

Who Am I?

Why Jesus Matters

Patrick J. Griffiths

A black and white photograph of a metal ball and chain. The ball is on the left, and the chain extends to the right. At the end of the chain is a broken metal cuff, which is split into two pieces. The entire scene is set against a plain white background with soft shadows.

Who Am I?

From Romans 8

Why Jesus Matters

Patrick J. Griffiths

Who Am I?

Copyright © 2016 Patrick J. Griffiths
Published by Torn Veil Publications

Waukesha Bible Church
553 W24079 Glendale Road
Waukesha, Wisconsin 53189
www.waukeshabile.org

All rights reserved. No part of this booklet may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise—except for brief quotations for the purpose of review or comment, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Scripture taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

An Introduction

It is said that the Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin so feared for his safety that his residence in Moscow contained eight bedrooms. Each night Stalin chose a bedroom at random to ensure that no one knew exactly where he was sleeping.¹

In many ways, this is how we live the Christian life. We think we believe there is now no condemnation, but just to make sure we live our lives doing the best we can just in case we do end up standing before God having to give an account for any or all of our sins. Such thinking is regrettable.

Because of our union with Jesus in His death, burial, and resurrection (Rom. 6), there is now no condemnation (Rom. 8:1). None of this rests in the fickleness of our emotion or circumstances, but on the objective and absolute truth of His death,

¹ http://www.bible.org/illus.php?topic_id=543

burial, and resurrection (Rom. 5:6-10). An aspect of this union is the indwelling Holy Spirit. In many ways, the two ideas of our union and indwelling are synonymous. The consequence of this divine work in behalf of His people is "otherworldly." No longer does sin or the Law define His people. Jesus defeated sin and fulfilled the Law. Jesus defines His people and He is for them their identity before the Father.

The implications of unveiling this new identity is unprecedented. It is unfortunate, yea; it is a tragedy of the highest kind, that we have made the benefits of this union conditional. Romans 8 describes what God has done because of Jesus. It does not prescribe what we must do. Believers are beneficiaries. They simply show up by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone and everything described in the eighth chapter is theirs. Oh what glory is theirs now and forever.

Nonetheless, we often live our lives like the condemned, when just the opposite is true. We walk about as if there is no hope, no healing, and no wholeness. Christian, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. The merit of His cross-work has been fully and completely transferred to our account. We are living in this present reality. We cannot undo what He has done.

It is apparent in the reading of Romans that the Holy Spirit becomes prominent in chapter eight, where 60% of the occurrences exist. The intent of the author marks the Spirit's ministry in making "real" the work of Jesus in behalf of His people.

How does this idea of "NO CONDEMNATION" become real to us? How do we move from information to application? Friend, this is what the Holy Spirit works in the people of God.

Romans 8:1-17 has three subject divisions.

1. Law of the Spirit of life **VS**
Law of sin and death (vv. 1-4)
2. According to the Spirit **VS**
According to the Flesh (vv. 5-13)
3. Sons **VS** Slaves (vv. 14-17)

The intent is to show the contrasting picture laid before the reader. We are either governed by the Law of the Spirit of life or governed by the Law of sin and death. We are either walking, living, being led by the Holy Spirit or we are walking, living, and being led by the flesh. It is one or the other. Finally, we are either a son of God or a slave to sin. This picture of contrasts began in Romans 5:12-21. One is either in Adam or in Christ. No one is wedged between the two nor are they moving from one to the other throughout any given period.

We desire to promote appreciation for the immeasurable power of God's redemptive activity on behalf of His people by **showing what His people are because of who Jesus**

is. This statement is crucial. Because of who Jesus is and what Jesus does, we have the indwelling Holy Spirit. Because of who the Holy Spirit is and what the Holy Spirit does, we are the fifteen statements found in Romans 8:1-17. We will examine all of chapter 8, but initially let us begin by noting the fifteen statements as found in Romans 8:1-17.

1. We are not condemned (v. 1).
2. We are in Christ Jesus (v. 1).
3. We are freed from the Law of sin and death (v. 2).
4. We are commandment keepers (vv. 4, 7).
5. [We] are walking according to the Spirit (v. 4).
6. [We] are setting [our] minds on the things of the Spirit (vv. 5, 6).
7. The Spirit of God does dwell within us (vv. 9, 11).
8. We do please God (v. 9).

