

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

ROMANS 7:14-8:39

Dr. Dudley Johnson was a skilled cardiologist, but a man of few words. Once, on the eve of an open heart surgery the patient asked Dr. Johnson, "Can you fix my heart?" Johnson replied, "Sure" - then he walked away.

The next day, after a twelve hour surgery, the patient asked him again, "In light of the blocked arteries you bypassed, how much more blood will I have now?" Dr Johnson gave him a terse reply, "All you'll ever need."

When the patient was discharged, his wife asked Dr. Johnson again, "How will this surgery affect my husband's future quality of life?" Dr. Johnson's answer is what I want you to hear... He said, "Ma'am, I fixed your husband's heart. His quality of life is up to him."

And this sums up Romans 6. On the cross Jesus fixed our rebellious hearts (in Christ we're new inside), but now our quality of life depends on three choices...

Know at the cross we connect with Christ - we become dead to sin and alive to God... Reckon this miracle as true and see yourself in Him... Then present your members to righteousness so that you think and behave in ways that reinforce a new, spiritual identity...

On the cross of Jesus our old man was crucified with Him; thus our rebellious heart was replaced with a compliant heart - one that loves God and loves others.

We've been transformed by God's Spirit in the inner man, now the goal is to get the rest of us in tow...

Romans 6 teaches us that Christians are free from sin! While, Romans 7 teaches that we're also free from the Law. In Christ, we died to sin and we died to the Law - and both realizations are vital to victory.

A believer in Jesus is fixated on God's love, and pardon, and power... Until the Law gets interjected into his thinking. Now his attention invariably shifts...

Here's an example, say I impose a law: Vanilla ice cream is prohibited. Yet the more I think of keeping the law, the more I want some delicious vanilla ice cream. The more I resist, the stronger the temptation grows. The best way to resist vanilla ice cream is to cultivate a desire for chocolate ice cream - to replace it with something better. This is how to live victorious over sin.

Under the Law I'm solely focused on resisting sin. The issue I dwell on is the sin in my life. But under grace the issue is the Son in my life. My focus is on Jesus. And it's His joy that lessens sin's appeal, and neutralizes it's temptation. To live in victory preoccupy yourself with following the Son, not just fighting the sin.

Let's pick up where we left off last week, 7:14, "For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin." Here, Paul introduces a new term to the discussion. He calls himself "carnal." When you hear "carnal" think chili. And there're two types of chili: plain chili or chili con carne - "chili with meat" - the good chili BTW! "Carne" or "carnal" is Latin for "meat or flesh."

Recall what we learned in Chapter 6. We all consist of two parts... The inner man is the part of you that lives forever. The outer man is the part that dies and returns to dust. "Flesh" is a synonym for the outer man.

So "carnal" is someone who leans on their own resources, rather than the influence of God's Spirit. They would rather do-it-yourself, than walk by faith.

Remember two, in 6:6 Paul uses two more terms. He mentions "the old man." That's the old sin nature we inherited from Adam, the inborn rebellion that fueled our selfishness and pride... But the rebellion on the inside shaped who I was on the outside. Evil thoughts and habits governed what I did and said. Paul refer to this outer man as "the body of sin" - or "the flesh."

So when I came to Christ the old man was crucified. I'm dead to sin. The sin nature has been eradicated.

But the flesh or the body of sin that was conditioned to do evil stays with me. The old man is dead, but our flesh keeps his tendencies alive. Old habits die hard. And when I fall into those habits, I'm being carnal.

Apparently this was Paul's problem... Verse 15, "For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do."

Paul tells us his actions contradicted his real desires. He wanted to obey God, but lacked the follow through.

It's unfortunate that some commentators think Paul was speaking of himself as an unbeliever. I don't think so. Paul

has godly desires. He says he wants to do good... he wouldn't say that if he wasn't a Christian.

Its obvious to me that Paul is a bona fide believer, but he's also a bewildered believer! He has godly ambitions, but he lacks the will power to carry them out. And we've all been there, haven't we? What I want to do, I don't do. I say no, then there I go!

Paul elaborates in verse 16, "If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good (The Law is right in condemning my actions). But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me." And this is astonishing. How can Paul sin; then dare say, "It is no longer I who do it..." unless a real transformation had actually occurred in his spirit to change his true nature.

