

IN CHRIST JESUS

I. Romans 8:1-4, 28-29, 31, 34-35, 37-39

A. Since a New Year began this past Monday, it's fitting we share Communion together on this first Sunday. As stated last Sunday, we ultimately do not know what the future folds but we do know *Who* holds it. While the old adage suggests God laughs at our plans, it's probably better to say that any plans we make should be held open to our Lord's revision. Trusting Him is what is key...

B. With or without plans, being *in Christ Jesus* makes all the difference. When our lives are *in Christ*, we have nothing to fear. He has us and He holds us! An unknown author wrote a fabulous poem which will usher us straight into our text.

In Christ We Have

Author Unknown

In Christ We Have:

A love that can never be fathomed.
A life that can never die.
A righteousness that can never be tarnished.
A peace that can never be understood.
A rest that can never be disturbed.
A joy that can never be diminished.
A hope that can never be disappointed.
A glory that can never be clouded.
A light that can never be darkened.
A purity that can never be defiled.
A beauty that can never be marred.
A wisdom that can never be baffled.

C. So to find out if any of this poetry is true, let's go back in time to last Sunday to some select verses from Romans 8. We could spend a month in this chapter and still mine tons and tons of golden nuggets...

D. Romans 8:1-4, 28-29, 31, 34-35, 37-39 (ESV) is chock full of riches...

1) V1: 1 *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. (The key to this verse is the "In Christ Jesus" part... But think about this: All of you in Christ Jesus are Blessed to enter this new year (each day of this new year) without condemnation. Before you seek to break any bad habit or launch into any new endeavor, you start with--no condemnation! Not guilty!)*

2) V2: 2 *For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. (The law of the Spirit of life: The operative controlling power of the Holy Spirit has set you free from the controlling power of sin and death!)*

3) V3-4: 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 (a sin offering), 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. **(God Sent His Son to keep the Law for lawbreakers-us. He sent His Son to absorb the wrath of God against our unrighteousness in order to impute His righteousness (His perfect, sin-free record) to us. He paid our penalty for sin. The spotless Lamb of God died in our place as a condemned lawbreaker. He likewise conquered death. And yes, The Bread & Cup remind us!)**

D. Onto Verses 28 & 29 where we were last week...

1) V28: 28 *And we know that for those who love God (This is a conditional promise!) all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose. (How many of you understand that not everything that happens to us is good? People say: "It's all good!" No it's not! But God uses all things to work towards good in those of us who are in Christ Jesus!)*

2) V29: 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. (If we are truly in Christ; then His Holy Spirit is truly in us. [V9b says: "Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him."] [You either belong to Him or He wants you to belong to Him!]) And the Holy Spirit in us is active, not passive. He's at work. We call His redemptive work: Sanctification--the process of being changed into the likeness of Christ. This is totally the work of the Holy Spirit. 2 Corinthians 3:17-18 (NLT) puts it like this: **17** *For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. **18** So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord--who is the Spirit--makes us more and more like Him as we are changed into His glorious image. (Like that mangey dog or stray cat you rescued off the street--God loved us too, just the way He found us, but He doesn't want to leave us that way!)**

E. Onto Verse 31: 31 *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? (No matter what God allows to happen to us, He's still for us despite everyone and everything that may be lined up against us. That includes the world, the flesh, the devil and anyone working in cahoots with that axis of evil!)*

F. Onto Verses 34 & 35:

1) V34: 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. (The Good News doesn't end with Jesus' death & resurrection. The Good news continues with His rule & reign and His faithful intercession. Think about it: Jesus is praying for you! There's absolutely no chance His prayers for you will go unanswered! That's Good News on top of Good News!)*

2) V35: 35 *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? (In Christ you're in an inseparable relationship!)*

G. Onto Verses 37-39: Verses 37-39: **37** *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. (And here are the things which cannot separate us from the love of God:) **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.*

H. As we prepare our hearts for the Lord's Table, let's stand on the following:

*** Come what may, come what might, whether rejoicing or grieving, whether up or down, whether resolute or worn out, whether stoked to the core or deeply depressed, whether really excited or bummed out, we take this Bread & Cup as those who are in Christ Jesus...**

*** We take the Bread & Cup as individuals who are a part of a family of believers who are NOT under condemnation because we are in Christ Jesus... And not only are you NOT under condemnation, the same is true for your brothers & sisters *in Christ!* Let all our doing this year flow from God's declaration of "*not guilty!*"**

*** We take the Bread & Cup as brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus who have been freed from sin and death by the regenerative power of the Holy Spirit that now resides in us and *Who* is making us into the likeness of God's very own Son.**

