

More than Conquerors - Romans 8

Leonard Ravenhill:

Romans Chapter 8. Read verse 37: "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

This 8th chapter, as many of you know, begins a new section in this wonderful epistle to the Romans.

The 7th chapter is a chapter of gloom, the

8th chapter is a chapter of glory.

The 7th chapter is a chapter of condemnation, the

8th chapter is a chapter of emancipation.

The 7th chapter is a funeral march, the

8th chapter is a wedding march. It's the song of a "soul set free," to use the

phrase of a

lovely hymn.

Romans 7 is a chapter on the tomb.

Romans 8 is a chapter on triumph.

(If you want to use the phrase of John Milton.)

The 7th chapter is the chapter of paradise lost. It's a chapter of depravity.

The 8th chapter is a chapter of deliverance and delight.

Now this is a magnificent chapter. If you want to make a special bonding here, chapter 7 is a chapter of misery and condemnation.

The 8th chapter is a liberated soul.

You can explain this by this fact:

chapter 7 is a chapter on a self-centered person.

The 8th chapter is a chapter about the Christ-centered person. In

the 7th chapter you read that first person over and over and over until you get weary of reading "I, I, I, I,..."

"I want to do this but I can't...", and "I find I'm in bondage...", and so forth and so on. If you count you'll discover 41 times you find that "I," and no mention of the Holy Spirit. In the 8th chapter there is no mention of the "I" except in two verses where he says "I reckon" and "I am persuaded" (where there is no alternative). But the difference in the 8th chapter is that there is all the mention in the world about the Holy Spirit. Nineteen times the Holy Spirit is mentioned.

"There is therefore now no condemnation..." So, the chapter begins away in the heights -- there is no condemnation. And it ends -- "there is no separation." "What shall separate us from the love of God?" But it does not say there is no tribulation. In fact, it marks tribulation out for us very, very carefully.

A wretched, sin-bound man in the 7th chapter and no Holy Spirit.

A liberated man in the 8th chapter, and over and over again he

pays tribute to the Holy Spirit of God.

This is an amazing Word of God. Here is a man talking about emancipation. He's talking about an individual having under his feet the world, the flesh, and the devil. We'll get to it a bit later, but he says "In all these things..." and he doesn't leave you to fill in the blanks. He fills them in himself.

I love to read the apostle Paul! You know why, he'd go out and snub the devil! The devil never pushed the apostle around. He pushed the devil around! I'm going to make a guess that when Paul died they had a half-day's holiday in Hell. They were so glad about it. Satan never had the victory over the apostle Paul. He tried. No man ever had such a massive theology as Paul. No man ever saw further, deeper into the pit of human depravity.

I think one of the most alert writers today - that is not scholarly, or sensational stuff, but a deep writer - is that wonderful man of the L'Abré Fellowship, Switzerland. That gracious man, Shaeffer, said in his book "Death in the City," God has given up on the cities in America. He's written "Finished!" on them. That's why they're dead in their rebellion. That's why we've got whole cities that are bankrupt. The whole world has been asking, "Why is the greatest city in the greatest country in the world, New York, why is it bankrupt?" The millionaires of different cities are saying we are teetering on the edge of bankruptcy. But you see, our biggest problem is we are morally bankrupt! We are spiritually bankrupt!

I remember again that gracious man says, "For 40 years we've watched America going down the drain." He's like Jeremiah. He saw nation after nation with fits of depression and darkness and devils. Then coming around

and trying to say they were the chosen people of God. Then slumbering down in the mire again. He reminds us that eight centuries ago, every town and city in China had a thriving New Testament church. Eight hundred years ago. Where is she tonight?

Nobody, I say, saw the depth of depravity Paul saw. He saw that because men had rejected the message of the Son of God, God gave them up to uncleanness. If you want to read a very vivid, dramatic, stirring, disturbing account of that, read J.B. Phillips' translation of the first chapter of Romans.

