

ROMANS

Chapter 8

Life in the Spirit

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. 3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. 5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. 6 For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. 7 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. 8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. 10 But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

Chapter 8 begins with “no condemnation...in Christ” and closes with the victorious affirmation of no separation from God’s love in Christ. In between is an unparalleled presentation of the Spirit’s work (referred to 19 times in vv 1-27) to sanctify and keep us in the faith. There are no imperatives in the chapter, for we are led by the Spirit, not driven by the Law. Luther says: “In chapter 8 (Paul) comforts these fighters, telling them that this flesh does not condemn them. He shows further what the nature of flesh and spirit is, and how the Spirit comes from Christ. Christ has given us His Holy Spirit; He makes us spiritual and subdues the flesh, and assures us that we are still God’s children, however hard sin may be raging within us, so long as we follow the Spirit and resist sin to slay it. Since, however, nothing else is so good for the mortifying of the flesh as the cross and suffering, He comforts us in suffering with the support of the Spirit of love, and of the whole creation, namely,, that the Spirit sighs within us and the creation longs with us that we may be rid of the flesh and of sin. So we see that these three chapters (6-8) drive home the one task of faith, which is to slay the old Adam and subdue the flesh.” (AE 35:377-78) (TLSB)

8:1-2 “Consequently now, nothing [is] condemnation for the ones in Christ Jesus” (see the textual notes on 8:1). Paul explains why this is so in the verses to follow, especially with the verb “condemned” (κατέκρινεν) in 8:3, which is related to the noun “condemnation” (κατάκριμα). The noun and verb indicate a negative judgment against someone and also convey the punishment which goes along with it. God’s Son received the punishment (8:3) so that we in Christ are spared both the verdict and the just penalty. Paul’s initial statement in 8:1 nicely parallels 8:39, where nothing, that is, absolutely none of the entities encompassed within the sweep of 8:38–39, will be able to separate us from God’s love. (CC)

8:1 In 8:1 Paul identifies those to whom “nothing [is] condemnation” applies; it is “for the ones in Christ Jesus” (τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ). The characteristic description of baptized believers as those “in Christ” first appeared in the exposition of Baptism in 6:11 (see the commentary there). The significance of the assertion here is monumental. The dilemma of 7:14–25 is that sin still

dwells in me, this is, in my flesh, as “I” (the Christian Paul), during this life, remain sold and still under sin (7:14, 17–18). The “I,” a baptized believer who utters “thanks to God through Jesus Christ our Lord,” even admits to being a slave to the Law of sin “with my flesh” (7:25). (CC)

The solution, however, is not to try to escape bodily life; neither is it attempting to purify the unreformable “flesh” (σάρξ). Instead, it is defined as being “in Christ Jesus.” In Romans 6 this status is portrayed as the direct result of Baptism: “we were *baptized into Christ Jesus*” (ἐβαπτίσθημεν εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν, 6:3). Later in 8:9–11 the indwelling of the Spirit, who is bestowed in Baptism (e.g., Acts 2:38; 1 Cor 12:13; Eph 4:4–5; Titus 3:5–6; compare Rom 6:5 to 8:11) and is further identified as “the Spirit of Christ” (Rom 8:9; cf. Rom 8:11; Acts 16:7), is recognized as a necessary consequence of belonging to Christ, of being “his” (8:9). There Paul not only declares that the Spirit dwells in baptized believers (8:9, 11), but also adds, “Christ is in you” (8:10). In all these verses, the supreme factor is the relationship with Christ which the Holy Spirit establishes through baptismal incorporation into Christ and which the same indwelling Spirit also sustains through faith in “our Lord Jesus Christ” (see 5:1). (CC)

therefore – *ara* means “then,” “consequently,” “as a result.” What Paul is about to say is a result of what he just said, namely, that though he is a wretched man whose body is a body of death (7:24), yet he will be delivered through Jesus Christ (7:25), whom God presented as a sacrifice of atonement (3:25). The nun ties the thought back to 3:21, “But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 2)

no – *ouden* makes the “no” even more emphatic, “not a single condemnation of any kind. The image is that of a criminal who awaits the judge’s just penalty, but then hears instead that the sentence has been commuted. Every charge was silenced at the cross. The Christian’s life is marked by this freedom and this certainty of God’s mercy in Christ. Because of our connection with Christ the Spirit frees us for living in the spirit. As Christians we need not fear because we serve God’s law with our real self, with our renewed mind and will, because we have pleasure in God’s law and, on the other hand, hate and abhor evil. God judges Christians according to the new man, not according to the old man, and does not lay to their account what evil the flesh does. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 2)

condemnation. The law brings condemnation because it points out, stimulates and condemns sin. But the Christian is no longer “under law” (6:14). (CSB)

God’s Law declares that all people are guilty of sin and deserve to die (cf 7:5, 10-11, 13, 24). Paul now concisely summarizes God’s reverse declaration for those in Christ: “Not guilty!” Luther states: “We fell under God’s wrath and displeasure and were doomed to eternal damnation, just as we had merited and deserved. There was no counsel, help, or comfort until this only and eternal Son of God – in His immeasurable goodness – had compassion upon our misery and wretchedness. He came from heaven to help us (John 1:9). So those tyrants and jailers are all expelled now. In their place has come Jesus Christ, Lord of life, righteousness, every blessing, and salvation. He has delivered us poor, lost people from hell’s jaws, has won us, has made us free (Romans 8:1-2), and has brought us again into the Father’s favor and grace.” (LC II 28-30) (TLSB)

katakrima occurs only in Romans in this form and is used to contrast the consequences of Adam’s fall with the effects of Christ’s saving work. “Just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men” (5:18). *Katakrima* brings the sentence of death. Justification brings the gift of life. Those

who are in Christ are freed from the sentence of death and released to a new life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 2)

in Christ Jesus. United with him, as explained in 6:1–10. (CSB)

This is an expression in Romans for union with Christ and His saving work (3:24; 6:11, 23; 8:39; 15:17; 16:3). Those who believe and are baptized into Him (6:3-4) are now and forever free from the Law’s cold verdict and terrifying sentence. (TLSB)

This is a baptismal reference, drawing on Paul’s previous words in 6:3,11, “Don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?...In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.” Having been joined to Christ by water and the Word, Jesus’ death so sin and to the Law’s condemnation counts as our own. He who is our refuge from judgment now gives us to share in his resurrection and to walk in newness of life (6:4). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 2)

8:2 Rom 8:2 explains why “nothing [is] condemnation” (8:1). “For the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus freed you from the Law of sin and death.” This is another passage in which the sense of “Law” (νόμος) is contested (see also 3:27; 7:21, 23). Robinson identifies 8:2 as “a typical Pauline transition, with one use of *nomos* sliding into another.” What exactly are “the Law of the Spirit of life” (ὁ νόμος τοῦ πνεύματος τῆς ζωῆς) and “the Law of sin and death” (τοῦ νόμου τῆς ἁμαρτίας καὶ τοῦ θανάτου)? English translations traditionally render both occurrences of νόμος with “law” (e.g., ESV, KJV, NASB, RSV, NRSV). However, many commentators exclude any reference to the Law of Moses (the Torah), particularly from the first phrase; instead, they propose that νόμος designates some type of “principle.” For example, Matera asserts: “Employing *nomos* in the sense of principle, he refers to the ‘law’ that is God’s own life-giving Spirit.” Cranfield also resorts to a metaphorical sense by defining νόμος more specifically as “the Holy Spirit’s presence and exercised authority and constraint.” Räisänen also does so because “the Torah had been superseded in Christ,” who is the “termination of the law” according to his interpretation of 10:4.¹⁶ He contends that 8:2 “support[s] the conclusion that Paul often speaks of the actual abolition of the Torah.” But this radical view is difficult to square with 3:31, where Paul states: “Then do we make the Law ineffective through the faith? May it never come to be! But we confirm the validity of the Law” (νόμον ισχύνομεν; cf. Mt 5:17–20). (CC)

