

## Dr. Craig Keener, Romans, Lecture 9, Romans 8:5-26

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This is Dr. Craig Keener in his teaching on the book of Romans. This is session number 9 on Romans 8:5-26.

We, in the previous session, talked about Romans 7 and how Romans 7 depicts life under the law.

Sometimes Christians say, boy, that sure sounds like me. But when it sounds like us, normally it's because we're trying to achieve righteousness on our own instead of just accepting what God has done for us in Christ, which is what Romans is telling us we're supposed to accept as done in Christ. Paul technically is addressing life under the law not for believers, but what life under the law is like without faith, without the Spirit.

And so, it's not meant to be the believer's life. And if we're experiencing it, it's because we're forgetting what we have in Christ. So now we're talking about the mind of the Spirit.

I see this as not a struggle between a person who has the mind of the flesh and the mind of the Spirit, but those who are in the flesh versus those who are in the Spirit. And those who have the Spirit's input into our thinking, we have the mind of the Spirit. Well, what does he mean by this? *Phronema*, the word he uses here that's often translated as mind, can mean disposition, frame of mind, way of thinking, or sometimes it simply just means mind, like probably it will mean later on in Chapter 8, verses 26 and 27, where it refers to God's own mind.

The mind of the Spirit is the mind of God's Spirit. We don't know how to pray the way that's needed, but the Spirit intercedes for us with inarticulate groanings. And the searcher of hearts knows the mind of the Spirit because he intercedes in accordance with God for those consecrated to God.

So, when he speaks of the mind of the Spirit, it actually, in this context, may involve the activity of God's own Spirit and God's own way of thinking influencing our way of thinking. And something that we see here that's important, I was in a tradition early in my Christian life after my conversion from atheism, I got this idea in my head that I'd heard in different places, we don't need to understand, we don't need to use our minds, we just need to get the revelation in our spirit. And I think I gravitated toward that somewhat because I had been idolatrous toward my mind before my conversion.

So, you know, I was thinking this, I was reading the Bible, I really was trying to understand it, but I was saying, no, I'm just trying to get the revelation in my spirit. And one day I felt like the Holy Spirit was saying that God wanted me to understand something in Scripture, and I was like, no, I don't need to understand it, I just need to get the revelation in my spirit. So, God flashed about ten texts into my mind at once, and I was like, oh, I guess I do need to understand it, because these were texts about understanding.

And of course, you have 1 Corinthians 14, where it talks about praying with your spirit, praying with your understanding also, in that context tongues and interpretation. But both are valuable. Both probably the affective dimension of us and the cognitive dimension of us.

Well, in some circles we tend to emphasize one more than the other, and, you know, we're built in different ways, too. I mean, some of us naturally gravitate more towards one than the other, but still, we need to care about the whole person. Some people like to emphasize what we have in chapter 8 and verse 16, the spirit testifies with our spirit, and that's true.

But the spirit we see here also helps to shape our worldview and our thinking. So, the spirit works not only on our spirit, but God's spirit works also on our mind. Many people start with that assumption, but since I had adopted the contrary assumption for a while, I was very excited to find out that it's also the mind.

The spirit reveals God's mind. Sometimes ancient thinkers spoke of the divine mind, and they spoke of having the divine mind within them and that they were sharing the divine mind. Now, Paul would not go as far as those thinkers who said that we actually become part of the divine.

Paul never uses that kind of language. He always stops way short of that. So, it's not that we become God, but he definitely believes with the spirit of God in us that God influences us, just like the spirit of God would overwhelm prophets in the Old Testament, and they would speak the heart and mind of God, and also in the New Testament.

Sometimes ancient thinkers spoke of the divine mind. In 1 Corinthians 2:10, Paul says that believers know about our future glory because the Holy Spirit searches the depths of God. That was language.

In wisdom literature, it speaks of the depths of God, and we have access to that by wisdom, divine wisdom, and so on. Romans 8:26 and 27, God knows the mind of the spirit, and thus hears the spirit's intercession within believers. So there probably is here the idea that because the spirit is in us, we can be more in tune with God's heart, with how God feels, how God cares about things, how God views things.

Certainly, more in tune with that than we would be without the spirit, where we're like in Romans 1 or Romans 7. Romans 7 is better than Romans 1. It's informed by the law, but a mind that doesn't have the full picture in Romans 1 is corrupted by sin. So, the spirit influences not only our spirit, but also our mind, and we have the mind of the spirit idea. Also, in 1 Corinthians 2, I want to digress just to shed light on this passage.

Now the Romans couldn't do what I'm doing now, except for the leaders in the congregation who would have known Paul's teachings in Corinth if they had been in Corinth with Paul or known him somewhere, and then they had come back to Rome at this time after 54, after Claudius's death. But in the case of when Paul's writing of the Corinthians, they had some background that Paul didn't have to explain because Paul had been among them, except for those who had been converted since then. And in Rome, keep in mind that when you send a letter via somebody, if they have questions, they can ask that person for an explanation.

So, Paul sent a letter via Phoebe. She may have been able to explain some of these details based on what she knew of Paul's teaching and Paul's person elsewhere. So, we're going to try to use some of Paul's other teaching on this to help illumine what he's saying here.