Paul doesn't say how terrible the malady is. He's not concerned about the malady. He's concerned about the remedy! He said in Heb. 7:25, "He is able to save to the uttermost" and the "guttermost." Therefore, at the end of this amazing chapter he said,

"We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

The only reason there is an America tonight is, not because we signed the Declaration of Independence, but because 34 years before that time there was a revival that struck this country.

I quote Dr. Tozer, he said to me, "as soon as man got alienated from God, he got interested in things." Now I was reading through these chapters, and I noticed how many times Paul says that, "They that are after the flesh do mind the THINGS of the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit mind the THINGS of the Spirit."

And then that very famous, popular verse: Romans 8:28. "All THINGS work together for good." Not some things. All THINGS. Losses as well as gain; invisible things as well as visible; those that are bitter as well as those that are sweet. All things work together for good. Mr. Chadwick used to tell us the only way to read that verse was backwards. "To them that love God, to them who are the called, according to His purpose, all things work together for good." If you read it the right way, the forward way, it doesn't make too much impression. But if you read it from the back, to them that love God, all things work together for good. To them that are called according to His purpose. Now verse 31, "What shall we say to these THINGS? If God be for us, who can be against us?"

He says in verse 37, "Nay in all these THINGS..." You can almost hear his contempt there, can't you? "Things. So what?" And then he finishes the verse there in 38. I believe he throws his shoulders back and laughs in the face of the devil and says you haven't an invention in Hell that can separate me. That's what he says, doesn't he? Because he says here, at the end of verse 38, "I am persuaded." Are you persuaded tonight? Paul was a persuaded man. He was persuaded that God was able to keep that which he'd committed unto Him.

I'm persuaded tonight that neither height, nor depth, nor any other creature can separate me from the love of God. "For I'm persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor THINGS present nor THINGS to come..." If that isn't defiance I don't know what is.

One day, this man was going down the Damascus Road. Look! You know what? A man with an experience is never at the mercy of a man with an argument.

He was going down the Damascus Road, breathing out threatenings. He carried documents that said he could put any Christian he liked to death. (It's exactly what the blundering, blind, bankrupt world that you and I live in did,) but he did not reckon with Jesus Christ Himself. And Jesus sits on His throne and met him in the road. Paul said, "Who art thou? Lord?" "On that road," he said, "He revealed Himself to me." He said, "In the wilderness. In the school of silence." (It's still open if you want to go. It'll cost you nothing.) "On the Damascus Road God revealed Himself to me. There in the wilderness, He revealed Himself in me."

Then he soared up into heaven. I don't know all he saw except it was just so marvelous. The Lord said "Don't ever say a word about it. As long as you live, you can't tell anything you saw." And he never did! Sometimes I wonder if God rolled out the plans of the ages from the incarnation to the consummation. I wonder if he saw the day in which you and I live. I wonder if he saw the depravity that was going to strangle the world silent before Jesus comes.

There where he and God were alone, and God stripped him, what happened? I tell you, he became spiritually pregnant. He birthed these churches to whom he was writing here. He birthed these epistles in the Holy Ghost.

God put something in him that, when later he is put in the waters, thirty-six hours in the Mediterranean; the waves couldn't wash it out. They lashed him one hundred ninety-five times; they couldn't whip it out. The devils chased him; they couldn't scare it out of him. They wouldn't give him any food; they couldn't starve it out of

him.

Brother and sister, you and I had better get an experience like that before long because the roof is going to come in before we go much further. God hasn't raised you up to be a bottle-fed baby from here to eternity. He's coming to gather His jewels out of your life. He's invested a lot in you. He didn't save you that you might escape eternal fire. That's a fringe benefit. He saved you that you might be conformed to the image of His Son, however costly that may be.

A lot of people say today when they talk about victorious life, "Well, you know what Paul said..." in the end of Romans chapter 7: "Oh wretched man that I am!" Well, I didn't need the Lord to tell me that. I know that well enough. But you see, we tack onto that another statement. We say - listen now to what the Scripture says: "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." But read the next verse: "Ye are NOT in the flesh." Now, what do you do with it? This flesh...Yes. But a fleshy nature, a lusting, sinful, greedy, lustful nature...No.