9. We do belong to Him (v. 9).
10. Christ is in us (v. 10).
11. [We] are living according to the Spirit (v. 13).
12. By the Spirit [we] are putting to death the deeds of the body (v. 13).
13. [We] are being led by the Spirit of God (v. 14).
14. [We] have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" (v. 15).
15. We are heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ (v. 17).

Friend, it is "easy" to read the statements and not feel the weight of each. Please prayerfully and carefully read each statement and think about the implications of each in your own life. It is because this is true and completely dependent on who God is and what God does that His people live free lives.

The vertical [what God did] forever changes the horizontal [what we do]. Whatever we do is a consequence of what God is doing.

Thus . . .

We do not walk in order not to be condemned. We walk because we are not condemned (v. 1).

We do not walk in order to keep the Law. We walk because the Law is being kept for us (v. 4).

We do not mind the things of the Spirit in order to be indwelt. We mind the things of the Spirit because we are indwelt (vv. 5-9).

We do not abhor the flesh in order to please God. We abhor the flesh because we do please God (vv. 8, 9).

We do not put to death the deeds of the body in order to live. We put to death the deeds of the body because we live (v. 13).

Consider Romans 8:18-30.

It is important to take these fifteen statements and ask what prompted Paul to write what he did. One of the questions confronting the early church was this, "If Jesus defeated sin and death and I am no longer defined by it, what am I to make of my present suffering?" Our circumstances push us to think God does not love us. Bad things are happening. Why? What is it that others or I have done to incur this suffering? Is God punishing me for some unknown sin? Can I lose God's love? This text assures us that He does love us and we cannot lose His love. Paul's response is four-fold. **First**, our present suffering is catapulting us toward future glory. **Second**, we are not alone in our suffering. All of creation groans under the curse and equally waits for the final revealing. **Third**, God is

praying for us. **Finally**, nothing can stop God from finishing His work in us and through us to those around us.

You and I exist in a time of suffering. Nonetheless, where we are now cannot compare with the glory awaiting us. There is release.

BEFORE WE “WRAP” THINGS UP . . .

Let us consider Paul’s final word to us. As we close out Romans 8, the apostle concludes his treatise on our present situation in a spectacular manner. Romans 8:31-39 is breathtaking. It reaches into the deepest recesses of the human heart and breathes a whisper of calm to the agitated soul. The capstone sits on the triumph of God over all things created.

Again, the apostle concludes one thought and in so doing, introduces another. This paragraph is in response to the entire thought presented in chapters 6, 7, and 8.

In light of our union with Christ and the certainty of God fulfilling His purpose, can we ever be separated from the love of God? Paul's emphatic answer is "No!" What follows resembles a doxological outburst and expression of worship.

As those who are in Christ, we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us (8:37). Our placement under the reign of grace is because of who God is and what He has done (Rom. 5:20, 21). The fact that our God reigns causes us to be the beneficiaries of His triumphant activity.

Structurally, when one reads chapters six through eight, one can see repeating elements common to the previous questions (6:1, 14; 7:7, 13 "What then"), but unlike the previous four questions, it lacks, "May it never be." In all of the questions that are contained inside of Paul's final thought the bottom line appears to be, "Can the purpose of God for His people fail?" Is it possible for our suffering to stop God

from fulfilling His purpose to conform us to the likeness of Jesus? His response although unstated is clearly implied, "May it never be!"

For the purpose of God to fail, His love for them would have to fail. Because each thought is inseparably linked to the other, neither one is capable of failing.

What Paul began in Romans 5:1, he begins drawing to a conclusion in Romans 8:31-39. Not only is all of 8:1-17 true, not only does all this lead to an end with our future glory (vv. 18-20), but God's intentions toward us are both favorable and unstoppable. Without forgetting the fifteen statements found in Romans 8:1-17, let us also note the five freedoms listed in Romans 8:31-39.

First, the work of Jesus and the indwelling Holy Spirit free us from doubt (vv. 28-31).

The "these things" of verse 31 are referencing not only Romans 8:28-30, but

everything from Romans 6:1 up to this point. Our own doubts often plague us. We really wonder if it is all true and if this is real or just a bad joke. Our passage assures us that what God has begun, He will finish. None of what we have in Christ is the result of our own effort. Every aspect of our vertical relationship with God rests on the person and work of Jesus. Let us not waver in this. Let us rest and live knowing He did all the heavy lifting and it is finished.

Second, the work of Jesus and the indwelling Holy Spirit free us from debt (v. 32).

