something for me to do. Now, I don’t do it alone. So he says in Galatians 5, “*They that are Christ’s, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof.*”

Ever try to crucify yourself? You don’t have enough hands to do it. Again, Paul, **Romans 8:13**, “*If ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live*”. See, that’s that’s a lovely combination there because you, through...how? Through the Spirit. That’s where you get the extra hand.

So, we are not on this trip by ourselves. I go back again and this is fundamental point and thank you for raising it because this is so basic. “*Without me you can do nothing*” but remember, “*If you do nothing, it will be without me.*” You may not think that’s right theologically and you have to work that through. I will just tell you that you watch people who do nothing and see how far they get. You have to work through all this stuff. It isn’t for merit. It isn’t for self-justification. For example, if I back out of a fast, I have not sinned. That’s very important to understand. If you go into a discipline and it doesn’t work, you haven’t sinned. So don’t get guilt. Just say, this is something I need to learn.

Prayer is the same way. I can remember many, many years ago I started to try to pray for people. I couldn’t pray because I was too worried about whether or not God would answer it. You can’t pray if that’s what’s on your mind, can you? I had to come to the place where I didn’t care whether or not God answered, that was his business. I was going to pray. Suddenly things changed. Why? Well, because I really did around to praying finally instead of worrying about me.

See, all of these things made a lot of difference. You have to pray until you get the habit of praying. You have to fast until you get the habit of fasting and then you don't think about fasting. But, when you start, you think about fasting. Same way if you get a new exercise machine. You get on that thing and you think about exercising and not about the good that is going to come from it or anything of that sort. You are focused on exercising and your sore muscles and all of that and that's why there are many exercise machines sitting idle. So it's basic human truth.

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- **The Gospel of the Kingdom**, Dallas, Wheaton College [11:40]
 - [What is the Gospel? Gospels of Sin Management and Gospels of Life](#)

Book of Acts & The Kingdom of God

1:3 - Jesus - 40 days He talks to His disciples about the Kingdom of God
Phillip in Samaria - gospel of the Kingdom of God and name of Jesus
Paul in Ephesus - preaches the Kingdom of God
Paul in Rome - Acts 28 - preaches the gospel of the Kingdom of God

If you have that, you have the message that allows you to step in the Kingdom of God now and live there. Your life is transformed because now there is a life in you that is not of you. "*As many who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.*" **Romans 8:14**

The mark of a person who is a child of God is a life in them that is not of them. That's what the new birth is about. We are invited to learn to know what that is in our day to day life. That is where we are disciples in day to day life.

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- ["Incarnation and Celebration"](#) Dallas' only Christmas sermon

Creation Groaning for Redemption

And it is, as **Romans 8:24** tells us, "All of creation is groaning." And you can sometimes hear that. In many ways, no doubt, creation is waiting for the sons and daughters of God to step in to their role as, in the way Hebrews puts it, as brothers and sisters of the One who came first and who has led the way, you see.

~ ~ ~

- “**The Divine Conspiracy Lectures**” #3 of 12, Dallas
[God and His Kingdom](#)

The Meaning of Life for the Believers in Christ [57:25-1:00:33]

What is the meaning of life? The love and purpose of God for us. We are embedded in His eternal life. What makes our life eternal is involvement in His eternal life. In **Romans 8 (29-31)** you have these marvelous verses that spell this out. Paul has just said that *“all things work together for those that love God and are called into purposes.”* That’s life in the Kingdom.

“For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son...” See that’s purpose, that’s meaning.

“...that He would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified. What then shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who is against us?”

Then he goes on to describe the path of life a person has who is embedded in the Kingdom of God. All the hard things turn to our good. Now, you can’t have that unless you have a vision of life in the Kingdom. All the hard things turn to good. Even aging—the body breaking down. This passage in **II Corinthians 4:16**, *“even though our outward man is perishing. Our inward man is being renewed day by day.”* The trials of the present time are nothing compared to *“the great weight of glory which they are working.”* He talks about how we are inwardly renewed as we look *“not at the things that are temporal but at the things that are eternal”* and how the temporal things are visible, the eternal things are invisible.

All that fits in to this picture of a meaningful life in the Kingdom of God. We look forward, we are carried forward by meaning. Drama is a word that we need to learn to use. We should be living a dramatic life. It helps us I think to really come to grip with how our life is going. Is there drama in our lives? “Drama” refers to the ups and downs of meaningful existence in pursuit of good against opposition. That’s what drama is. Some of us may feel like we could stand a little less drama because the opposition may be pressing us very hard. But, living in the eternal Kingdom of God now is what gives us this framework.

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● **“Healing the Heart”** [3A “Feelings”](#), Dallas [6:00 - 7:30]

The way of Christ is to say it’s all real. It’s all real and everything is redeemable. There is not a single thing that happens to human beings in this world that is not redeemable.

“And things work together for good” [**Romans 8:28**] does not mean all things are good.

Do you understand that? There’s some bad stuff. I did a little bit of it. Right? And you have done a little bit yourself, thought you do look pretty good. Probably there is something that we contribute to it.

We acknowledge that and we acknowledge pain, and we acknowledge death, and we acknowledge disappointment. In the midst of that we acknowledge everything works together for the good for those who love God and are called into His purposes. That’s the story. That is what enables us no matter what is happening to be able to give thanks. Now that takes some work because our thoughts have often been obsessed with bad stuff. And one of the things that really pulls us in is the bad stuff that happens to us then we become fixed on that and we become angry and unforgiving and superior in our outlook to defend ourselves. All kinds of things. That’s what you see pulling your own soul, the bad stuff. We focus on that. [Ends at 7:38]

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● ***Renovation of the Heart in Daily Practice*** by Dallas & Jan Johnson

Apprentices of Jesus know **Romans 8:28**. They do not have to look out for themselves because they are not in charge of their lives, rather, God is. (49)

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● ***Hearing God*** by Dallas Willard “Redemption Through the Word of God”

Discerning God’s voice is essentially just one dimension of a certain kind of life, the eternal kind of life, a life lived in conversational relationship with God. (Jn 17:3) (p. 189)

John 17:3 - *“Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”*

Hearing God is not a freakish event. (p. 190)

?) What is the process by which we can be fully transformed into children of light? (Philippians 2:15-16)

1. How are we to understand the ongoing process of our present life being conformed to the likeness of the Son (**Romans 8:29**)?

2. What is the role of the word of God in this process?

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- [“Spiritual Formation as a Natural Part of Salvation”](#), Dallas, [31:50-33:10]
Also *Renewing the Christian Mind*, p. 308

A human being, in a comparison to other living things, has a real or possible environment of fantastic proportions that, as yet, have not been revealed.

“Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man the joys that God has prepared for those who are faithful to Him.”
I Corinthians 2:9

The sufficiency of God to the human being as you see in **Romans 8 (v. 31-39)**, for example, is adequate to the fantastic proportions of human abilities and aspirations. To lose that central reality is what it means to be: “Dead in trespasses and sin.” Life activity of a sort continues in a human being for a while but defined in terms of the reversed trinity - world, flesh & devil which is stated there in the opening chapter 2 of Ephesians. That activity draws from limited, chaotic, and self-destructive resources. Its conditions of spiritual death ends in total death as **Romans 8:5-6** tells us.

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- ***Renovation of the Heart in Daily Practice*** by Dallas & Jan Johnson
Chapter 31 - “A Person of Joy & Peace”

Joy is a pervasive sense of well-being that is deeper and broader than any pleasure. Peace is the **assurance** that things will turn out well. When others do not extend the grace and mercy I need, I have to draw on the abundance of it in God. **Romans 8:34**

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- **“Healing the Heart”** - [The Soul, Session 5A](#), Dallas
“Love Defined” [18:50-23:15]

Now what is love? “Love is will to good for all concerned in our presence and our action.”

That is to say, when we love, we have good will, we are thinking about doing good to those who are effected by our action. Love is not a feeling. We talked about that earlier. It has feelings with it and they are good feelings. But we don't focus on that. That's a consequence, that's not the heart of the matter. That's very important to understand because love is a set of the will.

First, it comes from God in Christ. That's how we learn it. I have given you two passages there. I won't take time to work through them now, but I hope you are familiar with them. The great passage in **Romans 8:39** is about how “Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ”. It talks about how God loves us. Then I John 4:9 says, “*We love God because He first love us.*”

The truth is from where we are coming, broken people in a broken world, we really don't know what love is. That's why in the culture it is such a mess. It does so much harm and hurts so many people because of the confusion. If love in this sense were what governed our relationships in our families and beyond, of course, the world would be transformed beyond recognition. But too often love is confused with desire. Love is not desire. I say I love chocolate cake but I don't. I want to eat it. I am not interested in its good at all. Love and desire are two different things. Now, if we were put together in the right way, then we would desire what is good. But, the trouble is that we often desire what is not good and consequently our love does not function right because our will is enslaved to what we desire and not what is good. Go back through our notes and remember what we said about the mind and all of that because if our MIND is not set full of the goodness of God, we will be enslaved to our desires because we will think, “I can't do what is good because I won't get what I want.”

It is only confidence in God that enables us to say, “*The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.*” And to say that whatever the circumstances may be. That's the process we go through - God loves us and love is from God and the one who loves is born of God and knows God.

You have to remember the standard of love. It isn't true that the one who lusts is born of God. That isn't true. The one who loves is born of God because that's the only source of love.

The center of the universe is a wonderful community of persons that characterized by love. God is love. So we grow to love God with all our heart.

~ ~ ~

● **Life Without Lack** by Dallas Willard

If we get ourselves out of the way, and focus our attention upon the God of our SUFFICIENCY, and we, too, can be singing songs of victory.

Romans 8:31, 35, 37 – 39. (148)

Family — to keep my right heart, we must remember that the face of God shining upon us in gracious approval is the basis of our value. We see this exemplified within the family. Child who lives under the shining face of a mother and father has no problem of self-worth. But when the faces of the parents turn away - withdraw, they become troubled. God does not withdraw his affection in approval from us. Indeed, *“nothing is able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* **Romans 8:38–39** [page. 148]

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● **Hearing God** by Dallas Willard

The Giver and His Gifts

Genesis 15:1 - To Abraham, “I am your shield.” Hebrews 13:5-6, “What can anyone do to me?” **Romans 8:39**, “Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.”

“A wise lover regards not so much the gift of him who loves, as the love of him who gives.” Thomas a’ Kempis (61)

~ Romans 8 - Additional NT Wright quotes ~

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- **The Day the Revolution Began** - Interview portions on Romans 8
Mike Bird/ OCTOBER 13, 2016

Q — *You provocatively say in the book that a lot of Reformation churches, including your own Anglican tradition, have often failed to know what to do with Easter. Well, what are we to do with Easter, in particular, Good Friday?*

NT — In the West we have been so seduced by the Platonic vision of ‘heaven’ that the resurrection of Jesus is seen simply as the “happy ending” after the crucifixion, and as the prelude to his “going to heaven” so that we can go and join him there later. This misses the central point that the resurrection of Jesus is *the beginning of the new creation, in which we are to share already in the power of the Spirit*. This affects everything, from prayer and the sacraments to mission and service to the poor. And yes, it ought to be reflected liturgically in whatever tradition we stand. Playing this back to the meaning of the cross, we realize that new creation is now happening because the dark powers that have kept the world enslaved to sin and death have been defeated. Perhaps there are themes there which could be brought more explicitly into our Good Friday commemorations as well. But the Christian life is meant to be a sustained and focused celebration of that achievement. Present suffering and struggle are held within the narrative of Jesus’ victory on the one hand and the final redemption of all creation on the other. That is what climactic passages like **Romans 8** are all about. I would love to see churches trying out different ways of embodying all of this in the way we order our public worship.

Q — When we say that Jesus died for us, what does the “for” mean?

NT — The “for” is itself explained by “in accordance with the Scriptures.” In the Bible, Israel is God’s chosen people for the sake of the world; then various people, like prophets, priests, and kings are chosen for the sake of Israel; then, at the time of the exile, the remnant was chosen as a kind of “true Israel”—a concept we find in many writings of the time, such as the Dead Sea Scrolls. The point is that what happens to this group—and, in Jesus’ own vocation and the church’s perception, to this one man—happens on behalf of the whole world. So, as Paul puts it in **Romans 8:1–4**, there is “no condemnation” for those who are “in Messiah Jesus”—those who belong to him by faith and baptism—because in his death God “condemned sin in the flesh.” The millennia-old representation had narrowed down to one point, and the punishment of Sin itself—the dark force behind all our actual sins—

took place once and for all. That is what we ought to mean when we say, as of course I do, that he died “in our place and on our behalf.” We should, however, beware of shorthand formulations (including my own!). In good biblical theology, the summaries mean what they mean within the larger story of the Bible as a whole and, not least, the Gospels as a whole.

Q — There is a great hymn called “In Christ Alone,” which says that on the cross “the wrath of God was satisfied.” But you argue that we must not forget the love of God here either. So what does the cross have to do with the love of God?

