

# **ROMANS 8: THE HEART OF IT ALL**

## **Romanos 8: El Corazón de Todo**

The Heart of the Gospel and the Book of Romans  
*El Corazón del Evangelio y el Libro de Romanos*

I have been reading the past months in a new translation called The Voice. I read Luke, then Acts, John and now Romans. It is a powerful scripture project that when I start to read it, it is hard to put down. It is called The Voice of Romans: the gospel according to Paul. The project brings together Bible scholars, poets, story tellers, writers, pastors and artists to tell the gospel story in a way that connects with us. I encourage you to find it and read it.

*The Voice is published by Thomas Nelson which, by the way, is the Bible producing company that is being sued by a man claiming that he has been emotionally damaged for 20 years because Thomas Nelson published Bibles that called homosexuality sin. He is seeking 32 million dollars.*

The Word of God is the Word of God and says what it says. It is our job to change our lives to conform to it, not attempt to change what the Word says to conform to our lives.

Back to The Voice of Romans. Romans is a tough book, filled with doctrinal challenges, but it has rightly been identified by many as the heart of the N.T. and it contains the heart of the gospel. I am considering going through Romans for at least half of 2009.

I want to spend the next six sermons that I preach going through the heart of Romans chapter eight.

Listen to this quote from Martin Luther about Romans.

*From Martin Luther, (not King Jr.), but Martin Luther the monk who began the Protestant Reformation.*

“This letter is the principal part of the New Testament and the purest gospel, which surely deserves the honor that a Christian man should not merely know it by heart word for word, but that he should be occupied with it daily as the daily bread of his soul. For it can never be read too often or too well.

And the more it is used the more delicious it becomes and the better it tastes.”

Even though the Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are the stories of Jesus and that gives them special importance because they give us the stories of Jesus and his activities, Romans defines what the gospel is and what is the content of our faith.

Romans is the heart of the gospel.

If you read Romans through you will realize that the book keeps building until it climaxes in Chapter eight. Chapter eight is the heart of the book which is the heart of the gospel.

The gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ. It is the truth that in Christ we be forgiven of anything and everything wrong we have done. We can be restored to a relationship with God our heavenly Father. Our lives can be transformed from those controlled by sin, to those controlled by The Spirit of Christ-The Holy Spirit.

Forgiveness is a great thing. Before we jump into Romans 8, the gospel according to Paul, lets take a lighter look at The gospel according to Granny on the Beverly Hillbillies.

VIDEO - “Funny Forgiveness” by Bruce Cory on SermonSpice (1:54)

There is a lot of truth in Granny’s words. It is hard to accept God’s free gift of salvation. We rightly feel we need to be stepped on, run over or beat up. The truth is we all deserve to be punished, but God offers us this amazing gift of forgiveness.

For the next six weeks we are going to dig into Romans 8: the heart of it all and discover a truly amazing gospel, a gospel that is full of hope! A gospel that is overflowing with optimism. This is Paul’s gospel of Romans.

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You have to have a brief history lesson!

- ✚ Rome is the heart, the center of the world. All culture, commerce and power emanated out of the heart of the empire.
- ✚ In Rome a group of believers had formed a growing church. Many had moved there from other parts of the empire, others had been converted.
- ✚ No apostles had been there. So they were functioning without any apostolic leadership.
- ✚ And yet this growing church was key to taking the gospel around the world.
- ✚ So Paul writes to this church which he understood as critical to the gospel and yet he is writing to many people he didn't know, to a church he didn't plant or had not preached to. He was trying to get them to lead the missionary effort to Spain and yet he had never been there to model what it meant to be a missional Christian or church.

As a result this letter is different than all his other letters. It pulls together his gospel teachings.

Romans is the heart of Paul's letters and the N.T.

Romans has been at the heart of reformation and revival down through the centuries.

Martin was working on lectures in Romans "The Righteousness of God" which is a focus of Romans had always haunted him.

**<<La Rectitud de Dios>> es un punto centrado de Romanos que siempre le había perseguido.**

He had lived under the legal club of God's righteousness for years. God was holy and he wasn't, God was good and he wasn't. God was powerful and he wasn't. He could never live up to God holiness and he knew it. All he deserved was God's punishment. As he was writing his lectures, The Spirit of God broke through to his heart and taught him that

The righteousness of God is a gift of God given to every person who claims Christ and is justified by faith.

**La Rectitud de Dios es un regalo de Dios que es dado a cada persona que reivindica Cristo y está justificado por la fe.**

This gift of God's grace that came by faith was the breakthrough that caused the Reformation.

