Romans 8 Pt. 1

SPEAKER	Matt Ryniker
DATE	Sunday, February 15, 2026
PASSAGES	Romans 5; Romans 6; Romans 7; Romans 8; 1 Corinthians 2; Hebrews 7; Galatians 3; John 16; 1 John 5
MESSAGE	Begins at 1:07:25 in the service

THE BIG IDEA

Romans 8 begins with a *therefore*, and everything holding it up is one point Paul never leaves: Christ, and Christ crucified. We were really in Adam, and in the same real way we are now in Christ — which is why the verdict is no condemnation, and why our standing before God was never ours to earn or to lose.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Paul resolved to know nothing but Christ crucified, and he never deviated. Romans is one message repeated in different keys, not a religious preamble followed by a good part.
- There is one plan of salvation for Jew and Gentile alike — and the plan is a person. Faith is the means precisely because faith is, by definition, not a work.
- Adam is not somebody whose bad decision inconveniences us from a distance. Paul says *we* sinned. We were carried in him the way Levi was carried in Abraham.
- Keep that logic and change the name: grace now reigns through one man the same inescapable way death once did. You cannot ruin a perfectly lived life that is already finished.
- Death is not our savior. We are not freed from sin at the end of our own lives; we were freed at the end of his.
- “Then why do anything?” is a healthy shock, not a heresy. Most Old Testament sacrifice was never about atonement — it was honor. That is what a living sacrifice is now.
- Setting the mind on the Spirit is not the old works program with new vocabulary. The Spirit’s work is testimony about Jesus, so a mind set on the Spirit is a mind full of the gospel.

- You approach God on the merits of the risen Messiah — when you pray for the sick, when you are discouraged by your own failure, when you open your mouth about him.

▶ 1:07:25

Matt did not start in Romans 8. He started with the one sentence he thinks unlocks Paul: "I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified." Romans, he said, is essentially a long Galatians — the person of Jesus is behind every point in it. There is no shortcut, no cheat code, no limited-time offer for special people. One message, one salvation, and by salvation he meant a person.

One message, and it is a person

▶ 1:08:46

Why did God want it to come through faith? "Because that's by definition not a work," Matt said. He wants to give eternal life away for free. The carnal mind pulls the other direction the way objects fall to the ground — toward bartering, toward a tidy little contract where I give God this and he gives me that. Christianity announces the opposite: God came to man.

▶ 1:11:03

And the diagnosis is universal. Paul lists sins that carried a death penalty in the Torah, then points out that the Gentiles are no better off — otherwise why would Hammurabi need a code, or ancient China need courts. The standard we miss is not the average person at the bus stop; it is the glory of God. Nor is faith a surprise ending. Abraham was an obedient man, but
he was counted righteous because he believed. God has been approaching people this way the whole time.

Patient zero

▶ 1:17:57

> "Just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned…"
>
> ROMANS 5:12 ↗

Sin was loose before Sinai — ask Cain and Abel, Matt suggested, or maybe just ask Abel. And if the story of the brothers does not persuade you, the genealogies will: so-and-so lived, had a son, and died.

And he died. And he died. Nobody escapes it except the one man who walked with God, which reads like a foreshadowing of the gospel.

▶ 1:13:24

Here is where Paul goes further than we would. He does not say Adam sinned and God has been grumpy ever since. He says *we* sinned. How does that work? Like Russian nesting dolls — we were inside our ancestors, which is why the writer of Hebrews can say Levi paid tithes through Abraham, being still in his ancestor's loins. Not a life verse most people would get tattooed. But you want it to be true, because the same mechanism runs the other direction.

Keep the logic, change the name

▶ 1:20:05

> "Because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ."
>
> ROMANS 5:17 ↗

Trapped in Adam, we were locked in with death as the tyrant — beyond us, larger than life, nothing we could do about it. Now run the same sentence with grace reigning through one man instead. Just as inescapable, and just as far beyond us. "It's beyond you to even ruin it," Matt said. Suppose you had a time machine and went back to tempt Jesus into a mistake — hell already sent its best man on that job and it did not work. You could not trip him on the way to the cross. That perfectly lived life of obedience is more done than set in stone, and you sink into it by grace through faith.