1 Corinthians 2, verses 6-10. The rulers of this age didn't understand eternal wisdom. He's been talking about the heart of God's wisdom not being like the world's wisdom, but being antithetical to it, the wisdom of the cross.

He says the rulers of this age didn't understand eternal wisdom. That's why they crucified him. But we speak wisdom among the spiritually mature, but it's not wisdom from this age or from its rulers who are becoming as nothing.

So, we speak not this age's wisdom, what's valued as wisdom in this age, but we speak the wisdom from God's eternal perspective. We look at things from the light of eternity. We speak God's eternal wisdom.

He says, concealed from this age's rulers. It was in their ignorance of that wisdom that they executed on a cross, shameful cross, the most glorious and honorable ruler of all, the Lord. This is my way of translating this in 1 Corinthians to try to bring out the contextual point.

The rulers of this age didn't understand eternal wisdom, he says, and so he calls us to have the wisdom of the future age from the standpoint of eternity. Well, this eternal wisdom imparted by God's spirit appears in verses 9 and 10. Paul speaks of this wisdom in this way.

He quotes Scripture. He says, that because the Bible says, things that the eyes haven't seen and the ears haven't heard, nor have people imagined, such are the things that God has prepared for those who love him. But then he qualifies that.

Well, these are the eternal things, the promised things to come. Quote Scripture for that. Then it says, but by the spirit, God has revealed these hidden things to us already.

We have a foretaste of that coming world by the spirit. Paul also says in 1 Corinthians 13:9, we know in part, we prophesy in part. So, it doesn't mean we have the full picture.

We've talked about that before. But it means that we have a foretaste of that coming world. He's echoing here Isaiah 64 verse 4, mortals are unable to fathom God's ways, but the spirit is a down payment of the eternal future.

We read about that elsewhere in Paul's writings as well. It's not from us. It's God's gift.

Sometimes we may experience a foretaste of that, like an intense worship in the presence of God. The spirit's insight, he goes on to talk about in chapter two, verses 10 through 15, where the spirit acts as a revealer. Nobody else knows everything in your heart, he says.

The only person who knows your heart is your own spirit, right? But only the spirit of God knows God's heart and therefore only the spirit of God can share God's heart with us. And that's, how does he share God's heart with us? Well, we've already seen like in Romans 5:5, he reminds us of God's love for us. We're going to see in Romans 8:15 and 16, the Holy Spirit makes us cry, Abba, Father, and testifies with our spirit that we're God's kids, we're God's children.

You have a similar idea in John 16, verses 13 through 16, where the focus is on the spirit revealing Jesus, revealing God's heart to us, revealing the things that matter to God to us. So, it's not to say the spirit doesn't also speak to us about things in our daily lives, but the most important thing that the spirit comes to speak to us about is to reveal God's heart to us, the depths of God, the deep things of God, as he puts it. Well, our understanding of God's Spirit contrasts with what people can have by the world's spirit.

Paul has to emphasize that in 1 Corinthians because Corinth had a pervasive culture of evaluation, and public competitions, including for speeches and everything else. You had rival teachers who sometimes their disciples would get in fights with each other. This is important because the Corinthians are using worldly methods of evaluation.

If they're evaluating Paul and Apollos, instead of just taking what God is giving them through them, they're using worldly criteria. Well, who's the better speaker? Well, Apollos is the better speaker, so we follow Apollos. Paul responds, you don't want to have Christian celebrity cults.

It's not this teacher or that teacher. Well, this guy's the better speaker. I like this guy or this person knows Greek better.

I'll follow this person. God has given us many gifts and we should appreciate them all and not use worldly criteria the way the world judges their celebrities. That's not how we're supposed to do in the church.

We're not supposed to have celebrities. The greatest will be the least. We need spiritual competence to assess the truth.

Sometimes we use worldly evaluation criteria. Everybody starts with a worldview. Everybody starts with a framework, a way of looking at things.

When the world looks at miracles, they say, well, often, well, it depends on what culture you're part of. You may be part of a culture where they say, well, we don't believe in miracles. You can give them as much evidence as you want and they're going to come up with some other explanation.

Well, I don't have an explanation for that, but someday there'll be an explanation. Or in some cultures, well, your God does miracles. My God does miracles.

What's the difference? Everybody starts with a framework. Do we start with the right framework for evaluating things? If we've accepted Christ if we've already made our decision for Christ, if we've already acknowledged that God's way is wiser, then we should start with that premise and that worldview, that framework, rather than a contrary framework. I spent so much of my life as a scholar going back and searching every detail, trying to be fair to everybody and trying to be fair to every worldview and working through it.

That was good as a scholar. But ultimately, I got to the place where in the midst of my historical Jesus research, I would be just trying to examine every possible argument and I'd come out of my study and my wife would say something to me and I would say, can you give me evidence for that assertion? Now, I can assure you that whether you're an egalitarian or a complementarian, you're going to get in trouble if you say something like that. So, I had to come to grips with the fact, that if my wife says something, she's a reliable witness.

