

Session 8

We Are Set Free and Glorified in Christ

Key Question: How has (and will) the Father glorify us in Christ by setting us free through the presence of the Spirit?

Core Truth: In Christ, we have truly been set free. We are so free that we could even use that freedom for self-serving purposes. Father-God desires that we use our freedom to love one another and others in the fellowship the Spirit brings.

To Remember: “For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity to indulge your flesh, but through love serve one another.” [Galatians 5:13]

Objective: Father-God has adopted you into His family. He has glorified you (given you honor) by giving you the greatest name and title that you could ever receive – “Son of God.” But God will also glorify us in the future when He completely redeems our corrupt physical bodies. At that point, we will be made completely, gloriously free. Until then, we are called to live in the freedom that Jesus has given to us, using our time serve and love others as He has loved us.

WORDwork / Day 1

What Do We See and Hear? and What Does It Mean?

8.1 **We Have Been Set Free in Christ.**

Galatians 5:1-16 For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not be subject again to the yoke of slavery. ... 5:5 For through the Spirit, by faith, we wait expectantly for the hope of righteousness. 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision carries any weight—***the only thing that matters is faith working through love.*** ...

5:13 For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity to indulge your flesh, but through love serve one another. 5:14 For the whole law can be summed up in a single commandment, namely, “*You must love your neighbor as yourself.*”

- ? 36 According to verse 1, what has Christ done for us?
- ? 37 What are we now waiting for through the Spirit?
- ? 38 What is the “only thing” that matters in Christ Jesus according to 5:6?
- ? 39 How are we to use the freedom that has been given to us in Christ?
- ? 40 What is Paul’s summary of the whole Law?

8.1.1 **We have truly been set free.**

This week we are going to explore two ideas that may seem strange to place together: *freedom* and *glory*. As we will hear, the whole creation is waiting to see us, the children of God, finally revealed in our “glorious freedom” (see Romans 8:21). In the Scriptures, glory and freedom are linked together in some key passages. Here we will discover that true glory is produced when the children of God use their freedom to love and serve others (even our enemies).

In the Galatians passage that we have here, Paul is addressing a community of believers who are being plagued by false teaching. This false teaching is calling them to do certain things—get circumcised and keep the Mosaic Law—in order to be right with God and maintain a favorable relationship with God. Paul says that this type of teaching is contrary to the One True Gospel and is therefore accursed (see Galatians 1). In Christ we have all that is necessary to be right with God and with one another.

The Mosaic Law was composed of some 613 commandments (plus all the additions the Pharisees had added). Paul now considered that trying to keep all the law was a form of slavery. God does not intend his children to bear this burden any longer and has therefore *set us free* in Christ. We are right with God on the basis of faith, not rule keeping. Christ has set us free so that we might become mature—discerning between good and evil, pursuing righteousness and not just avoiding sin.

In Galatians 5, Paul repeats this truth to the Galatians: “*For freedom Christ has set us free!*” As those who are now in Christ, we are called to live in light of this freedom. Getting circumcised cannot help anyone become more mature in Christ. Keeping a long list of “Dos” and “Don’ts” can’t help us become mature in Christ. As Paul says, the only thing that matters is “*faith working through love.*” This is a critically important statement that we need to understand.

8.1.2 **We have been given a New Commandment by Christ.**

Jesus himself said,

John 13:34 “I give you a new commandment—to love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.

In the same way that Jesus loved us, so we are to love another. This is a high standard. Yet this is exactly what Paul is calling the Galatians and us to in chapter 5. Christ has set us free from rule-keeping and sin *and from ourselves* so that we may love. Love does not flow from obligation but from pure desire and choice. Christ has set us free so that we can use that freedom to love.

8.1.3 **We are called to use our freedom to love.**

There is something else that we need to be aware of. Although we need to have freedom in order to love, *freedom does not guarantee that we will use it properly.* With freedom comes the temptation to use it for selfish ambition and selfish desires (remember Adam in the Garden). Christ has set us free and given us an example of how to use our freedom.

As Paul says, “You were called to freedom... do not use your freedom as an opportunity to indulge your flesh, but through love serve one another.” Paul’s concept of the “flesh” is a large topic that we will cover at a later time. For now, simply understand that we are constantly tempted to put ourselves in the “center of the universe” without thinking about others. We are tempted to put our selves “first” rather than Christ and others. Our flesh is that part of us, still corrupted by indwelling sin, which calls us to please and satisfy ourselves, at the expense of others, at the same time denying what Father-God gives to us freely in Christ.