▶ 1:22:27

Which is why Romans 5:19 — made sinners by one man's disobedience, made righteous by another's obedience — is not an accounting trick that leaves you unchanged under a new label. We were carried around in Adam and were made sinners; we are carried around in Christ and are made righteous. That is how our old self was crucified with him. Some Christians have been crucified; all Christians have, because his death is our death. And he did it on purpose, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

▶ 1:25:09

You might think the escape is to do better. Matt let the room laugh at that one before naming it a fool's errand. "One who has died has been set free from sin." Not *if* we die — since we have. And note whose death is doing the work. "The wages of sin are not carried out on our physical bodies at the end of our lives," Matt said. "Death is not our savior. We're not free when we die. We're free when he died." So sin

has no dominion over you since you are not under law but under grace — not since you have been doing great lately. People with a lot of willpower have a particular problem here: it is hard to let the gospel pierce a long record of success.

"Then what is the point of doing anything?"

▶ 1:26:32

That shock, Matt said, is an appropriate stop along the way. If the message never scandalizes you, you may not have heard it. His picture: your dad hands you a controller and says he has already rescued the princess and killed Bowser. The game is over — why are we playing? Well, there is a lot to explore, and we are hanging out.

If I am not paying anything back, what is my life for? Perhaps knowing your Lord is somewhere on his to-do list. He wants to be our God, and for us to be his people, and to dwell among us. That is why the living sacrifice of Romans 12 gets misread. A great many Old Testament sacrifices had nothing to do with atonement. When Solomon burned a staggering pile of wealth at the dedication of the temple, it was not because he had skipped his reading and felt bad about it. It was respect, honor, love. Imagine living like that kind of sacrifice — waking up already on the other side of the finish line, hidden in Christ, with nothing to atone for.

▶ 1:30:18

And you are not under law, because you are dead to it.
"You also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another." Paul had just used marriage: you cannot take a new spouse while the first is living, but death severs the bond. We belong to Jesus or we are under the law. Not both, not neither.

The therefore

▶ 1:33:10

This is why Matt refuses the comic-book reading of Romans, where chapters 1–6 are religious gobbledygook, the back half of 7 is the real Christian life of trying hard, and 8 is a blur. The struggle in Romans 7 is relatable, and it should be — but it should not be *fully* relatable, because straining to satisfy the righteous requirement of the law is not the Christian endeavor. Religions that offer that are a dime a dozen.

> "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."
>
> ROMANS 8:1–2 ↗

The reason for the verdict is not that Jesus did something nice, and not that God decided nothing matters after all. It is that we are hidden in the crucified Messiah.

▶ 1:35:11

> "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, 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."
>
> ROMANS 8:3–4 ↗

Jesus joined himself to the one mass of humanity we all belong to, differing only in having no sin, attached our problem to his own flesh, and killed it — a death we could never have pulled off. And try to picture what he fulfilled. Not merely avoiding what you know you should not do, but doing everything you should, all the way, through puberty and early adulthood and sickness. No sick days. No paid time off. That is why you have legal standing in heaven. You cannot barge into a courtroom and talk; the judge has to recognize why you are speaking. Esther knew better than to approach the king unbidden. We approach because we are in Christ.

Flesh and Spirit — not the old program in new vocabulary

▶ 1:37:50

Then comes Romans 8:5–8, and Matt named the way we get it twisted: as though your righteous standing hangs on your mindset or your vibes at any given moment. Hungry, need lunch, mind on the flesh, I am finished. Read that way, it is "legal works, but with glitter" — new language for the same old bargaining.