NT — I have often said that if a church wants to sing that hymn—and I agree that it is a great hymn in most other respects—then at least every second time they sing it they should sing **“the love of God was satisfied”** instead at that point. There is a deep and dark truth under what the writer said, and it’s the truth I just mentioned, as set out in **Romans 8:1–4** and elsewhere. But people can all too easily hear that and sing it with a very different narrative in mind: the narrative according to which, in a parody of John 3:16, God so *hated* the world that he *killed* his only son. Yes, God hates sin. **Yes, the death of Jesus is—because of his representative messianic role—the moment when sin is condemned.** But the way most people hear it is taking a large step towards a pagan idea which, frankly, not only puts a lot of people off Christianity but quietly hints at a license for other forms of anger and brutality. From the very beginning, Jesus’ followers insisted that his **crucifixion was the personal expression of the ultimate divine love: “the son of God loved me and gave himself for me,” said Paul in Galatians 2:20,** and he and John return to this theme again and again (John 13:1 says “having loved his own in the world, he loved them to the uttermost”). **Romans 8** is the great climax: Nothing in all creation shall separate us from the love of God in the Messiah, Jesus our Lord. To understand this, you need (of course) at least the beginnings of a doctrine of the Trinity, so that what the Son does is the full expression of the Father’s love and purpose. That is why—to revert to an earlier question—many people simply sense, whether they can articulate it or not, that the cross is the effective sign that the God who made the world is the God of powerful, rescuing love, a love that has come down to share the very depths of human tragedy and, by taking its weight on himself, to rescue us from it and enable us by his Spirit to share in his new creation as a result. This is a love that goes to work; a love that will not let us go.

Link here for more [NT Wright Online](#) resources.

~ NT Wright, Romans 8 Intensive, 2022 ~

In June, 2022, NT Wright taught an intensive course on Romans 8 hosted by [Truett Seminary](#) in Waco, Texas. Doug Webster had the privilege to attend. Here are 24 pages of his personal notes from the gathering. For the full content, see Nt Wright's, [Into the Heart of Romans](#) and the online course <https://www.admirato.org/courses/heart-of-romans>

Session 1 - Romans 8 Overview

Romans weaves a broad and dense theological tapestry themes woven throughout it. It is about being genuinely human through the power of the indwelling God. Romans 8 draws-in so much of the Old Testament: books and themes. It is the climax of the entire Bible for assurance

Trigger warning: the authority of scripture is over and above all denominational and theological systems. We will always bump-up against other interpretations, but a commitment to the text is most important. Secondly, so many people have followed the books of Romans with the self-centered “Romans road” to personal salvation. It is so much deeper, fuller, and more encompassing than just dealing with individuals. Salvation is not so much God’s gift to people, as much as it is salvation to people and through His people. Lastly, we have gotten our story of salvation upside down: when we die, we go up. The whole Bible is about the Creator God coming down to us to dwell with us, as well as the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in us.

Summary — Romans is about God’s character and righteous actions. This a book about God, where the Gospel of God reveals the righteousness of God. This book is also about putting the world to right, because of God’s faithful love and perfect justice. God intends to make through the whole world right by making humans right, so that we can be a part of the plan and working out of making the whole world right. It is about God’s Spirit making us new, so that we can help bring about the New Creation.

**The shape of Romans 8, from a helicopter view:
Assurance is the main theme**

Main divisions of the chapter

verses 1-11 “celebratory introduction: no condemnation”, verses 12-16 “Spirit and Sonship”, verses 18-27 “suffering and persecution”, verses 28-30 “assurance that God’s love will hold His people”, verses 31-32, “coda for the chapter”

Verses 12-30 “all about the calling and vocation of those who are ‘in the Messiah’ during this intense time of persecution.”

Romans 8 Big Themes

New Creation: renewed humans from death to life, so that we can tend the garden of the whole world. We are not saved from the world, but for the world. We are not awaiting to fly away or leave this earth, but to await the New Creation and live as a part of those who have been rescued, as royal priests and ruling/reigning children of God.

New Image: God made humans in His own image, so that we could reflect His image into the world. We must be raised from the dead and take our place to reign/rule as parts of the New Creation (Romans 5:17). We have a job to be vice regents in the grand rescue plan to redeem the world. Romans 1-4 gives birth to Romans 5-8.

New Covenant: The new Exodus is moving from death to self and into the life of Christ. We are rescued from slavery to sin and given a New Covenant. Through the Messiah, we have a new worldwide family that starts with Him. This is the way the new Exodus is underway: through a new Genesis start. That is why Jesus chose the Passover feast to inaugurate the New Covenant. Many scholars through the ages have assumed for many years that Romans 5-8 is about personal sin and personal salvation. If you force Paul into a box where we believe he is teaching about “how to live the Christian life” in Romans, you are not letting Paul speak for himself.

What we in Romans is the re-telling of the Exodus story in Romans 6-8:

- Romans 6: enslaved sinners come through baptism and find freedom and life
- Romans 7: the coming of the law in God dealing with the people’s sin
- Romans 8: what Torah could not do, God’s Spirit does by indwelling/leading His people

Summary — Romans 8 shows us the glorification of God through: the living presence of God and the genuine indwelling of the Spirit us as Temple people. We are active agents and signposts pointing ahead to the remaking and putting to rights of the whole cosmos, as the Spirit has done to us.

Session 2 - Romans 8:1-4

3 Ground rules for studying Pauline texts

- 1) Discover the main thrust of the text
Drawn in the opening and closing of the passage
v 1-4 - No condemnation because of the Cross & the Spirit
Matthew 1 - Immanuel God with Us; Mt. 28 - I am with you always
- 2) Pay close attention to Paul’s connecting words
Paul doesn’t throw these around randomly
v. 1-11 Paul’s argumentative structure
- 3) Think into the First Century perspective
Exegesis ought to be to get to the place of stand here in the Graeco-Roman world seeing the resurrected Christ. We have to allow Paul to say pay attention to my words into the pieces of the jigsaw fit together. If we reach too quickly to what it means today, we’ll miss the true meaning.

* We can drive a car but we study Paul to fix broken down cars

“Therefore, there is now no condemnation...”

The conclusion to the longer argument going on. Romans 8:1 breathes a new fresh air. Romans 7 ends in sorrow and frustration. 7:25, “I’m left to being a slave...”

Romans 7

Who is the “I” of Romans 7? We think Romans 5-7 is the “Christian experience”. Romans 7 is the Christian still struggling. Others say it can’t be that, it’s the non-Christian trying to be a Christian.

He is talking about the Jewish law, the Torah. “Nomos” is not just a system it is Israel’s covenant charter. He is referring to Torah, Israel’s covenant law from the first 5 books. End of Deuteronomy is one of Paul’s favorite passages.

What is Paul saying about the law, the Torah?

How the whole story of Israel works reaching its paradoxical goal in the Messiah. It generates a new kind of history. It is the regime given on Mt. Sinai to guide the children of Israel to the point with which it will be fulfilled.