The notion of an established “principle” certainly conveys what Paul has in mind with his initial use of νόμος in 8:2 (perhaps also in 7:21). But this definition should not be viewed as some nebulous or unattached power. “Law” communicates that νόμος designates a codified and unchanging norm. Furthermore, a metaphorical understanding of νόμος as a “principle” or “authority” is inadequate in regard to the second occurrence in 8:2 (see the commentary on 7:23 and below). Both uses in 8:2 should also be related to Paul’s uses of “Law” (νόμος) throughout Romans and, especially, in the previous chapter. From a practical perspective, it would have been difficult, though not impossible, for those who heard the letter read orally to accurately identify up to five definitions of “Law” (νόμος), “with one use of *nomos* sliding into another.” Together these considerations lead to the conclusion that, as in Romans 7, the Torah should not be dismissed entirely from either phrase in 8:2. As Schreiner states: “Although it is difficult to be certain, the idea that the Mosaic law is intended in both uses of the word νόμος in verse 2 is more probable.” (CC)

For Paul, “Law” (νόμος) consistently maintains a connection with the Pentateuch. Paul then utilizes the context, in this case the qualifying genitives (“of the Spirit of life” and “of sin and death”), in order to direct his focus more specifically. For a significant parallel, see the second textual note and the commentary on 3:21. Paul defines his second use of “Law” (νόμος) in 3:21

more precisely by placing it together with “the Prophets” (ὕπὸ τοῦ νόμου καὶ τῶν προφητῶν), indicating that “Law” (νόμος) refers to the five Books of Moses. Yet there in 3:21–22 Paul is focusing even more specifically on the Gospel promise contained within the Torah which, along with “the Prophets,” testifies to the righteousness of God which is “through faith” (διὰ πίστεως, 3:22). In 3:27 Paul then refers to “the Law of faith,” and in the final verse of Romans 3 he states that through faith “we confirm the validity of the Law” (3:31). These assertions launch Paul into an extensive discussion which corroborates them. The foundational account of Abraham in Romans 4, drawn from Genesis, serves as another positive expression of the evangelical promise which Paul asserts is contained in the narrative of the “Law” (νόμος). See also, for example, Lk 24:27, 44; Jn 1:45; 5:39; 1 Pet 1:10–11. (CC)

In Rom 8:2, then, “the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” refers to the Torah and focuses upon the Christological, Spirit-inspired promises of life enunciated there. These promises are repeated regularly throughout the OT and now stand fulfilled in Christ (3:22, 24–25; 8:3; 10:4), whose Spirit (“the Spirit of Christ,” 8:9) works life (8:5–6, 10–11). In this Gospel sense, this “Law” (νόμος) also designates a codified and unchanging norm. Our Lord’s written words of Spirit and life (Jn 6:63) provide the firm foundation upon which faith rests, as well as the blessed assurance of no condemnation (Rom 8:1; see also *LSB* 728). (CC)

the law – Principle here something like today’s operating system. (TLSB)

nomos here is not the Decalogue but terms of order. Where Jesus is, there is a new order that frees us from the old order of the law. We are released from decay and death into the glory of the children of God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 2)

the law of the Spirit of life. The controlling power of the Holy Spirit, who is life-giving. Paul uses the word “law” in several different ways in Romans—to mean, e.g., a controlling power (here); God’s law (2:17–20; 9:31; 10:3–5); the Pentateuch (3:21b); the OT as a whole (3:19); a principle (3:27). (CSB)

pneumatos tas zoas – This calls to mind the phrase in the Nicene Creed that confesses that the Holy Spirit is “the Lord and giver of life.” This he delivers to us through Word and Sacrament. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 2)

The Holy Spirit daily cleanses and sweeps out the remaining sins and works to make a person truly pure and holy. (TLSB)

set you free – Freedom from a binding relationship of ownership or control and authority. (TLSB)

law of sin and death. The controlling power of sin, which ultimately produces death. (CSB)

System in which sin brings death (6:16, 21, 23) and the Law condemns to death (7:5, 10–11, 13, 24). (TLSB)

8:3 The negative side of Paul’s extended analysis of the Law which began in 7:1 is concluded in 8:3. “For the inability of the Law, in that it was weakened through the flesh, God, after sending his own Son in [the] likeness of [the] flesh of sin and as a sin offering, condemned sin in the flesh.” (CC)

But it is important to recall that the Law is holy, righteous, and good (7:12). While inadequate for the redemption of sinners, the Law, in and of itself, is not a negative force or responsible for the

failures of sinners. The reason why it is impossible for the Law to effect fulfillment of God's command and to deliver the life it offers (10:5; 7:10) is because the Law is weakened "through the flesh" (διὰ τῆς σαρκός, 8:3). This phrase assigns the blame to fallen humanity. Unbelievers exist completely within the realm of the flesh (ἐν τῇ σαρκί, 7:5); while believers properly delight in the Law, during their present life they also still remain in the flesh, where sin continues to dwell (7:17–18, 22). Thus it is important to recognize that "the inadequacy of the law lies not in itself but in the conditions in which it has to operate." (CC)

The "inability" or "*powerlessness*" (ἀδύνατον) of the Law in 8:3 stands in sharp contrast to the Good News of 1:16, which is the "*power of God*" (δύναμις θεοῦ; see the commentary on 1:16). God has dealt decisively with sin, death, and the Law's inability by "sending his own Son in [the] likeness of [the] flesh of sin and as a sin offering" (τὸν ἑαυτοῦ υἱὸν πέμψας ἐν ὁμοιώματι σαρκός ἁμαρτίας καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας, 8:3). (CC)

A number of Christological factors in the second half of 8:3 warrant further comment. "In [the] likeness of [the] flesh of sin" (ἐν ὁμοιώματι σαρκός ἁμαρτίας) is both profoundly meaningful and potentially misunderstood. The error of Docetism is to suppose that "in [the] likeness" (ἐν ὁμοιώματι) means that Jesus was only like a human, not fully or truly a man. Another error is to ignore "likeness" and twist "flesh of sin" (σαρκός ἁμαρτίας) to assert that Christ took on sinful flesh in his incarnation and thus was not sinless. In a compact fashion, Paul effectively avoids both errors. (CC)

That Jesus came "in [the] likeness of [the] flesh of sin" (8:3) is the reality of 2 Cor 5:21: "he [Christ] who knew not sin, he [God] made him sin in behalf of us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him" (τὸν μὴ γνόντα ἁμαρτίαν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς γενώμεθα δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ). Compare the "righteousness of God" also in Rom 1:17; 3:21. The terminology of substitutionary sacrifice, "in behalf of us" (ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, 2 Cor 5:21), is present verbatim in Rom 5:8 (see the third textual note on 5:6 for ὑπὲρ, which recurs in 5:7–8). It is even more clearly evident in the phrase περὶ ἁμαρτίας in 8:3, literally, "[a sacrifice] concerning sin," meaning "a sin offering." The Apology of the Augsburg Confession takes the phrase in 8:3 as meaning "sin offering" and equates it with the Hebrew term *זֶבֶחַ* in Is 53:10, "when he makes himself *an offering for sin*": (CC)

The word he [Isaiah] uses here (*'asham*) means a victim sacrificed for transgression. In the Old Testament this meant that a victim was to come to reconcile God and make satisfaction for our sins, so that men might know that God does not want our own righteousness but the merits of another (namely, of Christ) to reconcile him to us. Paul interprets the same word as "sin" in Rom. 8:3, "As a sin offering he condemned sin," that is, through an offering for sin." (Ap XXIV 23) (CC)

