

CEC Bible Study: Romans

Session 5: Romans 7 – 8
Sept. 2, 2020
Christ Episcopal Church
Cape Girardeau, MO

Group Introductions

- Any newcomers?
- Recap of last week (download all of our previous discussion notes [here](#))

Opening Question: How do you know God loves you?

Romans 7: Christ and the Law (Torah)

- First things first: To whom is Paul speaking? ([7:1](#))
 - How might this understanding of the audience shape the way we read what follows?
- The First Covenant (the Law) and the New Covenant in Christ
 - An Analogy from Marriage ([7:1–3](#))
 - What Christ’s New Covenant means for the Law ([7:4–6](#))
- If Christ somehow supersedes the Law, does this mean that the Law is evil? ([7:7–12](#))
 - The Coercion of the Law by the Cosmic Power of Sin ([7:8–13](#))
 - Conclusion: The real problem is not the Law at all, but rather Sin ([7:12–13](#))
- Law and Spirit, Flesh and Sin ([7:14–25](#))
 - Did Paul have a guilty conscience?
 - It depends on what readers believe “Sin” to be:
 - Sin as moral culpability?
 - Sin as a cosmic agent?
 - Krister Stendahl, [“The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West”](#) (PDF)
 - Paul’s “inmost self” confesses that the Law is a net positive ([7:22](#))
 - What makes Paul’s body a “body of death”? ([7:21–25](#))

Romans 8: The gentiles’ adoption through the faithfulness of Christ

- Just what did Jesus do, anyway? ([8:1–2](#))
 - εν χριστῷ (“in Christ”): A curious Pauline phrase.
 - Similarly “in the Lord,” or “in him”
 - Almost 200 occurrences in Paul’s letters
 - Perhaps: Unity with Christ? What might this look like?
- Why did God do it this way?
 - Connecting Paul’s train of thought in ch.7 and ch.8
 - “God has done what the Law, weakened by the flesh, could not do...” ([8:3](#))
- Life of the Flesh, Life of the Spirit ([8:3–17](#))
 - Paul’s confidence in the Romans

- “Y’all are not in the flesh; y’all are in the spirit” (8:9).
 - The indwelling of the spirit (8:9–11)
 - Whither human agency? (compare 7:20 with 8:11)
 - The emphasis: Not on *human* action, but what *God has done for us in Christ*.
- Children of Abraham, Children of God (8:12–39)
 - The “spirit of adoption” (8:14–17)
 - Gentiles now among God’s heirs by the power of the Spirit (8:17)
 - The adoption of the gentiles is the first sign of what God is up to (8:18)
 - A vision of the world made whole (8:18–27)
 - Compare/contrast with the vision of the world in 1:18–32
 - The already/not-yet expectation of cosmic renewal (8:22–25)
 - How do we know we are children of God?
 - What if I can’t pray well? (8:26–27)
 - What if we’re worried things won’t work out? (8:28–30)
 - If God makes a habit out of changing God’s mind, can we trust any promises God makes? (8:31–39)