Paul understood that every believer experiences a fundamental change inside. In the inner man - his true self - Paul was clean and sinless. Recall the bumper sticker, "Christians aren't perfect, just forgiven." I get the sentiment. We're human and as humans we are very capable of still sinning. But spiritually speaking, we ARE perfect. In the deepest part of who I am, I've become a new creation in Christ.

The real you isn't the problem. Paul says it's "no longer I who (sin), but sin that dwells in me." So what's the culprit? It's the body of sin, the flesh. The outer man - the thoughts and habits I carried over from my past life, and have allowed the world to teach me now. I have remnants of my former life lodged in my flesh that rise up and lead me astray. I'm

responsible for my flesh and it's deeds, but fundamentally it's not me.

Thursday at the Masters we watched Mackenzie Hughes, a pro golfer, hit a shot into the 15th green that comforted every hacker in the crowd. He bladed one. Hit a line drive 90 degrees off line with a sand wedge that almost took a caddie's head off. After he hit it he looks at the club, as if to say, "That wasn't me, it was the club's fault." This is what Paul says. In my heart I'm a pro, but at times I can still hack with the best of them.

Verse 18, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells..." In the inner man Paul is new in Christ - "It is no longer I who (sin)." But the outer man is the problem. For "in my flesh nothing good dwells..."

Here's every Christian's miracle AND dilemma... The old man is dead. I no longer have a sin nature - yet sin still lingers in my members, and can trip me up. Here's the Christian's plight in a nutshell, Paul is a redeemed spirit packaged in a corrupt flesh - and so are you!

In the last half of verse 18 Paul restates his dilemma, "For to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice."

In the inner man Paul wants to do good, but the flesh betrays him. He has total confidence in what God has done in his spirit, but zero confidence in his flesh.

Yet our attitude is often the opposite. We fail to recognize the miraculous work God has done inside us, and instead

think that godliness can be produced by our flesh. We try to please God in our own strength.

Here's our downfall... we don't lean totally on the Spirit because we refuse to be weaned off the flesh. Victory lies within us. What was done on the cross is now done in our hearts. But we live by faith, not flesh.

Verse 20, "Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me." Again, this is an incredible statement. Paul disavows that it's truly him - the real Paul - doing it when he sins. It's his flesh.

Think of the "Philly Phanatic" - mascot for the Philadelphia baseball team. On the outside he's a green, furry monster who he does crazy stuff. He taunts opponents and incites the crowd. But when you see him, remember the furry exterior is just a costume. There's a man on the inside (making a six figure salary BTW), and the person on the inside is the real person.

And the same is true with me... At times I get green with envy, have a monster-like temper, do crazy things, but that's not me. The real Sandy is underneath the exterior. The spiritual part of me is holy in God's sight.

The guy inside the Phanatic is not the monster, yet he's still responsible for his monster-like behavior. And this is Paul's frustration. How do we tame the Monster?

He sums it up, "I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing

me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.” Paul loves God, but he’s lugging around members that don’t want to cooperate.

Here’s a rhyme, “Within my earthly temple there is a fight. Part of me is love, and part is spite. There’s a part that’s broken-hearted for my sin. There’s a part of me that’s stubborn - sits and grins. Deep inside I love my neighbor as myself, at other times I prefer to sit alone upon the shelf.” But hear the conclusion, “From such care I should be free. If I could once for all determine which of these is me!” And here’s the key to victory!

How do we see ourselves? As a new person in Christ? Do you know what He’s done? Do you reckon it so? Do you present your members to act accordingly...

Or are you trying to earn your way to God by obeying the Law? That was Paul when he wrote Chapter 7. He followed Christ, yet lived as if he were under the Law.

That’s why he concludes in verse 24, “O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” And here, Paul draws on some vivid imagery.

Rome had an extremely harsh sentence for ruthless murderers. The corpse of the person who’d been murdered was strapped to the man who murdered him. The perpetrator carried around the rotting flesh of his victim. Wherever he went, the corpse went with him.

And this is how Paul sees himself, “O wretched man that I am!” He’s attached to rotting flesh, his own body of sin. And until he dies he carries the flesh around with him. What an awful dilemma, yet there is hope!

In verse 25 Paul answers the question he just asked, "Who will deliver me?" He says, "I thank God - through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin." The answer to our dilemma is not keeping laws, but walking in God's Spirit... Chapter 8 teaches us how...

Have you noticed that the meaning of words change over time. Fifty years ago, "Hardware" was nails, nuts, and washers. "Hard drive" involved maneuvering a car up a steep mountain. "Boot" you wore on your foot...