Although the holy and eternal Son of God was not personally guilty of any transgression nor tainted with sin by his incarnation or his own deeds (e.g., Is 53:9; Lk 23:41), the sins of the world were imputed to him, and so he was, in fact, made sin in our behalf (2 Cor 5:21). This explains what is packed into the final phrase of 8:3: God "condemned sin in the flesh." Both aspects of the noun "condemnation" in 8:1, namely, the verdict of guilt and the execution of the deserved judgment, come out here in the related verb "condemn" (κατακρίνω). The scandal of particularity is that salvation for all was accomplished by God in only one particular way and is available to all only through faith in this particular One: the one-time event of the conviction of the only sinless person "in the flesh" actually condemned and executed sin itself! "What he died, he died to sin *once for all*" (ἐφάπαξ, 6:10). (CC)

In so doing, he has redeemed our flesh. While alluding to 1 Corinthians 15, Chrysostom summarizes the implications of Rom 8:3 as follows:

Just because Paul says that Christ came *in the likeness of sinful flesh*, you must not think that his flesh was any different from ours. It was because he called it *sinful* that he added the word *likeness*. For Christ did not have sinful flesh but flesh which, though it was like ours by nature, was sinless. From this it is plain that flesh is not sinful by nature. It was not by taking on a different kind of flesh nor by changing ours into something different that Christ caused it to gain the victory over sin and death. Rather, he allowed the flesh to keep its own nature, giving it the crown of victory and after its resurrection life immortal. (CC)

The Good News is that the Law's righteous requirement was perfectly fulfilled. Jesus' own words in Mt 5:17 are most relevant here: "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill" (μη νομισητε οτι ηλθον καταλυσαι τον νομον η τους προφητας· ουκ ηλθον καταλυσαι αλλα πληρωσαι). Jesus' use of "fulfill" (πληρωω) is even broader than Paul's (see the third textual note on Rom 8:4). It is a fulfillment and enactment of the righteousness of God testified to by the entire "Law," or Torah, and "the Prophets" (as in Rom 3:21; cf. Mt 5:20). This necessarily includes both Christ's active obedience, the action of actively performing "the righteous requirement of the Law" (το δικαίωμα του νόμου, 8:4), as well as his passive obedience, enduring the execution of its righteous pronouncement of condemnation because of our sin ("righteous decree," δικαίωμα, in 1:32; "condemnation," κατάκριμα, in 5:16, 18; cf. 8:1). (CC)

could not *to do*. The law was not able to overcome sin. It could point out, condemn and even stimulate sin, but it could not remove it. (CSB)

The Law is good (7:12), but it is powerless because the sinful nature cannot keep it. (TLSB)

adunaton tou nomou, the impossible thing of the Law, that which the Law could not do, namely save me from sin or give me the ability to live without sin. The Law is only able to point out the holy will of God, of whose glory all have fallen short (3:23). The law is good, but it is weakened by the flesh, the sinful nature, in whom the ability to do good is not present (7:18). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 2)

sending His own Son. Expression implies Christ's preexistence. (TLSB)

in the likeness of sinful flesh. Christ in his incarnation became truly a man, but, unlike all other men, was sinless. (CSB)

Paul guards against two opposing errors: that Jesus was Himself sinful like other human beings, or that He did not become fully human. Jesus is completely like us (fully human), yet without sin (2Co 5:21; Heb 4:15). (TLSB)

omoiomati sarkos amartias – Jesus subjected himself to all the effects of our sin even though he himself had no sin. He experienced hunger, thirst, pain and weariness. He put himself under the curse and took into his sinless flesh all the sin of the world, that he might put our sin to death once and for all on the cross. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 2)

sin in the flesh – If the latter, it states where God condemned sin, namely, in Christ's human (but not sinful) nature—the interpretation that seems more consistent with Paul's teaching. (CSB)

condemned. Cf v 1. Sin personified was sentenced to die and executed when Jesus died—in the very realm where it previously reigned: the flesh. (TLSB)

8:4 But herein lies Paul’s great hinge. He goes on to define us as “the ones who are not walking in accord with the flesh, but in accord with the Spirit” (τοῖς μὴ κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦσιν ἀλλὰ κατὰ πνεῦμα, 8:4). The sense of “walk” (περιπατέω) is comparable to Paul’s previous use of the verb in 6:4: “consequently, we were buried with him through this Baptism into [his] death, so that just as Christ was raised from [the] dead through the glory of the Father, thus also *we might walk* [περιπατήσωμεν] in life’s renewal.” There this commentary concludes: (CC)

Paul uses “walk” (περιπατέω) to describe how believers who have “died to sin” (Rom 6:2) are called to live out who we are by virtue of our Baptism in our daily life and conduct (6:4). The basis and exhortation for doing so is the topic of 6:12–23. (CC)

The exhortation to do so similarly follows here in 8:5–13. (CC)

In a manner comparable to 6:11, now 8:4 both completes the previous, largely “indicative” discussion and also moves the discussion forward to speak of the believer’s response. The alternatives in 8:3 are not couched in the imperative (as in 6:11), but as *descriptive* and *defining* characteristics. We are “the ones who are *not walking* in accord with the flesh” (κατὰ σάρκα). During this temporal existence sin still dwells in us, that is, in our flesh (7:17–18), but we are not defined by it. Since we were baptized into Christ, our will, inner man, and mind resist living “in conformity with” (BDAG, s.v. κατὰ, B 5) the flesh (7:14–25); in other words, “flesh” (σάρξ) is no longer “the norm which governs” (BDAG, s.v. κατὰ, B 5 a) us, even while we still live in it. Instead, Paul says, we are now walking in conformity with and governed by the Spirit (πνεῦμα) poured out on us. The details, challenges, and even paradox involved in this contrast are laid out in 8:5–13. (CC)

At this point, however, it is important to grasp both aspects of Paul’s movement in 8:4. “The reference to Christian behavior in this phrase [“the ones who are not walking in accord with the flesh, but in accord with the Spirit”] shows that Paul does not separate the ‘fulfillment’ of the law from the lifestyle of Christians. But, this does not mean that Christian behavior is how the law is fulfilled.” Instead, “the Law of the Spirit of life *in Christ Jesus* freed you” (8:2), by whose sacrifice the Law of sin and death was overcome (8:2–3), by whom the righteous requirement of the Law was fulfilled (8:4), and in whom nothing is condemnation (8:1). So now, let’s walk the walk of the Spirit and not that of the flesh. (CC)

righteous requirements of the law. The law still plays a role in the life of a believer—not, however, as a means of salvation but as a moral and ethical guide, obeyed out of love for God and by the power that the Spirit provides. This is the fulfillment of Jer 31:33–34 (a prophecy of the new covenant). (CSB)

Gk *dikaioma*, Reference to God’s will revealed in the Law. (TLSB)

fully met. † Lit. “fulfilled.” God’s aim in sending his Son was that believers might be enabled to follow the intentions of the law. (CSB)

God is the one who fulfills the Law for us. Note the passive voice of the verb. Cf Php 2:13. (TLSB)

Paul is speaking of sanctification, not of justification. It is not fulfilled by us but in us by Christ, who dwells in us by his Word and Spirit. Christ's work has taken place that we might do that which is right and good. We have been redeemed not for a life of sin, but for a life of holy obedience, not merely for salvation in heaven but for a holy life on earth. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 2)

talk. Used by Jewish rabbis to denote lifestyle of obedience to the Law (cf Eph 5:2). (TLSB)

according to the Spirit. How the law's righteous requirements can be fully met—by no longer letting the sinful nature hold sway but by yielding to the directing and empowering ministry of the Holy Spirit. (CSB)

Under the Spirit's power and direction. (TLSB)

8:5–8 Two mind-sets are described here: that of the sinful nature and that of the Spirit. The former leads to death, the latter to life and peace. The sinful nature is bound up with death (v. 6), hostility to God (v. 7), insubordination (v. 7) and unacceptability to God (v. 8). (CSB)