Romans 6- 8 follows the story of Israel - Crossing of the Red Sea - Romans 6. Mt. Sinai - Romans 7; Tabernacle - Romans 8

Romans 5:20 - “so that the trespass might increase.” The purpose of the Torah was negative to bring the sin of Adam to the full height. Why would god want to do that? Romans 7:10, “choose life over death”.

7:7-25 - “Speech in character” - put into your own mouth words a character might be saying. This is not Paul’s autobiography. It is not psychological self-analysis. I love the law but I grieve I can’t keep it the way I should. Deut. 27-29 is being worked out. They are still in exile in their own land.

When the Torah was given on Mt. Sinai, Israel capitulated in the sin of Adam. What was God to do? God called Abraham’s family but they were composed of sinners. Sin had to be shown up for what it was. It could be seen in all it’s horror. It showed up in the ultimate curse, in Israel’s exile, Babylonian captivity.

Deuteronomy 30 and Romans 10 - God will renew the covenant.

This is the condition Paul summarizes in Romans 7 “the law of the sin”. We need to have this in mind as we look at Romans 8.

What has that got do with me today?

Paul described the human dilemma seeing the good I ought to do but fail to do it. Paul described Israel under Adam, when the Torah arrived, reaches as high as possible but they are on the same level as the pagan moralist. This is Israel’s story, the highlighted dilemma of the human history.

Why did God give the Torah?

God will enable people to keep the Torah from the heart and move people from the exile.

The Christian is part of the narrative. Like marrying into a family. I am not part of their story.

Obey the covenant, you’ll have life, disobey and you’ll have death like Genesis 2. The promise of Dt. 30 is coming true in the Messiah from those who keep Torah in the heart.

Romans 8 from ch. 2 who are these Gentiles who keep the Law to Romans 10.

Romans 8:1, There is therefore now no condemnation...

“because hear how God fixes it.” (v. 2, 3, 4) explains the puzzling “therefore” in v. 1 Remember 7:10, “unto life” do this and you will live. The

Torah could not give the life because Israel was still in Adam. It is a reflection of what all the prophets said again and again.

Torah promise life. The Spirit will give life.

Romans 8:2 - “released from the law and sin and death”

Paul’s theology of the Cross

Romans 5:20, “So the trespass might be filled out”

As sin increased, grace increased all the more

Torah brings Adomic sin until brighter light

Romans 7:13, “So that sin might become...”

To lure sin onto one place there it could do it’s worse to become it’s horrid self onto the Messiah so that it might be dealt with once and for all. The Messiah represents Israel and himself. He draws sin onto Himself and God can condemn it right there. God’s sone has taken the heaped up sin on itself. This is not a doctrine of the atonement, it is the story of the covenant.

Two Key Points — The Promise of Life and the Luring of Sin onto one place

He could do what the Torah could not do. God could not dwell where sin was powerful and polluting.

What happens to the Torah in the New Testament? It is fulfilled.

It is not an allegory for some other world’s dream.

This passage describes penal substitution. *The Day the Revolution Began*

Not an angry God looking to take it out on someone so he takes it out on His son.

God make humans to bed hHis stewards reflecting His image in the world. Following sin, He chose Abraham to rescue Israel and the whole world from sin. The royal, rejected, resurrected, reigning.

All capsulated in “God’s own son”. Psalm 2, II Samuel 7

Penal Substitution — “There is therefore now no condemnation because God condemns sin in the flesh”. That is “penal” and it is “substitution.” This works because of God’s Israel is in the vocation... God did not condemn Jesus, He condemns sin in the flesh.

“Now” in the present is assured for the future.

“Condemnation” looks back to chapter 2 and 5

“In Christ” - in what sense are Jesus’ followers in the Messiah? It depends upon the messianic meaning of “Christos”.

Verses 2-4 - the opening of a flower

v. 1 - the bud

v. 2 - opens, “the torah released you from sin and death”

v. 3 - “sin is condemned and the Spirit gives life.

What could the Torah not do? Give life! The Torah was not bad, it was given to a people who were hard-hearted. The Son is the appropriate vehicle for God’s own revelation echoing God’s likeness in Genesis 1. The genuine human being reflecting God’s love to the word and the worship of God.

The accidental and unwilling sin of Romans 7 -

The main point - God condemns sin in Jesus.

On the cross God wins the victory through penal substitution and victory. Penal works through the Messiah’s representative vocation of Israel. It is not punishing the animal, it is cleansing the place where God will come.

Torah’s verdict of life is now fulfilled.

Close - Paul’s inner logic will become familiar.

Session 3 — Romans 8:5-11

“For those who are in the flesh...” - the flower is beginning to open up.
1-11 round off the argument about the Torah. 8:11 finishes from 7:7

Torah wanted to give life but it could not because of the weakness of the flesh, Israel still in Adam. (7:10)

God sent the Spirit to give the life the Torah promised but could not.

No condemnation does not mean escaping this world and going to heaven. “Heaven” is not in Romans 8. God will renew His creation from top to bottom and rescue it. Sin with a capital S is the dark satanic power that opposes everything and lures us into idolatry.

John 12 - The ruler of this world is cast out. I will draw others to myself when lifted up.

The victory of the cross clears the darkness out of the way so that the Spirit could bring the light.

No way to “No condemnation” through the law or the flesh.

“But” v. 9, 10, 11

Principle #3 — Read from the New Testament Era

1) Flesh & Spirit

“Spirit” - widespread philosophical use in NT era.

Not “material” and non-material like in modern, Platonic thinking

Flesh - corruptible, decaying world. Being in Adam heading for death

II Corinthians 10 - we are still flesh people but we do not live in the flesh

The body is “soma” the bridge term - more the “person”

v.11 - the body not the flesh will be raised from the dead.

“flesh and blood will not inherit the Kingdom.”

ref: Galatians 5:16-26 — works of the flesh could be practiced by a disembodied spirit. The fruit of the Spirit expressed in bodily action.

Sharp contrast in the flesh vs. in the spirit - basic mindset

the mind, the thoughts - v. 5 “set their minds on nature’s desire”

Christian living does not just happen. It takes effort to focus the mind.

v. 6 - “mindset” - focus of the mind

Either/Or - Deuteronomy & Joshua - Choose life not death

Choose the mindset of the spirit not of the flesh

* A Taxi driver who’s mind is shaped by the map & experience

Focus on fruit of the spirit not the flesh until they become 2nd nature.

“Life and peace” - sin and flesh pollute the sanctuary but the blood washes it clean.

Do this and you will live.

v. 7 - This is the last present of the Torah in the argument. It is now handed to the Spirit. Torah was God’s law, holy, just and good.

v. 8 - If God’s Spirit is in us of course we ought to please God.

Flesh does not just mean material, and spirit does not mean just non-material.

