

The Spirit in Us

SCOTT HOEZEE

In the English language, the word *therefore* typically signals that something really significant is coming up. If a parent is reviewing a series of bad behaviors by a child, when the mom or the dad says *therefore*, the kid knows he is about to hear what his punishment will be. When a defense lawyer in a murder trial turns to the jury during final arguments and says *therefore*, the jurors know they are about to hear the primary reason they will be asked to declare the defendant not guilty. Romans 8 begins with one of the Bible's most famous *therefore* statements; and as we will see on this episode of *Groundwork*, Paul's thunderous *therefore* does indeed lead to one of the most lyric and amazing chapters in the whole Bible. Stay tuned.

DARRELL DELANEY

Welcome to *Groundwork*, where we dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Darrell Delaney.

SCOTT HOEZEE

I am Scott Hoezee; and Darrell, we are kind of right in the middle here, program number three of a six-part series on Paul's letter to the Romans. Romans kind of follows the same pattern that the *Heidelberg Catechism*, the Reformed confession, follows. It is sort of *sin, salvation, service*, or you know, *misery, deliverance*, and *gratitude*. We have been in the sin part—the misery part. Chapters 1 through 7 tell us that we cannot save ourselves; we are too sinful.

DARRELL DELANEY

And now we are going into the *deliverance* part right now; and we read Chapters 1 through 7, but we have always recommended this, that you should read the whole book in its entirety so you can get the full context of what God is trying to teach in this beautiful doctrine and book of Romans.

SCOTT HOEZEE

So, we cannot save ourselves. The law cannot save us; in fact, Paul says in the early chapters of Romans, the law was never meant to save you; it convicts you of your sin; but let's remember the climax of what we looked at in the second program...the previous program. Here is how Romans 7 ends. Paul writes: ²¹So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. ²²For in my inner being I delight in God's law; ²³but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. ²⁴What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?

That is how Romans 7 ends.

DARRELL DELANEY

Now, if we are honest, Scott, I believe that every one of us who are believers have had this dilemma moment, where you are struggling with your new life. You are excited. God has saved you, but you also have this old sinful nature that keeps trying to drag you back into temptation...drag you back into your old ways...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes.

DARRELL DELANEY

And this inner struggle is the heart of every believer, if we are really honest.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Darrell, that is where Romans 7 ends, and so it is probably high time that Paul helps us turn the corner to good news, and that is what we are going to get.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, we start in Romans 8, and it says: Therefore (there it is) there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ²because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. ³For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

SCOTT HOEZEE

The gospel in a nutshell. You know, Darrell, we have noted this on other *Groundwork* programs: Paul's favorite two-word prepositional phrase...he uses it all over the thirteen epistles that he wrote in the New Testament...his favorite little phrase is: In Christ...in Christ. We have union with Christ; and you know, Darrell, the way Paul treats that, it is almost like it is a spiritual location. In Christ is almost like our spiritual zip code now.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, now that is where we live. We do have one foot in this world, but we are not of this world...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

And we have been born again. I love that because not only did he allude to it in Chapter 6 when he talked about dying with Christ, buried with Christ, being raised with Christ...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

But now, here in Chapter 8, he really goes into detail to show how in Christ we are.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; a great book...Lewis Smedes' great book entitled *Union With Christ*. He said: You know, what is it to have union with Christ? What does it mean to be in Christ? Well, it means we now live inside the new situation—the new cosmic situation that Christ's death and resurrection made possible. Our entire situation got changed; so, we have moved from the desperate despair that Romans 7 ends with: Who will deliver me? Wretched man that I am, who will help me? Now, we have moved into the brightness of the kingdom where sin is forgiven, death has been defeated, and there is nobody in heaven or earth who can bring any charge of condemnation against us anymore: There is, therefore, now *no* condemnation.

DARRELL DELANEY

It is a beautiful thing if you think about how God has paid the debt of sin that we owed. We could not pay it ourselves. I used to say this a lot, that Christ lived the life we couldn't live and he died the death we couldn't die, to afford us the righteousness by faith that we receive as a gift.

SCOTT HOEZEE

All of Christ's perfect righteousness...it is like it gets transferred into our spiritual bank account. It is as though Jesus' righteousness is now our righteousness. He earned it; we get it. That is the doctrine of justification. Although, you know, I have always kind of thought maybe it is too cute by half, but there is something correct about the little saying that, you know, the little thing that they do with justified...what does it mean to be justified? It is: *just as if I'd never sinned*. That is actually right. Justification, the way God looks at us, he looks at us and he doesn't see our sin, he sees only Christ's righteousness, as though it were our very own.

