

Saving Sophie

a bird's-eye tour of Paul's letter to the church at Rome

*“the gospel .. is the power of God for the salvation
of everyone who believes.. ” [Romans 1.16]*

Few books of the Bible provide such a comprehensive and in-depth statement of the gospel as Paul's letter to the Romans. This series of studies is intended simply to familiarize us all (in the case of some, *again*) with the landscape of the letter.

May the result of our studies be that we exclaim with Paul, *“Oh the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! .. For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory for ever! Amen!”* (Rom.11.33-36)

You can find the background to this series [here](#).

*

6. Romans 8.1-39 [w/b Sunday 6th August]

“.. the law of the Spirit of life set me free ..”

Romans 8.1-39

We come in this chapter to a hugely important theme, where Paul explores with us the **‘freedom’** we have in Christ: this is the next ‘key word’ in understanding God’s salvation in Jesus, and it follows the heartfelt cry at the end of chapter 7 – ‘who will deliver me from this body of death?’

It’s one of the richest chapters in Scripture as Paul explains both nature of, and the present and future dimensions of, the true freedom which we enjoy in Jesus Christ. May the Lord use your study of it to uplift your heart and encourage your spirit!

*

1. **Read Romans 8.1-39.** Slowly; carefully; and more than once! Get the feel and flow of the whole chapter and allow its upward currents of gracious truth to lift your soul!

What truths does the Lord impress on your heart as you read the passage?

How does Paul’s teaching here counter the despairing cry of Rom.7.24?

2. Read Romans 8.1-4. The word 'law' is used in a number of different senses in these verses: the first two references (v.2) use the word more in the sense of a 'force' or 'power' (as in the 'law of gravity'), rather than in the sense of the 'law of God' with its regulations for living (vv.3 & 4).

What is it that Paul suggests the 'law' is powerless to do?

If the theme of the whole chapter is 'freedom', from what are we now set free, according to what Paul says in these verses?

When you sin in one way or another and feel condemned, how should you address that as you 'pastor' yourself?

3. Read Romans 8.4-13. Having Jesus in your life by His Spirit makes the world of difference in terms of the way we live our lives. Paul here draws the contrast between our old way of life and the new life we have in Christ.

Read vv.5-8: what are the contrasts Paul draws between the life controlled by the 'sinful nature' and the life now controlled by the Spirit of God?

How can we ensure our lives are 'controlled' by the Spirit?

Read vv.9-11: what truths does Paul underline in these verses? And what are their implications for our living?

Read vv.12-13: what does 'putting to death the misdeeds of the body' entail? What will this mean, in practical terms, for you?

4. **Read Romans 8.14-17.** A cowering fear has been part of human experience from the beginning. The antidote to that is the security we have in the assurance of the Father's love.

Read Gen.3.6-10: why were the man and woman afraid? How do we tend to 'cover' ourselves (v.7) and 'hide' (v.8)?

In the first 3 verses (Rom.8.14-16) what are the three 'evidences' of 'sonship' to which Paul points us? How helpful are these 'evidences' in dispelling that fear in your own life?

What implications of 'sonship' are mentioned here (v.17)?

5. **Read Romans 8.18-27.** Paul turns our attention to the experience of 'frustration' which is so very characteristic of this present world.

Sin affected not just humanity, but the cosmos. What is the 'frustration' to which the 'creation itself' has been subjected, and how is that seen?

How do *we* experience this 'frustration' according to vv.22-27? And why does the gift to us of the Spirit make such a difference to our experience?

6. Read Romans 8.28-30. With relentless logic Paul proceeds to show why, in and through all our circumstances, we may be sure that there will be a good ending to our story!

The phrase '*according to His purpose*' belongs not just with His calling of us, but also with His working things for our good: what does Paul say is the culmination of the purpose God has for us in Christ?

What encourages you most as you think about this?

Can you think of illustrations of this both from Scripture and in your own life?

7. Read Romans 8.31-39. Paul concludes this section of the letter by pointing to the three-fold 'worst-case scenario' we fear, and then showing how we are now entirely free from any possibility of this happening.

Why can we be so sure that God Himself will indeed 'graciously give us all things' (or at least all things we need)?

Read Isaiah 43.1-7 and let the Lord speak personally to you through these verses: what reasons does He give for exhorting you not to fear, come what may?