

ROMANS (CHAPTERS 5-8) TOGETHER IN CONTEXT THE PRACTICAL LEARNING – LIVING – LOVING ASPECTS of FAITH (Part 1)

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As we said previously, Jesus **sent the Holy Spirit** to the Apostles and disciples to **empower and enable** them to testify and witness. **God the Father sent God the Holy Spirit from Jesus for our benefit**. The Holy Spirit was **sent** to give us **new life**, and then **teach** us **how to live** in our **new life** and then **empower** us to be **faithful** and **obedient** in our **new life**. In both theory and practice, **God the Holy Spirit** is the one who **Leads**, who **Counsels** and who **Directs** the Body of Christ (the Church) here on earth. Today we will talk about some **theological and practical** aspects of faith and how the many aspects of faith help us understand our journey in Christ Jesus and his living His life in us through **God the Holy Spirit** as He **Leads, Counsels** and lovingly **Directs** our lives to **testify and witness** to Jesus as our brother, our best friend, our High Priest, our Mediator, our Messiah, our Savior, our Master, our Lord, and our King.

OPENING PRAYER

Faith is a foundational aspect of our life in the Lord; scripture says that "*Without faith it is impossible to please God.*" (**Hebrews 11:6a**) Our faith in the Lord is very important in how we "please God." We need to grow in faith throughout our physical lives. Years ago we taught about faith mostly as being a yes answer for healing, yet faith encompasses every area of our lives.

Let's go over two verses in **Hebrews 11** (the faith chapter) looking at verses 5 and 6 in reference to Enoch so we can better understand how Enoch was a man of faith.

Hebrews 11:5-6

5 *by faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he **was commended as one who pleased God.*** **6** *And without faith it is impossible to*

*please God, because anyone who **comes** to him **must believe** that he exists and that he rewards those who **earnestly seek** him.*

We don't know exactly how God took Enoch from this world; we know this happened before the flood. Enoch was taken by God and could not be found, and because God took him Enoch did not experience death. We can speculate about **how** God did this but the **why** of it is very clearly stated. The important **why** sentence here is "For before he was taken, he was **commended** as **one who pleased** God." God blessed Enoch **in this way** because Enoch was one who pleased God. **Who** commended Enoch in this way, as one who pleased God? It certainly was not those who were living around him. Very shortly around this time there was going to be only eight people left on earth. So **who** commended Enoch? God himself! There were **three things** about Enoch that **pleased God**, **first** of all Enoch **came** to God and in so doing put his faith and trust in God, **secondly** Enoch **believed** that God did exist, and **thirdly** Enoch **sought God earnestly**. All the people mentioned in Hebrews 11 lived by faith and as it says in **verse 13**, "All these people were **still living by faith** when they died." It is very important that we learn and grow in faith and we can begin by understanding some aspects of faith that we may not have considered before.

Let's talk about "faith" as it is brought out in **Romans 5-8**. We will quote from *The Deliverance of God* written by Douglas A. Campbell; from pages 67, 68, and 69.

First, as **6:8** suggests, "faith" refers to the correct beliefs about God and salvation that follow, hopefully in increasing measure, upon the arrival of the event of salvation itself. Once people have died with Christ, it says, they can now "**believe**" or "**understand**" that they "**will also live**" with him, **both** now in a (present) life of real transformation and in the future in a state of complete transformation.

6:8 *Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.*

(Because we want to hold and have correct beliefs about God and salvation all of) **Romans 5, 6, 7, 8** chapters extant from Paul are really bound up

with this struggle for cognitive clarification; they are a sustained appeal for various beliefs to be held in the Christian life *as against other, apparently unhelpful ones* (see **Romans 6:1a, 15a; 7:7a; 8:33a**).

6:1a what shall we say, then? **Shall we go on sinning** so that grace may increase?

6:15a What then? **Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?** By no means!

7:7a what shall we say, then? **Is the law sin? Certainly not!** Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "Do not covet."

8:33a who will **bring any charge against those whom God has chosen?** It is God who justifies.

Moreover, this whole journey seems to have begun in some relation to a certain act of *submission* to a form of teaching (**Romans 6:17**), although we would doubtless be unwise to separate this event from the work of the Spirit (see **Romans 5:5; 8:9-11, 14-17, 28-30**). "Faith" in this sense, then, really refers to *the theological journey that Christians are meant to undertake in the light of the Christ event* – a journey that begins in the life of the Christian as that event does. (The *Christ event* refers to the *incarnation of Christ*)

6:17 *But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you **wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching** to which you were entrusted.*

5:5 *And hope does not disappoint us, because **God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit**, whom he has given us.*

8:9 *You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. **10** but if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. **11** And if the **Spirit of him***

who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

8:14 Because those who **are led by the Spirit of God** are sons of God. **15** for you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the **Spirit of sonship**. And by him we cry, "Abba Father." **16** The **Spirit himself testifies with our spirit** that we are God's children. **17** Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

8:28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. **29** for those God foreknew he **also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son**, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. **30** And those he **predestined**, he also **called**; those he called, he also **justified**; those he justified, he also **glorified**.