DARRELL DELANEY

And there are implications that go along with that, and Paul continues talking about this in Chapter 8, where he says: ¹²Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. ¹³For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. ¹⁵The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” ¹⁶The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. ¹⁷Now 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.

SCOTT HOEZEE

So, there is another *therefore* yet, in verse 12 there, that you just read. The second *therefore* of Romans 8. So, now we have this new identity in Christ, Paul says lean into it, you know; I mean, we are already *not yet* people. We are not fully sanctified; we are not fully made over into the image of God; we still do struggle a bit; but remember, Paul says, you are in Christ, and live like it. Lean into it. The Spirit of God does live inside you, already now...not later...not when you get the heaven. The Spirit is in you now, and the testimony that that is true is that that Spirit...and this is amazing...that Spirit assures us that we are children—we are children; and if you are a child, then you have a parent, and in this case, it is our Father; and we cry Abba, Father; and Darrell, I think, as you and I have probably both said in sermons: We are told that that word *abba* doesn't just mean father. It is almost more intimate. It is like *daddy*...

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

That is who we get to call Almighty God: Daddy. He loves us that way.

DARRELL DELANEY

And it is a beautiful connection we have with him, to be able to know that he is our Father; and because that relationship has changed from an object of wrath to a child of God, we actually live a different life; and we can draw on the Spirit's power to get us there.

SCOTT HOEZEE

But, as we just read there, you were reading Romans 8:17, Paul makes a little nod here. So, we have been talking about all kinds of fantastically great stuff in the first sixteen verses of Romans 8, but then Paul throws in the word *suffering*. For now, we also have some suffering; and Paul has a lot more to say about that. We are going to turn to that in just a moment, so stay tuned.

Segment 2

DARRELL DELANEY

I am Darrell Delaney, with Scott Hoezee, and you are listening to *Groundwork*.

SCOTT HOEZEE

We just saw, Darrell, that the first seventeen verses of Romans 8 are just jam-packed with amazing good news, but Paul has to admit an obvious truth: We receive this gospel—we try to lean into this gospel—but we do it in the midst of a world that still includes suffering, sickness, persecution, and death.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, what I like about this is that the life in Christ that you just mentioned, it is not one that is sugar coated; it is not one that is fabricated; or, you know, we are not looking with rosy-colored glasses. We have a life that goes through suffering. Even Jesus promised that there will be trouble. I love the fact that the Bible doesn't leave that out.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

It doesn't act like it is just going to be all hunky-dory all the time. No; there are mountain highs and valley lows, and life in Christ can help you through those tribulations and sufferings.

SCOTT HOEZEE

So, what about that? Well, let's pick up at verse 18 of Romans 8, where Paul writes: I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. ¹⁹For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. ²⁰For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

DARRELL DELANEY

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

SCOTT HOEZEE

So, you know, Darrell, almost the whole of Romans 8 is really familiar to a lot of people who have been around the church for any length of time at all. So, this is a well-known set of verses, too. But yes, as you said, there is realism here, right? Not pie in the sky, hunky-dory, as you just said, Darrell. Paul acknowledges that honesty compels us to admit that our current situation includes suffering, but that suffering pales in comparison to the glory to come. What I think is interesting here, Darrell, is Paul doesn't say that we are going to get to a day when glory will be revealed to us, or we will get to see glory. No; he says the glory is going to be revealed *in* us, and that is really interesting.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, I call it pole vault theology when we skip over this life and think about the life to come in the sweet by and by; and that is not where Paul is going. He is talking about right here, right now, the Holy Spirit doing something in us that will change our perspective; but I also think it is important for us to know that it is not just about the people, but it is about all of creation.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Every critter in it is somehow involved in all this, and they are all looking for the day when the glory will be in you, in me, in us; and in fact, it is interesting that here in verse 19, Paul says that the whole creation is waiting in what he calls "eager expectation." He uses a Greek word there. It is found nowhere else in the Bible. It is called *apokaradokia*. Literally, Darrell, it means to crane your neck. That is the whole creation,

Paul says. All of creation is on its tippy-toes, craning its neck to see God's glory in Christ revealed in us, the children of God.