Jesus even takes this whole reality a step further:

Matthew 5:43-45 “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor’ and ‘hate your enemy.’ 5:44 But I say to you, *love your enemy and pray for those who persecute you,* 5:45 so that you may be like your Father in heaven...

We were all an one time enemies of God. Yet Father-God sent Christ the Son to sacrifice Himself for us so that we might come to know Him as He truly is. As we follow Jesus as our Savior and Master, we realize that we too are called to this radical, revolutionary and heart-transforming expression of self-sacrificial love. Christ has set us free indeed; He desires that we now use that freedom to show others the reality of His love. As we love others as He has loved us, we open the door for the power of the Gospel to do its life-transforming work.

WORDwork / Day 2

What Do We See and Hear? and What Does It Mean?

8.2 **We are Glorified in Christ.**

Romans 8:14-25 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God.

15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery leading again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry, “Abba, Father.”

16 The Spirit himself bears witness to our spirit that we are God’s children. 17 And if children, then heirs (namely, heirs of God and also fellow heirs with Christ) if indeed we suffer with him *so we may also be glorified with him.*

18 For I consider that our present sufferings cannot even be compared to *the glory that will be revealed to us.* 19 For the creation eagerly waits for the revelation of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility not willingly but because of God who subjected it in hope 21 that the creation itself will also be set free from the bondage of decay into the **glorious freedom of God’s children.** 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers together until now.

23 Not only this, but we ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we eagerly await our adoption, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope, because who hopes for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with endurance.

- ? 41 How are the “sons of God” related to the Spirit in verse 14?
- ? 42 What is the purpose of our “suffering with Christ” according to the end of verse 17?
- ? 43 What is Paul’s point in verses 18? How does this encourage our hope?
- ? 44 What do verses 24-25 teach us about our salvation? What are we “eagerly waiting”?

8.2.1 **What is Glory? What Does It Mean to Be Glorified?**

“Glory” is a big idea in the Bible. If we start with God, glory is used to describe His very essence, His luminous and radiant perfection (In the Hebrew Scriptures, this aspect of God’s glory is referred to as *shechinah*—visible glory). Glory also speaks about God’s *holiness* and *splendor* as the source of all that is true, good and beautiful.

When we “glorify” someone we are *praising them* or ascribing *honor* to them because of who they are. When you apply these ideas to God, you can see how they fit. God is glorious and therefore worthy of our praise and honor.

The incredible news for us is that *Father-God has glorified us in Christ and will glorify us in the completion of our salvation!* God honors us *now* by giving us the great-

est name He could: *His beloved children*. In the end, He will transform us completely (at the resurrection) so that even our bodies will be glorious—radiant, reflecting His glory. He is now shaping us spiritually to be His holy children, full of His grace and truth.

8.2.2 **The Spirit is Leading Us to Live as Beloved Children.**

As we have seen earlier, God has caused us to be born again and adopted into His family as “Sons.” There is no greater honor and privilege that He could give to us. This new “origin” has also changed our destiny; whereas we were dead in Adam heading for eternal condemnation and destruction, we are now alive in Christ headed for eternal glory.

In this passage, we hear that we are being led by the Spirit of God. This is not an optional idea. If you belong to Christ, the Holy Spirit is leading you to live as Father-God’s beloved children. The Spirit is leading us to live in the true freedom that this reality brings.

Part of the Spirit’s ministry to us is always to remind us that we are God’s children. He constantly speaks deep within our hearts where He dwells, saying, “You belong to God; You are His child.” This is what Paul means in saying, “the Spirit bears witness to our spirit...”

8.2.3 **We are Heirs of God with Christ**

Not only are we children of God—we are also “heirs of God” and “fellow heirs with Christ.” This means that Jesus, who has inherited all things, shares His inheritance—eternal life, power and blessing—with us. As we saw earlier Jesus is not ashamed to call us His brothers and sisters (Hebrews 2:11) and He is proud to call us His spiritual children (Hebrews 2:13).

8.2.4 **The Suffering that Leads to Glory**

So far, this is good and glorious news; but then Paul adds an “if”—if we suffer with Christ. At first, this does not seem like such good news. Who wants to suffer? However, it is our suffering that actually conforms us to the likeness of Christ so that we may share in His glory. This “if” is really a statement of fact—since God has claimed us as His own, He will now allow *purposeful suffering* in our lives so that we may be glorified with Christ.

This should not surprise us, because Jesus when through this same process:

Hebrews 2:10 For it was fitting for him (Father-God), for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the pioneer of their salvation (Jesus) perfect through sufferings.

