Favorite Chapters - Romans 8

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us. All right, well, you can open to Romans chapter 8.

! As you know, that's where we will be for tonight. And as we begin tonight, I just wanted to share with you by way of introduction one of the reasons that this chapter is so meaningful to me and has been used powerfully of the Lord in my life.
I praise God that He saved me at a young age. I had a godly mother who taught me the Word and shared the Gospel with me, so I relate with Timothy in a lot of ways.
That was a gift of the Lord, that I had a mom that shared the Gospel with me at a young age. And remember vividly, even at a young age, with the understanding of me being a sinner and in need of a Savior, and that Christ is the way, the truth, and the life, and no one comes to the Father except through Him.
And obviously, at a young age, I didn't know all that I would learn through the years. But one of the things that really marked much of my Christian journey and my walk with the Lord, if it could be boiled down to one word, that word would be uncertainty.
[1:39] Uncertainty. Uncertainty. For many, many years, I lived on this rollercoaster ride of, am I doing enough?

Does God accept me? Am I saved? Listen, for all of you who pray the quote-unquote sinner's prayer every time you get on an airplane, then just magnify that a million times.
And that was my life. It was pretty much one that I just felt like I was walking on eggshells all the time. Shared this before with you. There were times I'd come home from school, and if no one was home, I was convinced the rapture had happened, and I was left behind.
And I can laugh about it now, but at the time, I did not laugh. I cried and thought, what is going to happen? It was uncertain.
Uncertain. Uncertain if I was saved. Uncertain if I had pleased God. Uncertain with every aspect of my life. And I would hear sermons, and I'd read passages of Scripture that Jesus came to give us life, and it more abundantly.
[2:51] And I thought, this is not my life. If this is abundant life, I'm not living the abundant life, because I am living in fear and anxiety and very little joy.

Well, if you could boil down the Christian life for me from an early age into my early 20s, to one word, and that word being uncertainty, we could take Romans chapter 8 and boil it down to one word, and it's assurance.
Assurance. In fact, the title of tonight's message is not just the one word, but it is blessed assurance. Out of Romans chapter 8.
Spurgeon said, Assurance of faith can never come by works of the law. It is an evangelical virtue, and can only reach us in a gospel way.
Such good words. Comes right out of our text, even this evening. Thomas Watson said, Faith will make us walk, but assurance will make us run.
[4:14] And J.C. Ryle said, Assurance is a most delicate plant. It needs daily, hourly, watering, tending, cherishing.

So watch and pray the more when you have got it. So we look tonight at Romans 8, what's been called the Mount Everest of Scripture, with the theme of assurance.
A quick overview of the chapter, you would see that in Romans 8, 1, there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
Which, let me just by way of quick application, encourage you, if you have ever struggled with a lack of assurance or uncertainty, this is a verse that you should memorize.

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This is a verse that should be a part of your life. You're constantly reminding yourself, reminding the three great enemies of the soul, the world, the flesh, the devil, that there is no condemnation.
[5:29] None whatsoever for those who are in Christ Jesus. So you're in Christ Jesus, then there's no condemnation. None. Zero. That will aid you in assurance.

So the chapter begins with no condemnation, and then as John already read, it ends with no separation. That nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.
Nothing. And then he even details it out. It is an anthem of praise, a hymn of praise, that declares that there's nothing that can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.
But there, sandwiched in the middle, is no trepidation. In verses 26 to 30, there's no trepidation.
You see, Romans chapter 8 fits in a larger unit, and that larger unit in the book of Romans encompasses Romans 5 through 8.
[6:33] And there are striking similarities, if you've never seen them, between Romans 5 and Romans 8. They almost operate in an inclusio-type manner, or like parentheses, on either side of each other.

