

## Romans Chapter 8 Part 1 - John Karmelich

Title "And now for the good news!"

If you've been reading my Roman lessons, or are just familiar with the book, you know this book up to this point is a tough read! It makes anyone reading it feel guilty about not being good enough to please God! The good news is Chapter 8! I realize the original text doesn't have any chapter breaks! I've said for years that if I'm stuck on a desert island and can only have parts of the bible give me Isaiah Chapter 53, as well as Psalm 22 and Romans Chapter 8! This chapter is so important, I'm taking two lessons to take it on! A key point: Most of us have gone through times where we've messed up so bad we start to think we're not good enough to be saved! Remember demons have the goal to make us think we are not worth saving, so we no longer try to live as a Christian! That's why this is such a great chapter. It states clearly that our salvation is not up to us! It reminds us God paid for all our sins, past, present, and even whatever future one's we commit! When we sin, we're to confess it, ask the Spirit for help as to be the type of witness God wants us to be.

Speaking of the Spirit, in effect this is His chapter! One of the things I've argued all my adult life is we don't have a key chapter on baptism, a key chapter on the Holy Spirit, a key chapter on the resurrection as simple examples. Why is that? As I call it to "prevent hostile jamming". Let me explain. In WWII code messages were sent (as an illustration) partially at 600AM, partially at 670AM and the rest at 710 am. If all the messages were sent at 600, the enemy could broadcast a loud signal at 600. So, a message was spread over the bandwidth to "prevent hostile jamming". Same with the bible. If one removes say one book or a chapter the whole message would still be there, but not as clear! With that said, Romans is considered the best book on Christian "doctrine". Can you find all those doctrine points elsewhere in the bible? Of course, but again, not as clear! With that said, Chapter 8 is in effect, "The Holy Spirit" as the main subject. The Holy Spirit is one of those things Christians accept as part of the Trinity, but it is not something we give much thought to unless asked about it say in a Bible Study! My short version is the Spirit is what helps us draw closer to God, helps us turn from sin and leads us where God desires. I am aware He's far more than that, but I'm talking to my fellow believers and what He does for us!

With all of that said, my goal is to get through Verse 17 in this lesson and the rest of the chapter in Part 2 (next lesson). Now you know the scope of the lesson and that the Holy Spirit is key. OK John hit us, "Now what"? Why should I read the rest of it? Again, moments will come when you ask, "How will I be able to make my next rent or mortgage payment?" Or we may think, "I know I messed up so badly, I lost my salvation!" We may have vowed, "God I know I messed up, so I promise to read my bible for 2 hours a day every day next week!" OK you get the idea. When we experience something like any of those things read the 1st Verse of Chapter 8: "There's therefore NOW NO condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." I put the NOW & NO in caps, as the "NO" applies to all people who have put their trust in Jesus as God, and full payment of our sins! Yes, we still must deal with where the money will come from that we may need, but we cannot lose our salvation! I realize most of us already accept that, but I promise moments will come when one of those questions will come in our head.

Even Paul himself struggled with his doubts. Keep in mind the first seven chapters are basically a full argument why we can't ever be good enough for God! Also keep in mind, Paul worked far harder than any of us ever will for Jesus! Paul realized living by God's laws (not the food ones but murder or theft as obvious examples) was the best way to live! Still Paul knew he was not perfect. Another great name in Christianity: Martin Luther (despite his many faults) realized he couldn't please God based on works

and was heavily influenced by the half-verse "The just shall live by faith", that is from Habakkuk 2:4b! In effect that's the same point Paul makes in Romans 8:1. By the way, that verse (8:1) has a second half which most scholars will argue is not in the original text, so I'll leave it at that!

Of all things, that leads me back to a discussion of the Holy Spirit. The word Spirit is used 23 times in my current favorite translation (English Standard Version) of this chapter so it's a big deal! In essence the Spirit is what gives us the power to turn away from the desire to sin. But John, you just stated how even Paul realized he couldn't do it right and he still battles sin! I'm not claiming there's a magic pill to keep us from sin! I'm just saying living for God and letting the Spirit guide our lives is the best way for us to live and that helps us resist the urge to sin. To put it another way, the way to tell a Christian is he or she has a strong desire to want to please God and turn from sin! The Spirit puts that desire in us and helps to lead us down the path God desires for us to go! That is the key point from Verse 2 to Verse 8!

Are you saying that all we have to do is focus on God (speaking to believers) and we won't desire to do any sins? Not that I've seen! All of us battle our old nature still living inside of us, the temptations we get from the world around us and demonic forces. Why is that? If God gives us free will, then He must allow sin to exist for us to turn from it! As most Christians realize, the world belongs to Satan until the return of Jesus to redeem the world! I know that's old news. My point is our old nature will always go through a struggle with sin but with the Holy Spirit guiding us God does make it possible to overcome that desire! That's one reason the Holy Spirit LITERALLY takes up residence in the believer. But I'm still struggling with sin! We all do at times! The fact we struggle with it, is a clue that pleasing God is an important part of our lives and a sign of our salvation! As I love to preach, we don't do good works to earn His love, we do good works out of gratitude for what God does for us!

OK John, you've beaten over our heads the fact that Spirit is our guide to help us overcome our desires to sin. Of course, I believe in accountability and encouragement. I've always argued a key reason that I go to church every Sunday is to encourage other believers and be encouraged. We are not more saved by doing church but encouraging other believers is a great reason to get involved with a church group!

Paul finishes this section by stating in effect: people who don't care about pleasing God go do whatever they want as pleasing God isn't an-issue. What about people of other religions? I argue willpower can do a lot but it always falls short which is why we need His power to overcome sin! Paul uses "Abba" as an illustration. That's a Jewish (Aramaic) word that can best be translated "Daddy" as it implies having an intimate relationship. Yes, I believe in formal titles for God but at the same time we must realize He also desires that intimate relationship with us like a loving father and his child! That's another way we are assured of our salvation. When the desire to sin comes upon us, the guilt we feel is God desiring to guide our lives back to what He wants for us!

It may help to keep the big picture in mind. When we are wondering how we'll pay the rent or how we can overcome the sin we're struggling with, first remember even the most devout Christian struggles as well! Chapter 8 is the reminder we can't EVER blow it bad enough to lose our salvation. Of course, we may suffer in other ways as it's God's desire for us to be a good witness for Him. When we blow it and we will, the Spirit works inside of us to guide us to how He wants us to live! That is one reason why I don't doubt my salvation even when I blow it badly or am struggling with some sin at the moment. We are called to use our lives for His glory and God loves us too much to leave us struggling with some sin!

With that said, hope you like this study. I wrote a more detailed one some years back. If you want to read that one, click on one of the links below. It is still a joy to study this stuff, and again I'm grateful

for all of you reading this. If you're new here, you're always welcome to e-mail me. Thanks again for reading this!

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That's it. Hope you enjoy it. Don't forget to fire up a prayer prior to your reading.