Unless I have compelling reason to think that she's mistaken or something, I ought to be willing to take her word for something she says she saw, something she says happened. Well, in the same way, I was working, trying to look for additional evidence and ways of evidence. But if we're dealing with texts from reliable witnesses, and reliable sources, those texts themselves are evidence as well.

And I realized, okay, there's one thing we do according to the rules of the academy and if this is the minimal basis for common dialogue that we use, we understand that's the language we speak in those circumstances. But that is not a working epistemology, a working way of understanding knowledge that we live by. Instead, we recognize that there are some things that we know because we have reliable testimony for that.

And I, myself, had to come to grips with that more in my own life. Epistemology is the way that we know things. It's our starting assumptions, often, for knowing things.

And again, everybody's got some of those. And there are different ways of knowing. In science, you use observation and experimentation, and that's good.

I mean, that's what we need to get scientific information. But there are things that we know that we can't experiment on. In history, in law, in journalism, in anthropology, in sociology, you often have to depend on eyewitness testimony.

And that's not something you can go back and do the event over again. If it's like somebody dying, you can't kill them again to do it again. So, in terms of epistemological frameworks or epistemic frameworks, we have to use the framework that's appropriate to the discipline.

If God has revealed things to us in the scriptures, and we already have good reason to believe that, and that's why we become his followers, then we have to be willing to take his word for that. David Hume used a very constricted epistemic approach where it had to depend on something you experienced, or at least somebody in your immediate circle experienced. Now, Hume himself said that outside his study, he couldn't follow that.

We don't live by such a constricted epistemology. That's an approach that we can use within a particular disciplinary area, but it doesn't cover everything. So, in terms of worldview, we evaluate spiritual things, Paul says, by spiritual.

He says that many people are not qualified to understand matters of the spirit. Here's a cartoon. I'd like to be your pastor, but I don't know if I'm qualified. It's Koala Bear.

Paul contrasts the natural, the psychikos person, versus the spiritual person. Well, what does he mean by psychikos? He uses that phrase elsewhere in the same letter, 1 Corinthians 15:44, where he speaks of a psychikos body versus a spiritual body.

Psychikos here doesn't mean a body made out of soul any more than a spiritual body means a body just made out of spirit. It's probably alluding back to the Greek translation of Genesis 2:7, because he's going to go on in the next verse to speak of Adam as a living psuche. Adam is a living soul? Well, it just means Adam is a living being on his own, apart from God's spirit.

So, we're either running our own lives, psychikos life, also known as a fleshly life, or we are submitting to God. We have God's spirit within us, giving a new dynamic, an additional dynamic, so that we're not living for ourselves ultimately, but we're living for God. Paul has quoted scripture and said, you know, here's the future that's promised to us.

We have a foretaste of that in the spirit. Now he's going to quote another text in 1 Corinthians 2 from Isaiah 40:13. This time the text says something very much the same. Mortals are unable to fathom God's ways.

But again, Paul qualifies it. He says, we have the spirit. Paul is aware of both the Greek and the Hebrew versions.

The Hebrew of Isaiah 40:13 says, who is known? He talks about the spirit of the Lord. But the Greek translation says, who is known? The mind of the Lord. So, he's going to identify the mind of the Lord and the spirit of the Lord.

And in quoting Isaiah 40:13, he says, well, who is known? The mind of the Lord. He's been talking about how we have the spirit to give us God's mind. And he goes on to say, we have the mind of Christ, Christ being identified with God.

So, we know God's heart by means of the spirit. So, Paul says, we have the mind of the spirit as opposed to the mind of the flesh, back here in Romans chapter 8. Now, one thing that I struggled with as a young Christian when I first read this, I said, oh boy, we have to be in the spirit rather than in the flesh. Before my conversion, I'd read a lot of Plato and I was reading Platonic dualism into this as if we're not talking about God's spirit, but our spirit.

So, it's like sometimes I'm thinking of things and I'm saying, oh no, I'm in the flesh right now. And it was as if, you know, your salvation comes and goes. That's not at all the point here.

The point here is two types of people. And it doesn't mean that if a person ever does something accommodating what we call the flesh, that doesn't mean the person is

not in Christ. What it means is the difference is those who are in the flesh, that's all they have.

They're dependent on themselves and those who are in the spirit. Well, how can you use such a clear-cut distinction? Well, because in antiquity, one rhetorical form that was commonly used both in the Old Testament and in the Greco-Roman world was that of ideal types. We have two categories in humanity as ideal types.

And here we're going to see about flesh people and spirit people. The contrast, flesh people, that's what we were in Adam. We are but flesh.

And spirit people, what we are in Christ. Flesh people, people who are dependent on their own righteousness at best, those who are subject to their own passions. And spirit people, those who depend on God's righteousness, those in whom the mind of Christ can give us a higher way of thinking.

Now, ideal types are not completely either-ors. Imperfection by itself doesn't mean that we're not regenerate, that we haven't become a new person in Christ. Paul speaks of how he's, in Philippians 3, he's pressing onward to greater maturity, not looking back where he's come from, but he's pressing on.

We still may have spontaneous reactions to old triggers, but that doesn't mean that we're the same as we were before we became believers. This idea of two categories in humanity as ideal types was a recognized rhetorical form. Stoics would speak of the ideal sage versus fools.