8:5 *but according to the spirit* – New mind-set and actions that the Spirit produces (cf Gal 5:22–23). (TLSB)

set their minds on the things of the flesh – A heart ruled by the flesh will think and produce nothing but sinful thoughts and deeds. (CSB)

Everything that our fallen, self-centered human nature desires and does (cf Gal 5:16–21). (TLSB)

8:6 *death.* Spiritual death and eternal separation from God. (TLSB)

life and peace. Total well-being. These eternal blessings are already ours (cf v 1). (TLSB)

8:7–8 Unregenerate mind, heart, and will are “entirely evil, perverse, and hostile to God” (FC SD II 17). (TLSB)

8:7 To be subject to, and thus obey. (TLSB)

8:8 *cannot please God* – Those controlled by their sinful nature have no power whatsoever to please God. (TLSB)

8:9 *You.* Plural in Gk. Paul now addresses his readers, the Christians at Rome. (TLSB)

are not in the flesh – The baptized believer's true and abiding identity is no longer determined by Adam, but by Christ, whose Spirit dwells in him. The flesh no longer wholly dominates his life and dictates his actions. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 2)

Spirit of God ... Spirit of Christ. As the Nicene Creed confesses, the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. (TLSB)

dwells in you. Christians as a body (the Church) are the place of God's abiding presence (1Co 3:16–17; 2Co 6:16–18; Eph 2:21–22). The Third Person of the Trinity, not merely some “force,” resides in them. (TLSB)

not belong to Him. Lit, “not His.” A person in whom the Spirit does not dwell is not a Christian. (TLSB)

8:10 *Christ is in you.* Where the Spirit is, there is Christ. Paul describes the forces at work within a believer. (TLSB)

you. Plural, meaning the congregation. (TLSB)

your body is dead because of sin. Even a Christian’s body is subject to physical death, the consequence of sin. (CSB)

From birth, our body travels toward death. It is thus a “body of death” (7:24; cf 6:12; 8:11b). (TLSB)

spirit is life. Or “the Spirit is life” (see v. 2). On this reading, “body” is understood as in 7:24. (CSB)

May mean the Holy Spirit, through whom the dead are raised (8:11b), or the believer’s renewed spirit. (TLSB)

because of righteousness.† Because the spirit of the Christian has been justified, it is not subject to death. The Christian is indwelt by the life-giving Spirit as a result of his justification. (CSB)

8:11 For the close connection between the resurrection of Christ and that of believers see 1Co 6:14; 15:20, 23; 2Co 4:14; Php 3:21; 1Th 4:14. (CSB)

Spirit of him who raised Christ – Our hope is not only spiritual but also material. The same Spirit who raised Jesus’ flesh and bones from the dead will also raise our mortal bodies and give them new and everlasting life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 2)

God the Father (4:24; Ac 2:32). (TLSB)

dwells in you – This is a reminder to all believers of their Baptism, through which their bodies were made the temple of the Holy Spirit. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 2)

give life to your mortal bodies. The resurrection of our bodies, guaranteed to believers by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit—whose presence is evidenced by a Spirit-controlled life (vv. 4–9), which in turn provides assurance that our resurrection is certain even now. (CSB)

According to Paul, the Spirit is a down payment, or guarantee, of our resurrection from the dead (v 23; cf 2Co 1:22; 5:1–5; Eph 1:13–14). (TLSB)

8:1–11 Because Christ justifies sinners, God’s life-giving Spirit dwells in believers. He frees us from the bondage of sin and death. Those who are preoccupied with satisfying their selfish desires often become angry with God and rebel against Him. God promises release from this deadly cycle and brings life and peace. • Father, by Your Spirit, direct our hearts to Christ, where true joys are found. Amen. (TLSB)

Heirs with Christ

12 So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” 16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

8:12 *we are debtors.* This does not mean “God has done His part, now what are you going to do for Him? There is no synergism here. We could never even begin to repay God the debt we owe Him. All that we are and have, in both soul and body, is owed to God’s goodness and mercy toward us. Rather, Paul is saying this: Since the Spirit of Christ dwells in you and has brought you new life and peace, it behooves you now to live by the Spirit. To do anything else would be to reject God’s saving work and fall into the condemnation of unbelief. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 2)

Our fallen nature no longer has any claim on us (vv 1–11). Therefore, we are no longer obligated to obey its impulses or satisfy its desires (contrary to the flesh’s claim “I owe it to myself”; cf Gal 5:16). (TLSB)

not to the flesh –We dare not go the way of the flesh again, for that would be to nullify His work in us. (Franzmann)

We are no longer in debt to the flesh, obligated to walk in its ways or suffer its end. We are now released to a new and holy obligation, the life lived by faith in Christ. Such a life is lived according to the eternal reality of what God has done and will do for us. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 2)

8:13 *you live* – To live according to the sinful nature is to live always on the verge of death. It is to dance at the edge of the pit of hell, to dangle one foot in the grave. To walk according to the flesh is to be headed straight for a death that never ends, a death that is just around the corner and that hangs over the head like the sword of Damocles. Every deed of the flesh is always flirting with disaster. Paul’s words are a warning to all those who would minimize the seriousness of the works of the sinful nature. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 2)

A lifestyle marked by personal refusal to repudiate sin or “renounce the Devil and all his works and all his ways” (Rite of Baptism, *LSB*, pp 268–71). (TLSB)

you will die – It is not so much that God will make them die as it is that they will bring death on themselves, they will throw themselves into the pit by their own doing. This the inevitable outcome of their life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 2)

by the Spirit – Through the power or agency of the Holy Spirit. (TLSB)

put to death – Gk indicates ongoing action, as in extracting a bad tooth (cf Gal 5:4; Mk 9:43–47). Luther “taught that these remnants of original sin [after Baptism] are not, by nature, adiaphora in people, but that we need Christ’s grace so that they are not counted against us as sin. And, to put them to death [mortify them], we need the Holy Spirit” (Ap II 45). (TLSB)

deeds of the body – “The practices of the body,” therefore is synonymous with “the works of the sinful nature” and carries with it the idea of an ongoing behavior. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 2)

The body and its members are the instruments, so to speak, by which our rebellious will acts. (TLSB)

of the body – “Body” is, of course to be understood as “mortal body” or “body of death” (7:24), the body under the power and curse of sin. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 2)

you will live – To live according to the new man is to put to death these deeds of the mortal body, to battle the old Adam and its desires and actions. And how is this done? “By the Spirit.” We cannot do this “by our own reason or strength” but only by the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we are drawn back to our Baptism, in which our flesh was crucified with Christ and we are raised up to a new life with Him. To put to death the deeds of the body is to return to our Baptism in penitence and faith, that the sinful nature may be “drowned and die with all sins and evil desire, and the a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever” (Small Catechism, Baptism IV). It is to hear the preaching of God’s holy Law, which slays the old Adam, and His holy Gospel, which raises up with Christ. It is to receive the true body and blood of Christ in the Sacrament, that our sin may be taken away and that He may dwell in us to live in faith toward God and love toward the neighbor. This is the work of the Holy Spirit by which you will live. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 2)

8:14-17 Paul brings up a number of new topics in 8:14–17 which mark it off as a unique section.