"Virus" made you sick. "Mouse" carried the virus. And "Dump" was where the mouse lived...

"Menu" helped you order your food. "Byte" was what you did with your food. And "Spam" was the type of food you hoped was not on the menu...

Before computers, "Desktop" was the top of a desk. "Laptop" was the top of your lap. And "Load" was when a heavy person sat on your laptop...

Of course, today we recognize these terms as computer jargon. But this is how I want you to think as we move into Romans 8. In a sense, we are all like computers in that we consist of hardware and software.

Think of your spirit, the inner person, as hardware, but hardware is controlled by software... by mind-sets, and beliefs, and presuppositions, and perspectives.

Now imagine two types of software - two operating systems, if you like - loaded onto your hard drive. Paul calls them: the law of the Spirit of life and the law of sin and death. Now each

day when you awake, you have a choice... Which operating system will you boot up?

Which approach to life will govern your thoughts and actions? Will you orientate your life around God's Spirit, or will you gravitate toward things of the flesh?

With that as a backdrop, let's jump into one of the most hopeful chapters in the Bible. Romans 8 begins with a bang, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit."

Paul says if I keep God's Son the issue in my life, even when I shank a shot there's "no condemnation."

I'm condemned only if I live under the Law.

"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death."

When an airplane takes off, two different principles are at play... The law of gravity puts a drag on the plane, and pulls it down, but the law of thrust and lift supersede gravity, and propels it airborne...

And likewise, the upward life of the Spirit overrides the downward pull of sin. We can soar in the Spirit.

So here's the question... what principle is at work in you? What's running on your hard drive... law or faith?

"For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in

us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.” God’s Law had no flaw. The problem isn’t the Law, it’s my flesh. It’s terribly weak, and prone to sin.

It reminds of a jingle: "To run and work the law commands, yet gives me neither feet or hands. But better news the Gospel brings. It bids me fly, and gives me wings." The law sets the bar, but only the Holy Spirit gives me spring enough to jump over the bar.

“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, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” Again, how do we walk in the Spirit? Let’s go back to our computer illustration...

When you come to Jesus God installs a new hard drive inside you. He puts His nature in you. But the hardware’s efficiency depends on the software.

If old software is running on new equipment it won’t perform very well. It’ll malfunction, a.k.a. Chapter 7!

That’s why you’ve got to reboot. Stop using the operating system entitled “the things of the flesh.” And log on to the system entitled “the things of the Spirit.”

I don’t know much about computers, but I’ve learned one truth over the years - when all else fails, reboot!

And this also applies spiritually. When I struggle and I do what I hate and not do what I want - I reboot!

I check my mind-set! Am I laboring on my own as if it’s up to me, or am I resting in the work God has done in my spirit? Do

I see myself in Christ, or am I logged on to an old identity? When I reboot I shift from flesh to faith - from “carnally minded” to “spiritually minded.”

Are you operating spiritually, or in the flesh? A carnal mind is death - while a spiritual mind is life and peace.

Verse 7, “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.” Like Mac and PC, or Tech and Georgia, or Coke and Pepsi, the flesh and Spirit are bitter rivals.

The goal of your flesh is to make itself look good and feel good... Whereas, the Spirit wants to glorify God. Try running both operating systems at the same time and you end up in Chapter 7 - stuck in frustration.

That’s why Paul says in verse 9, “But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.” All true believers possess God’s Spirit. You have the power to live victoriously, but you need to learn to operate from a spiritual mindset.

Paul says, “And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.” If we rely on our own resources we’re in trouble - for our body is dead due to sin. That’s why we have to move and live in the Spirit. Paul is telling us to shelve our do-it-yourself attitude and live by faith.

Verse 11, “But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will

also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.” The same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead lives in us - incredible power - resurrection power - is available to a Christian.

It’s been said, “We depend on Jesus for our eternal life, but we depend on the Spirit for our internal life.”

And the next verses teach us to live by the Spirit... be led by the Spirit... and be loved by the Spirit...

Jeannette lives in NY City. Because of the crime in her neighborhood she took Judo, and later Karate. She learned all the kicks, punches, pressure holds. She eventually became a black belt - a martial arts expert.

Finally, the day came when all her training was put to the test. She was attacked by a purse snatcher, and Jeannette defended herself admirably, but not with her martial arts. She beat the guy up with an umbrella.

And here’s the point of the story, what you know theoretically may not be what you draw on in reality.