And sandwiched in the middle is everything in Romans 5, 6, and 7, and chapter 8. And it's all speaking of this new life we have in Christ.
Well, tonight, I want to boil this down to four points. Four points that will outline this chapter.
And the first point is the assurance we have in salvation. Assurance in salvation. Romans 8, beginning in verse 1, there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin.
[7:49] He condemned sin in the flesh. in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

These are some of the most comforting words in all of Scripture. John MacArthur says of verse 3 alone, perhaps the most definitive and succinct statement of the substitutionary atonement to be found in Scripture.
The most definitive and succinct statement of the substitutionary atonement to be found in all of Scripture. You see, when we have walked through Romans 1, 2, and 3, we understand that we are a condemned people and rightly so.
We are sinners. We are sinners in need of and deserving of the judgment of God. There are none who are righteous. No, not one.
There are none who seek after God. Romans clearly declares those who were created in the image of God have exchanged worshiping God for images made in the likeness of mortal man or in creeping images, creeping things, animals, and they worship these things.
[9:17] They've exchanged the glory of God. So, you see in Romans 1, verses 18 to 32, this downward spiral of sin and the punishment of God because the wrath of God is revealed in Romans 1, 18, and the wrath of God is clearly on display by God giving them over and God gave them over and God gave them over and God gave them over.

It's a repeated declaration in Romans 1, but then he turns his sights to the religious, to the Jew who is cheering that on saying, condemn the pagan, condemn him, and he says, oh, you who preach and teach that thou should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery or you should not steal? Do you steal? Your hypocrisy is on display. You too are condemned. The pagan, the religious, and then the culmination is in Romans 3 and that's everyone.
All of us stand with mouths clothed before the Lord. And when we grasp that, then we will grasp amazing grace of what happens in Romans 3, 21 and following of this amazing transaction that happens is based on the perfect sacrifice in Jesus Christ and him satisfying the wrath of God, him making us acceptable to the Father and drawing us to himself and we are saved by grace alone. That's God's unmerited favor and it's by faith alone, in Christ alone and it goes all to the glory of God alone. This salvation should be mind-blowing.
[11:14] But it should also remind us that our salvation is secure not based on what we have done but on what Christ accomplished.

Our security, our assurance is based upon the completed work of another and not by anything that you do.

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you don't save yourself. You could never do enough good deeds in order to save yourself and you can't cause yourself to go from death to life.
Only God can do that. Only God can cause you to be born again and he who is born again is born again.
He is a new creature in Christ. He's a new creation. You can't be unborn. born. You don't go from death to life and then go back to death and then back to life again.
[12:11] That's the life of living the Christian life by your own works and it will never lead to assurance. The Lord used not only this chapter and as we continue to work through this chapter in bringing assurance in my life but chapter John chapter three Jesus is exchanged with Nicodemus a very common passage but one in which if you read it and you understand what Jesus is saying to Nicodemus is mind blowing.

And then John chapter six in fact verse 37 all that the father gives me will come to me and he who comes to me I will never know never cast aside.
John chapter three John chapter six John chapter ten my sheep know my voice and I know my sheep and my sheep will follow me and not only that but I give them eternal life and that's eternal life forever that's eternal life that it's not I give it and then I take it away and then I give it again.
No I give them eternal life and they will follow me and no one can pluck them from my hand and my father who I'm one with no one can pluck him from his hand.
All these passages that speak of God's great salvation that is found in his son Jesus Christ. You see what Romans chapter eight points us to here is not only are we free from the guilt of sin but we are free from its power as well.
[13:56] And again that's only based on the salvation that we have in Jesus Christ and by him giving of his spirit to us that he does not leave us as orphans but he sends the paracletos the one called alongside to help the Holy Spirit who resides within us who is giving assurance that we are one of his.

So salvation salvation in salvation and a whole theology that we call it soteriology the study of salvation will lead you to tremendous assurance because salvation is not based on your performance salvation is based on what Christ did.
His perfect sacrificial death burial and resurrection as is common for most people who struggle with the lack of assurance we tend to be very introspective.
We look at ourselves we're always asking am I doing enough? Am I being obedient enough? Am I and it's always I I I we would benefit from listening and heeding the words of Robert Murray McShane who said for every look at yourself take ten looks at Christ.
For every look at yourself take ten looks at Christ. That's where our assurance comes from is Christ. When my focus is on Christ and not on myself then there comes a flood of assurance because I understand his completed work.
[15:40] And I understand that what the law could not do weakened by the flesh God did. By sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin he condemns sin in the flesh in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us.