Ethics in inaugurated eschatology.

2) Temple Theology

We miss this because our ears are not attuned to the echoes.

“If the Spirit dwells within you.” (v. 9. 11)

Yahweh dwelling in the Temple. Exodus narrative.

Rescued from Egypt and idols to worship God in the desert.

New Exodus - The Spirit comes to dwell within humans themselves, the new Tabernacle. Jesus chose Passover for what needed to be done.

The Spirit comes to constitute the New Temple joining Heaven & Earth.

Acts 1 Ascension - Part of Earth is in Heaven.

Acts 2 - Breath of God on Earth

v. 11 & v. 30 - Justified also glorified - “give life to your mortal bodies”

v. 9a - Phil 1:21, Colossians 1:27 - A new life, a new energy bubbling up inside us

Indwelling life, new temple existence.

The humble invitation to Jesus Himself to come and dwell in the temple.

The temple is the advanced signpost pointing to the new Heavens & Earth

We human temples are meant to be signpost towards the final new creation.

8:1-11 Establishes the basis of operation.

God will do what He planned to do and we have a vocation.

Glorification - God in us right now.

v. 10 - “righteousness” - covenant justice - 5:1-11, 1:17

“Life after death” - Raised from the dead

v. 11 - Ultimate answer to Romans 7

“Jesus” human being raised; “Christ” - anointed one The purpose of the Torah of the life promised. Renewal of the entire creation and resurrection of that life us today

“Those in the flesh can not please God” (v. 8)

What has God made you to enable you feel His pleasure?

Q — Strengthen Romans Road?

A — Add 1:3-4 - Gospel of the descendant of David

Q — Did Jesus know He was God?

A — None of us start off with a complete understanding of God. Start with Jesus and figure out who God is. Don't be afraid of the humanity of Jesus. Humans were made to be in the image of God. In the humanness of Jesus, the divinity is revealed. Jesus was having a real dialogue with the religious leaders in Luke 2, not just playing a game with knowledge.

Q — Flesh & Spirit relate to terms like “heart”.

A — The heart is interiority. Hidden motivations, joys and sorrows.

“What matters is what comes out of the heart.” Your heart needs renewal. Hidden springs of motivation and the emotions that swirl around it.

Q — How does Romans 7, “it is not longer I”, fit?

A — People of Israel remain the people of Israel even in this desperate state of sin. There is a tension that does not deny that they are called to be the people of Israel.

Q — Wrath against sin and against people work? How do we deal with people opposed to God’s plan?

A — God has promised to put the world right. Idolatry and Injustice” are what God’s wrath is revealed against. Putting the world wrong not right. Idolatry is going on, some idol is being worshipped. Humanness will deconstruct. God must say No. He can not collude with that. Romans 1 going against God’s creation. There is no future for those in putting the world wrong.

Q — Address a new believer explaining God condemning sin in the flesh of Jesus?

A — Fox collecting sheep’s wool off the bushes and made a ball of wool to draw the fleas off the fox upon entering the water. Sin in one place in Jesus.

SESSION 4 - Romans 8:12-17

The chapter - the ultimate Christian hope.

Today’s Christians think about “going to be with Jesus when I die”.

Heaven is not mentioned in Romans 8 nor the soul waiting to be saved.

We flip back into default mode. So many of our songs, hymns unthinking repeat 19th century Platonic tradition.

We need to recover the biblical message.

v. 17 - is a bridge between 12-16 and 18 ff.

Principle #1 - start & finish of the passage

How does vs. 17 round off v. 12?

Paul’s mind is racing ahead by often giving only part of the full thought

“We are in debt, not to the flesh...” What are we in debt to? The spirit? **Our debt is to God the Father**, “Abba Father”. (v. 15)

“Children of God” (v. 16)

“Heirs” (v. 17)

What do we do now?

Go to heaven when we die = platonized our eschatology and moralized our anthropology — *The Day the Revolution Began*

We are new creation people. We have discovered our “vocation” in the business of God putting our world right. We can be part of it. 8:12-13

We are called to live as God’s free children, God’s new exodus people.

God’s sons as in the exodus from Egypt. Exodus 19 - A Kingdom of Priests, a holy nation. Preamble to the Sinai covenant which is the preamble to God dwelling in the Tabernacle.

Principle #2 — Connecting words?

12-15 - string of “gar” = for or because or “you see”.

Principle #3 — First Century Jewish Eyes

The Son of God - the key them of “sonship”

Phoebe reading the letter from Paul. What would they be thinking?

Inheriting a great empire of Rome. Julius adopted son Octavius who became Augustus inherited the empire to be loyal to Julius Caesar.

The first 5 Emperors were chosen, adopted and groomed for the job

The son of the deified one.

Jesus is the true son of the true God.

Sons to rule over the Lord’s creation which in

Romans 5:17 - will reign in life. A counter empirical claim.

The Exodus Narrative - Romans 6 - crossing the Red Sea

“When the time had fully come...” Galatians 4:4

God’s glorious presence dwelling in Jesus’ followers

Vocation - Royal Priesthood - Genesis 1

Status given to Abraham’s people coming out of Egypt

given the Tabernacle and to be His agent in the world.

He is the royal priest and we are his royal family.

v. 15 - Contrast sonship and slavery

v. 17 - Israel as God’s son linked with the Messiah as God’s Son

v. 14 - “led by the Spirit” - people of the Exodus

God with His People in the wilderness — Haggai 2:5; Isaiah 63:7-14; Nehemiah 9:20

v. 16 - we are God’s children - all in the Messiah

v. 17 - the inheritance - New creation not heaven - Psalm 2:8

We have forgotten that Kingdom & Cross are mutually interpretive.
Not just the Cross to die for our sins nor the kingdom to change culture

This is how Kingdom followers will make this true through the suffering of His people.

1) v. 12-13 - A spirituality of holiness & hope

Heaven & Earth come together in us who are filled with the Spirit.

Holiness is drawing down from life’s future we have in God.

2) v. 14 - 15 Led through the exodus with a spirit of Sonship calling God “Abba! Father”

Strange word “Abba”. God is neither an impersonal force, nor a capricious deity but is deeply personal, deeply loving Father.

Q — What Bible versions do you recommend?

A — NRSV over NIV which will often lead you astray. The Jerusalem Bible.

Q — Consider “nomos” translated into “Torah” in your translations?

A — Yes, “Torah” is multi-purpose. Romans 7 is one of the most charged sections in the New Testament.

Q — Is the church carrying on the vocation of Israel - drawing the sin of the world into one place?

A — What was achieved on the Cross is implemented through the Spirit in the Church.