8:14 *are led by the Spirit* – Led, as by the hand of a beloved and trusted father, not as shackled prisoners or sternly disciplined troops. “Good works are evidences of [the Spirit’s] presence and indwelling” (FC Ep IV 15). (TLSB)

sons of God. God is the Father of all in the sense that he created all and his love and providential care are extended to all (see Mt 5:45). But not all are his children. Jesus said to the unbelieving Jews of his day, “You belong to your father, the devil” (Jn 8:44). People become children of God through faith in God’s unique Son (see Jn 1:12–13), and being led by God’s Spirit is the hallmark of this relationship. (CSB)

Expression broadly means “children of God” (v 16; Gal 3:26; cf 2Co 6:18). (TLSB)

God is the Father of all in the sense that He created all and sustains all life. But those “led by the Spirit” are called children or sons of God. Membership in God’s family is by grace alone – the gift of God (cf. Eph 2:8-9; John 1:12-13). Paul prepares the reader to understand that since we are sons of God we can count on our inheritance, and our hope will not disappoint us (Rom. 5:5). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 3)

8:15 *spirit of slavery*. The Holy Spirit does not place us back under the Law’s terrifying condemnation. (TLSB)

adoption of sons. The underlying word here is “adoption.” It occurs four other times in the NT (v. 23; 9:4; Gal 4:5 [see note there]; Eph 1:5). Adoption was common among the Greeks and Romans, who granted the adopted son all the privileges of a natural son, including inheritance rights. Christians are adopted sons by grace; Christ, however, is God’s Son by nature. (CSB)

Those baptized into Christ (ch 6) receive full status as God’s children. (TLSB)

We are not enslaved to a new Law, but we have received the status of children, adopted by God into His family. The word “adoption” indicates a new family relation with all of its rights, privileges, and responsibilities. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 2)

Abba, Father. Expressive of an especially close relationship to God. (CSB)

Aram “Father.” Conveys childlike intimacy and confidence (Mk 14:36; Gal 4:6). Perhaps an expression from the baptismal liturgy. Jesus gave us the privilege of addressing God as our dear Father (“Abba!”) when He gave us the Lord’s Prayer (cf Mt 6:9–13). (TLSB)

Aramaic “father,” comparable with English “pap” or “dad”. Conveys childlike intimacy and confidence (Mk. 14:36; Rm. 8:15; Gal, 4:6) Expresses the deep loving relationship Jesus had with the Father and which believers now share. Ab or abi are also used to form proper names e.g. Abraham. (Lutheran Bible Companion – Volume 2)

Being sons and daughters of God, we are able to call God “Abba, Father,” by the Spirit dwelling within. Jews thought the Aramaic word too intimate to apply to God. But no word expresses so well this understanding of God. The one word makes a whole prayer in itself. It is evidence of the Spirit’s groaning within (Rom 8:26), expressing all human searching and longing. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

We come before God in familiarity and intimacy. We come before God in prayer as His dearly beloved children, not afraid of Him, but confident of His love and goodness. Small Catechism: “With these words [Our Father who art in heaven] God tenderly invites us to believe that He is our true Father and the we are His true children, so that with all boldness and confidence we may ask Him as dear children ask their dear Father.” In the early church, new Christians were first given to speak the words of the Our Father immediately after their Baptism. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 2)

8:16 *bears witness with our spirit.* The inner testimony of the Holy Spirit to our relationship to Christ. (CSB)

The Spirit causes us to believe in our gracious Father, to whom Christ has given us access (Jn 14:6; Eph 3:11–12; see AE 25:358–60). (TLSB)

summaturei means “to confirm, to testify” in support of someone. This is not testimony of the Spirit apart from the Word. Rather, it is the very testimony of the Word by which faith and prayer are brought forth in us. Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 2)

Because God’s Spirit bears witness to our spirit, we belong to God as dear children. We can call Him “Abba Father.” It is not a reasoned discovery of our intelligence but a response to what God has revealed to us. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 3)

God’s children. The same as “sons of God,” terms that in the NT are synonymous. (CSB)

tekon expresses the relation of nature and indicates community of life. In other words, we don’t merely have the status of children, but we actually share in the life and nature of the Son of God as members of His body. We are partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 2)

8:17 *heirs*. Those who have already entered, at least partially, into the possession of their inheritance. (CSB)

Our full status as God’s children makes us beneficiaries of everything Christ possesses. We are truly His co-heirs (see Luther’s “glorious exchange”; AE 51:316). (TLSB)

fellow heirs with Christ. Everything really belongs to Christ, but by grace we share in what is his. (CSB)

As true children of God, we are also heirs of God, inheritors of all that Christ won for us by His death and resurrection. “We are joint heirs with Christ.” Everything that belongs to Him belongs to us too. We have the same status with the Father as Jesus does. “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you though His poverty might become rich” (2 Cor 8:9). Therefore, we will hear the voice of Jesus say on the Last Day, “Come you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world (Matthew 25:34). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 2)

if indeed we share in his sufferings.† The Greek construction used here does not set forth a condition but states a fact. An alternate translation could be “since indeed ...” The meaning, then, is not that there is some doubt about sharing Christ’s glory. Rather, despite the fact that Christians presently suffer, they are assured a future entrance into their inheritance. (CSB)

As Christ suffered, Christians will, and even must, suffer because of their allegiance to Him (2Co 1:5; Php 3:10; cf Col 1:24; 2Tm 2:11–12). (TLSB)

glorified with Him. As Christ entered “into His glory” (Lk 24:26), so shall we—with joy (1Pt 4:13)! (TLSB)

8:12–17 The Holy Spirit leads us to trust confidently that we are heirs, privileged to call God “our Father” and to receive eternal glory at the end of present suffering. The path to glory, however, is not an easy street, for it entails daily rejection of personal sins. When God’s judgment frightens us, the Spirit assures us that God loves us in Christ. • Lord, by Your Spirit, comfort us when we are afraid. Lead us to see You as our dear Father and to see ourselves as Your dear children. Amen. (TLSB)

Future Glory

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. 19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. 23 And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

26 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. 27 And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. 28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. 29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

8:18 *I consider* – logidzomai – I am persuaded; I am absolutely sure. (QV)

present time are not worthy comparing – pathamata – The suffering Christian stands in close relation to the suffering of Christ. He suffers as Christ did, or for Christ's sake, or in mystic unity with Christ. The word is used both of Christ's suffering (1 Peter 1:11), and the sufferings of persecuted Christians (1 Peter 5:9). (CSB)

Forms of distress and danger because of loyalty to Christ, as in v 35. Present anguish also includes pains of human frailty brought on by the fall (cf vv 19–23). (TLSB)

glory. God's radiant presence awaiting believers in heaven (2Co 4:17). (TLSB)

8:19 *The creation*. Both animate and inanimate, but exclusive of human beings (see vv. 22–23, where “whole creation” and “we ourselves” are contrasted). (CSB)

Personification of all created beings and things. (TLSB)

waits. Intense expectation. (TLSB)

Luke 21:28, “When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

Romans 8:22, “We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.”

sons of God to be revealed. Christians are already sons of God, but the full manifestation of all that this means will not come until the end (see 1Jn 3:1–2). (CSB)

Full disclosure of the new, transformed existence in heaven. (TLSB)

8:20 *was subjected to futility*. A reference to Ge 3:17–19. (CSB)

in hope. A possible allusion to the promise of Ge 3:15. (CSB)

8:21 *will be set free bondage to decay*. † The physical universe is not destined for annihilation but for renewal (see 2Pe 3:13; Rev 21:1). And living things will no longer be subject to death and decay, as they are today. (CSB)

Cf Gn 3:17–19 and God's curse on the ground. (TLSB)

When freedom from “the law of sin and death” (v 2) reaches its glorious consummation, creation itself will experience a new beginning (cf Ps 102:25–28; Is 35; 65:17–25). (TLSB)

bondage to corruption. Creation is now trapped in the endless cycle of deterioration leading to death. (TLSB)

freedom of the glory of the children of God. Paul focuses on the indescribable glory that awaits believers. (TLSB)

8:22 *has been groaning.* Creation is personified as a woman in labor waiting for the birth of her child. (CSB)

Powerful metaphor for creation’s yearning to be free from the change and death in its current state. (TLSB)

pains of childbirth. Gk implies that there will be an end to the anguish. (TLSB)