You've got, here's the wise person, here's the, here's a fool. But when the Stoics made that kind of distinction, if you asked them, well, are you, are you this wise person? They would say, well, no, I haven't achieved that yet, but I'm becoming that. Do you know anybody who's achieved that? Do you know any wise person? Well, no, we're making progress toward that goal.

I have never met anybody who already had achieved it. Are you the foolish person? No, no, no, no. I'm making progress in wisdom.

So, Stoics, when they used this language of the wise person versus the fool, there was the understanding they were speaking in terms of ideal types. Did Jewish people ever do this? Of course. Look at Proverbs.

You've got the wise person and the fool. You've got the righteous person versus the wicked. You have that again in the Dead Sea Scrolls where the probably Essenes, the Qumran sectarians would also speak of the children of light versus the children of darkness.



Well, if you were part of their movement, you were children of light, but you read some of their prayers. Oh God, only you can help me to be righteous. They understood that they needed grace, and they called on God for grace.

They called on God's spirit for grace, but in some other ways they were still pretty legalistic and tightly controlled. But in any case, the idea of mixtures. Individuals have mixtures of wisdom and folly, righteous and wicked behavior, but be that as it may, you've got people who are typically righteous or typically wicked.

You have a similar kind of paradox in 1 John. 1 John 3 and verse 9, whoever is born from God doesn't sin. But in chapter 1 and verse 8, if we claim to have no sin, we deceive ourselves.

Chapter 2 and verse 1, I'm writing these things to you so you won't sin. But if anyone does sin, he uses paradox, which was also a rhetorical technique. It was used by Jesus in some riddles he told that people were trying to figure out what he was talking about.

John makes use of that as well in 1 John, where you have to hold some things in tension to get the full perspective. The point of the differentiation, in Adam, people have only the power of the flesh to depend on. In Christ, we have the power of the Spirit, and thus we have access to a new way.

In Romans 8, he's going to talk about how the mind of the Spirit is peace. Well, what does that mean, the mind of the Spirit being at peace? We read in Greek philosophers about having tranquil minds. That was the way they were trying to do things.

They were going to try to subdue all anxiety. Now, you can try to micromanage that and just get more anxious about your anxiety. I went through that actually myself, although in my case it was abetted by some anti-malaria medicine I was taking after my wife and I were speaking to 1,700 pastors about ethnic reconciliation in Cote d'Ivoire.

But the malaria medicine I was taking had psychotic effects on certain people, and I started having panic attacks. I didn't know what they were, and so I started panicking about the panic attacks. Of course, they fed on one another until we figured out, oh, don't give him that medicine anymore.

Philosophers emphasized having tranquil minds. There's a possible exegetical basis when Paul speaks of the peaceful mind. That's Isaiah 26 and verse 3, where the mind that stayed on him, and one way of looking at it in the context and also comparing the Greek version may be something like the mind that trusts in him, the mind that stayed in the Lord will have peace, and it's possible that Paul is drawing from that.

What does it mean by the mind of the Spirit has peace? Well, elsewhere in his writings also he addresses something like this. Philippians 4:6, don't worry. He's not talking about anxiety like just something in your nervous system, but he's talking about something we do with our mind.

Don't worry, but instead, it's not like you just pretend that the issues aren't there. Instead, pray about them. Entrust these issues to God, also in verse 6. Then he says in verse 7, his peace will guard your minds.

In verse 8, he says, think on good things, and philosophers would have agreed with that. Think on good things. It doesn't mean you can't acknowledge that there's some problem, but when the problem comes, commit it to God, and you can think about his goodness and his grace.

It's a nice discipline for the mind, but the mind of the Spirit is peace because we can depend on God, and also it probably implies peace with one another. That's how the language of peace is used elsewhere in Romans, peace with God first of all, but also peace with one another, Romans 12:18, 14.19. The context in Philippians involves interpersonal conflict, so he probably also wants us to have peace not just in ourselves, but with others insofar as it depends on us, as he qualifies it in Romans 12. Sometimes somebody wants to pick a fight with you, and you're not trying to get worked up over it, but you also are not going to say what they want you to say.

It makes us stronger, I think, in the long run. But in any case, so this first section of Romans 8, it's ideal types. You're either on your own, or God's Spirit is at work in you.

We come to chapter 8 and verse 14. He talks about being led by the Spirit. Now, this is probably Exodus language in the context of other Exodus language that we have in the chapter, just like in Matthew 4 and in Luke 4 when Jesus is led out into the wilderness.

In Mark, he's expelled, he's thrown out into the wilderness, ekballo, but he's led into the wilderness by the Spirit in Matthew and Luke, and especially in Matthew, you've got echoes. Well, in both Matthew and Luke, you have echoes of Israel in the wilderness and quotations that were given to Israel in the wilderness, Jesus' sites. In any case, it's probably Exodus language, but it's applied in this context, especially to moral issues.

The Spirit leads us. The Spirit checks us from doing something morally wrong. The Spirit can encourage us, working within us, to do something right.