This happens in our struggle with sin. When temptation comes, do we trust in God’s Spirit, or do we cope in our own strength? We need to be “spiritually minded” and rely on what we have in Christ Jesus.

“Therefore, brethren, 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.”

We need to shake off the do-it-yourself attitude, and make room in our perspective for God’s Spirit to work.

Verse 14, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” The Greek word translated “led” means “to be driven.” To be “led” doesn’t mean to be dragged around. The Law led from the outside in. The Spirit leads us from the inside out.

In basketball, one great player can get hot, and carry the whole team. This is the impact the Holy Spirit wants to make. He wants to be our difference maker.

Verse 15, “For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.”

We’re not only born of God’s Spirit, we’re also adopted. And adoption provide a child one great advantage. If you’re adopted you always know you’re wanted. And this what God is saying to us by giving us “the Spirit of adoption.” He loves us. We can cry out, “Abba,” or “Daddy.” The term implies a closeness. The Holy Spirit puts us on intimate terms with our Father.

Then Paul says in verse 16, “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God...” I say this reverently, but the Holy Spirit is like a dial tone. He confirms our connection to God. He provides us the inner witness of God’s presence.

I could tell my kids over and over I loved them, but if I never hugged them my words would ring hollow. Think of the Holy Spirit as “the hug of God.” We feel God’s love through the presence of His Holy Spirit.

“And if children, then heirs - heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ...” It would be more than enough as an adopted child if God just let you eat at His table and live under His roof. I’d understand if He gave all His treasure to His natural Son, but God has included us in His will. He’s assigned us not just a 5% cut, or 10%, but we’re “joint heirs with Christ!” Who would’ve thunk, God would split His inheritance between us and Jesus.

What a shocker!... And God has only one ask of us in return. To share in His glory, He wants us to share in His sufferings. We’re “joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.” To receive a crown, we need to bear a cross.

But His crosses are nothing compared to His glory. And that’s what he teaches in the next for verses...

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” Always remember, hardships on earth pale in comparison to the glories of Christ.

Think of a marathon - all 26 miles. The runners toe the starting line, when one of them jumps the gun. It’s a false start, but in light of the 26 miles it’s no big deal. When the race is over the false start won’t be recalled.

And that’s what the sufferings of this life are like compared to the glories of heaven. Heaven is so heavy it makes all earthly hardships seem lite as a feather.

Often we think of the glories our eyes will see when we reach heaven. But hey, next to the Savior Himself, the most

glorious site in heaven is us. We'll be the highlight of heaven. Christians will share in God's glory

Verse 19 reads, "For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God." The Phillips translation renders verse 19, "The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own." It's amazing!

Verse 20 is an important verse, "For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope..." In the beginning all creation was in harmony with its Creator, but sin threw a wrench in the gears. God's perfectly ordered universe became subject to randomness. Nature has gone berserk.

Today, every time a tree creaks, or a dog howls at the moon its a sign all is not right... Because of sin, the gentle rain that waters your lawn is also the source of floods that wipe out a city. The wind that lifts a kite, can knock over your house in a tornado... Today Nature is a mix of beauty and brutality - majesty and monstrosity.

Paul continues, "Because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." Jesus didn't just die on the cross to save us. He also died to redeem the universe - to restore everything that sin has touched.

Verse 22, "For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now."

Julie Andrews sang, "The hills are alive with the sound of music." But today the hills sing in a minor key.

All creation is in “the bondage of corruption” - we live in a fallen world, that longs to be free. Today, creation’s song is a dirge. It groans waiting on its redemption - on the day when God will make everything brand new.

“Not only that, but we also who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.” We all groan. We feel the aches and pains of our fallen state. And the older I get, the more I groan...

And I groan not just to be free - suicide would do that. No! My hope is to be clothed in the glory of Jesus.

We groan for “the redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.” God has a purpose for our groaning - groaning causes growing. You’ve heard of “growing pains.” When we grapple with a “yet-to-be-realized hope” it creates endurance.

The first half of Romans 8 taught us how God by His Spirit adopts us. Now the last half of the chapter, describes how He adapts us. Trials build character.

There are actually three groanings in Romans 8. We’ve discussed two - there’s the groaning around us and the groaning within us. And the third type of groaning, is the Spirit’s groaning on behalf of us...

Which Paul mentions in verse 26, “Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes

intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” When our minds are so befuddled we don’t know how to pray - or our hearts so heavy we’re overwhelmed - the Spirit will groan for us.