Romans 5 8 says but God demonstrates his love for us in this that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Christ Jesus died for us. While we were yet sinners.
Go to a host of passages of scripture that remind us that our faith is not in ourselves nor our performance but our faith is in Christ in him alone.
R.C. Sproul said our assurance is only as strong as our faith our faith in Christ. Sinclair Ferguson also said assurance does not lie in what we are be we great or small it lies in what God has done in his plan of salvation to secure us to himself.
It's all God. It's all his work. And when you begin to grasp that that salvation is a work of God and it's not the work of yourself that brings freedom that brings joy.
[17:07] And listen the last thing it will do is lead you to a life of license that oh I can just sin as I want. I'm once saved always saved. That's always the argument against the security of the believer is that well you say that you're giving people a pass to sin.

Listen who in their right mind wants to live a life of sin when you've been given such a great grace. And that leads us into our second point. It leads us into further into this chapter and that is our sanctification.

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Assurance in our salvation 8 1 through 4 and then assurance in sanctification verses 5 through 17. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh but those who live according to the spirit set their minds on the things of the spirit for it is set the mind on the flesh is death but to set the mind on the spirit is life and peace for the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God for it does not submit to God's law indeed it cannot those who are in the flesh cannot please God you however are not in the flesh but in the spirit if in fact the spirit of God dwells in you anyone who does not have the spirit of Christ does not belong to him but if Christ is in you although the the spirit is life because of righteousness if the spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his spirit who dwells in you so then brothers we are debtors not to the flesh to live according to the flesh for if you live according to the flesh you will die but if by the spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live for all who are led by the spirit of
God are sons of God for you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear but you have received the spirit of adoption as sons by whom we cry Abba Father the spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God and if children then heirs heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him our sanctification listen here's what's amazing your justification is all God you are justified by faith alone and Christ alone and that's all the work of God he has declared you righteous based on the righteousness of his son the righteousness of Christ that's been imputed to you it's been credited to your account when the father looks at you he looks at you through the blood of his son Jesus Christ that was perfect now in sanctification is also the work of God however it's the work of
God with us now having the desire or the mind of Christ or the mind of the spirit so even this morning we heard Sarah's testimony what a powerful testimony that was given this morning and when she said when she began to read now she's reading the bible and there's understanding and there's there's now illumination that's happening that it's oh my goodness this this is now making sense and I desire to do these things because she's gone from legalism and just a checkbox and just checking off the boxes of reading and then you feel better about yourself into reading because this is the words of life that I'm reading and this is God speaking and God has done that work by implanting his spirit in you as a result of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ now what flows from that is you've been given the spirit of God in fact it's fascinating when you look at Romans only two times up until this point in Romans do we have the Holy Spirit reference and then there's going to be 19 references to him in chapter 8 the spirit of God the Holy Spirit who is doing this work in us so that now we are led of the spirit and then we live not according to the flesh by which way we will die but by the spirit we are putting to death the deeds of the body and then for all who are led by the spirit of God are what sons of God now listen quick application your identity as a believer is a child of God it's what I just read you are sons of God in fact you've not been given the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear but you've received the spirit of adoption as sons by whom we cry
[22:09] Abba Father you've heard this preached you've heard this taught it's a term of endearment and affection affection it's saying daddy or papa it speaks to deep personal connection between a father and a son and we've been given the Holy Spirit that causes us to cry out Abba Father so your identity is a child of God or a son of God your father is your Abba Father now why is that important because the world the flesh and the devil will seek to mark you by a different identity I'm a victim I am a failure I am an anxious person I'm a fearful person I'm an orphan