8:23 *firstfruits of the Spirit.* The Christian’s possession of the Holy Spirit is not only evidence of his present salvation (vv. 14, 16) but is also a pledge of his future inheritance—and not only a pledge but also the down payment on that inheritance (see 2Co 1:22; 5:5; Eph 1:14). (CSB)

As the firstfruits of the harvest (Ex 23:19; Lv 23:10–11; Nu 18:12; Dt 18:4) indicate more is to come, so the Holy Spirit and His work guarantee future blessing. (TLSB)

adoption as sons. See note on v. 15. Christians are already God’s children, but this is a reference to the full realization of our inheritance in Christ. (CSB)

Christians have this status now (v 15), and yet do not have it in its fullness (v 19). (TLSB)

redemption of our bodies. The resurrection, as the final stage of our adoption. The first stage was God’s predestination of our adoption (see Eph 1:5); the second is our present inclusion as children of God (see v. 14; Gal 3:26). (CSB)

Transformation of our bodies in the resurrection (Php 3:21). (TLSB)

8:24 *in this hope.*† We are saved through faith (see Eph 2:8–9), not hope; but hope accompanies salvation. (CSB)

hope. Gk *elpis*, confident trust in what is not seen (Heb 11:1). Key to Paul’s presentation of the Gospel (Rm 4:18; 5:2, 4–5; 15:4, 13). Grounded in Christ’s resurrection, with patient expectation, believers hope in the promise of His return in glory. (TLSB p. 1903)

8:25 *wait for it with patience* – This description of Christian life should compose the suffering Christians and make them content with their present life. (CSB)

8:26 *likewise.* As hope sustains the believer in suffering, so the Holy Spirit helps him in prayer. (CSB)

Just as hope proves to be a buffer against weariness and discouragement in times of suffering, so the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness when we don’t know what we ought to pray for. Time and again Christians find themselves at their wits end, wondering what the will of God is for them in this situation. They find themselves lamenting, “If only I knew what the Lord wanted me to

do; if only I knew what to pray for.” At such times the Holy Spirit steps in and does for us what we’re at a loss to do for ourselves. “The Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.” (PBC)

In verse 23 it was the children of God who were groaning; here it is the Holy Spirit. Bible interpreters are divided as to whether the Holy Spirit’s petitions are framed without words, that is, unspoken, or are spoken in words that surpass human speech. The point becomes unimportant when we realize that the petitions are understood perfectly by Him for whom they are intended, regardless of their form. God the Father, who searches our hearts, knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will.” (PBC)

The “saints” for whom the Holy Spirit intercedes are not some especially pious and good Christians but are those who are holy by their faith in Christ – in other words, all believers. Therefore, help in prayer is a service the Holy Spirit renders to all Christians. That does not release us from God’s command and encouragement to pray, but it does cover for us when we do it poorly or too little. And unlike many of our bumbling prayers, the Holy Spirit’s prayers for us are always on target, always “in accordance with God’s will. (PBC)

He comes to assist us. (TLSB)

weakness. Frailty of our present condition hinders our prayer life. (TLSB)

The weariness of all things in this world (Eccl. 1:8) infects us too. We do not know how to pray as we ought; the strength of our prayers is not in proportion to the glory that we pay for. But the law of the Spirit of life is no mere general atmosphere in which we live; it is the personal presence of the Spirit, who helps us in our weakness. He knows the world of God and how men ought to pray for it. (Franzman)

what to pray. Our mental horizons are severely limited compared to what God knows and wills. (TLSB)

he Spirit Himself intercedes. Christ prays for us in heaven (v 34; Heb 7:25; 1Jn 2:1), but the Spirit intercedes within us. (TLSB)

Have you ever asked someone to pray for you? I am sure you have. We feel comforted in the knowledge that others are praying for us. And have also said, “I don’t even know what to pray for” or words to that effect? How encouraging to know that someone, whose head is clearer at the moment, is praying with us! This person will know better what ought to be asked. And if that person is experienced in prayer and knowledgeable of God’s will as revealed in the Scriptures, so much the better. We need prayer allies like that. (LL)

How about the best prayer partner of all – the Holy Spirit Himself! If anyone know how our prayer ought to be said, He does! If anyone knows the mind of the Lord, He does! If anyone knows our real needs, He does! What a prayer partner to have! What a prayer partner we have as we wait patiently for our dreams to come true, for our hope to be fulfilled! (LL)

with groans to deep for words. In v. 23 it is the believer who groans; here it is the Holy Spirit. Whether Paul means words that are unspoken or words that cannot be expressed in human language is not clear—probably the former, though v. 27 seems to suggest the latter. (CSB)

Gk *alaletos*, without words to express present longings (cf v 23), but the Spirit brings these longings to God. (TLSB)

stevagmois alalatois – This literally means “in groans unspeakable or with sighs too deep for words.” Words often fail us in prayer. We are overwhelmed by circumstances and anxiety. We cry out for relief. Sometimes, too, our hearts are numb. We cannot think clearly enough to know what we need from God. Our perspective is so limited compared to his. In times like that, our cries to God take form in groans or sighs through which the Spirit speaks to God on our behalf. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 3)

8:27 *searches hearts* – He searches the inmost being of Christians. He knows what the Holy Spirit intends by his intercessions even though we may not understand.

mind of the Spirit. What the Holy Spirit is thinking. (TLSB)

according to the will of God. Lit, “according to God,” i.e., in tune with His will. (TLSB)

8:28 *for those who love God.* Emphasized in Gk. Not people in general, but believers, who are loved by God first (5:8; 8:35, 37, 39; 1Jn 4:19). (TLSB)

the good. That which conforms us “to the likeness of his Son” (v. 29). (CSB)

Even the “accidents” of history are God working for our good. (TLSB)

No accident of history made us His; therefore there are no “accidents” in our history anymore. He was in charge, and He is in charge; all the “accidents” of history are His working for our good. (Franzmann)

All things, that also includes the suffering of the present time, serve the best interests of those who love God. For those who love Him God has prepared salvation, has promised eternal life. (1 Cor 2:9; James 1:12; 2:5). Our relation of love to God brings with it that God does everything for the welfare of those who love Him and endure all temptations, that He will finally give them eternal life and glory. Our love to God is never the basis of our salvation. (Stoekhardt)

called.† See v. 30; 1:6; the Holy Spirit calls through word and sacrament. (CSB)

Christians are these things by the calling of God, who “calls things that are not so that they are (Rom. 4:17). Those “called” are from Jews and Gentile; they are “my people,” “beloved,” “sons of the living God” (Rom. 9:24-26).

All men who have heard the Gospel are called, in the sense of invited. (Matt 20:16; 22:14) Most men reject this call and invitation of God. (Stoekhardt)

according to his purpose – God planned our salvation in advance. God planned our salvation in advance. Gk *prothesis*, eternal election in Paul’s writings (9:11; Eph 1:11; 3:11; 2Tm 1:9). The Spirit, in history, has called us by the Gospel (cf 1:7, 16–17). (TLSB)

8:29 *foreknew.*† Knowledge here is not abstract but is couched in love and mixed with purpose. God not only knew us before we had any knowledge of him, but he also knew us in the sense of choosing us by his grace, before the foundation of the world. (CSB)

Not referring to God's advance knowledge of what will happen to good and evil people alike (which indeed He has), but to His gracious choice of those called, i.e., the elect (cf 1Pt 1:1–2). (TLSB)

Hosea can sum up all the Lord's loving care for His people in their years of wandering with the words: "It was I who knew you in the wilderness" (Hos 13:5). Foreknow expresses not primarily the omniscience of God but a motion of the heart of God. (Franzmann)

predestined. Predestination here is to moral conformity to the likeness of his Son. (CSB)