There is no deficiency in the nature of what God has provided. The outpouring of God's resources forms the basis of grace and is, therefore, immeasurable. Why would we, how could we question the certainty of the end or the fulfillment of His promises when they rest on the Father's gift of His only begotten Son?

The offering the Father made in His Son was “in behalf of” His people. He did for them what they could never do for themselves. The words “freely give” comes from the word “grace.” God’s activity toward us is grace-based. He can give freely all that He has because He gave freely the greatest possession in offering up the second member of the Godhead for the good of His people. Let us rest and live knowing we are fully resourced by the Son.

Third, the work of Jesus and the indwelling Holy Spirit free us from accusation (v. 33).

If my righteousness before God is sourced in His work for me, what created thing can possibly raise any accusation against me? Not even God will undo what He has done. No charge can be laid at our feet. Jesus is our Advocate (1 John 2:1, 2). He intercedes before the Father in our behalf. Let us rest and live knowing we are guiltless before the Father.

Fourth, the work of Jesus and the indwelling Holy Spirit free us from condemnation (v. 34).

We have already noted this in Romans 8:1, however let us expand on this idea from 8:4. There are four reasons as to why we are free from condemnation.

1. Jesus Christ died for my sin
2. Jesus Christ was raised from the dead
3. Jesus Christ sits at the right hand of God
4. Jesus Christ intercedes for me

The intercessory ministry of the Holy Spirit (vv. 26, 27) and Jesus Christ the Son guarantees the promised outcome. I find this fact stunning and humbling. God, in the persons of the Holy Spirit and the Son are interceding for their people! If our non-condemnation is fully sourced in the cross-work of Jesus Christ, then who can condemn us? When we stand in the

courtroom of heaven, who will be able to charge us with wrong as to discredit the judgment of God for us? Friend, let us rest and live knowing we are fully accepted and received by God because of the work of another, Jesus.

Finally, the work of Jesus and the indwelling Holy Spirit free us from separation (vv. 25-39)

Often we gauge or evaluate our relationship with God based on how we feel or on what we have or have not done in any given moment. Thus, we have a tendency to distance ourselves from God and put up unnecessary barriers. This is unfortunate.

The issue is not my love for God (which tragically proves fickle), but rather His love for me. What can separate me from God's love for me? **There is nothing natural or supernatural that can separate me from God's love for me.** No matter what the charge is or from whom it is raised, I

overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved me. This victory is not from me or by me. It is a victory that has been attributed to me. His victory sits in my account.

Although God's love for His people is unconditional, there was a basis for that unconditional love and that basis was the sending and sacrificing of His only begotten Son. It is equally true that I must accept this by faith or I will not enjoy it. Take some time and step back to meditate on the unconditional nature of God's love for you.

Let us rest and live knowing nothing we do or fail to do can stop or change God's love for us.

TODAY

Our union with Christ (chap. 6) and our relationship to the Holy Spirit (chap. 8) irrevocably and powerfully changes how we live.

The emphasis in that statement, however, is not on what we do, but rather on what God has done and is doing.

Come and believe the promise. Believe Jesus and find in Him all you need and one day all you will want. If you have taken time to read this short tract, then please allow me to ask one more question. "Do you recognize you are a sinner, broken in sin, and completely undone before God?" Moreover, "Do you recognize Jesus is your only hope in this life and in the life to come?"

If today you recognize your own sin and brokenness, and if today you see Jesus as your Savior from sin and death, then we invite you to begin your relationship with Him. We invite you to talk to God right now. It is never complicated to come. God has made the way easy. Perhaps you can pray the following prayer:

Dear Jesus,

Up to this point, I have lived my life without you. I have tried to fix my own brokenness and instead of getting better, I have made it worse. I know you came to save sinners, to fix my brokenness. I know you died on the cross to save me from my sin. I know you rose on the third day to secure the victory for me from my sin and death. Today, I come in faith, believing the promises. Today, I accept your record, your *Story* as it is written in the Bible. Thank you for saving my soul this day. Thank you for forgiving me of all my sins. Thank you for inviting me into your family. Thank you for giving me life with you. Amen.

If you have prayed this prayer, then we welcome you into God's family. I would encourage you to make your desires known. Consider writing us a short note telling us of your decision to begin your relationship with God. We can be reached at office@waukeshabible.org.

WAUKESHA BIBLE CHURCH



CHRIST-EXALTING · WORD-CENTRED · GRACE-BASED · GLOBAL-IMPACTING

262-542-7177

www.waukeshabile.org