Now, that's not to say, because we often use the expression led by the Spirit in a more general way today, it's not to say that those other ways are wrong. For

instance, Acts emphasizes power for mission, and so we see, especially for crossing cultural barriers, in Acts chapter 8 and verse 29, the Spirit says to Philip, go, join yourself to that chariot of that African court official. In Acts chapter 10 and verse 19, the Spirit says to Peter, I've sent some men to you, go with them.

Well, these are the messengers of Cornelius, the Gentile. Acts chapter 16, verses 6 and 7, Paul wants to minister in this area or that area. The Spirit forbids him.

So, the Spirit got a different plan. The Spirit can lead us in those ways, and I've had that happen a number of times, where I felt the Spirit prompt me, okay, this person's ready. Share Christ with them.

Or, they're ready to accept Christ. Go ahead and invite them to do that. It's not always a feeling.

We also trust that God speaks through us, and works through us, as we share the gospel. The gospel, God's power is in the gospel, whether we have a feeling about it or not. But sometimes we have this kind of, like God works with our spirit as well as with our minds, we have what we might call a spiritual intuition.

Some people, again, are better at this than others. And some people go off the deep end if it's entirely affective, just like people can go off the deep end if it's entirely cognitive and they're trying to control everything. It's not that our spirit is perfect or that our mind is perfect, but that God's Spirit is perfect, and we want to depend on God's Spirit leading us in whatever ways we can depend on.

Yeah, I mean, sometimes I've had this in very dramatic ways. There was one time I was actually getting ready to teach Romans 8 in a Wednesday night service. I was still an undergraduate, but I was teaching at the church where I'd been discipled as a new believer.

And I felt the Spirit prompt me, you're going to talk about being led by the Spirit. Do you want to experience this? I'm like, well, if I want God's blessing, I better obey. And I felt the Spirit lead me out the door of the house, up another street, up another street.

I could give you the names of these streets, but it wouldn't make any difference for you. Up another street, a few blocks, and then up another street. And then I didn't feel anything.

I didn't know what was going on. I turned around, and there in front of me was an old friend from high school. And he knew that I'd been converted.

I'd witnessed to him after my conversion. But he hadn't become a believer, but he was one of the few people who, even though he didn't become a believer, because many of my friends did when I shared Christ with them, he also didn't make fun of me. He respected what I did.

And so, he was sitting there, and beside him was sitting a young lady named Lorena. Now, I had met Lorena, this was a Wednesday. I'd met Lorena on the Friday immediately preceding when I'd been speaking at a youth meeting at another church.

Lorena was a severe alcoholic. She kept getting thrown out of different homes. When she'd been at home, she'd seen her mother sleeping with different boyfriends in front of her and stuff.

So, she came from a very troubled past. She had a very troubled life at this time. And yet, I knew God wanted to reach out to her.

She seemed hard against the gospel. But I prayed that Friday night, and I think I'd prayed over that weekend that God would somehow touch her. Well, now, I mean, it wasn't a huge city.

It was a town of just 30,000 or so. But I turned around, and there was Lorena. I had never met her before all this time until that preceding Friday.

She lived in a completely different part of town. So, I walked up to them. I didn't need a particular inclination at that point.

And I had been praying that God would touch her. My friend from high school who was not a believer started sharing with her how my life had been transformed when I had accepted Christ and started witnessing to her for me. And the main thing that had turned her off to the gospel before was seeing hypocrisy.

And so, here's somebody testifying to my integrity. So, she listened to me. There were a couple of occasions after that when I would feel like God wanted you to talk to Lorena.

I didn't know where she lived because sometimes she lived on the street. She lived from house to house. I would go out walking and just start walking, and the Holy Spirit would take me to her.

Now, for me, that's unusual. My main spiritual gift is teaching, right? That's what I'm trying to do now. But God's Spirit can lead us in various ways.

So, my point is not to play down God's Spirit leading us in other ways. My point in this is just to say in this context, Paul is especially emphasizing the moral dimension of the Spirit's leading and how God empowers us to do what's right. But of course, to do what's right and pleasing in sight is to obey him, and whatever he does lead us to do.

The Spirit leads us, and if the Spirit leads us, he says, we are children of God. That language can echo Exodus. It echoes a few places in the Old Testament where God's people were called his children.

But Exodus 4:22, Israel is my son, my firstborn. Deuteronomy also calls them his children. We have this idea developed especially when we think about Jesus.

Now, Jesus is God's son. It's a messianic title. Of course, in John it becomes even more than that.

But initially, it's a messianic title. Second Samuel 7:14 and Psalm 2:7. In Second Samuel 7:14, it applies to the whole Davidic lineage. God has adopted them as his son, in a sense.

Well, if he's adopted Israel, he can certainly adopt David's line. And in Psalm 2:7, it may be more exalted in Psalm 2:7, but certainly, by this period, it was understood to apply to the Mashiach, the Anointed One, par excellence. This is the son of God, par excellence.

You find it in 4Q, Florelegium, in the Dead Sea Scrolls, and elsewhere, that this ultimate son of David would be the son of God. But in the Gospels, something that struck me, I was into the background, but something that struck me in terms of the usage was how often Jesus speaks of it in terms of intimacy with his father. We get this sense of how close Jesus is to his father, how much he loves his father, and how his father loves him.