A — Morality is irrelevant because we were saved by grace through faith. We go back and think, “Maybe I ought to be engaged more in spiritual disciplines. Maybe I should work with a spiritual director to deal with areas i struggle.” We are supposed to be places already where Heaven and Earth come together. Back to the Lord’s Prayer seeking forgiveness. The humility is part of the mortification of what Paul speaks.

Q — Mind to behavior or behavior to mind, which is first?

A — Love God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength. Some churches focus on some areas more than other. Habits of the heart and of the body are much more closely aligned than we realized. Sometimes the mind is so darkened, a discipline. of kneeling or making the sign of the cross can communicate to the heart and mind.

It’s got to be both in a spiritual community.

Q — Why the blood of Christ necessary of atonement?

A — We assume we know what “atonement” means. It crept in the 16th century through Tyndale’s translation which was a loose word for whatever the Cross achieved.

When you tell the story right side up - God is wanting to dwell with humans. How is that going to happen? Sin & death pollute who we are and where are. Sacrificial system is to cleanse not to kill. Blood is God’s gift that acts as a cleansing agent so the presence of God can come. In the rinsing away is forgiveness. Romans 3:24-26 - the blood of Jesus does that job.

Q — How to read the NT with a Gentile mindset who did not know the Torah?

A — My call is to be the apostle to the Gentiles. The world has a new Kyrios - a new Lord. “There is a new King and He is a Jew who was crucified and resurrected.” This is nonsense to the Gentile.

Caesar is a sham, but a very powerful sham.

Q — In what way are we helping God create the future?

A — Is about God’s sovereignty and how God is working through us.

I Cor. 3:9, “We are God’s fellow workers.”

II Cor. 6:1, “Working together with Him” - our vocation as God lovers
God wants to work through humans simple and failing as we are.

Session 5 — Romans 8:17-21

What does glory mean?

v. 30 is the conclusion of this passage.

Romans 8 is not about Heaven. “Heaven is important but it’s not the end of the world.”

Glory - “dignity, worth, status”

- 1) The glory of God’s presence in us. “Temple Theology”
- 2) The human rule over all creation. “Human Vocation”

Preliminary Remarks

1) Today’s context - we are more aware now than ever of environment and climate change full of political division. From stewards to exploitation of creation. Powers of old practiced a “scorched earth” policy.

Romans 8 in the best loved translations specifically the KJV makes such a mess of this passage.

Principle #1 - The Start and the Finish

v. 18 ties in with v. 30 - begin and end with “glory”

Suffering (expanding v. 17) into glorification has nothing to do with saints going to Heaven.

Principle #2 - The small connecting words

“Gar” = “For”

What does the longing creation have to do with us going to Heaven?

v. 18 - I “consider” - logizimai - “like doing the math”

The cosmic problem of futility and corruption

Principle #3 - The worldview of Paul’s day

A world dominated by Rome with the one particular myth of the return of the golden age. See Virgil’s “4th Eclogue 11-41”. Tied to the new reign of the reign of Julius Caesar’s stepson Octavius - Augustus. Now that Augustus is emperor, we will have a time of peace and justice. It was imprinted on coins - the social media of the day. It was lie based on Rome’s ruthless rule with oppression and crucifixions.

For Paul, nature was not a passive matriarch but creation made by the Creator God now groaning in travail longing to give birth of a new age.

Isaiah 11:1-10, Isaiah 9, Psalm 72

- 1) Thru the Davidic Messiah
- 2) The Divine Glory

Early Christians believed the new creation through faithful men and women and the wider world.

The biblical Jewish story and the Roman story (poets)

Post-Modernity - Eschatology without God. Truths of God without God.

They deceive many but won’t do what they promise.

Destroy everything with no plans to rebuild it.

* Aaron and the Golden Calf

Biblical meaning of creation and new creation has been lost in the toxic myth of faith and politics.

“Glory” - rule, power, status. Literal “weight” or “heaviness” or “dignity”

Symbolized in the crown with rays of bright light

“God’s glory will flood the whole creation” - God’s wisdom and power will shine out and we will know the earth is filled with the glory of the Lord.

~ Humans put in charge of the world goes closely with the resurrection.
Davidic King Psalms — Psalm 2 and 110
Especially Ps. 8 - vocation of humans made in God’s image
picks up Genesis 2 - created to have dominion
Paul insists on Jesus as the truly human one alongside His divinity.
8:29 - confirmed to the Image of the son

“Glorified” also means receive the divine inheritance

“Consider” - reckon II Corinthians 4 - “slight and momentary affliction compared to the eternal weight of glory.”

The old age and the new age. The present age and the age to come. In Jesus, the age to come arrives in the middle of the present age.

I Cor 15 & 3 - Jesus people are themselves the subject of themselves. The cosmos is waiting for the Christians to be revealed. “eagerly awaits the revealing of the sons of glory” - like straining the head to see what’s coming around the corner. Creation is on tiptoe. The central feature is God’s children being revealed. What counts here is this is how God made the world in the beginning. We “Spirit Temples” to be unveiled as the empowered stewards of creation.

Revelation - God through Jesus has rescued us so we will rule the world.

v. 20-21 — Romans 5:12-21 - Adam & Jesus

Adam’s sin means the earth itself will produce thorns and thistles.

Genesis 2 was the start of something bigger, a project. Creation was going nowhere and it knew it. It was created to flourish under God fearing humans. Creation was subjected to humility but always with hope.

v. 21 - The glorious claim

“the freedom of the glory of the children of God.”

Creation will be set free from decay when its people will reign.

“Creation will enjoy its freedom”

Overview of v. 17-21 — The Hope of All Creation

Double sense of glory - return of Yahweh and of humans

I hope this is clear to today’s concerns. Common responses:

- 1) Sit back and let nature take care of itself
- 2) God will burn it up

3) We humans have to take care of it.

What do we do in the intervening time?

Colossians 3 - Already raised with the Messiah

New creation has begun with Jesus' resurrection

v. 22-27 is the role of the church that begins with lament

God promises to do for the whole creation what He did for Jesus at Easter.

The resurrection is the start of the new creation. When God works, He works with the grain of creation longing for renewal.

Session 6 – Romans 8:22-27

Suffering is deeply personal. Paul is talking about our vocation to stand in prayer where the world is in pain. One of the most innovative and revelatory passages of the scripture.

God's Spirit dwells in the world but the world is in pain. Their prayer is the place where the Spirit is praying to the Father. This painful vocation is at the heart of the rescuing of creation.

This passage is about Christian Vocation.

Near the answer of the deepest questions humans ask.

Why evil? Start with God of Abraham and the One in the crucified Messiah, the One who sends His Spirit into the hearts of His people.

~ The Present work of Lament that anticipates new creation, looking for the consolation of Israel - Zechariah, Elizabeth, Simeon, Anna, Mary.