You see, Paul here uses one of the most amazing things in all his career. He says, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Now what will you do? Is that the end of the story? In the original there are no chapters. There's no 7th chapter and 8th chapter. The 7th goes right on into the 8th. Now what do you do? Do you stop at the end of Romans 7 and say Paul is saying all through his life, "O wretched man that I am! I've another war raging in my members"? What does he say? He says, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Well, tell me tonight, can Buddha do it? Can Confucius do it? Can transcendental meditation do it? No sir. A thousand times over. There is One who is able to do it.

You know, there were over 120 different types of crosses. There was a traditional cross. There was a cross like the letter "T" on which a man's head was allowed to drop back. There was a cross like the letter "X" where a man's body was stretched up. His arms went up into each section of the "X" and there he was crucified. There was another cross. It was a straight tree like this, with a spike. They pushed the man's body on it and turned it any old way they liked - like a propeller - and left him to hang and the birds to eat him.

There's another crucifixion worse than any of them. That was, that if you murdered someone, they would take that dead body of the person you murdered and they would crucify you to the body - to the dead body! There's a thought! They made you lay down on it. They strapped your arms to the other arms; your legs to the other legs; your trunk to the other trunk; your neck to that neck. Then they stood you up and said, "Get going!" You staggered everywhere with a body of death!

Gradually, of course, it became rigid with death. The mortification! The stench! The flesh, the whole body would degenerate! You would try to sleep with that rotten thing. If you were stumbling down the road after two or three days, the stench had made you vomit and you were just about as sick and weak and feeling as horrid as you could. You saw a friend and cried, "Hey Jack! Cut this body off from me!" Whispering, "OK. There's nobody around." He gets his knife out and cuts the ropes off. He's just going to cut the last one. You look up and there's a Roman sentry: "What are you doing?" "I'm liberating my friend." "The law doesn't allow you to do that." "Oh, yes it does, yes it does, yes it does." "Go ahead, on one condition. The one condition is that if you free that man from that corpse, that corpse will be tied to your body. Do you love him enough now to have the body...?" "Oh no, sir! I won't cut it. I don't want that stinking rotten corpse attached to my body!" "All right. We'll tie him up again..."

Now Paul had been talking about the Law in chapter 7. He says the Law is holy. He says the Law is spiritual. But, you see, the Law could bring condemnation. It could point out sin, but it couldn't cast out sin. Can the Law break you free? No. Who shall deliver me from this wretched man? "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He says there's no end to this! But then he says, "Yes there is - Thanks be unto God through Jesus Christ my Lord...!" Romans 6:6 says that "Knowing this, that our old man is (not was, but is) crucified with Him."

The trouble in the church of God today is that we preach half a salvation.
 We tell people how to get rid of the lousy sin, yet we don't tell them
 how to get rid of the principle inside that has dominion over them.
 This is exactly what Paul is talking about in this epistle.
 This is why I say it's the song of the soul set free.

Come over to verse 9. "You are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit." Are you in the Spirit? Or in the flesh? Have you got secrets? What's biting you on the inside? An unforgiving spirit? A grudge? Laziness? Jealousy? Anger? Secret lusts? What is it?

He says,

Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be..."

Now listen!

"...the Spirit of God dwelleth in you!"

Look at the next verse (verse 10):

"If Christ be in you."

Look at the 11th verse:

"The spirit of Him that raised up Jesus...dwell in you."

My! Oh my! How in God's name can you be indwelt by

God the Father,

God the Son, and

God the Holy Ghost

and be defeated?! Don't argue with me about it. Scratch it out in your Bible if you don't believe it. If you're a Christian, you're an indwelt person. God dwells in you. The Father dwells in you. That's what it says. I didn't write that. The Holy Ghost wrote it. I want you to know: if you're really born of God, God dwells in you. And the Son dwells in you. "He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son..." It doesn't matter if they baptized you three times a day, it won't make you a Christian. Who is a Christian?

