

NO ONE WILL SEPARATE US FROM CHRIST



PSALM 128:1-6 // ROMANS 8:26-39

MONDAY 7/31/23

PSALM 128:1-6 // 1 Happy is everyone who fears the LORD, who walks in his ways.

ROMANS 8:26-39 //26 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words.

REFLECTION We can sit in our cars, but if we have no gasoline we cannot move forward. We are stuck. A person who says they are a Christian but does not have the Holy Spirit is lying. The planting or anointing of the Spirit is essential to the whole Christian faith. In other words, it is impossible to be a Christian without the Holy Spirit. This week's FCC devotional study (otsegocongregational.org) is going to teach the power of the Holy Spirit in the lives of people. The Holy Spirit's power transforms us. Gives us the power to have a new life. The Spirit sustains us in the faith of Christ and readily helps us and guides us to live as God's Children. If you deny these truths about the Holy Spirit, you are not a Christian. How do you know the Holy Spirit has anointed you? 1 Cor. 12: 3 says, "Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit (Please look up Apostle's Creed)." The empowerment of the Holy Spirit is essential for the church even to function. The book "Growing the Church in the Power of the Holy Spirit", by Brad Long tells us, by nurturing a relationship with the Spirit we will have these results. A love, that draws us into engagement; A faith, resulting in obedience; A will to receiving divine guidance to move forward; A will to be able to exercising spiritual discernment; A desire to receive the gifts of the Spirit in our hearts (See: 1 Cor. 13): Be guided by intercessory prayer that shapes our future. We are the Children of God who see life differently. St Paul writes: 1 Cor" 12 27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it." Christians in Otsego and Plainwell, are all just one body of Jesus Christ. We bear the cross of Christ and His Spirit gives us a power beyond our own strength to impact our neighbor. Think of it this way, we are sustained by a celestial power.

PRAYER Holy Spirit I thank you for bringing me into your presence and guiding my power to love, to accept others, and forgive. I am happy because I have learned to honor and love you Lord Jesus. In Jesus Name Amen

TUESDAY 8/1/23

PSALM 128:1-6//128:2 You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands; you shall be happy, and it shall go well with you.

ROMANS 8:26-39//27 And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. 28 We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.

REFLECTION What does it mean to have the Spirit of God intercede for us? The Spirit takes upon himself a part of our burden, and our weakness. Even though we are weak and fragile to sin, born of the Spirit people have enough protection from being overwhelmed by sin. God appointed the Spirit, not only to give us instructions, but also to guide us in life. We have the power of God behind us. 1 Peter 1 3-4,7 says, "3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. 7 These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed". St Paul concludes, "heavenly favors" bring us to a place where we have a desire to have a personal relationship with God. None of us can even aspire to read the Bible nor pray without first being guided by the Spirit. The Spirit daily stirs up our hearts to come into the presence of Christ. We once were helpless in this task. Now it is clear by God's grace the power of the Spirit opens the door of our heart and mind.

PRAYER: Lord God, thank you for the favor of your Spirit who drew me to you. You have blessed me with the first fruits of the Spirit. You make my heart sore with joy because of your heavenly gifts. In Jesus Name. Amen

WEDNESDAY 8/2/23

PSALM 128:1-6//128:3 Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table.

ROMANS 8:26-39//29 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 within a large family. 30 And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

REFLECTION I think it is important to understand who are the “chosen ones” and what does it mean to be predestined. First, “predestined” is defined as a set course of events. God is sovereign over all of life and has set a course of events leading towards eternal life. The curse of death has been imposed on life as the penalty of sin. Death is an unnatural state for God who created life in the first place. In order for us to have eternal life, God grants new life to us through His Son Jesus Christ. God chose to give to us His Son. Those He chose are those He has conformed into His image. There is no reason for us to be grieved by this activity of God. In all generations since Christ’s resurrection, millions of people have confirmed Jesus



Christ is of Man. We have been foreordained to a new life. Now we bear the image of God’s Son. Who are the “predestined ones”? Those remade in the image of God. They are the ones who received the “new birth” from the Holy Spirit. As members of God’s Family we offer His grace to others who are still seeking. Eph 3: “8 Though I am the least deserving of all God’s people, he graciously gave me the privilege of telling the Gentiles about the endless treasures available to them in Christ. 9 I was chosen to explain to everyone this mysterious plan that God, the Creator of all things, had kept secret from the beginning.”