And that, I think, is what we also see here. Now, not everybody today that we talk with, not everybody back then either, but not everybody today that we talk with comes from an ideal household. But in Jewish culture, in Judea and Galilee where Jesus was speaking, normally when people thought of a father, they would speak of somebody that they could depend on, provided for them as best as he could, somebody who loved them, would discipline them, but for their good.

And we experience God that way. We may not, if that wasn't a relationship with our earthly father, that is still what it means when it speaks of God as father. Of course, we're born from him spiritually.

Paul says that elsewhere. Other New Testament writers say that. But this idea of intimacy, respectful intimacy with God, in verse 15, he says that we haven't received the spirit of slavery again to fear.

We've received instead the spirit of adoption. Well, the spirit of slavery probably echoes the idea of exodus. And going back to fear, it could mean different things.

But I think it may talk about what he's been talking about earlier. Once we were slaves to sin, once it dominated us. What you have in 7.15 through 22 isn't called fear there, but this person who's unable to control themselves and they're taken as prisoner to sin and so on.

I think it may describe that kind of life. But the Israelites were in bondage. They were in literal physical bondage.

And we were in bondage to sin. And we were in bondage to the fear of sin. Philosophers often spoke about the fear of death also, which Hebrews says that we've been delivered from in Christ.

Paul says we don't have that. Instead we have the spirit of adoption, the spirit of sonship. Now we have a different kind of relationship with God, not slaves, but children.

Paul elaborates more in Galatians chapter 4, but the idea is clear here in this context. He's talking about being God's children. The term *huia thesia*, is used in chapter 9 for Israel being adopted by God as his children.

But Paul applies it here in Romans 8 a couple of times with reference to all of us who believe in Jesus. We've been adopted as God's children. We can have intimacy with God.

The intimacy of somebody we know is trustworthy. Even when we don't understand what's going on, we know God is trustworthy. And it's actually good to get that in your mind before you go through the testing rather than trying to figure it out during the testing.

The hardest test of the first half of my Christian life, until I had the reaction of that medicine, the hardest thing was, this first one almost killed me, was it was just so intense. And for two years I was in a situation where it looked like my ministry was destroyed, my life was destroyed. Everything was out of my control.

There was nothing I could do. But I knew beforehand that God works all things for good to those who love him. So, it wasn't just a cliché.

Somebody was throwing at me and I was like, I don't want to hear that right now. It was something I knew in my heart. And for those two years, it was like, God, I can't see it, how this can possibly work for good.

But I trust you. Sometimes I was like, oh God, how long, how long in the language of the Psalms. But I knew God would work all things for good to those who loved him.

I just wanted to make sure I persevered in loving him through that. And he helped me through the weakest times of my life. 8:15 talks further about crying out Abba Father.

This language of crying out, *kradzo*, it in fact does mean something like a loud outcry. It's a very strong language. And what do we cry out? We cry out Abba hapater.

Abba is an Aramaic expression. Why would Paul be speaking to people in Rome in Aramaic? Why would he assume that they would know the Aramaic language? That's not the impression we get from most of the tomb inscriptions and other Jewish inscriptions from Rome. Maybe a few people knew a little bit of Aramaic, but that wasn't very common.

So, when Paul says Abba, he gives a translation, but he also understands that there are some things that they know about, some things that have been widely circulated among early Christians. He does this again in Galatians, except there he's already ministered to them directly so they could have heard it from him. Galatians 4.6. What would be the source that would have made that so important that this Aramaic phrase is widespread in the early church, Greek-speaking church? Mark 14.36, as Jesus is pouring out his heart in anguish to God at Gethsemane, he says, Abba, Father.

So, Jesus becomes the model for our intimate relationship with God. We have the spirit of sonship because we're in the Son, we're in Jesus. What did Jesus mean by that? Jesus' prayer was very distinctive.

Joachim Jeremias wrote a lot about this, and then Geza Vermes, who's a very good Jewish scholar, countered on that point. He said, well, there were other people who used Abba for God. But the examples of other people using it are much later than this, and they surround a particular, what Vermes called a charismatic rabbi, a particular rabbi who was known for a special kind of prayer.

And this particular rabbi also doesn't address God as Abba in prayer. He speaks of God as like an Abba in a parable. So, you don't have to be completely unique to be distinctive.

But in this case, Jesus was very, very distinctive in addressing God as Abba. It suggests a title of intimacy. It's not disrespectful, and it wasn't only little children who did it, but it was like my papa.

It was a very, very, very, very, very, it communicated intimacy as well as respect. And that's the kind of relationship the Spirit gives us with our Heavenly Father. I know of people who didn't have that kind of relationship with their earthly father, but through their relationship with their Heavenly Father, they found out what fatherhood should be like, and they were able to be reconciled with their earthly father in some of these cases through their experience with God.

Chapter 8, verse 16. The Spirit testifies. What does it mean that the Spirit testifies? Remember, in early Judaism, the Spirit was especially associated with prophecy, often in the Old Testament as well, but even more dominantly in early Jewish thought.

So, this might be one of the first things that people would think about. In Essene-type circles, like in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Book of Jubilees, the Spirit also is associated with purification, like you have in Ezekiel 36. But the Spirit even there is sometimes associated with prophetic empowerment.