DARRELL DELANEY

And since this world has been tainted by sin, all of the things have been affected; and that is why there is brokenness in people and in creation...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

I love the eager anticipation that you are talking about right now, that we are looking forward to God's people being revealed so that he can do the redemption starting in us and through us, that we may be the light and witnesses that he has called us to be; but we are also called to care for this creation until he comes back to redeem it all in full.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right; but not needless pain, or not pain for pain's sake; not pain that is pointless. Paul says: You know what this pain is like? Giving birth. These are birth pains. Now, probably like you, Darrell, other than a long time ago, when you are a man, don't talk about childbirth like you know what it is like, because, you know, certain people get upset, like spouses...

DARRELL DELANEY

Careful.

SCOTT HOEZEE

But I have been told by many women that, indeed, the pain of childbirth is terrible. It is severe, it is intense; and yet, when that newborn...you see your precious child for the first time; it is laid on the mother's chest, it does kind of fade away. This pain had a point. This pain was leading to something good, and that is the pain of the whole creation, Paul is saying.

DARRELL DELANEY

And to look past that pain to see that there is something better coming after, that is one of the reasons why people continue to want to have children, because they remember the connection and the love and all the good things that come after those temporary pains; and this earth is in temporary pain, and when the sons of God and the daughters of God are revealed, then that temporary pain will be cast away for a glory that will come that will be renewing and redeeming for everyone and everything.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And you said this earlier, Darrell, that the scope of salvation...we are reminded here in Romans 8...the scope of salvation is so much bigger. You know, sometimes we talk about how Jesus is my personal savior. That is true, but Jesus didn't just come for me, and he didn't come for only people. You know, when the devil came to the Garden of Eden and tempted Adam and Eve, he was out to vandalize everything; not just the man and the woman, but he was out to vandalize rivers and mountains and elephants and bobcats and tiger lilies and rain forests and oceans. Christ made all that. Colossians 1 and John 1 tells us Jesus was the Word of God who spoke creation into being. So, Christ created everything. Everything comes together and makes sense in him; and therefore, Christ died for everything; not just you and me and people, but bobcats and tigers and elephants and rain forests—everything; because it is that valuable to God.

DARRELL DELANEY

And so, that is supposed to be hope for us who are going through these things now; and Paul is trying to remind us that even in the midst of all of that, we are still in Christ, and we have the help from the Holy Spirit, especially in these verses where it says: ²⁶In 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 through wordless groans. ²⁷ And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

So, the groans are even interpreted by God. Because this world is hard sometimes, and you still can be encouraged to know that even if you sigh, he knows what it means.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Interesting. The translation we just read said the Spirit utters wordless groans. We have also seen translations that the Spirit utters sighs that are too deep for words, right? I mean, sometimes in prayer, Darrell...you know, you and I know it, most everybody listening to this program knows it...sometimes in prayer you seem to hit a wall. You know, things aren't getting better. Your spouse is sick and you have been praying for healing, and she is dying anyway. Your kids have turned away from you and you have prayed for them to come back and they just don't do it. Eventually, you get to the point where you just say: I don't know what to say anymore, God. The Spirit enters in and does those sighs and groans that go beyond words; but the point is, what an amazing thing, Darrell. The Spirit is praying for us in those moments when we hit a wall.

DARRELL DELANEY

That is a beautiful thing to have the Spirit deep down inside who is helping to interpret those things. I also think that it is going to be even better at the end of this chapter, when Paul begins to encourage us as he rounds it out; and as we round out this episode, we will see what Paul has to say; so, stay tuned.

Segment 3

SCOTT HOEZEE

You are listening to *Groundwork*, where we are digging into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Scott Hoezee.

DARRELL DELANEY

And I am Darrell Delaney.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Let's get straight back to Romans 8, Darrell. We don't have a lot of time left in this program, but we have a lot of stuff to cover. Paul was just getting warmed up, and now we get verse 28: And we (now) 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 predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. ³⁰ And those he predestined he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

DARRELL DELANEY

And what I love about this verse is that it doesn't mean that all things are going to go great.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

It goes right along with what we just talked about in the last segment, that there can be suffering, there can be hardships; and yet, God is not powerless in those situations, and he can work in spite of them, in the midst of them, and he can get all the glory for that. This is a very, very powerful verse for me personally.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; not all things that happen to us are good, but God can work in all things to bring out some good. It is a mystery we don't understand. Sometimes in this life yet, we, in retrospect, can see the good God brought out of something bad. Sometimes we don't. Sometimes people die never having quite known, and maybe it will be revealed to them then in heaven when they get to the kingdom; but God is able to bring out something

good in the long run for those who were chosen, who are predestined. We are going to talk more about that in the next episode of this series. Predestined to be loved by God and to be made capable of loving God back. He called us, he justified us, as we said earlier, and now he is in the process of glorifying us; and again, Darrell, there are still more fireworks to come here in Romans 8.

