



20.
'Finding freedom'
Romans 8.1-4

Background

Martin Luther, with some justification, described this next chapter of Romans as *"the masterpiece of the New Testament."*

Another (more modern!) commentator, Douglas Moo, describes it as *"the inner sanctuary within the Cathedral of the Christian faith; the tree of life in the midst of the Garden of Eden; the highest peak in the range of mountains."* Its elevated truth is certainly worth savouring!

The over-riding theme of the chapter is that of 'freedom' – the freedom which is the birthright of every believer. Following the heart-felt cry at the end of the previous chapter – "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?" (Rom.7.24) – Paul launches into what is effectively a glorious exposition of the 'deliverance' which God has effected for us through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom.7.25).

That note of freedom is flagged up here in the opening couple of verses with the statement that 'the law of the Spirit who gives life has **set you free** ..': and later in the chapter Paul will speak about 'the freedom and the glory of the children of God' (Rom.8.21). And there's a sense in which that freedom is indeed the distinguishing hallmark of those who are in Christ Jesus, a freedom into whose fulness we grow and one whose full glory we shall one day finally know. This is what it is, Paul wants his readers to know, to be delivered from this body that is 'subject to death'!

This freedom which we have in Christ is a multi-faceted jewel, and the first 'face' of the freedom we have in Christ which Paul explores in these opening verses of the chapter has to do with our relationship with God: a relationship that is now free from the taint of condemnation which the law inevitably brings to sinful men and women.

Paul's explanation here as to how that condemnation has been removed is a pervasive theme throughout Scripture obviously and alongside the text of Rom.8.1-4, therefore, the readings comprise 4 other Scripture passages (2 in the Old Testament, 2 in the New Testament) which address this same theme from a variety of perspectives.

It's worth looking at all the passages mentioned but if you're short of time then start with **'days' (3), (4), and (7)**.

1) Monday 10th June – no condemnation!

Read [Romans 8.1](#)

“.. there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus ..” (Rom.8.1)

The resounding opening note of a glorious chapter, replete with gospel truth. Simple, clear, emphatic. No doubt about it. No maybe involved. No waiting for some future date. For those in Christ Jesus, it's present and certain. The peace of total absolution.

What is Paul pointing back to when he starts this statement with the word 'therefore'?

When and how did the Lord first impress this great truth on your heart?

Prayer: *Amazing love! How can it be that Thou, my God, shouldst die for me? Make me truly thankful for Your mercy towards me, and may my life show forth Your praise.*

2) Tuesday 11th June – liberated!

Read [Romans 8.2](#)

“.. the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free ..” (Rom.8.2)

Here's the reason for the certainty you may have as a believer that there is now no condemnation. Not because of anything you've done: but because the life-giving Spirit has graciously set you free from the death-bringing grip which sin once had on you.

What does Paul mean when he speaks about your being 'set free from the law of sin and death'?

To what does the phrase 'the law of the Spirit' refer?

Prayer: *My chains are gone, I've been set free! You, Lord, my Saviour, You've ransomed me! And like a flood Your mercy reigns, unending love, amazing grace!*

3) Wednesday 12th June – pure grace!

Read [Romans 8.3](#)

“.. and so He condemned sin in the flesh ..” (Rom.8.3)

The gospel is pure grace. God has done what we could never do. The Son of God assumed our humanity, in order that thereby He who was Himself without sin might bear and exhaust in His own person the righteous condemnation of God on our sin.

What was the law 'powerless to do'?

How did you become aware of what Paul describes here as the 'weakness' of the flesh?

Paul always is careful in the use of his language: why does he describe the coming of the Son of God as being 'in the likeness of sinful flesh'?

In what ways have you experienced the 'freedom' which Jesus' coming to be a sin offering for His people has secured?

Prayer: You have done what I could never do, my Lord, and I can never thank You enough for Your grace towards me. Help me to show my gratitude in all I say and do.

4) Thursday 13th June – fully human!

Read [Hebrews 2.14-18](#)

".. for this reason He had to be made like them, fully human in every way .." (Heb.2.17)

The power of death over humanity could only be broken by one who was truly and fully human, and by one who, in the face of all the temptations we experience, was Himself without sin. Atonement is made. Sin is dealt with. Death's power is broken.

How does the 'slavery' of the 'fear of death' find expression in our culture and in the lives of those around you?

To what extent is our mortality a starting point for evangelism? [You could have a look at the 'Solus, Short Answers' [videos](#)]

Why was the incarnation, whereby the Son of God became 'fully human', so necessary?

In what ways are you 'helped' by having Jesus as your 'high priest'?

Prayer: How wonderful to know that You have broken the power of death, My great High Priest! May those who grieve after the death of a loved one be comforted by You.

5) Friday 14th June – God our Saviour!

Read [Psalm 24.1-10](#)

".. lift up your heads, you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors .." (Ps.24.7)

We are made *by* God, *for* God. And long to be *with* God. But how can fallen, sin-stained men and women draw near to the holy God? The King of glory has stepped into the fray as one of us to satisfy the demands of righteousness. Hallelujah, what a Saviour!

Why is this psalm often, and very appropriately, sung as part of a communion service?

Since you placed your trust in Jesus as Lord, in what ways are you conscious of 'receiving blessing from the Lord'?

Prayer: Thank You Lord. There is a way for us to rise to that sublime abode: an offering and a sacrifice, a Holy Spirit's energies, an advocate with God. [Thomas Binney]

6) Saturday 15th June – our substitute!

Read [Isaiah 53.1-6](#)

“.. the punishment that brought us peace was on Him ..” (Is.53.5)

A remarkable portrait of Jesus, a masterpiece painted long centuries before the Saviour came, underscoring the selfless love of the Son of God. *Our* pain: *our* suffering: *our* transgressions: *our* iniquities. Jesus bore it all. In Him there’s healing and hope.

If this was the only passage of the Bible you had, how would you use it to explain to a friend (a) who Jesus is and (b) what He has done for you?

What is the ‘healing’ to which v.5 refers?

Prayer: *I will praise You, Lord, with all my heart. My debt to You I can never remotely repay. My love for You I can never adequately express. I offer up my life to You again.*

7) Sunday 16th June – freed!

Read [John 8.3-11](#)

“.. Go now and leave your life of sin ..” (Jn.8.11)

The first day of the week. The day of resurrection. A God-appointed day of grace and the opportunity to start again. The Lord has written on the ‘ground’ of Scripture that He will pay the price and bear the condemnation: He sets you free now to live for God.

How quick are you to criticise and condemn others?

The teachers of the law and the Pharisees were Bible-believing folk, concerned to uphold God’s revealed truth: how, as a fellowship, do we avoid being either lax, on the one hand, or legalistic, on the other, when it comes to the law of God?

In what areas of your life do Jesus’ words to the woman here (‘Go now and leave your life of sin’) challenge you, and what steps will you now take?

How easy is it to combining a warm welcome to any and all, in which we encourage them to come to Jesus ‘just as I am’, with an uncompromising pattern of discipleship which never leaves us ‘just as we are’?

Prayer: *Bless Your people as we gather for worship today, O Lord. May grace be multiplied to us as we wait upon You. Send us out refreshed, renewed, resolved.*