In other literature, 4 Ezra, certainly the rabbis, and widely in early Jewish circles, the Spirit is associated with the spirit of prophecy. Josephus also. So, the Spirit testifies.

It's like the same Spirit who inspired the prophets speaks to us, reminding us that we're God's children. When I say speaks to us, different ones of us may hear Him in different ways. I certainly experience the Spirit speaking to me when I'm studying Scripture, especially when I'm studying it devotionally to hear God's voice.

It never becomes dry to me because the Spirit is alive in my study of Scripture, and I ask Him to do that. But also, the Spirit can speak to us in different ways. Some people have experienced the Spirit in ways that, I mean, I've never had a vision, for example.

I've never heard an audible voice. But, you know, we hear the Spirit in different ways. But the Spirit testifies so the Spirit speaks to us in some way.

And it says the Spirit testifies together with our spirit, so that it's not just the Spirit testifies to our spirit, but the Spirit bears witness together with our spirit that we are God's children. Ezekiel 36, before he says, I'll put my spirit in them, he says, I'll give them a new heart and a new spirit. John chapter 3 plays on that too.

Whatever is born of the Spirit is Spirit. He makes us new inside, and His Spirit testifies together with our spirit. The Moravians very much emphasize the inner witness.



If you belong to God, you know you belong to God. And Wesley said that too. That doesn't mean that a person never has any questions about it.

Wesley went through that sometimes after he felt his heart strangely warmed. People sometimes struggle with different questions. But there's a difference between having given your life to Christ and not having given your life to Christ.

In chapter 8 and verse 17, he says, well, we're children of God, and if we're children, we're also heirs. And that means that just as we've been adopted through Jesus, God's Son, we are co-heirs, he says, with Jesus. What does he mean by heirs? What does he mean by we will inherit? Jewish texts frequently spoke of inheriting the world to come.

Again, it's Exodus language, where God delivered his people from Egypt and he promised them an inheritance and a possession in the promised land. Ephesians actually use both of those terms in Ephesians 1 for our future inheritance or our future possession. Paul uses this language of inheritance very frequently.

He used it back in Chapter 4. He uses it in 1 Corinthians, the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God. He uses it that way in Galatians. And the spirit is specifically associated with reminding us of this inheritance elsewhere too, this future possession.

Because in 2 Corinthians 1:22 and 2 Corinthians 5:5, the Spirit is our ar-habon, the down payment. It's used in the papyri for the first installment of what God has for us. I repeat some things, not only in case some people forgot them, but I repeat some things in case some people are watching one part of the video and not another.

But also Ephesians 1:13-14, the spirit is the down payment of our future inheritance. So, the spirit testifying to us that we're children of God is also the spirit assuring us of God's promise that those things that the eye has not seen nor ear heard, but that we know through the spirit. You have apocalyptic literature.

You have even in prophetic literature and in the book of Revelation where sometimes it has to use almost poetic language. It has to use a lot of images and metaphors to communicate the glory of the world to come. And Revelation goes beyond Ezekiel at a number of points because it's just expanding.

There's no way we can possibly describe this in words, but it comes as close in words as it can by using these evocative images. But we actually have a foretaste of that as we experience God's love for us. We'll have that intimacy forever.

Sometimes I've experienced that so deeply in worship that I've actually said, God, oh God, I don't want to stop experiencing this. Please take me home to be with you right

now. I don't experience that regularly in that way of wanting to go home and be with the Lord, but I just don't want to stop.

Someday we won't have to stop. It'll be that beautiful. Sufferings versus glory.

Sometimes we just want to talk about the nice things, but sufferings are part of the Christian life. Verses 17 and 18. We died with Christ, and we have a new life.

Well, we suffer with Christ, verse 17 goes on to say so that we'll be glorified with him. That's the inheritance, what we will inherit. We will be glorified with him.

What does it mean by glory? You may remember that sometimes in the Old Testament, it speaks of God's glory on the tabernacle or on the temple. When Solomon's temple was dedicated, I believe it was in 1 Kings chapter 8, the spirit of the Lord, the glory of the Lord, the kabod, which also means heaviness, Jewish people would also speak in terms of the shekinah, of God's presence or the yakara. The glory of the Lord fell on the people, on the priests so heavily that they couldn't stand to minister before the Lord.

You remember how Moses couldn't withstand all the glory of the Lord. Even Moses couldn't see all of God's glory. Someday we're going to have bodies of glory, like his own glorified body, Philippians says, and we'll be able to stand in the presence of God.

It's why I think the New Jerusalem is shaped like a cube, like the Holy of Holies in the Old Testament. The fullness of God's presence without distraction, forever and ever. That's not to say that there aren't other things going on.

There are other images of the future, but being in his presence without limit, that's the most awesome thing possible. But we suffer with Christ, so we may be glorified with him. And Paul will speak more about that later in the chapter.

What can separate us from the love of Christ? Can famine or peril or nakedness or sword, martyrdom, even in all these things, we overwhelmingly conquer through Christ who loved us. Comparisons are not always between equals. I mentioned that earlier, and that's true here in 8:18. He says the present suffering is not worthy to be compared with the glory that awaits us.