God in grace alone made a decision beforehand (Eph 1:5, 11). (TLSB)

conformed – God makes us to be like Jesus, Himself the image of God (2Co 4:4; Col 1:15). (TLSB)

that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. The reason God foreknew, predestined and conformed believers to Christ's likeness is that the Son might hold the position of highest honor in the great family of God. (CSB)

Gk *prototokos*, signifies preeminence of the exalted Lord Jesus. (TLSB)

In God's great family, in the mass of His perfect children, Christ should receive the position and honor of the Firstborn. He is the Captain of our salvation, who leads many to glory with Him. (Heb. 2:10) (Stoekhardt)

8:30 *predestined ... glorified*.† The sequence by which God carries out his predestination. This teaching is basic to the scriptural truth that salvation comes only by God's grace without any merit or assistance on our part. (CSB)

called – *kaleo* – a gracious and divine summons to salvation. (CSB)

Justified – *dikaioo* – This is both legal and relational and causes a new relationship to him and our brothers. (CSB)

glorified. Since this final stage is firmly grounded in God's set purpose, it is as certain as if it had already happened. (CSB)

8:18–30 The Holy Spirit ministers to God's dear children by giving us hope in our suffering, help in our weakness, and assurance that all things work out to fulfill God's eternal purposes in our lives. When our hope in God dims, we easily succumb to impatience in distress. The Spirit helps us in our frailty, assuring us of God's steadfast love. • Father in heaven, never leave or forsake us. Turn our complaints into prayers and our condemnation into glory. Amen. (TLSB)

God's Everlasting Love

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? 33 Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or

famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? 36 As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

8:31-39 The assurance, hope, and comfort from the grace of God revealed through Jesus Christ is nowhere stated with greater confidence and exuberance than in this passage. A sermon on this text should lift every believer’s heart! Romans 8 contains a message of the new life in Christ filled with confidence that our gracious God is fully in control. As Spirit-filled children of God we can trustingly say, “Abba, Father” (v 15). Our text immediately follows a passage which reassures that God in his goodness not only chooses but also justifies and glorifies his people. By a series of rhetorical questions, some of which are replies to previous questions, Paul builds up his hearers in a crescendo of faith which is expressed in a sublime, incomparable manner in the final verses. Some of the questions are couched in forensic language reminiscent of courts of law. The course of the argument calls to mind also the book of Job and Zechariah 3, both of which wrestle with the issue of justification and conclude with an affirmation of sola gratia and sola fide. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 2)

8:31 *these things* – “This” (*tauta*, literally, “these things”) refers not only to the preceding discussion of God’s predestination, calling, justification, and glorification of his people (8:29–30), but also to the entire first 8 chapters of Romans. Paul has written a masterful exposition in which he first condemns the whole world of sin, Jew and Gentile alike (1:18–3:20), and then describes in detail the doctrine of justification by grace through faith in Christ (3:21–6:23). He then addresses the subject of the sanctified life of the man of faith, the ongoing struggle with sin (chapter 7) and life in the Spirit (chapter 8). Paul now asks his readers to respond in joyful faith to this Law/Gospel message of condemnation, justification, and sanctification. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 2)

Rhetorical questions demanding a powerful, even defiant, challenge: “No one!” (TLSB)

The response of faith is implied by the rhetorical question: God is for us! This corresponds to the pro nobis (“for us”) emphasis in Lutheran theology. The man or woman of faith realizes that God has done all this “for us men and for our salvation” (Nicene Creed). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 2)

If God is for us. The form of the condition makes it clear that there is no doubt about it. (CSB)

“God for us” is a three-word summary of redemptive history, that history of God’s free, elective love that culminated in the sending of His Servant and Son, called “Emmanuel, God with us” (Matt 1:23). (Franzmann)

Since we have God on our side, no one can hinder our salvation. (Stoekhardt)

8:32 The argument (from the greater to the lesser) here is similar to that in 5:9–10. If God gave the supreme gift of his Son to save us, he will certainly also give whatever is necessary to bring to fulfillment the work begun at the cross. (CSB)

When God in these last days said once more and said climactically to His people and to all mankind, “I will be your God,” He wrote these words in blood. (Franzmann)

spared not – Just as Abraham did not withhold his only son (Gn 22:12, 16), so God gave His only Son (Jn 3:16). (TLSB)

The reference to God not sparing his Son is verbally similar to Gen 22:16, where Abraham did not spare Isaac and was willing to sacrifice him. Gen 22:2, 16 in turn are echoed in the Father’s words at Jesus’ baptism and transfiguration (Matt 3:17; 17:5 and parallels). Abraham’s near sacrifice of his one beloved son provides a sermon illustration of just how immense the love of God must be for him to have given his only Son. God wrote his promise of mercy and forgiveness in the blood of his Son. The word *paradidōmi*, “give up,” is used elsewhere of the sacrifice of Christ (Rom 4:25; Gal 2:20; Eph 5:2, 25). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 2)

God is not neutral. He is either for us or against us. Paul stipulates under what terms he is for us: Christ was given up for us, and is now risen and intercedes for us on the basis of his atonement. This is the basis for Christian assurance. No danger or trouble can make the believer forget the love of Christ and his consequent actions on their behalf. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 2)

The logical analysis of human experience using human wisdom and the “law” of cause and effect leads to the conclusion that things happen in life randomly. Life is without purpose or meaning. This is the conclusion of many agnostic and atheistic philosophers, as well as biological scientists following the theory of evolution. Then follows the decision to “eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die” (Is 22:13; Luke 12:19; 1 Cor 15:32), a kind of hedonism and materialism often blatant in our society today. Only reliance on the sovereignty and grace of God can give the kind of assurance this passage in Romans expresses. Without Christ, God would be against us; in Christ, he is for us. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 2)

gave him up – Gk “handed over.” Judas (Jn 18:5), the chief priests and elders (Mt 27:2), the people of Jerusalem (Ac 3:13), and Pilate (Mk 15:15) all handed over, betrayed, and delivered Jesus. But here, God delivers Him over to death (4:25; cf Is 53:6, 12) (TLSB)

for us. “God for us” is a “three-word summary of redemptive history” (Franzmann, p 157). (TLSB)

all things – Another rhetorical question. Everything belonging to God’s Son now also belongs, by grace, to believers, truly co-heirs. (TLSB)

8:33–34 A court of law is in mind. No charge can be brought against the Christian because God has already pronounced a verdict of not guilty. (CSB)

8:33 *bring any charge* – Using legal language, Paul asks what prosecutor can bring any charges against the elect. The answer: none; the case is closed. God has declared the defendant not guilty! (TLSB)

God’s elect? Those whom God has graciously chosen from eternity. (TLSB)

The “elects” innocence and inviolability is grounded in the eternal and unchangeable designs of God. (Franzmann)

Christians do have enemies who accuse them. They are all hostile power, as Satan, the world and the flesh. (Stoekhardt)

justifies. “The word *justify* means ... ‘to absolve, that is, to declare free from sins’ ” (FC Ep III 7). (TLSB)

Only God himself could bring charges against his elect, but he himself has justified us by the sacrifice of his Son. The Judge is himself the Redeemer! Because of Christ, our record before God is clean. We are exonerated! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 2)

8:34 *who is to condemn* – The worst enemy of our salvation is sin, which still clings to us. It gives our adversaries occasion for accusation and condemnation. Yet, this proof of guilt is invalidated through Christ’s death, atonement and intercession. (Stoekhardt)

Christ Jesus ... hand of God. Because Christ, our Savior, died for our sins, was raised by God for our justification (4:25), and has been exalted to God’s throne on high, we know that there is “now no condemnation” (v 1). (TLSB)

interceding for us – From Christ’s heavenly office “as the Mediator, Atoning Sacrifice, High Priest, and Intercessor” before God, “He has promised that He will hear our prayer” and that this is “the worship He approves above all other worship, that He be called upon in all afflictions” (AC XXI 2–3; cf 1Jn 2:1). (TLSB)

