

## 3I - God's Triumph

**Read Romans 8:26-39**



At the end of the movie *Patton* we hear the famous general say, "For over a thousand years Roman conquerors returning from the wars enjoyed the honor of a triumph, a tumultuous parade. In the procession came trumpeters, musicians and strange animals from the conquered territories, together with carts laden with treasure and captured armaments. The conqueror rode in a triumphal chariot, the dazed prisoners walking in chains before him. Sometimes his children, robed in white, stood with him in the chariot or rode the trace horses. A slave stood behind the conqueror, holding a golden crown and whispering in his ear a warning: that all glory is fleeting."

In Romans 8, Paul describes Christians as conquerors, who by God's love and grace overcome all forces that are hostile or harmful to us. However, the glory we receive can never be taken from us! Our triumph is God's triumph in us.

### 1. Why is it easy for Christians to feel more like the conquered than the conqueror?

We have all grown up being slaves to sin. We are used to the feeling of condemnation. The witness of nature, the voice of our conscience and the verdict of God's Word all combine to testify to our condition.

We see the destruction of random chaos, the rise of incurable diseases that we thought were conquered long ago, the lingering and malignant diseases brought on by sin and greed, and in our ears ring the old curse but with a whole new emphasis: "The ground is cursed because of you. You will eat from it by means of painful labor all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you. You will eat by the sweat of your brow until you return to the ground. You are dust and you will return to dust." (Genesis 3:17-20).

Our consciences testify to our guilt. Whole systems of idolatry are based upon the persistent feeling of condemnation and the perceived need for deliverance. The baskets of the Druids,<sup>1</sup> the wheels of the Juggernaut,<sup>2</sup> the shrines where the firstborn have been slain for the sins of the parents,<sup>3</sup> all testify that man's conscience says that he is in a state of

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<sup>1</sup> Julius Caesar reported that anyone suffering from a serious disease, or about to face the perils of battle, would offer, or vow to offer a human sacrifice, which would be carried out by the Druids. One method was for victims to be burned alive in huge wicker baskets. Usually criminals were chosen for sacrifice.

<sup>2</sup> A crude idol of Krishna worshipped at Puri and throughout Orissa and Bengal. At an annual festival the idol is wheeled through the town on a gigantic chariot and devotees are supposed to have formerly thrown themselves under the wheels.

<sup>3</sup> Child sacrifice was practiced by the Irish Celts, the Gauls, the Scandinavians, the Egyptians, the Phoenicians, the Moabites, the Ammonites, and, in certain periods, the Israelites. Thousands of bones of sacrificed children

condemnation. The priests of these false religions could not have made a trade of their snake oil if this were not true.

The Word of God is crystal clear on the matter.

- [Romans 3:23 HCSB](#) For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
- [1 John 1:8 HCSB](#) If we say, "We have no sin," we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
- [Galatians 3:10-11 HCSB](#) For all who *rely on* the works of the law are under a curse, because it is written: **Cursed is everyone who does not continue doing everything written in the book of the law. (11)** Now it is clear that no one is justified before God by the law, because **the righteous will live by faith.**

## 2. Read Romans 8:26-39. What words would you use to describe the mood of this passage?

Initially, it begins with: dependent, reliant, subordinate, subservient, vulnerable.

Then, surprisingly, it swings toward: assured, buoyant, enthusiastic, expectant, hopeful, optimistic.

## 3. Are there ever times when you feel at a loss about how to pray (Romans 8:26)? Explain.

The word "weakness" is correctly translated in the HCSB as singular. I only have one principle, root problem in my prayer life, i.e. unbelief.

Having said that, I have found that the root of unbelief sprouts and demonstrates itself in the following ways:

1. Lack of persistence (Matthew 7:7)
2. Lack of concentration (Deuteronomy 5:32; Psalm 1:2; 1 Corinthians 6:12)
3. Unknown sin (Psalm 19:12; Philippians 3:15)
4. Unconfessed sin (Psalm 19:13; Isaiah 59:1; John 9:31)
5. Not asking (James 4:2)
6. Selfishness (James 4:3)

In my weakness and faithlessness I can echo the father of the demon-possessed boy:

- [Mark 9:24 HCSB](#) Immediately the father of the boy cried out, "I do believe! Help my unbelief."

