

Redeemed & Restored, Romans 5-8

Do you know how the Father, Son and Spirit really see you?

If you did, would you give your all to our Family-of-Three to give them free reign in you to make you more like Jesus? In essence, Paul proposes these questions to us today through His brilliant summary of the Christian life in Romans 5-8.

Take time to read each section yourself. Then compare your thoughts with mine, adapting and modifying to make them your **voice**. All that Jesus Christ provides in His death and resurrection, all that the Father is, the Spirit **activates** so it's available to us.

Satisfaction in Union with Christ – Romans 5:15-8:4

In 5:15-8:4, Paul describes our oneness with Christ. Both Jesus and Paul **begin** with union as the only certain foundation.¹ As with the Trinity, although the Father, Son and Spirit are one, they are also unique individuals. We never lose our uniqueness but gain everything Jesus is. Paul seemingly exhausts imagination with the varied illustrations he uses. Set a time when you can dive in depth into these chapters since this is too rich to summarize.²

1. In **Jesus Christ our Lord**, we become a new race of people, 5:15-19. Note the fivefold “how much more.” Each contrasts the death and condemnation we have in Adam with the abounding grace to live a righteous life in Christ.
2. In **Jesus Christ our Lord**, we have been baptized or immersed into Him, now inseparable, 6:1-14. In the first century, the word translated “baptize” was used of white cloth dipped into a vat of royal blue dye. When we arise from Spirit baptism through faith in Christ (at the instant of salvation), we are someone we never were before. We are saturated by the King's royal blue dye. Notice the three movements flowing from what we “know” for certain, beginning by faith. His history is now ours, exchanged on the cross as we have been raised into His new life. So, make choices to act on it (6:11-14).
3. In **Jesus Christ our Lord**, we are enslaved to Christ, called to do only His wishes, 6:15-23. Oh what a message to our independent, “can-do” American church-life! Paul gives us a glimpse into God's original design. God made us for Himself. We can either live for Him or for sin...those are the only two choices. And when we choose obedience of faith towards Jesus, this results in a right standing before God, set free **from sin to** holiness and eternal life. List the results side-by-side between your two choices, a slave to sin or to Christ. **Then choose!**
4. In **Jesus Christ our Lord**, we have been married to our Groom, Jesus, Romans 7:1-13. How do we get our minds around the fullness of our oneness with Jesus? The most

¹ Beware of any teaching that holds **union with God** out as the final stage of growth. Jesus began with union (see John 14:10 with 20, fulfilled at Pentecost when the Spirit descended to birth the church). In the next chapter, Jesus stated, “*I am the true Vine,*” and if we are a true branch, we abide in **union** with Him as Vine. Paul amplifies on **union** with Christ as the essential launching point for our Christian journey (Romans 5:15-8:1). Don't be deceived by counterfeits, even though this Reality is beyond our present experience. “*Since we are in union with Christ, continue to grow in it.*”

² I wrote a free PDF to reflect on this passage. It's on my website under *Freder's Favorites*, Romans 5-8.

intimate relationship on earth is the full partnership of a great marriage, and that's where Paul goes (compare Ephesians 5:31-32; Revelation 19:9; 21:9). Don't ever settle to be a concubine or mistress, begging for a quick "interruption" to enter occasionally into His presence.

5. In **Jesus Christ our Lord**, we will still experience battles in our life, even though we are on the winning side, Romans 7:14-8:4. Paul describes this battle between who we really are and our "flesh" (see NASB) like a two round boxing match. The "flesh" is like a breakoff guerilla band after the rightful ruler has regained control. The guerillas have the same lineage, but they are **not** the new nation. Although this passage is difficult to interpret, what is clear is that a power resides in Paul's "flesh" that can't be tamed by his self-initiated will-choices (15b+19-20).

Five powerful pictures attempt to describe the indescribable life we have in **oneness** with Christ. Then Paul returns in Romans 8:1 with a sweeping statement of how forgiven we are. For those in Christ, condemnation with all its guilt and shame is gone. In Romans 8:2, Paul usher us into a life **activated** by the Spirit.

...through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.