Paul, "We have hoped. We go on hoping."

The glory (18-21) comes through prayer and particularly lament. When things are so bad you don't know what to pray for. You share in the spirit of the agony of Jesus in the garden at that point Jesus had the Psalms in His bloodstream. The biblical call to not hear the call to lament. The first generation where the Psalms are not the backbone of the church worship.

Even the Holy Spirit is at a loss for words in our contemporary world. If the Spirit does fill the world, what the Spirit is doing most is grieving. The way to avoid dualism is to lament and perhaps, speak truth to power and to be ready to bring God's healing to the world.

This constitutes the heart of the chapter. This chapter focuses on vocation.

John 21 — Simon, son of John, do you love me? Jesus commissions him.
Romans 8 - Expecting sins are forgiven, we're going to heaven and we are giving a vocation.

What is the church for?

To announce the gospel and to engage the world in its turmoil. Part of our calling is to lament to stand in prayer at the heart of the world in pain. Glorification meant for Jesus be vilified, hung out to die.

Learning to lament is a non-negotiable part of God's people.

This can tip over to the martyr complex.

Principle #1 - Start and Finish

v. 22 & 27 - clear theme - “groaning”

- 1) The world is groaning
- 2) The saints are groaning
- 3) God's Spirit is groaning

Principle #2 - small, connecting words

“Gar” - let me explain” the glory to be revealed.

v. 23 - “not only so, but we to...”

v. 24-25 - hope and patience (back to 5:1,5) - Paul's regular theme

v. 26 - climax - “in the same way to...”

v. 27 - at the heart we find God

Principle #3 - Contemporary Context

A woman in labor - creation not nature

The New Exodus - the now and not yet

v. 22 - “we know...” - only the redeemed in the biblical tradition
unlike views of Epicureans, Stoics, and Platonists

The church is groaning. We are placed at the places of pain.

It is not an accident, it is where we are supposed to be.

We are eagerly awaiting our full sonship

v. 23 - “redemption of our bodies” - an Exodus motif

v. 24-25 - look back to chapter 5

v. 26-27 - the Spirit comes alongside to help to work in us and with us

The Spirit is pleading for us.

This vocation is challenging. It is hard work. Fortunately we have the playbook. It is called the Psalms.

The Spirit calling to the Father in the depths of the world’s pain. Like the people of Israel, God heard and takes action. The Father & the Spirit are conformed to the image of the Son (v. 29).

Only when we take time to lament, can we find a way forward. The hope is anticipated in the dark prayer for the world. We don’t pray from a great height, we pray out of our own pain. We are called to be the Tabernacle People, where the Spirit carries on this often painful work. The mystery of trinitarian theology is the mystery of prayer.

v. 17 - to suffer that we may be glorified with the Messiah.

8:26-27 not just dwelling but its groaning.

Q — “already and not yet”

A — Romans 6 is in the anchor. We have been buried and we are raised with Him. The story of Jesus - Philippians 2 - emptying Himself and becoming human and then exalted - publicly exalted as “kyrios.” The already/not yet. Lots of people did not know what was going on with Jesus in the now/not yet. It makes sense when you’re living it. In theory it’s hard to line up the verses. We are already the children of God but the future resurrection will reveal. Colossians 3:4, “our life hidden and will be revealed”

Q — Divine and professional vocation

A — As we worship, the different gifts that God has given us and others discern the gifts. Keep the vision of the new creation and the pain of the world. I Corinthians 15:58, “Your work is not in vain.”

Q — The role of sacred spaces in us “temple people”.

A — God honors the places where His people get together. It is a bridgehead into the world.

Q — The biblical use of the word “soul”

A — The word soul has a long, checkered soul. The use of the word has been strongly influenced by Plato in Western Church. Soul means the whole life - people. Soul our whole self in deep interiority. These are not precise terms, they are gestures toward an understanding.

Q — What strategies to gain understanding of the 3rd Principle - to contemporize scripture.

A — Read Josephus and Dead Sea Scrolls.

Session 7 — Romans 8:28-30

The RSV - “God works with those who love Him...” “collaborators with God”

The Shema - “you shall love YHWH your God”

“Those who love God” is shorthand for all Jesus followers
“Love” being primary identity is also primary characteristic

Paul is reaching the central climax of the letter.

The church theologians have always been worried about synergism - God does His part and we do ours. “God helps those who help themselves.”

Paul is not speaking about how salvation is accomplished. Salvation is through the sovereign love of God. This passage is speaking about the vocation of the saved community within and for the benefit of the whole world.

“To be people of prayer at the heart of the pain of the world.”

I Corinthians 3:9 - vocation not salvation.

Western Church - made it how to get to heaven and avoid hell and we read scripture through that view.

Isaiah 40-55 - very similar to Romans 8
God calls Israel the servant people for a particular purpose.
49:3, God will be glorified like Romans 8:30;
40:5 - glory revealed; thru the work and suffering unto death the servant of the Lord.

On the road to Damascus, Paul was not saved, he was sent.

5:17 - receive righteousness will reign in life. The justified will be glorified.

Reigning now looks like living the Sermon on the Mount.

Romans 8 is one of “The poor in spirit and the Kingdom of God”

This is not about predestination.

Regaining proper human vocation. Genesis 1, Psalm 8, the Spirit comes to live within us to make us not like god but more human.

Romans 1:4 - “Jesus marked out as the Son of God”.

This Christological framework holds the book of Romans together.

Calling = Baptism; Justification = Resurrection; Glorification = Ascension

Q — The nature of sin?

A — Sin is unclear and undefined because it is sneaky. Jesus has conquered evil but it likes to strike back.

Romans 6, 7 sin is a force. Romans 1 has a long catalogue of behavior

Romans 1:18 - godliness (acibeia) and unrighteousness (akidia)
Stuff is going to get worse unless it is forgiven.

Q — How do we communicate sin to a modern ethos?

A — Most people know most of the world is radically out of joint.

How much do we all individually contribute?

Is this how it should be? If not, is this just a fluke?

If not, how have we all contributed?

Sooner or later, the doctrine of the fall is good news.

A diagnosis to lead to healing.

Christians coming together as friends to help neighbors in a crisis.

Psalms, the Lord’s Prayer, holding on the hope of God’s kingdom come

Session 8 — Romans 8:31-34

This is not about life after death nor the forgiveness of sins.

v. 35 & 38 - threats do not include the sins that cling to us or the judgment they might

Western Theology - moralize anthropology to make it about sin, sin, sin

If people focus on their sin, that can become an inward looking possessive thing. We pray the Lord’s prayer, “forgive us our trespasses” and then we get on with the day.

Paul’s purpose is to encourage believers.

“We are more than conquerors, not only winning the battle, but controlling the field.”

Today - “Who can be against us?”