Clearly, it is rather difficult to respond appropriately to the Christ event, and indeed to communicate about it to others, if the wrong beliefs are in place. Correct understanding will be vital. While that understanding may never be perfect, obviously, the more accurate the understanding, the better. Thus, the painstakingly crafted argument of **Romans chapters 5-8** is simply extended evidence that **Paul is passionately committed to the formation of correct beliefs within his congregations**. The struggle for right thinking and speaking about God is obviously very important to him, and **faith is involved** with this. But it is important to recall that any such beliefs also seem to be shaped by the retrospective process of salvation, along with its implicit epistemology (*how human knowledge is obtained, its basis, forms, and criteria*) , as it is explained in these chapters by Paul. Beliefs, in a sense, look back on an event of revelation (*which is both holistic and ongoing*) and **attempts to articulate it** – and hence, perhaps, much of the struggle! This transformation of the mind seems to be difficult. The fleshly mind resists it. **Nevertheless, according to these chapters in Romans, that difficult process is the origin of true belief.**

Secondly, “**faith**” occurs in **another distinguishable sense** in these texts, even if not explicitly. The reader of Koine Greek knows that (“**faith**”) often indicates an activity of faithfulness or fidelity (“**faith**” by its nature will produce faithfulness and fidelity). And this quality has already been much remarked on within Paul’s’ argument here. **Suffering, patience, perseverance, endurance, and hope are an unavoidable cluster within Paul’s account of present Christian existence, occurring throughout these texts.**

In fact, the apostle articulates **several dimensions** within this semantic complex. Major Key: When a person lives a “**life of faith**” they will suffer. In the **process of “faith”** the Holy Spirit produces traits that make our life in the Holy Spirit and our salvation a daily reality:

The process of suffering in faith produces the patient, persevering endurance of suffering in hope and is to be expected (Romans 5:2-5; 8:9-25):

5:2 ...through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we **rejoice in the hope** of the glory of God. **3** Not only so, but we also **rejoice in our sufferings**, because we know that **suffering** produces **perseverance**; **4** perseverance, **character**; and character, **hope**. **5** And hope **does not disappoint us**, because God has **poured out his love** into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

8:9 You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. **10** But if **Christ is in you**, your body is dead because of sin, yet **your spirit is alive because of righteousness**. **11** And if the **Spirit of him** who raised Jesus from the dead **is living in you**, he who

raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

12 Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. **13** For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; **14** but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because **those who are led by the Spirit of God** are sons of God. **15** For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the **Spirit of sonship** (or adoption). And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” **16** The **Spirit himself testifies with our spirit** that we are God’s children. **17** Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we **share in his sufferings in order** that we may also **share in his glory**.

18 I consider that our **present sufferings** are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. **19** The creation **waits in eager expectation** for the sons of God to be revealed. **20** For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope **21** that the creation itself **will be liberated** from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

22 We know that the whole creation **has been groaning** as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. **23** Not only so, but we ourselves, who have **the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly** as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. **24** For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? **25** but if we hope for what we do not yet have, **we wait for it patiently.**

The process of suffering in faith is so that we may understand in this process that the Holy Spirit produces traits that make final life or salvation a daily reality (Romans 5:1-5; 6:17; 8:18, 23-25, 35-39):

5:1 Therefore, since we **have been justified through faith**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, **2** through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. **3** not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces **perseverance**; **4** perseverance, **character**; and character, **hope**. **5** And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

6:17 But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you **wholeheartedly** obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted.

8:18 I consider that our **present sufferings are not worth comparing** with the glory that will be revealed in us.

8:23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly **as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies**. **24** For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? **25** but if we hope for what we do not yet have, **we wait for it patiently**.

8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? **36 As it is written:** "For your sake we face death all day long; **we are considered 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 convinced** that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, **39** neither height nor depth, nor anything

else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the **love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

The process of suffering in faith is aided by the presence of the Spirit (Romans 5:5; 8:9-17, 23, 26-27):

5:5 And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts **by the Holy Spirit**, whom he has given us.

8:9 You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature **but by the Spirit**, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. **10** But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet **your spirit is alive** because of righteousness. **11** And if **the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you**, he who raised Christ from the dead will also **give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.**

12 Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. **13** For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; **but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body**, you will live, **14** because those who **are led by the Spirit of God** are sons of God. **15** For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the **Spirit of sonship**. And by him we cry, "Abba Father." **16** The **Spirit himself testifies with our spirit** that we are God's children. **17** Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we **share in his sufferings** in order that we may **also share in his glory.**

8:23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the **firstfruits of the Spirit**, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies

8:26 In the same way, **the Spirit helps us in our weakness.** We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the **Spirit**

himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. **27** And **he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints** in accordance with God's will.

The process of suffering in faith includes a sharing in the sufferings of creation (Romans 8:19-21):

8:19 *the creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. 20* For the creation **was subjected to frustration**, not by its own choice, but by the **will of the one who subjected it**, in hope **21** that the creation itself will be **liberated** from its bondage to decay and **brought into** the glorious freedom of the children of God.

The process of suffering in faith is also a sharing in the suffering of Christ that then involves sharing in His glory and gaining His eternal perspective about the sufferings we go through (Romans 8:17):

8:17 *Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we **share in his sufferings** in order that we may also **share in his glory**.*

And, perhaps most importantly, **as a participation in Christ's trajectory toward death** (Christ knew He was going to die physically and we do as well), **which was followed for him by transformation and glorification**, it is a guarantee of future transformation and glorification for us as well (**Romans 8:9-11**).

8:9 *You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. 10* but if Christ is in you, **your body is dead because of sin**, yet **your spirit is alive because of righteousness. 11** And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is **living in you**, he who raised Christ from the dead **will also give life** to your mortal bodies **through his Spirit, who lives in you**.

Hence, "faith" occurs in two distinguishable senses within Paul's discussion, denoting two important aspects of Christian existence – **right beliefs about God acting in Christ**, and faithfulness through suffering, in the sense of patient, hopeful endurance – although it should be noted that the fundamental rationale for both seems to be pneumatological (spiritual) and participatory.

In our thorough study of **Romans 8**, it remains only to ask what sort of life "the brothers" of **Romans 8:29** have been introduced into. There are certain critical indications that are supplied concerning the nature of this redeemed existence. (This we will answer next week on Pentecost).