I am a sinner you fill in the blank I'm sure many of you can the things that you tell yourself the things that you hear whispered in your ear and yet Romans chapter 8 says you've been given the spirit of God and you're a child of God and not only a child of God but one who has received the spirit of adoption and who is able to cry out Abba father daddy papa see the idea is that the root or the heart has been changed and what flows out of that is the fruit or behavior that changes it's not the other way around it's not we get our act together we clean up we get we feel like we're acceptable now and now God will accept us because we got our act together no it's the opposite while you were dead in your trespasses and sins
Ephesians 2 says God made you alive together in Christ Jesus it's the work of God in your life and when he changes you and causes you to be born again and gives you a new heart as Ezekiel points to in the new covenant a heart of flesh not a heart of stone what happens is there is a change in desires and affections now listen be very careful what I'm not saying is you're driven by your emotions if you were driven by your emotions or your feelings you'll be on a constant rollercoaster

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ride we are people who live by faith not by sight we live by faith not by feelings the feelings may follow but all you have to do is go to Hebrews chapter 11 and read of the walk of faith listen if ever there were people when we go through the great hall of faith in Hebrews chapter 11 if ever there were people who had difficult times who their emotions would have been low or their feelings would have been low and yet they pressed on why because they were walking by faith faith is rooted in fact and that fact is the character and nature of God whether the emotions or the feelings come or not you don't feel like a child of God well you know that you've trusted
Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord then you walk by faith that says there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus and I've been given the spirit of adoption that calls me as a son I can call out to Abba Father that's who I am that's what scripture tells me so am I going to walk by faith or am I going to be led by my feelings you see the path of sanctification is one that the Puritans called one of mortification and it's mortification of sin in your life by the spirit of God it's not by your own bootstraps I'm just going to do better listen if ever there was a person who said I'm just going to try harder I'm going to do better it was me you talk to Martin Luther talk to Martin Luther about his life that I'm going to I'm just going to be more diligent in my studies he he nearly drove himself mad trying to gain justification by faith in this righteousness of God that is given through his son
Jesus Christ so there's assurance in salvation there's assurance in sanctification and you may say but Jeff I have seasons that I don't feel like I'm pursuing the Lord or I don't I don't observe in my life that I am putting to death the deeds of the flesh and mortifying sin in my life well you continue the call was never to perfection the call is to faithfulness and you continue to walk by faith not on your feelings not on your circumstances again Thomas Watson said sanctification is the seed assurance is the flower which grows out of it sanctification is the seed and assurance is the flower which grows out of it leads us to our third point and it encompasses 18 to 30 and that is suffering there's assurance in the midst of suffering oh listen
[28:06] Romans 818 for I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us now if you know your Bibles you know the cross reference there right 2nd Corinthians chapter 4 verses 16 to 18 that which is happening here in now is light and momentary compared to the weight of eternity and Paul says I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us for the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God for the creation was subjected to futility not willingly but because of him who subjected it in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of

God for we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now and not only the creation but we ourselves who have the first fruits of the spirit grown inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons the redemption of our bodies for in this hope we were saved now hope that is seen is not hope for who hopes for what he sees but if we hope for what we do not see we wait for it with patience many a preacher has entitled their sermon from groaning to glory on that passage I just read the creation groans we groan we long for glory listen all we have to do!
open up news channels on our phones or I almost said just read the paper but I don't think anybody does that anymore and so you read it on your phone and you know that our world is a world of suffering it's not getting better it's decaying it's going from bad to worse and we along with the creation groan for the glory that is to be revealed to us but verse 26 continues likewise the spirit helps us in our weakness for we do not know what to pray for as we ought but the spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words and he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the spirit because the spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God and we know that for those who love God all things work together for good for those who are called according to his purpose for those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and those whom he predestined he also called and those whom he called he also justified and those whom he justified he also glorified now here's the beauty in in all of
Romans 8 28 to 30 that it brought comfort to countless believers down through church history it is set within the context of suffering that's powerful in the midst of suffering there's this tremendous promise that is a promise that is exclusive in that this promise does not apply to non believers this promise applies to believers that God is taking all things and working them for good does he say