Christ’s intercession in the presence of God is taught in Heb 7:25 and reflected in 1 Jn 2:1 (“advocate with the Father”). That the Suffering Servant “will make intercession” is taught in Is 53:12. (CSB)

Christ now sits at the right hand of God; He has the same power, honor and Godhead as God. Therefore, when He intercedes with God for us, when He entreats for us when we sin, the goal of this intercession is certainly also reached. Christ’s intercession is the continuous urging of His bloody merit before God. (Stoekhardt)

Three reasons are given as to why no one can condemn God’s elect: (1) Christ died for us; (2) he is alive and at the right hand of God, the position of power; (3) he is interceding for us. (CSB)

Who dares dispute the verdict of this judge, who is both Judge and Deliverer on the men whom He has chosen? Beside the Judge is He who shares His throne, the Christ, the anointed King. (Franzmann)

Because most punctuation marks are absent from the oldest NT manuscripts, it is unclear whether the second half of v 34 is a question or an assertion. It seems more consistent with the sense to take it as an assertion, just as the question in v 33 is followed by an assertion. If God acquits, who can condemn? The resurrection of Christ is the proof of our acquittal, and it is his sacrifice on our behalf that Jesus pleads for us at the Father’s right hand. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 2)

8:35–39 Paul wanted to show his readers that suffering does not separate believers from Christ but actually carries them along toward their ultimate goal. (CSB)

8:35 *who will separate us from the love of Christ* – Rhetorical questions with mounting intensity. The same answer follows—“nothing and no one!” (TLSB)

Shall tribulation ... sword? Paul lists seven things that threaten to come between us and Christ’s love—all of which Paul himself experienced. Cf 2Co 11:16–33. (TLSB)

The list of seven trials were faced by Christians through the ages. Some believe the list of seven represents an actual inventory of challenges endured by first-century Christians, Paul among them. (LL)

Perhaps it is not too fanciful to see in the seven nouns which follow the compressed history of a Christian martyrdom. There is first, (1) “tribulation” (literally, pressure), the constant pressure of a pagan society against whose culture, religion, and morals the Christian life is a perpetual witness. The comes (2) “distress” (literally, “narrowness”); the pressure mounts to (3) enmity, and the place in which the Christian dwells has no room for him. (4) He flees and is pursued (5) “persecution”. His pursuers press him hard, (6) “peril”, and he is overtaken. At the end, the (7) “sword” of the Roman executioner awaits him. (Franzmann)

Paul asks a penetrating question: can something, anything, separate us from the magnificent love of God he has so eloquently described? While it is possible for individuals to reject the objective justification Christ has accomplished for them, believers can rest assured that no external force, event, or circumstance can force them to do so. To make his point Paul lists seven nouns that name the dangers believers will encounter: trouble, hardship, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, and sword. Paul himself had endured all of them except the last, and that lay before him. Historians agree that Paul likely was beheaded under the Roman emperor Nero in A. D. 64 or 65, about 8 years after writing Romans. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 2)

John 10:28 “I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.”

John 15:4 “Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.”

8:36 Ps 44:22 is quoted to show that suffering has always been part of the experience of God’s people. (CSB)

God’s people were troubled, almost to despair, by the suffering they endured—a temptation familiar to all God’s people. (TLSB)

Paul then quotes Ps 44:22 to show that the suffering of believers is no accident; the faithful in the OT likewise were persecuted because of their God. Since suffering is prophesied by Scripture, Paul’s readers are assured that God is in control. Their suffering does not mean that they are separated from the love of God, since throughout history suffering has been the common experience of believers who have received God’s love. Tribulations, far from contradicting God’s love, may paradoxically be signs of God’s care. Modern dangers that Christians face include pressure, scorn, and ridicule from a society whose lifestyle contrasts so definitely with Christian commitment. There are also dangers common to believers and unbelievers alike, such as hunger, lack of shelter, natural disasters, tragedies, and violence. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 2)

Galatians 2:20 “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

1 Peter 2:20 “But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.”

8:37 *conquerors* – Heightened form of Gk *nikao*, “to prevail completely.” (TLSB)

The new people of God can also renew their strength at those same wells of life from which the psalmist drew, the wells of the “steadfast love of God” (Ps.44:26; cf 44:3). (Franzmann)

Paul promises even more! Literally, he says that we will be “hyper-victorious” or “super-conquerors.” That, however, is no credit to us, because it will not come about by anything we do. It will not be accomplished by our love and devotion for the Lord. Rather, it is entirely the other way around. We’re conquerors “through him who loved us.” when it is his love that carries the day. (PBC)

who loved us. Referring especially to Christ’s death on the cross. (CSB)

To the point of death on the cross (5:6–8). Christ gained total victory for us. (TLSB)

How great is the contrast between the trials and tribulations of this life and the glorious future in God’s very presence! How vast the difference between the confident faith that affirms “we are more than conquerors” and the feeble hearts we often have at the moment the storms of life strike us. Yet no matter how weak we may be, we are confident of victory, not because of our own strength, but through the power of “him who loved us” and who conquered all, even death, for us. Years ago Karl Barth said, “in his love our love celebrates its victory.” It is in our very defeat, in our weakness, and in our time of greatest need that the victory of Christ Jesus, who died, rose, and intercedes at God’s right hand for us, aids us most. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 2)

8:38-39 Paul hints at mysterious powers that seek to wreak havoc and chaos in our world. Our true battle is against these demonic powers of evil that threaten to engulf us and destroy our lives (Eph 6:12). But Paul assures us that whatever there may be in all creation that haunts or threatens to overwhelm us is subject to the Creator. Because of God’s surpassing grace in Jesus Christ, nothing of human or diabolic devising, none of the terrors of human existence “will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 2)

Tenfold list is all-embracing inventory of superhuman realities that threaten, in vain, to break the grip of Christ’s love. (See FC SD XI 48–49.) (TLSB)

8:38 Each suffering undergone has made our hope more sure. It is like building up an immunity to a illness. (Franzmann)

angels ... rulers ... powers. Unseen cosmic forces. Though created by God (Col 1:16), they now stand in opposition to God’s eternal purpose because of the fall (Eph 3:10; 6:12; Col 1:16). They threaten to separate us from Christ’s love, but Christ has triumphed over them (Eph 1:20–23; Col 2:15). (TLSB)

In the NT, ἄγγελος is regularly used for an “angel,” that is, a spiritual being who serves as God’s messenger. But this is not exclusively the case.

The word “angels” can be used of evil spirits, angels that kept not their first estate (*cf.* Matt. 25:41; 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6). But it is questionable if the term “angel” without any further qualification is ever used in the New Testament of evil spirits.

δυνάμεις—This unpaired form is the nominative plural of δύναμις. While its basic meaning is “power,” as in 1:16, the plural form and the context indicate that “some kind of spiritual forces are denoted here.” (CC)

Romans 5:3-5, “³Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.”

8:39 *neither height nor depth.* It is impossible to get beyond God’s loving reach. (CSB)

Perhaps it is best to leave the meaning more general, referring “height” and “depth” to the geographical framework of our lives. The meaning would be: no power from on high has power to destroy us; the sun shall not smite us by day nor the moon by night (Ps. 121:6). No power from below has power to harm us really; the earth which spews forth lava or quakes and opens up beneath our feet is no terror to us now, nor are the depths of the sea. (Franzmann)

nor anything else in all creation. Includes all created things. Only God is not included, and he is the one who has justified us (v. 33). (CSB)

8:31–39 Christ’s death, resurrection, and exaltation at God’s right hand guarantees our victory over anything and everything that would separate us from His love. When following Christ brings distress, we sometimes distance ourselves from Him. But Christ never draws back from us. • Lord Jesus, though You are exalted at the Father’s right hand, You still hold us. Keep us in Your love to the end. Amen. (TLSB)