Do you catch what Paul says? Since the law of gravity governs, why can an airplane that's heavier than air fly? A higher law exists, the law of aerodynamics. In the same way, the "law of sin and death" keeps us ground bound. However, in solidarity with Jesus in our oneness, we may access a higher law, the law of the Spirit who gives life." Embrace our life **activated** by the Spirit.

Life Activated by the Spirit – Romans 8:2-27

1. **God the Spirit** answers the Romans 7 tension regarding rules-keeping to please God, 8:2-4. The Law is good yet intrinsically weak. The purpose of all Law is to demonstrate how very much we need Jesus Christ.³
2. **God the Spirit** teaches His people to think and respond from a new identity, 8:5-9. We are active, involved decision-makers, like the Trinity, in whose image we are fashioned. However, God never pushed "reset" on our minds when we came to Christ. Our minds must be renewed.
3. **God the Spirit** gives life to our fading and decaying bodies, 8:10-11. As I grow older, this brings me more and more comfort. It's also true for a very young Christian.
4. **God the Spirit** empowers us to put to death sinful choices expressed through the body, 8:12-13. As in the previous section in 6:15-23, God fashioned humanity to abandon ourselves fully to Him.
5. **God the Spirit** releases revelation of our full sonship as adopted children, the Beloved Ones, 8:14-17. We are a beloved child of our Father, joint heirs with Christ.

³ As an important aside, God designed us to be filled with the Spirit, not to live for ourselves (see Jesus, Luke 4:1, 4:18). God inbreathed His Spirit at creation and Adam became a living being, fashioned to live by the animating Spirit, Jeremiah 10:23). At the Fall, Adam gave allegiance to another Spirit, the deceitful serpent, Satan. Our society, and unfortunately many Christians, act as if we are captains of our own ship. We are not! We live animated by the Spirit of God or the spirit of this world, the evil triad, the world, our flesh and demonic minions. We choose who to give our allegiance to, but it will be given to another Spirit or spirit.

6. **God the Spirit** guarantees our eternal inheritance, 8:18-25. In our present sufferings, the Spirit protects us and releases an inward yearning for the eternal culmination.
7. **God the Spirit** overcomes our weaknesses in prayer, so God's people tap into His will, 8:26-27. Have you ever struggled in prayer as I have? Four times the Holy Spirit is mentioned as our help. Rely on the Spirit as you pray.

Loved by the Father - Romans 8:28-39

Paul concludes this section with seven ringing affirmations of the keeping love and power flowing from the first-love of the Father. Oh, what confidence to rest in the keeping love and power of our gracious Father. We may rest completely, secure in His arms of unparalleled goodness. God our Father takes bad things and works them for the good of every one of His children, 8:28.

1. **God our Father** causes all things to work together for the good of every one of His children, 8:28. In every detail of our lives, the Father's love brings out something good, even in tough times. All things are **not** good, but our Father will use them for good in our lives.
2. **God our Father** grows us more like Jesus through a five-fold process, 8:29-30. It's like a golden chain with five unbreakable links (foreknew, predestined, called, justified and glorified). These shape us to become more like His Son. The Father gives us Jesus as our Model of outpoured love, in inward virtues, and also in the outward expression of them. Look to His life upward in worship, outward in evangelism, and inward in nurturing family relationships.
3. **God our Father** stands with us as a Friend, always on our side with our highest and best on His heart, 8:31. With such a Father standing beside us, how can we lose?
4. **God our Father** gifts us everything we need on our journey since Jesus is His pledge. He has already given us His very best, Jesus, 8:32.
5. **God our Father** defends us against all condemning charges since Jesus constantly intercedes for us, 8:33-34. Who would dare point a finger of condemnation at us? Our Father justifies. The Son died and was raised for us.
6. **God our Father** empowers us as more than conquerors in the midst of hard times because of His unfailing love for us, 8:35-37. Do you believe that **anything** can separate you from the Father's love in Christ? Break off the lie!
7. **God our Father** keeps us 100% secure in our intimate relationship with Him since His keeping first-love will **never** let us go, 8:38-39. Never!

I have a rough draft of a devotional on my website under *Freder's Favorites*. Perhaps use this brief outline of these three chapters for an extended reflection on this passage that perhaps surpasses all others in its depth and breadth of describing God's redeemed and restored people.