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that all things are good no of course not there are things that are bad that happen things that are tragic things that are evil and yet God is able to take those and work them for good for his purpose now here's the thing that I love about this passage here is that he does not leave us in the dark as to what his purpose is the purpose is to be conformed to the image of his son the purpose of God working all things together for good in your life is to conform you to the image of his son that's the goal it's not a life of peace it's not the absence of pain it's not even getting the answers to your why questions the comfort and the assurance in the midst of suffering is number one we are groaning along with creation for glory this is not it we haven't arrived what awaits us is glory and we're marching toward glory and so we're groaning creation is groaning but then he tells us the spirit will also help you in your weakness have you ever been weak have you ever just been completely confused as to how to pray maybe you don't even you can't even articulate the words what does

[33:33] Paul tell us the Holy Spirit interceding the Holy Spirit interceding on your behalf with groanings too deep for words and then the comfort that God you have a sovereign purpose in the midst of the suffering in my life it's not without purpose oh it may hurt it it may cause tremendous pain in sleepless nights in tears in in confusion and yet you have a purpose in this God you're in control and you're working all things we sang it tonight you're working all things together for good now verse 30 it's been called the golden chain of salvation those whom he predestined he also called those whom he called he also justified those whom he justified he also glorified it's a golden chain of salvation now

I love what Sinclair Ferguson said what we need to be careful of with the these great theological terms and yet it's set within the context of suffering it's not meant to be something that that you're just confused by or that you're just left wondering it's meant to bring tremendous comfort that the golden chain of salvation the gold is

Christ Christ is the one who holds us all together it leads us fourthly to the final assurance and that is the assurance that does lead to security in the love of God security John already read it but I'll read it again verses 31 to 39 six questions that are asked again I'd encourage you memorize this what then shall we say to these things if God is for us just stop there one Puritan said those words alone change everything it changes everything if God is for us think about this

God we're not talking about big brother we're not talking about a big strong uncle we're talking about God if God is for us who can be against us he who did not spare his own son but gave him up for us all how will he not also with him graciously give us all things who shall bring any charge against God's elect it is God who justifies who is to condemn Christ Jesus is the one who died more than that who was raised who is at the right hand of God who indeed is interceding for us don't miss that who's interceding for you the spirit is interceding for you and Christ Jesus is interceding for you you see Christ Jesus is the one who died more than that who was raised who was at the right hand of

God who indeed is interceding for us who shall separate us from the love of Christ now he just listed out shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword as it is written for your sake we are being killed all the day long we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered no in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us for I am sure that neither death nor life nor angels nor rulers nor things present nor things to come nor powers nor height nor depth nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord to which the people of God say amen and amen oh the security and the assurance that is found in this closing and our security is rooted in the love of

[38:44] God in Christ Jesus if God before us that changes everything Calvin said let us not seek any other ground of assurance than God's own testimony let us not seek any other ground of assurance than God's own testimony so as I close tonight kind of got a family joke but it's one that it's a joke but it carries with it that they know I'm serious I don't know what it is I just when I think of the end of my life I would prefer to be propped up on an old cottonwood tree facing the east in the morning and then if it's not too much trouble just come out in the evening and turn me around to the west so

I can see the sunrise and I can see the sunset I don't want to be in a home I don't even have to be in one of your homes just let me be there I'm not allergic to cottonwoods and I love cottonwoods and they're big and they're strong and it'll give me some shade but that which I kid with this I don't kid with if in my final days or final hours I could have Romans chapter 8 just read over and over and

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over and over again I'll die a happy man because there is assurance and the assurance is rooted in Christ let's pray our father we thank you for a chapter like
Romans chapter 8 that grips us that moves us that we could spend years reading and memorizing and meditating on and truly just hit the top of the iceberg on all that is contained in this glorious chapter word but our prayer tonight Lord is that this would become us being doers of the word and resting in the blessed assurance that is found in salvation and sanctification and suffering and in the security we have in the love of God in Christ Jesus oh that we would be a people that would practice this and when our accuser comes reminding us of our sin reminding us of our failure we'll point him to that rugged tree and say there my savior bled and died and my security is found in him alone we pray all of this in
Jesus name and all God's people said amen and amen Romans chapter 8 and you're only four minutes late that is a modern day miracle God bless you you are dismissed and you you you

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