*** We take this Bread & Cup as His people who are in Christ Jesus, to whom God promises to work all things for good (His good and our good), because we are loved by Him and called according to His purposes...**

*** We take this Bread and Cup as a remembrance that Christ loved us and died to make us His own forevermore and that nothing can separate us from His love--nothing whatsoever! There is no place better to be than in Christ Jesus!**

*** Pray & Officiate Communion...**

*** Matthew 7:24 are Jesus' words from the Sermon on the Mount: "*Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.*" Among the many wonderful names attributed to Jesus is *The Word made flesh*. In many Bibles, Jesus' words appear in red. But all those in black ink, no matter who penned them or uttered them, can rightly be called His as well.**

*** So as we're just a few days in on this brand new year, I wonder how being in Christ Jesus will shake out in each of your lives over the next 12 months: What Christlike things will the Holy Spirit prompt you to do? Who might He nudge you to go and see? What will He direct you to say to this one or that one? Will you make people thirsty for what you have? Will you pray more? Or pray more fervently? Will you go deeper in His Word? Will you serve more or give more or listen better? Will worship and fellowship become a higher priority than ever before? You are in Christ Jesus and therefore the Holy Spirit is in you. What will this reality produce in your life?**

[Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff](#)

[Romans 8:1-4, 28-29, 31, 34-35, 37-39 \(ESV\)](#)

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2 Corinthians 3:17-18 (NLT)

17 For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. **18** So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like Him as we are changed into His glorious image.

Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

Organic Christian Living in the Local Church - Nicholas Batzig (Feeding on Christ)
<https://www.feedingonchrist.com/blog/post/organic-christian-living-in-the-local-church->

All Things Well - Burk Parsons (Ligonier Ministries)
<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/all-things-well>

2 Corinthians 3:17-18 (AMP)

17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty [emancipation from bondage, true freedom]. **18** And we all, with unveiled face, continually seeing as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are progressively being transformed into His image from [one degree of] glory to [even more] glory, which comes from the Lord, [who is] the Spirit.

James 4:13-15 (ESV)

13 Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit”— **14** yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. **15** Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.”

Another Year Is Dawning

By Frances R. Havergal, 1874

Another year is dawning,
Dear Father let it be,
In working or in waiting,
Another year with Thee.
Another year of progress,
Another year of praise,
Another year of proving
Thy presence all the days.

Another year of mercies,
Of faithfulness and grace,
Another year of gladness,
The glory of Thy face.
Another year of leaning
Upon Thy loving breast,
Another year of trusting,
Of quiet, happy rest.

Another year of service,
Of witness for Thy love,
Another year of training
For holier work above.
Another year is dawning,
Dear Father, let it be,
On earth, or else in heaven,
Another year for Thee.

Resolutions

By Jonathan Edwards, 1703-1758

Being sensible that I am unable to do anything without God's help, I do humble entreat Him, by His grace, to enable me to keep these Resolutions, so far as they are agreeable to His will, for Christ's sake. [I will] remember to read over these Resolutions once a week:

1. Resolved, That I will do whatsoever I think to be most to the glory of God, and my own good, profit, and pleasure, in the whole of my duration; without any consideration of the time, whether now, or never so many myriads of ages hence.

2. Resolved, to do whatever I think to be my duty, and most for the good and advantage of mankind in general.
3. Resolved, Never to lose one moment of time, but to improve it in the most profitable way I possibly can.
4. Resolved, To live with all my might, while I do live.
5. Resolved, Never to do anything, which I should be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life.
6. Resolved, Never to do anything out of revenge.
7. Resolved, Never to speak evil of any one, so that it shall tend to his dishonour, more or less, upon no account except for some real good.
8. Resolved, To study the Scriptures so steadily, constantly, and frequently, as that I may find, and plainly perceive, myself to grow in the knowledge of the same.
9. Resolved, Never to count that a prayer, nor to let that pass as a prayer, nor that as a petition of a prayer, which is so made, that I cannot hope that God will answer it; nor that as a confession which I cannot hope God will accept.
10. Resolved, To ask myself, at the end of every day, week, month, and year, wherein I could possibly, in any respect, have done better.
11. Resolved, Never to give over, nor in the least to slacken, my fight with my corruptions, however unsuccessful I may be.
12. Resolved, After afflictions, to inquire, what I am the better for them; what good I have got by them, and what I might have got by them.
13. Resolved, Always to do that which I shall wish I had done when I see others do it.
14. Let there be something of benevolence in all that I speak.

- From the Works of Jonathan Edwards, Vol. 1.