He that hath the Son.

He that is born of God, and

He that hath the Spirit of God dwelling in him.

All right. Let's come down a bit further in the chapter. Look at verse 22. "We know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together..." Do you think it is doing that tonight? Men have dreamed of Utopia, from Augustine's City of God. Moore had his Utopia. Francis Bacon had his Utopia. And I'm going to tell you how many more. Hitler said you could dominate the world by a pure race. The Marxists say the only way to clean the world up is to get rid of the fluff and bourgeois folk we have around here and rule by revolution. The creation groaneth.

The whole creation groaneth! I've asked you more than once: Did it cost you a tear when you heard that fifty million people were signed off in Viet Nam, Laos, and Cambodia? Fifty million people went into captivity! Did it cost you a tear? Millions of people behind the Iron Curtain. Has it cost you a tear? - or are you still rehearsing your choir number for Sunday? Yes, I believe every earthquake we have, is a sign of the whole groaning creation. Creation groans.

Will you notice what Paul says a little further down? In the next verse, verse 23: that we, not only creation, but we ourselves also have the first fruits of the Spirit. If you have the first fruits of the Spirit, here's the proof that you have it. That you groan within yourself. Do you? After the Holy Ghost comes in - and He knows the mind of God, and nobody does but the Spirit - the Spirit whispers the secret of God to you. Some nights you're like the woman who wants to get delivered of something. It isn't time, and you groan within yourself.

I'll tell you the secret of getting revival in the church. Find half a dozen people who know how to groan. You won't have the same church in a year.

You can't learn groaning except by the Holy Ghost. It's the school of the Holy Spirit.

If you think that's unusual, then look at verse 26 in which he says, "Likewise the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with GROANINGS that cannot be uttered." And verse 27, "the Spirit... because maketh intercession...according to the will of God."

Now, I've heard people say that to pray "with groanings," means praying in tongues. It's nothing of the kind. Because if it was, God would say so. It's beyond that.

The greatest language of prayer has no vocabulary.

The greatest prayers in the Bible have no words.

Do you remember Hannah? How she prayed? Even the man of God, the priest, thought she was drunk. She groaned. She travailed. She was barren.

I suggest to you that with all the pretty little conferences we have going on now about the Holy Spirit and all the

rest, we're a barren people before God. We have no revival in the land. But I'll tell you this, when the Holy Ghost comes and begins to burden people, it's a pretty, pretty rough thing to learn the true language of intercession. But the Spirit helpeth our infirmity.

Let's come to this verse right here for a minute or two. "In all these things..." He mentions them. Sort them out when you go home, will you? Tribulation, distress, famine, peril, nakedness, sword, perils of the deep, and so forth and so on. Sort them out. You'll find that

Some are things that attack the body.

Some attack the mind.

Some attack the spirit.

And he says, "In all these things..." There is no area in your life where, as a Christian, you are expected to be defeated.

You say, "I can't be perfect." Can't you? Are you sure? Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, "Be ye therefore perfect." He said of Job to the devil, "Hast thou considered my servant Job? He's perfect and upright." He set a path for Abraham before the Holy Ghost was given as we know. He said, "Walk before me and be thou perfect." You can't have Adamic perfection in your body. You can't have mental perfection. You can't have perfection, but you CAN have perfect obedience.

We sing the song, "Perfect submission. All is at rest." The only way you can have rest is by perfect submission - to know there's no rebellion in your spirit in any area at all.

"In all these things we are more than conquerors." You know, very often we get so discouraged. We get so earthbound. We lose sight of the majesty of God. We forget this: that God has branded you as a child of God. He lives in you. His Spirit lives in you. Christ lives in you. And we let little rubbish around us upset us?