1) The Framework: The start and finish

“God is for us...” and “Nothing can separate us...”

v. 35 - God’s love has not been mentioned since 5:11

This whole chapter has been about the love of God

Same with “Son of God” used by Paul reserved for climactic places

v. 32 - looping back to chapters 5:6-11

Looking at the New Exodus - covenant faithfulness is God’s love

1:17, 3:21 — theme of Romans - “righteousness of God”

In OT, far more than the justice of God. It’s putting the world right.

The Cross declares God is for us!

Romans 8 towers above the majestic letter that towers above all other of Paul’s letters.

5:11, 7:23 each section ends with a Christology

2) Structure of the passage

Motifs of Jesus

v. 31 - What shall we say to these things - v. 12-30?

“If God is for us” - those in Christ assured of no condemnation

“Who can be against us” - when they do, it will be negligible.

1] The Torah - Genesis 22 (v. 32)

like Romans 5:6-10 without Genesis allusion

Romans 4:13 - Abraham will inherit the world; Ps. 2, 8:17-27

“All things are yours” in the Messiah’s new creation

2] Prophets - Is. 50 like Jesus in the Upper Room (v. 33-34)

“Who will charge?” No one. “God justifies.”

v. 34 - Condemn? Romans 2; Ch. 1 - no condemnation

~> Woman caught in adultery = men caught in hypocrisy

8:3 the place where and the means which sin is addressed

The blood in the animal released in death cleanses the Temple

so the divine glory may continue to abide with His people

Jesus crucified, resurrected, ascended, interceding (v. 34)

Rich and complex basis for full assurance

Ascension - we have not been taught the biblical metaphysic of the overlap of Heaven and Earth. Secularism has shrunk our imagination to see Heaven and Earth as the twin halves of God’s reality. Heaven is not a long way away. It is not detached from Earth, it is the place from which Earth is run.

At God’s right hand - Ps. 110:1 ‘Sit at my right hand’; Mark 14, Dan. 7

Father & Son are now working together.

Is. 50:4-9 - mistreatment of the servant but trusting God

Session 9 – Romans 8:36-39

Ends in confidence. Question of philosophers, “How do we know?”

II Corinthians - defining marks of genuine apostleship

3] Psalm 44 (v. 36)

like climax Romans 15:7-13

we are living “in accordance with the scriptures”

v. 37 - “but in all these things we are more than conquerors...”

Romans 5 - love & Romans 8 love

“For God so love the world” is so well known. We need to rattle this cage.

II Cor. 5 - Messiah’s love one died for all

Gal 2:20 “Loved me and gave Himself for me.”

Much more the “love” of God the Father not as much the Son’s love
The Messiah’s action in the OT is not about love. For Paul, it is.

Why? Biblical theme of love “hesed” of YHWH for His people.

- 1) Resurrection is the New Exodus of the long promised divine love
- 2) Resurrection was not separated from Jesus before His death
They knew who He was. Crucifixion was the climax of who He was.
- 3) Church awareness of the presence of Jesus

This is a radical innovation of thinking of the Jewish Messiah.

(2) Lists of dangers

v. 35 - 7 experiences of danger

v. 36 - Ps. 34:23 - not nasty to get through but redemptive acts

Where the wounds of Jesus meet the wounds of the world.

“reckoned” as sheep to the slaughter. Mark 8 - Jesus’ warning

v. 37 - “Alla” - But we are more than conquerors

Jesus conquered death. We are to be super-conquerors through the one who loved us. Philippians 4:13, strength from love to bring God’s love, life and healing right there.

v. 38 - 10 things that might come against you

“For” I am convinced. Paul has done the math

“death & life” “angels & rulers” “present & future” “powers”

“height & depth” - cosmic reach

“nor any other created/creature” who is loved by the Creator

God is faithful to the covenant of Abraham seen in the coming in the person of the Messiah. The single Jew plus Gentile family has shared existence are already the right, their sins have been dealt with, they are in the family.

It all comes down to the powerful love of God. Romans 8:39

“If God raised Jesus from the dead, everything else is rock ‘n roll.”

London Cabby to NT

Q — Better acquainted with the OT?

A — Read it as the Jew from the 1st Century. Some of the great “aha” moments for me came over the years such as the exile from Deuteronomy through Daniel into the story of Jesus. Read it as “The Great Story”.

Q — Image Dei and New Creation

A — I read Image Dei in Genesis 1 as the Temple of God where God and humans come into intersection. In the light of the Gospel we see the image bearing expression through Jesus. It is reflected into the “Royal Priesthood”. Radical reshaping around Jesus.

Q — Nature & New Creation difference?

A — II Peter - “elements dissolved in fire” - odd text

General picture - new creation is the redemption of the present creation not the abolition of it, like a child being born from the womb. The old world redeemed. Romans 8 is close to where I would start. Part of the action of humans is to look after God’s world. “Dominion” is to care about things the way God cares about things.

Q — Language at funerals?

A — *Surprised by Hope*. The time to teach is not at the funeral. Philippians 1, “My desire is to part and be with the Messiah...” They are now with Jesus the Messiah. A temporary rest until Jesus raises the new world. Go to the “with” passages. Your life is with Christ in God.

Q — Next new thing you are learning about? What are you intrigued by?

A — I’m 73. What does retirement look like? I am anxious about the apparent division in the fields of biblical and systematic theology. I pray for fresh integration.

End of Notes: NT Wright on Romans 8, Truett Seminary, 2022

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“Jesus, Dallas & NT - Romans 8” is the 30th course offered by Jesus College engaging more than 2800 participants from 57 countries! Two more “Jesus, Dallas & NT” courses add to the 20 ready-to-learn courses in the [Jesus College Library](#) with 440+ free resources and 5500 pages to enhance your Christlikeness.

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For information on the courses, a plan worksheet for your custom Master’s V-I-M, or a personal consult with Doug Webster to discuss your desired spiritual training and growth, email us — info@JesusCollege.com.

Jesus College Postscript

Thank you and God bless you for venturing further up, further in the Kingdom Among Us. We trust you received a fresh hearing of Jesus through the mind and soul of a humble follower of Jesus in Dallas Willard alongside a cadre of the crucifixion of friends from around the world. May your quietly transforming, conversational friendship with God immersed in the Trinitarian community be pervaded with joy, relaxed with shalom, and filled with agape, as you become the kind of apprentice of Jesus who willfully seeks the good of God, others and yourself.

For more resources to follow Jesus alongside Dallas Willard & NT Wright:

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The study guide was prepared by Doug Webster of Jesus College and provided for free for course participants. We welcome your comments, suggestions and ideas on how we might better help you strengthen your apprenticeship with Jesus in the With-God life with the singular and eternal goal of Christlikeness.

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