

Reading Schedule for September 25-October 1, 2017

We are shifting into the Apostle Paul's teaching about sanctification. You will notice that I am suggesting four days on chapter 8 alone. You might realize that I think chapter 8 is the most important one in the book, which is described as the chief book of the New Testament. If we understand chapter 8, we understand a lot about living the Christian life. Four days is not too long for us to delve into this amazing chapter. It begins with no condemnation and ends with no separation. Have a good week in God's Word!

September 25 – Romans 6:15-23: "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (v.23) As a young man, I was taught something called the Roman Road. This verse is included in that outline, which begins with Romans 3:23, then proceeds to 5:8, includes this verse and then wraps up with Romans 10:9. It is suggested that these verses outline the Gospel. I think that is accurate and have used these verses in witnessing to others. The separation between me (a sinful person) and the God of the Bible (who is holy) is very great. But separation could be referred to as death. The separation leads to death. Only those who are sinless could be embraced by God. That is exactly what Jesus offers, and he does so in gift form. Isn't the Gospel amazing! What do you read in these verses?

September 26 – Romans 7:1-6: "So then, if she has sexual relations with another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress if she marries another man." (v.3) The inclusion of marriage has sometimes caused confusion about how to understand these verses. Paul is using marriage as an illustration of our relationship to the law. When a spouse dies, the law of marriage no longer applies. Because we have died with Christ, the law no longer condemns us. We have been raised up with Christ and are a new people who belong to the Lord. He begins a chapter on the impossibility of living the law and always being defeated trying to do so. What does it mean that we have died to the law?

September 27 – Romans 7:7-25: "For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out." (v.18) I've quoted this verse many times and have suggested that this is the battle that goes on in my life because I do what I don't want to do. I want you to understand that this is the cry of a desperate man who wants to experience freedom, but struggles against sin and an inability to please God by keeping rules and laws without the Spirit's help. We must never attempt to fight this battle on our own strength. I want you to do what Paul ultimately does in these verses. He returns to the beginning of his spiritual life, remembering how he had been freed from sin by Jesus Christ (v.25). Whenever we base our connection with God on how well we are obeying, we will be frustrated. This reminds me that I must remember God's grace and surrender to his Spirit. Is this how you read it? What stands out to you?

September 28 – Romans 8:1-8: "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus . . ." (v.1) The word "therefore" always links what was just said to the subject matter that we have read today. The fact is that the whole human race is on death row and is justly condemned, because everyone

has broken God's holy law. Without Jesus we would have no hope. This frees us up to always depend upon the Lord for our help and our assurance. Those who are governed by the Holy Spirit will walk in the ways of the Lord. We must continuously choose to center our lives on the Lord and the work of his Spirit. How do you recognize the pull of the flesh versus the power of the Spirit? What do these verses tell you about living a victorious Christian life?

September 29 – Romans 8:9-17: "The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.'" (v.15) This has to be one of my favorite statements because it points me to my identity as a child of God. The Holy Spirit confirms the truth that I am adopted into God's family; and because of that I have access to a close relationship with the living God, even to the point of addressing him as "Abba," which an endearing term for father. We realize that God has given us the gifts of his Son, his Holy Spirit, forgiveness, eternal life, and will give us even more as we trust him. Our identity is intact so that we can live out God's destiny for us. He has given us a purpose, and the Holy Spirit enables us to fulfil that purpose. How do you respond to these life changing words?

September 30 – Romans 8:18-28: "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans." (v.26) I appreciate the help of the Holy Spirit in my life. I want to know God's will and pray effectively. These are possible through the Holy Spirit. In verse 27 we read that the Holy Spirit intercedes for you in accordance with God's will. As you are listening to the Holy Spirit's whisper, you can pray in line with God's will. And if you pray in line with God's will, you can know that you have what you have asked of him. Aren't these wonderful promises?! There are many promises given in these verses. The fact that God works all things out for the good is an amazing promise, and it's given to those who love him and want to live according to God's purpose for their life. How do you respond to this inspiring reading today?

October 1 – Romans 8:29-39: "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us." (v.37) Again, we have a presentation of profound truth that will shape our relationship with God. It is good to know that hardships are used by God to bring out the best in us. It is even better to know that these difficulties do not show God's displeasure, but are helping us realize how much we need the Lord, and how assured we can be that he will never let go of us. We can feel totally secure in him because nothing can separate us from his love. There is so much in these verses that I can't even highlight just one thing and do it justice. What profound truth is stirring your heart as you read these words? Some of the most inspiring words in all of Scripture are found in this last paragraph, from verses 37-39. Why so? What do they say to you?

Prayers: Pray for the parents of our church who are ministering to their children, especially those who have younger children at home. Pray for our helpful seminar about raising children to love Jesus this Sunday evening, October 1st @ 5pm.