PRAYER Heavenly Father, because of your profound love for me you have blessed my life with a loving Family. I thank you for my earthly family and friends May your grace continue to be poured out on all of them. In Jesus Name Amen

THURSDAY 8/3/23

PSALM 128:1-6//128:4 Thus shall the man be blessed who fears the LORD.

ROMANS 8:26-39//31 What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? 32 He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? 33 Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

REFLECTION Did you hear what St Paul just wrote? God is for us, who than dares to be against us. Let that sink into your consciousness for a bit. God’s love is so great He gave up His precious Son so we could live eternally with Him. The true meaning of predestination is, God has gratuitously adopted us into the eternal Family. We are reclaimed not just in the flesh but also in the Spirit. We all bear the cross of Christ and die to self. No person can be an inheritor of heaven without first being conformed into the image of God’s Son. Yes, God is for us! This fact is a powerful truth. There are hundreds of testimonies in the Bible telling us about the power of God saving each of them. The author of Psalm 23: 4 “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.” Later on Peter testifies how this continues to happen. 1 Peter 1:20-21 20 God chose him (Jesus) as your ransom long before the world began, (predestined) but now in these last days he has been revealed for your sake. 21 Through Christ you have come to trust in God. And you have placed your faith and hope in God because he raised Christ from the dead and gave him great glory.” God had predetermined all He has adopted in Christ. St Paul is so existed to tell us this news, he is shouting as loud as he can “God is for us!”

FRIDAY 8/4/23

PSALM 128:1-6//128:5 The LORD bless you from Zion. May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life.

ROMANS 8:26-39// 34 Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. 35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered."

REFLECTION We have all been accused of breaking the Law by committing criminal acts against God. We deserve just punishment. Yet, on the other hand, God who is our Judge has absolved us from punishment. St Paul teaches us there is hope for us. There is no condemnation for us who are in Christ Jesus. The fine of death has been paid. God's love has reached out of heaven by offering us His Son. Jesus' death on the Cross was the punishment due us. Yet, He willfully undertook our curse to deliver us from such horror. Christ's resurrection secures our resurrection and we are now conquerors of death. Praise God! Eph 1:20 "That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms." Jesus' supreme power triumphs over the devil, death, sin, and the gates of hell. Even more we are brought into an intimate relationship with God our Father, who now we dare call Abba, our daddy.

SATURDAY 8/5/23

PSALM 128:1-6// 6 May you see your children's children. Peace be upon Israel!

ROMANS 8:26-39//37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 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.

REFLECTION To be a conquer over evil, through Christ, means we have accepted the love of God. Before any of us knew of this great love, we succumbed to the sin in us. We were young children seeking love and acceptance in all the wrong places. Marty Buber, an Austrian Jewish philosopher best known for his distinction between the "I-Thou" relationship and the "I-It" writes about how relationships affect our lives. We have been created by God for a relationship with God. Sin distorted our relationship with God, other people, material things and the natural world. Being created male and female to love God is the essence of life. But sin caused all sorts of disruptions. In order to get right with God we need a new spiritual life granted by Christ. This new spiritual life causes us to humble ourselves and seek forgiveness before God. This paternal kindness of God, gives us assurance of this new eternal life. Christ now draws us away from the gates of hell into the eternal light of life. As we learn to live with this truth, our relationship with people, nature and material things begin to change. These old distorted relationships no longer have control over us. Paul Zahl's book "Grace in Practice" teaches us, as we accept God's grace we find the material things matter less and less. As we grow in faith, Mr Zahl says, money has little value, because we are overwhelmed by God's grace. The story of Jesus and Zacchaeus in Luke 19 is a good example. Luke 19: "8 But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." 9 Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." Zacchaeus certainly had a change of heart. Zacchaeus received and accepted the love of God. Once we have such a love, nothing will ever separate us from God.

PRAYER: Pray the Lord's Prayer today.



PSALM 128:1-6 // ROMANS 8:26-39

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