Then he says in Romans 9:33, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." Here is your strength. Notice in this verse again, verse 34: "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died." Can Christ's death be contested? Satan knows better than that. Then says, he "is risen again...at the right hand..." Can the sovereignty of Jesus Christ be contested? And at the end of the verse it says, he "maketh intercession for us." Is there any way that the prayers of Jesus Christ can be sabotaged?

You see, if I'm a believer, this is what this verse says: I have the protection of the death of Jesus. If He is risen, I not only have protection, I have propitiation. He is the one that justifies. Not only that, if He justifies me, I've not only protection and propitiation, I have prayer that's offered by Him. Then the old accusing devil comes and says, "Now, just look at this and look at that." You know what Tozer used to say to me? "Len, I talk back to the devil." Do you ever talk back to him? Tell him where to go and how to get there? Or do you just constantly get whipped by him?

We suffer accusations. Listen, as long as you live, till you get to the pearly gates, Satan will accuse you. That's his job. He's the accuser of the brethren. Even if you've done nothing wrong, he'll try to make you feel bad. He's a liar from the beginning.

In Washington - in the Smithsonian museum, I guess, there's a bit of an apron with a dirty brown mark on it. And the Rockefellers have a bit of money and yet the Rockefellers can't buy that apron. It looks like a chocolate stain and the apron isn't worth much. But when they were carrying the great emancipator Lincoln out of that theater, as they passed a little girl, his blood fell on that apron and immediately somebody said, "that is sacred for America, get hold of it." There's nothing in the world can buy that thing which is stamped with blood! And I want to tell you tonight in the face of the world, the flesh, and the devil and all hell that if the blood of Jesus Christ is on you tonight you're worth more than all the wealth in Fort Knox or anywhere else in the world. You're precious to Him... Why?... Because His blood is upon you, that's why.

What are you going to do with this text? What is this text? "In all these things," verse 37, "we are more than conquerors." That's beyond the bounds of logic. How can you be MORE than a conqueror?

You can do three things with this text. You can say,

"It's a statement by an ignorant, irresponsible person. The kind who overload you with confidence."

You can say, "It's an unbalanced statement by a super-optimist."

Or you can say is, "Here's a man talking out of experience."

"In all these things," he says, "we are more than conquerors."

You know, there isn't a man on God's earth who knows how the next phase of revival will come. It's coming. Don't make any mistake about it. But God's going to do it His way. God has wonderful ways of working.

One pastor said, "My people come to church and pay their tithes. Routine. There's no passion. No vision. They're worldly. They enjoy bowling a lot more than groaning. They like fishing for tiddlers in the waters much more than fishing for men. More of them are traveling than travailing." He said to his wife and another man in the church, "Can we agree together that God will send us revival?" And they did! They prayed.

Oh my! Sometimes it's very painful.

In fact, I don't know when God works any blessing without painfulness.

If He could have done it without pain, He'd have done it for His Son.

But His Son had to go through the horrors of Gethsemane and the cross.

So, this preacher and his wife, and the other man and his wife - she was the organist, I think - prayed. And God began to move. He moved them nearly all out of the church. From about 450 people, they went down to about 45. And they thought: "Now, Lord, Lord, put the brakes on here. It's going to stop here, isn't it?" The Lord said, "No, not yet." And they went down until they were a very select company: the preacher, his wife, the oldest deacon, and the organist. Four of them. Instead of shutting the shop, he said, "Keep on praying." Great! God was moving! They never asked Him to move that way. But after all, you ask God to move and He does it! The preacher said, "Four weeks, I preached to four people." It didn't take long to take the offering. For once the church was united. Then, he said, "God began to turn the tide and they started coming back. People got saved." Now he had hundreds of people.

You see, the Holy Spirit is so wonderful. As I said last night,

He's a spirit of truth and He convicts us of error.

He's a spirit of life and He convicts of death.

He's a spirit of power and He convicts of weakness.

He's a spirit of joy and He convicts of sorrow.

And He's a spirit of love!