Here’s how this works in my life... In desperate times I’ll just groan. I’ll sigh. I’ll just vocalize my raw emotion, and as I do I trust the Spirit to translate my feelings into God’s will. The Holy Spirit is the perfect prayer partner.

“Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” The Spirit takes our groaning, and turns it into effective prayer.

Verse 28 is a familiar verse. “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”

In the lives of God’s children He takes all our circumstances - both pleasant and painful - and works them together for our good and for His own glory...

And each word in verse 28 is strategic... God works not a few things, or some things, or even most things, but “all things together” for good! And He works “all things together.” On their own some events in life are worthless. Yet God takes random and unredeemable things, puts them together, and turns them into good.

Like the ingredients in a cake, on their own you can’t stomach them. Flour, eggs, butter are disgusting by themselves, but when the baker puts all the components together under fire, they turn out delicious. The same is true with how God works in our lives.

And notice God's overarching purpose in all that He does with us. "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."

Before we existed we were chosen to be like Jesus! This is why God is not afraid to use whatever means necessary - even suffering - to accomplish His goal.

Verse 30 "Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified." Your God-ordained destiny is to be glorified in Christ. And this blows Paul away. He writes in verse 31, "What then shall we say to these things?" He's speechless.

He closes the chapter with a flurry of questions, that are designed not necessarily to be answered, as much as to stir up our appreciation for God's amazing grace.

He begins, "If God is for us, who can be against us?"

Author Max Lucado says if there's a tree in heaven God has carved your name in its bark. Your photo is on His refrigerator magnet. Isaiah 49:16 even tells us, "I have written your name on My hand." Imagine this, God has tattoo, and it's a "Sandy" tat. Don't ever think God holds a grudge against you, or He's angry at you, or He's washed His hands of you... no way!

God is for you! And His favor trumps all opposition.

And what proof do I have that God is for me? Verse 32, "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" If

God gave us His most precious possession, His Son, as a sacrifice to save us, do you think He's going to get stingy with the rent, or a good job, or a Christian spouse? Why doubt His generosity?

"Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies." I have enemies who would like to throw rocks at me, but they're not the judge! God is my judge, and God isn't condemning or denouncing. He's just forgiving. He is the God who justifies.

Verse 34, "Who is he who condemns? (not Christ) It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us." Jesus traveled a long road: from a manger, to a cross, to heaven's throne to insure our salvation. Why would He condemn us after doing that?

Verse 35, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" In the fourth century, John Chrysostom, offended the Roman Emperor. He was called to the palace, and was told to stop preaching God's Word, or he would be banished.

Chrysostom replied, "Sire, you cannot banish me, for the world is my Father's house." The Emperor snapped back, "Then I will slay you." He said again, "No, you cannot, for my life is hid with Christ in God." "Then your treasures will be confiscated." "Sire, my treasures are in heaven, where none can break through and steal."

The Emperor got angry, "Then I will drive you from man, and you will have no friends left." "That you cannot do, either, for I

have a Friend in heaven who has said, 'I will never leave you or forsake you.'”

Chrysostom was eventually banished, and died in route. But history never forgot the lesson he taught that day. You can take nothing from a child of God that's truly important! Nothing separates us from God's love!

In verse 36 Paul quotes Psalm 44:22, “As it is written: “For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” This was certainly Paul's life. He suffered much for Jesus' sake.

“Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.” Name the trial and God saw to it Paul overcame with joy and victory. And you too, can be “more than a conqueror” in Christ Jesus.

“For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth...” A literal translation would be “neither the zenith or horizon.”

The "zenith" is the point in the sky directly overhead. The "horizon" is where the circle of the earth meets the sky. When astrologers cast their horoscopes they do so by studying the position of the stars and planets in relationship to the earth's “zenith” and “horizon.”

This is provocative language. Paul is combating the occult and astrology. Even today people think their destiny is tied to the constellations. Not so! Paul says not even the stars can separate us from God's love.

I like Donald Grey Barnhouse's comment on verse 39, "A true Christian can sit down at a table with thirteen people present, spill salt, break a mirror, put an umbrella up inside a room, walk under a ladder, have a black cat walk across his path, and all this can happen to him on Friday, the thirteenth. Yet none of it, nor all of it together, can separate him from God's love." Trust the Lord, not luck. Neither chance, or superstition or fate has any influence over your life if you're in Christ.

Chapter 8 concludes with wonderful assurance, "Nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."