He says something similar in 2 Corinthians 4, where the present afflictions will bear a much greater weight of glory. And there may be playing on the glory and the heaviness idea in Hebrew. He speaks of our present sufferings then in verse 22 as the birth pangs of a new world.

So even in our sufferings, it's in a sense a foretaste. It's helping bring about the new world, especially when we're suffering so that people can hear the gospel, like in Colossians 1, where Paul says, I fill up what's lacking in Christ's sufferings for the sake of his body, which is the church. Not that he's atoning for the world.

Christ already did that. But we share in his sufferings as we share the good news, the message of the good news, which is associated with the coming of the end. When the good news has been preached among all the nations, then the end will come.

Revelation 6, the souls under the altar where the blood of sacrifices was poured out in the Old Testament. Paul says, I'm sorry, Revelation says in Revelation 6 that these souls under the altar, these people who've been martyred, they cry out, how long, O Lord, holy and true until you avenge our blood that has been shed upon the earth? And the answer comes back, you have to wait until the full number has come in of your companions. Well, what's the full number? Until those who've had to give their lives for the sake of the spreading of the gospel.

When the good news has been spread among all peoples, that's when the end will come. The present sufferings, we experience them as birth pangs of the world to come. Jewish people believed, many Jewish people believed that there was going to be a final period of birth pangs, a final tribulation before the coming of a new world.

You find that in a lot of Jewish sources. Some people have said it's only in the rabbis, like in Mishnah Sotah 915, I believe. But actually, it's quite common.

It's widespread throughout Jewish literature, this end-time tribulation. And this idea of it being depicted as birth pangs, as intense suffering, you have it not only in some other Jewish literature like 4th Ezra, you also have it in, I think, the third hymn of the Qumran hymns and so forth. But Paul is applying that to the entire period between Jesus' first and second coming.

He didn't know it was going to take this long before the second coming. But we're presently experiencing birth pangs as we wait for the world to come. And he shows us in verse 28 that even sufferings work for our good.

Ultimately, they work for our good because we are conformed to the image of Christ in verse 29. Groaning, verses 22 and 23 and 26. We have him talking about groaning in a number of ways here.

Creation groans with birth pangs. We just looked at that. It says, we also groan, awaiting the transformation of our body.

And the Spirit intercedes for us with groanings. So, the present creation is groaning, interavailing. But there's a new order coming when God is going to transform things.

And we can work for that now as people who are living in the foretaste of the future. We can work to improve this world now. We need to do that if we're really people of the kingdom.

But ultimately, there's God's promise. Where God is going to make a world where justice, righteousness, and peace dwell. Also, we groan for the transformation of our bodies.

Paul uses the same language in 2 Corinthians 5, 2, and 4 where, assuming that he's referring to the same thing that the same language refers to in 1 Corinthians 15, Paul is talking about we're groaning not because we want to be unclothed with this present body, but because we want to be clothed upon. We want this mortal tent to be supplanted with an immortal body, a resurrection body. He says we'll be groaning for the transformation of the body.

Groaning as we await new bodies, verse 23. But in verse 26, the Spirit intercedes for us with unutterable groanings showing that it's not just us, it's not just the creation, but God himself is groaning with us that the Spirit himself is eager. Jesus himself is looking forward to coming back and raising us all.

Why is it taking so long? 2 Peter suggests we can be looking forward and hastening the coming of the day of God. God wants everybody to be saved. And again, fitting in with this context we've seen Jesus teaching that the good news must be preached among all the nations, then the end will come.

We're going to see that again in Romans 11 when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. If we're really groaning and we're really eager for the Lord's coming, let's spread the message of the kingdom. Let's help get the world ready.

But also, some scholars have said that this groaning here where the Spirit groans for us, within us, interceding within us, refers to the experience of praying in tongues. And scholars are actually divided on this. Some have argued it refers to tongues.

Now, I'm definitely not against tongues. I actually pray in tongues myself. But, if you don't like that, it just happened to me two days after my conversion.

I didn't know what tongues were, but I've been doing it ever since. I enjoy it, especially with my intellect being so wrapped up in research. It's really nice.

Paul says your spirit prays and your understanding is unfruitful. It's nice to have the Spirit renewing that part of me as well. But I don't think personally that this is referring to tongues because he says that these are inarticulate groanings.

Well, a tongue is glossa, which seems a really strange word for Paul to use or Luke to use for something that's inarticulate, that's wordless. There are debates about how the words are functioned or the syllables function or in terms of relevance theory maybe it's just to communicate something evocatively, emotionally. I won't get into all those debates because they're not really relevant here, in my opinion.

But I think because it says it's inarticulate, this is something else. But I think it's of the same order in the sense that the Spirit is working in us and the Spirit is helping us with prayer and the Spirit is interceding for us even more than we know how to intercede for ourselves. The language here is the language also of sighing.

It goes back to the Greek translation of the Old Testament, Exodus 2:23 and 24. And it fits the idea of the New Exodus that I've been talking about. And in the next session, we'll talk about the New Exodus and we will talk about the rest of Romans chapter 8.

This is Dr. Craig Keener in his teaching on the book of Romans. This is session number 9 on Romans 8:5-26.