The corrective is to ask what the Spirit actually does. He testifies about Jesus (John 16:14; 1 John 5:6). So a mind set on the Spirit is a mind full of the gospel. And we did not qualify for the Spirit either — Galatians 3:2 says we received him by hearing with faith, not by works. If we have the Spirit by believing, then we have the Spirit of Christ, and we belong to him by grace. Our bodies will still die; but the one who raised Jesus will give life to our mortal bodies, and we wait for that on his record, not ours.

Living according to the flesh, meanwhile, (Romans 8:12–14) is not a specialty of wild pagans. There are infinite ways to do it and plenty of them are religious.

Heirs of God

▶ 1:43:23

> "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."
>
> ROMANS 8:15–17 ↗

Not heirs of some spiritual gold or a house being held for you. Heirs of God. What did you do to deserve that? Nothing, and Matt was sorry to break it to us. The suffering with him in the next clause is about staying with Christ, abiding in him — not about accumulating enough painful experiences until God says that will do.

What you do with a one-point sermon

▶ 1:45:35

Matt granted this will not help with stock picks, then made it concrete anyway. When you pray for someone who is sick, where is your confidence coming from? From having read your Bible all week — or from the Messiah who multiplied bread, healed the sick, and always did what the Father wanted, on whose merits you have the audacity to ask for a miracle. We do not pray for the sick on the strength of a good breakfast.

▶ 1:47:05

Same for the mornings after. You sin, and you wonder whether you can still tell anyone about Jesus, whether you are a hypocrite. Was the gospel ever true because you had not done that thing? "The gospel is true and doesn't ask your permission for it to be true," Matt said. "Christ is Lord didn't ever ask you if that's okay with you." When a flaw discourages you, you can stand in front of your shepherd and be discipled — you have not lost a standing you never earned. And the message is for every tribe and language that traces its ancestry to Adam, which is all of them. Some of them now live down the street. If you feel unqualified to explain it, you still can, because the gospel has a life of its own.

▶ 1:51:14

He closed where he opened, with Paul's resolve to know nothing but Christ and him crucified — and with a picture of a life given the way Solomon gave: for honor, for respect, for love, our lives hidden with Christ. Then a short prayer: that God would speak to us about the person of Jesus, and teach us to believe it.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

SCRIPTURE IN THIS MESSAGE

- 1 Corinthians 2:2
- Romans 3:23
- Romans 4:3
- Romans 5:12
- Hebrews 7:9
- Romans 5:17
- Romans 5:19
- Romans 6:6
- Romans 6:7–8
- Romans 6:14
- Romans 12:1
- Romans 7:4
- Romans 8:1–2
- Romans 8:3–4
- Romans 8:5–8
- John 16:14
- 1 John 5:6
- Galatians 3:2
- Romans 8:9
- Romans 8:10–11
- Romans 8:12–14
- Romans 8:15–17
- Colossians 3:3

FOR YOUR HOPE GROUP

1. Matt said the carnal mind decays toward bartering with God the way objects fall to the ground. Where do you catch yourself drawing up that contract?
2. Paul says we were in Adam and sinned with him. What changes if being in Christ is just as literal as that?
3. “We’re not free when we die. We’re free when he died.” Where have you been waiting on something in the future to finally set you free?
4. If setting the mind on the Spirit is not a performance rating, how would you tell the difference between that and “legal works, but with glitter”?
5. Name one thing you will pray for this week strictly on the merits of Jesus and not on how your week has gone. What is it, and who will you tell?

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Matt Ryniker is Hope Chapel’s senior pastor — his own description of the job — and reports to the church’s governing board, who he cheerfully calls his boss. He and his wife Mandy have been held up from Hope’s own pulpit as an example to the congregation. He spent a stretch of his working life as a public school teacher, and he still teaches the parent dedication classes where families commit to raising their children to follow Jesus — a theme that runs straight into this message.

Watch the full message:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CNkXJoXg0V0&t=4045s

These notes summarise a message preached at Hope Chapel in Austin, Texas. They are a reader's aid, not a transcript — scripture references link to the full passage so you can read it in context.