DARRELL DELANEY

He concludes this chapter with a very powerful set of statements; and so, we are going to read them. It says: ³¹What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³²He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ³⁴Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. ³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

SCOTT HOEZEE

³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹neither 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.

With God on our side, Darrell, nobody can be against us.

DARRELL DELANEY

And because we have Christ as our advocate...because we have Christ as our atonement...because he removes all sin and guilt, shame, and everything that is the wrath that God wanted on us, he has removed those things, and we have a new life in him as his child. That means nothing can come between us. He is an Advocate with a capital A, and the Spirit of God is in us as well. So, we have the victory.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Nobody can take Jesus out of our corner; nobody can assign us to a different corner, because what could ever separate us now from the one who laid down his life for us? You know, Darrell, Paul runs through a goodly list of candidates here of things that could separate us—things we might worry could separate us: Trouble, hardship, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, sword, death, life, angels, demons, present, future, powers, height, depth. Sixteen things, quite a long list, and you know what? When he gets to the end of those sixteen things, he said: You know, as a matter of fact, nothing...there is nothing that can separate...not a thing in all creation that can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ. That pretty much covers it.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes, that is Paul's exclamation point that we are in Christ and we have the victory. There is nothing that can be done; and so, that should comfort us as believers. I know it comforts me to know that not even my mistakes, not even the things that happen against me, or the injustice of the person I think is wicked who is getting along further than me in life in whatever the world calls success and I start comparing, I realize that stuff is not going to matter because Christ has redeemed us, and Christ has given us a new life; and we can have the love of God, even in our sufferings and even in tough times.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Years ago, the pastor Rob Bell made a series of short teaching videos. They were called *Pneuma*, out of the Greek word for spirit; and one of them he did on this part of Romans 8. Here is how the video concluded. Rob Bell said: What can separate you from Jesus? Nothing. Nothing. Nothing. Nothing. Nothing. You know, when you first watch that video, Darrell, you tend to think: Wow; he is saying nothing a little bit too often, but then you realize you cannot repeat that too often, can you? That is the whole gospel right there: Nothing can separate us from the love of God.

DARRELL DELANEY

Every time we hear *nothing* like that, every time we say *nothing*, it should comfort us; it should encourage us; it should strengthen us; because the enemy...he often likes to accuse the believers...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

Of things that they used to do...things that they did wrong...the past that they had that is now gone and forgiven...that God has forgotten. He likes to try to bring that stuff back up. So, we can remind ourselves when we look in the mirror and say: No; nothing can separate us. We have been forgiven; we have been justified; and that should give us strength.

SCOTT HOEZEE

More than conquerors, he wrote. Sometimes, Darrell, we feel temporarily defeated. Sometimes there are people who oppose us who think: Ha, they got one over on us and he is done. No, they didn't get one over on us. No, we are not defeated; not ultimately; not finally. More than conquerors...not just conquerors. I mean, again, as you said, this is nothing but exclamation points from Paul. We are not just conquerors; we are more than conquerors.

You know, we often, here on *Groundwork*, Darrell, we try to address the questions that people ask, and address the feelings and the needs that they have; but you know, I think that Romans 8 is almost self-applying, you know; I mean, all of us, I think, can see why this is good news for us in this world.

DARRELL DELANEY

Romans 8 is teaching us that we have won. No matter how much we think we are losing by in life, we have already won thanks to the finished work of Jesus Christ and the power of the resurrection and the Spirit of God that he has put in his children. We have the victory no matter how much we feel like we are losing by.

SCOTT HOEZEE

We said that after *therefore* comes something significant, and we got a big *therefore*: Therefore, now no condemnation; therefore, now nothing can separate us from the love of God. As the good news goes, it doesn't get any better than that, thanks be to God.

DARRELL DELANEY

Well, thanks for listening and digging deeply into scripture with *Groundwork*. We are your hosts, Darrell Delaney with Scott Hoezee, and we hope you will join us again next time as we continue our study of Romans Chapters 9 through 11.

Connect with us at groundworkonline.com to share what *Groundwork* means to you, or to tell us what you would like to hear discussed next on *Groundwork*.

SCOTT HOEZEE

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