I'm going to tell you this. I believe tonight, if the Church of Jesus Christ, every true believer, in America had the baptism of love, the Church would be "back in business."

Love works many, many miracles that theory, philosophy, and theology don't work. The Word of God says that the first thing the Holy Spirit does in your life when He comes in is hang His shingle out. That's what he does. You know what it says on this shingle? "The fruit of the Spirit is power..." No, no. What is it? Oh, you know what it is. The first thing... LOVE.

You see, we've got the idea that you've got to be anointed of the Holy Ghost to be a missionary or a preacher. Well, that's great. You must have that. Let me tell you about three things here. Look. This man says we are more than conquerors. You know, when those three Hebrew children went into a burning, fiery furnace, they were conquerors. But when the form of the fourth, like unto the Son of God, came and they walked out, they were MORE THAN CONQUERORS.

When Daniel went into the lion's den, he was a conqueror. But when they pulled him out and made them change the laws of the Medes and the Persians, he was more than a conqueror.

When Jesus went to the cross, He could have just went "Pffft!" like that, and destroyed every man that was living. He could have cursed these people like He cursed the fig tree. But He kept His mouth shut. When He went to the grave with the sin of the world He was a conqueror. When He rose from the dead he was more than a conqueror. That's why this marvelous 8th chapter is so majestic. The Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead." Has he raised you from the dead? And touched death? And trespasses? And sin? Has He raised you from the death of formality and self-righteousness? If He has, you're indwelt by God the Father! You're indwelt by God the Son! You're indwelt by the Holy Ghost!

You know what America needs more than it needs some revivalist? It needs some Holy-Ghost filled mothers and Holy-Ghost filled fathers. I owe my spiritual life after God to a saintly Mother who influenced my life. I never heard my Mother gossip. I never heard her criticize anybody. I never saw her get angry. All I got when I came home from school was Mother in one chair and Grandmother in the other singing, "Take Time to Be Holy," usually off-key. But they were singing "Take Time to Be Holy." If it wasn't that, it was "Trust and Obey." Man, I was born in a home where the father was godly and the mother was a saint.

People say to me sometimes, "You know, I often ask the Lord to make me humble." I'll tell you how to make yourself humble. Go home and sit down before your little kids. Just sit down and say, "Do you think that I am like Jesus?"

I'm a debtor to America. Do you know why? Because outside of the New Testament, the greatest thing I ever read was the life of David Brainerd. I read that when he was about 18 years of age, he met God. I read that he died at the age of 28. The ripe old age of 28! I read that he used to kneel in the snow when it was up to his chin, when he had to make a hole in it. And, pray! He said, "I'd pray from sunrise to sunset. I couldn't touch the snow with the tips of my fingers. The heat of my body melted the snow." He had tuberculosis and when he sneezed he sprayed the snow with his blood.

Friend, listen. You have only one life. TÂ'will will soon be passed.

Only what's done for God will last.

When you are dying how glad you shall be,
if the lamp of your life has been burned out for Him.

So now, die to self-seeking. Die to public opinion. Die to ambition.

God doesn't use men that are alive. He uses men that are dead.

He doesn't use sober men. He uses drunk men.

He doesn't use somebody. He uses nobody.

"In all these things..." Where's your point of defeat tonight? - Is it prayerlessness? - Is it lack of love? - Is it self-pity? - Self-seeking? - Self-glory? - Self-promoting? What is it? -- You may be the one key holding up revival. Maybe just you, nobody else. I don't know. -- I want to tell you, God can put an end to all these things and you can leave this house tonight free, if you obey God. You can be more than conquerors by the indwelling God, by the indwelling Holy Spirit of God. But you'll have to confess it. I can't confess it for you. If I could repent for you, I'd be down there right now repenting for you. I can't do it. You have to do it. God can't do it for you. You have to do it.

Your repentance, your humility, your sincere seeking God for that cancer within the breast, whatever it is, will bring the compassion and love of God, the cleansing in the Blood, and the indwelling Holy Spirit.

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