Jesus was “made perfect” through His suffering. This does not mean that Jesus had any faults or sins before, but that His suffering *qualified* Him and showed Him to be tested, approved and accepted for the purposes that God had sent Him to accomplish. We too are now being perfected by the things we suffer. (*In the Appendices there is an extended discussion of suffering and its role in our sanctification.*)

WORDwork / Day 3

How Does this All Fit Together? and What are the Key Truths?

8.3 **We Will Posses the Glory of Our Lord Jesus!**

At the very beginning of this study unit, we read this passage:

1 John 3:1-3 See what sort of love the Father has given to us: that we should be called God's children - and indeed we are! 2 ... we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet been revealed. We know that whenever it is revealed we will be like Him (Jesus Christ), because we will see Him just as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope focused on Him purifies Himself, just as Jesus is pure).

This passage is speaking about our final glorification. One day we will see Jesus face to face and this experience will complete our personal transformation – we will become completely like Him because we will see Him just as He is.

But notice the last part of this passage: “And everyone who has this hope focused on Him purifies Himself, just as Jesus is pure.” In the present, we focus our hope on Jesus. As we “fix our eyes on Jesus” (Hebrews 12:3) we become captivated by our vision of Him and this vision transforms us. The more we come to know Jesus, the more we are able to “see” Him.

We must also remember that it is Father-God working in Christ through the Holy Spirit that works this transformation in us:

2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 But we ought to thank God always for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. 14 He called you to this salvation through our gospel, *so that you may possess the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

God is transforming us to “possess the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” What an amazing idea! One day, we will be like Christ and possess His truth, goodness and beauty. Right now, in the present, God has set us apart as His children and He is working this transformation process in us. It is a process that now takes place little by little, degree by degree:

2 Corinthians 3:17-18 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is present, *there is freedom.* 18 And we all, with unveiled faces reflecting the *glory* of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another, which is from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

This passage should give us confidence. It reinforces the truth the God's Spirit is working in us to bring freedom and to transform us into people who truly reflect His glory!

Notice how many times the idea of freedom is linked together with attaining God's glory in these passages that we have considered. In order for us to become “free indeed” as Jesus said, we will have to become people who are ruled by truth,

goodness and beauty in all things. God is transforming us into people who are “gloriously free.” Only when we are completely like Jesus will this be completely true of us.

8.4 **We are waiting for this Hope of Glory.**

In the Romans 8 passage that we heard yesterday, Paul emphasizes how incredible our “hope of glory” is, even for creation. After Adam’s rebellion and fall, all of Creation was subjected to the effects of sin, decay and death. Now this same Creation is waiting for us to be revealed fully as the people that God is shaping us to be – His gloriously free Children. When we have finally been conformed to the likeness of Christ, when we are finally completely free from the power of sin, the whole Creation will be renewed as well.

We have already seen that God has adopted us into His family; we are His children now. *But there is still a part of this adoption that is yet to be finalized.* As Paul says, we are eagerly awaiting our adoption—the redemption of our bodies (Romans 8:23). The final part of the salvation process is the complete transformation of our now corrupt physical bodies. In the present, we have been spiritually transformed, but our bodies are still subject to disease, decay and death. When our bodies are finally transformed, we will finally be free indeed!

In the present, then, we are sustained by our hope. If you remember, we defined hope as our confident expectation that God will be who He says and do what He says for His glory and our blessing. Right now, we are still waiting for our “full adoption”—the completion of our transformation into Christlikeness. But we are waiting in hope, confident that God will finish what He has started.

Take a look at once more passage:

Philippians 3:20-21 Now our citizenship is in heaven and we also await a savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, *21 who will transform these humble bodies of ours into the likeness of his glorious body* by means of that power by which he is able to subject all things to himself.

Notice the emphasis here is on the transformation of our physical bodies. We are not only taking on the “likeness” of Jesus spiritually in our spiritual selves, we will also take on the “image”—outward form—of Jesus now resurrected and glorified body in our physical bodies. This does not mean that we will all look like Jesus. We will still be ourselves, but our bodies will be free from the effects of sin, disease and death; our bodies will be made fit for living and ruling forever with Christ in power and glory.

All that Father-God is doing in Christ through the Holy Spirit both in us and to us and through us is working together to shape us into people who completely reflect the radiant and beautiful reality of His holiness. Because we are convinced of God’s faithfulness to complete this work in us, we pour ourselves out in love for one another and for others in this life because we know that the glory of God is seen clearly in His Holy, self-sacrificial Love.

