

A VIEW FROM THE TOP

Scripture Reading: Read Romans chapter 8

If you ever get a chance to visit Camp Pinnacle in Voorheesville, NY for a retreat or camping expedition, you're in for a real treat. The men of our church have been there several times for men's retreats. They have great food, a challenging ropes course, comfortable facilities, a decent price and incredible views. A short hike in any direction will give you a panoramic view of the entire area from multiple perspectives. The view from the top is certainly breathtaking, awe-inspiring, and worth the hike.

Many believers have come to see Romans chapter 8 in the same way. It's a breathtaking view from the top that reveals a panorama of God's glory no matter which way you look. From the opening declaration that *"there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,"* to Paul's closing statement that nothing in all of creation *"will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord,"* the chapter is filled with awe-inspiring views of God's promises and provision.

Although we certainly can't list them all here individually, take a look at a few "snapshots" from Romans 8. (1) There is no condemnation for those in Christ – 8:1. (2) We have freedom from the law of sin and death – 8:2. (3) The Spirit of Christ dwells within us & empowers us to walk holy – 8:9,13,15,23. (4) We can call God our Father – 8:15-16. (5) We are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ – 8:17. (6) We have the promise of a redeemed and resurrected body – 8:23. (7) The Spirit of God helps us pray according to God's will – 8:26-27. (8) God works all things together for good in our lives – 8:28. (9) Christ Jesus ever lives to intercede for us at his Father's right hand – 8:34. (10) Nothing can separate us from the love of God – 8:35, 38-39. (11) We are more than conquerors in Christ – 8:37.

What do you think? Pretty amazing views, aren't they? We had to climb quite a ways to get here, though. We had to begin at the bottom, in Romans 1-3, learning that we are sinners who can't save ourselves. We need God's righteousness. Until we face the reality of who we are apart from Christ, we can never scale the heights. Then we began our ascent by faith in Romans 3-5, finding the grace places to put our feet so that we can ascend the hill of justification. We discovered the free gift of righteousness that comes by faith to those who trust Jesus. We were, then, beckoned upwards by our guide, the Holy Spirit, and challenged to climb to the top in Romans 6-8. The Spirit wanted us to recognize that not only were we to be declared righteous by faith, we were to allow Him to work to develop Christ's righteousness within us as well. It's not an easy journey as we felt the pressure of the divided self within and the trials without, but the promise of the view from the top drove us ever upward to the pinnacle. We were assured that the view would be worth it in the end. It is!

Action Step & Prayer Focus: Go back through Romans 8 and pick out two or three "snapshots" that you need to have the Lord put in the "photo album" of your heart this week. Reflect on the "pictures" and give the Lord thanks for what He has provided for you through Jesus Christ.

Take-a-way: *A Romans 8 view from the top is worth the climb!*