## 4. How can we be encouraged by the Spirit's prayers for us (Romans 8:26-27)?

Jesus promised the Holy Spirit would help us. "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever." (John 14:16).

How does the Holy Spirit help us in prayer?

1. Reminds us what to pray. (John 14:26).
2. Reminds us of the Truth, remains in and with us. (John 14:17).
3. Guides us in prayer and gives wisdom as to the future. (John 16:13).
4. Will point us to Jesus. (John 15:26).
5. Gives us strength to love and thus pray compassionately. (Col. 1:8-12)

## 5. In Romans 8:28, Paul speaks of "the good" and "his purpose." What is God's good purpose for us (Romans 8:29)?

The grand aim of the Gospel is not to give men theological knowledge and material civilization. Its aim is something much higher, infinitely grander – it gives us the character of

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have been dug up by archaeologists, often with inscriptions identifying the victims as firstborn sons of noble families, reaching in time all the way back to Jericho of 7,000 B.C. Sealing children in walls, foundations of buildings, and bridges to strengthen the structure was also common from the building of the wall of Jericho to as late as 1843 in Germany.

Christ. It is to create us anew in Christ Jesus in good works. It is to inspire us with the Spirit of Christ, without which we are none of His. "Follow me" is the Messiah's clarion call to this very day. This is the burden of the whole Gospel. Are we like Christ? This is the ultimate question of our existence.

Assimilation to the image of Christ is our supreme duty and it is by far the most attainable. Why?

- a. Because we are made by imitation. It is how we grew up. It is what babies do naturally.
- b. Because Christ is the most imitable of all examples.
- c. He is the most admirable;
- d. He is the most transparent;
- e. He is the most unchanging;
- f. He is the most intimate. He is always with us in the lives of good disciples, in the writings of the prophets and the apostles, and in the influence of our consciences.

**6. How do words such as *foreknew, predestined, called, justified and glorified* (Romans 8:29-30) help us to understand how God accomplishes his purpose for us?**

As we studied before in the classes on the Trinity, the Father wills, the Spirit empowers, and the Son accomplishes. Our transcendent Father, being outside of time, was able to foreknow every human act, every human desire, every human decision. Those He knew would submit to the sovereignty of His Son were immediately set aside for greater things; namely conformity to the image of His Son. Through the Spirit He called those people. As He already knew they would, they responded positively and He immediately justified them. At once, the process of glorification began. In all of this we see that:

- His purpose is good because it is the work of a wise God. He knows all things.
- His purpose is safe because it is the work of a powerful God. Unless He chooses he cannot
- His purpose beneficial because it is the work of a loving God.

**7. Paul claims that God is working in every situation and circumstance in our lives to accomplish his good purpose (Romans 8:28). How do you respond to this claim?**

- **Romans 8:28 HCSB** We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God: those who are called according to His purpose.

The apostle says "we know." "We know" is used 5 times in the book of Romans and the word "know" alone is used thirteen times. All these references taken together indicate that it refers to that which should be common knowledge among the talmidim. Where human knowledge "puffs up", love edifies (1 Corinthians 8:1). This is knowledge that is implanted deep in the heart of the believer who "loves God."

"For those who love God" is the identifier. All does not work well for the rashaim, regardless of their present circumstances. To them the Lord calls "You fool! Your soul will be required this night! What good is it to own the whole world and yet lose your soul?" Clearly, if Hebrews 11 teaches us anything it is that loving God and having all things work together for the good does not preclude calamities in this present world. The principle the Apostle is referring to is the same James brought up. James said,

- **James 1:15 HCSB** Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and when sin is fully grown, it gives birth to death.

The flip side to that is "righteousness, when it is fully finished, gives birth to life and goodness."

**8.** In Romans 8:31-34 Paul imagines a courtroom in which God is the judge and Jesus is our defense attorney. How and why would they respond to any accusations brought against us (Romans 8:31-34)?

How can their verdict encourage us when we feel unacceptable before God?

**9.** Many first-century Christians, including Paul, experienced many of the hardships described in Romans 8:35-36. Why might these experiences cause us to question God's love for us?

**10.** How can Christians who are led like sheep to be slaughtered be considered "more than conquerors" (Romans 8:37-39)?

**11.** In what ways can this passage help us appreciate our triumph in God (Romans 8:26-39)?