WORDwork / Day 4

How Does This Work in Life? and How Does This Work in My Life?

8.5 **You are (and will be) Glorified in Christ**

Take a minute to reflect on this passage that we have considered earlier:

Romans 8:28-31 And we know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose, 29 because those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. 30 And those he predestined, he also called; and those he called, he also justified; and those he justified, *he also glorified*. 31 What then shall we say about these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

Notice that the verb “glorified” in this text is in past tense. Even though we do not yet share the full glory of Jesus (our “condition”), we are nevertheless “positionally glorified.” Because of God’s faithfulness we will be finally glorified. God has set us apart for His purposes, He has called us, He has declared us to be in right relationship with Him by faith, and in the end He will glorify us—make us completely like His Son Jesus and then display us proudly as his beloved children.

Consider this passage:

Colossians 3:1-4 Therefore, if you have been raised with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Keep thinking about things above, not things on the earth, 3 for you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ (who is your life) appears, *then you too will be revealed in glory with him*.

When Christ appears in the End, we will be revealed with Him as His people, as His children, as His brothers and sisters, as His “heavenly army”:

Revelation 19:11-14 Then I saw heaven opened and here came a white horse! The one riding it was called “Faithful” and “True,” and with justice he judges and goes to war. ... 14 The armies that are in heaven, dressed in white, clean, fine linen, were following him on white horses.

You will be one of those dressed in white, clean, fine linen following Him at His return!!! What an incredible privilege! Once we have attained the fullness of our glorification, we will then reign with Him forever.

God has glorified us by calling us His sons. He is now glorifying us as He transforms us to be conformed to the image of His Son Jesus. God will finally glorify us when we see Jesus face to face and become perfectly holy as He is. As God is transforming us, we are reminded that all we do should be motivated out of our desire to please Him for His glory:

1 Corinthians 10:31 So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, *do everything for the glory of God*.

We should also remember, as Paul says, “We have been bought with a price, let

us then glorify God with our bodies” (1 Corinthians 6:20). Christ has bought us for Himself and His greatest desire is that we glorify God in the way we use our bodies. As we allow ourselves to be used as “instruments of righteousness” displayed in self-sacrificial love, we glorify Father-God by showing the world the reality of what we believe to be true.

8.6 **Becoming a “Pierced Ear Slave.”**

In Deuteronomy, the Lord gives instruction about the releasing of debts and slaves every seventh year. In this cycle of seven years, the Lord was establishing his just way of dealing, making it possible for no one from the nation of Israel to become enslaved forever. In this passage we hear:

Deuteronomy 15:12-17 “If your brother, a Hebrew man or a Hebrew woman, is sold to you, he shall serve you six years, and in the seventh year you shall let him go free from you. 15:13 And when you let him go free from you, ... You shall furnish him liberally... As the LORD your God has blessed you, you shall give to him. 15:15 You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this today.

15:16 *But if he says to you, ‘I will not go out from you,’ because he loves you and your household, since he is well-off with you,* 15:17 then you shall take an awl, and put it through his ear into the door, and he shall be your slave forever. And to your female slave you shall do the same.

A slave who had been set free in this seventh year had the option of actually renouncing his freedom and becoming a permanent servant of the master (15:16-17). The master would then pierce the slave’s ear with an awl to signify his permanent servitude. Take note of why the slave would give up his freedom voluntarily: because he **loved** the master and the masters house (family).

Let us suggest that Father-God desires that you become His “pierced ear slave.” In Christ, we have truly been set free. The question before us is not, “*Are we really free?*”—We are! The real question is, “*What will we do with our freedom?*” Do we love our Master enough to trust Him if we give up our “freedom” for Him?

Jesus has truly set us free. He has set us freed because you could never express your love and gratitude to Him in voluntarily choosing to become one of His bond-slaves *unless you first had the freedom to choose not to serve Him*. Remember, it is our ability to say “no” to God that makes our “yes” so meaningful.

Think about the way Paul and the other writers will often begin their letters: “Paul, a **slave** of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle” (Romans 1:1), “Simeon Peter, a **slave** and apostle of Jesus Christ” (2Peter 1:1). These men had been set free and they were more than happy to be “enslaved” to Christ Jesus. As we too allow ourselves to be captivated by Christ, He truly sets us free indeed! (see John 8:34-38)



Becoming “enslaved” to Christ is not something that we can be *manipulated* or *forced* into. The only way to give ourselves fully to Christ is joyously out of our love for Him.