For Luther and Calvin and most other reformers up to today, they lived the Christian life as a terrible sinner that had been given a gift of grace because of what Jesus did on the cross.

***Luther vivía la vida Cristiana como un pecador terrible que había recibido un regalo de gracia por causa de lo que Jesús hizo en la cruz.***

They were at the same time terrible sinners and children of God declared righteous.

This is a very pessimistic point of view that says we are always being overcome by sin.

***Este es un punto de vista muy pesimista.***

We are part of a more optimistic point of view which teaches that The Righteousness of God is a gift but more than a gift, it is the power of God to restore us to God's creation.

***Tenemos un punto de vista más optimista que enseña que la Rectitud de Dios es más que solamente un regalo, es el poder de Dios para restablecernos a la creación de Dios.***

This is breaking through to all of Christianity. This view was given by the reformer James Arminius, taught by John Wesley and taken on by our founders. In 1980 another Lutheran named Kaseman studied Romans and taught that with the gift comes the giver or the Holy Spirit and he changes us. In this much more optimistic view Paul in chapter seven is writing as a person who knows what God expects but has not accepted God's grace in his or her life.

I want you to follow along with a visual reading of Romans seven. Keep in mind the two points of view.

A pessimistic point of view of grace that says this person described is a child of God and must live in this sense of defeat.

Or an optimistic point of view that says this is Paul writing as a person who has not yet accepted the gift of grace in their life.

VIDEO - “Romans” 7:14-25 by Visual Scripture on SermonSpice (2:40)

If we stop here we are left with a very pessimistic view of God’s grace in our lives. We never stop being reminded that we are a sinful bum. It is kinda like Granny needing to be stomped on or run over because she was no good. But, God never intended us to stop here. Listen to Romans chapter eight, verses one through four.

So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup> For the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you through Christ Jesus from the power of sin that leads to death. <sup>3</sup> The law of Moses could not save us, because of our sinful nature. But God put into effect a different plan to save us. He sent his own Son in a human body like ours, except that ours are sinful. God destroyed sin’s control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins. <sup>4</sup> He did this so that the requirement of the law would be fully accomplished for us who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit.

*1 Ahora pues, a quienes pertenecemos a Cristo Jesús no nos espera ya ninguna condenación, 2 porque la ley del poderoso Espíritu de vida que recibimos por medio de la fe en Cristo Jesús, nos libera de la ley del pecado y de la muerte. 3 El mero conocimiento de la ley de Dios no nos libra de las garras del pecado, porque no somos capaces de cumplirla. Por eso, a fin de darnos la salvación, envió Dios a su propio Hijo con un cuerpo humano igual en todo al nuestro (pero sin pecado), y al entregarlo en sacrificio a causa de nuestros pecados, destruyó el dominio que el pecado ejercía sobre nosotros. 4 Por lo tanto, podremos obedecer a la ley de Dios si nos dejamos guiar por el Espíritu Santo, en vez de obedecer los deseos de nuestra naturaleza pecaminosa.*

Does that sound a bit like chapter seven? You can live as a sinner, defeated constantly or you can step into chapter eight and realize that there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

To be in Christ means to have opened up your heart and invited him in by repentance and faith and are walking with him in obedience.

Here are the next six sermon topics.

**IN CHRIST WE ARE SET FREE FROM SIN'S CONDEMNATION!**  
*¡POR CRISTO SOMOS LIBERADOS DE LA CONDENACIÓN DE PECADO!*

**IN CHRIST WE ARE SET FREE FROM SIN'S CONTROL!**  
*¡POR CRISTO SOMOS LIBERADOS DEL CONTROL DE PECADO!*

**IN CHRIST WE ARE RESTORED TO GOD OUR FATHER!**  
*¡POR CRISTO SOMOS RESTABLECIDOS A DIOS NUESTRO PADRE!*

**IN CHRIST WE SUFFER WITH ALL CREATION!**  
*¡POR CRISTO SUFRIMOS CON TODA LA CREACIÓN!*

**IN CHRIST AND IN ALL THINGS, GOD IS WORKING FOR OUR GOOD!**  
*¡POR CRISTO Y EN CADA CIRCUNSTANCIA, DIOS ESTÁ TRABAJANDO PARA NUESTRA BIENESTAR!*

**IN CHRIST WE ARE SAFE AND SECURE NO MATTER WHAT!**  
*¡POR CRISTO SOMOS SEGUROS PASE LO QUE PASE!*

I hope you will join me as we discover the hope, victory and the radical optimism of God's grace.

Closing prayer.