

# “THE CORNERSTONE”

AUGUST 2023 – SEPTEMBER 2023

First Presbyterian Church PC (U.S.A.)

206 E. 20<sup>th</sup> Street P. O. Box 444

Falls City, Nebraska 68355

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Worship Time: 11:00 AM

## Pastor's Reflection

*For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, cannot do; by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*

### **Romans 8:2**

From violence, disasters, and trying to understand how wars of true evil shown on the nightly news to the personal, physical, or relational pain of our own lives, it is plain to see we live in a broken world. I am excited to walk with you as we understand more fully the “Good News” found in Scripture can be truly the “Great News” during difficult times. The above statements are from one of Paul’s letters to the Romans where he addressed people he never met in the hope of encouraging and building up this community during difficult times, and finding wholeness and unity through the process. As you follow with me, I thought you might find my research or “exegesis” of interest.

According to the Anchor Bible Dictionary, “exegesis” is the process of careful, analytical study of biblical passages undertaken in order to produce useful interpretations of those passages. Ideally, exegesis involves the analysis of the biblical text in the language of its original or earliest available form. Then I consider the contexts such as economic, social, educational, traditions of the time to list a few. Usually, I want to know who is in the room experiencing the event and are not named. We know there are other people around. I will discern and create an outline to note those things I am called to bring forward into the message or sermon. Due to limited space, please note my outline categories will consist of my final statements.

### Introduction:

In times of turmoil and brokenness, we often seek solace and hope to find the strength to overcome obstacles. The Bible, a source of wisdom and comfort, offers us Good News that sustains us

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amidst our toughest trials. Romans 8:2 specifically carries a powerful message of encouragement, assuring us that no matter the crisis we face, we can find wholeness and unity through the transforming power of the Gospel.

Exploring the Verse:

Romans 8:2 states, "For the law of the spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death." These words are filled with promise and offer a glimmer of hope in the midst of despair. Let us break down this verse and examine how it brings us Good News for tough times.

1. Freedom through the Spirit of Life:

The verse reminds us as followers of Christ, we have found liberation from the bondage of sin and death. In our brokenness, when life feels heavy and overwhelming, the Spirit of life offers us freedom. This freedom allows us to rise above our circumstances and embrace the promise of restoration, healing, and renewal.

2. Unity in Christ Jesus:

Additionally, the verse highlights freedom is found through Christ Jesus. It speaks of the unifying power of Christ, emphasizing that in Him, we can transcend our individual struggles and become part of a larger, unified body. In times of crisis, this reminder encourages us to seek support and find strength in connecting with fellow believers, fostering a community that uplifts and supports us through challenging times.

3. Transformation from Brokenness to Wholeness:

The verse points to the transformative nature of the Good News. It implies that no matter the magnitude of our brokenness, be it personal, societal, or spiritual, we can find hope in the promise of wholeness. The Gospel affirms our brokenness does not define us, but rather, through Christ, we are offered the opportunity to be made whole, to experience restoration, and to emerge from challenging circumstances with newfound strength and purpose.

4. A Source of Sustenance:

This verse reminds us the Good News is not merely a temporary escape from difficulties but a sustaining force in the midst of them. Regardless of the crisis we face, the Gospel serves as an anchor, providing us with inner strength, peace, and resilience. In times of brokenness, the promise of Romans 8:2 can guide our thoughts, actions, and decisions, anchoring us to the unwavering truth that we can rise above our circumstances through the power of Christ's redemptive love.

Conclusion:

Romans 8:2 offers us the Good News we seek during tough times. It reminds us of our freedom, unity, and the transformative power of the Gospel. By embracing this verse and applying its principles to our lives, we are encouraged to find wholeness and unity, no matter the crisis we face.

## COMMUNITY NEWS

### Asera Care Hospice

Asera Care Hospice is in need of hospice volunteers in our area to provide support to terminally ill patients and their families. Volunteers can visit, read to the patient, participate in a favorite activity, or simply sit alongside them in their journey. Volunteers are a vital part of our hospice care mission. They are provided with extensive training and continued support throughout their tenure.

To sign up or find out more about how to become a hospice care volunteer and other opportunities, please contact: Jen Vogt, Regional Volunteer Coordinator at 402-943-6871, email her at [jennifer.vogt@amedisys.com](mailto:jennifer.vogt@amedisys.com) or apply online at <https://btrr.im/sjmwww> Your support is greatly needed and appreciated.

### Rotary Club

Pastor Rick, President of the Falls City Rotary Club, announced the award of a matching grant in the amount of \$1,875.00 from Rotary International. The grant along with commitments by the Rotary Club of Falls City will provide \$3,375 of funds earmarked for the Community Medical Center Walking Trail. The gift will be used for installation of a bench, excavation and site preparation, landscaping and labor. The completed trail provides a great place to walk and reinforces the importance of exercise and mental wellness in our lives.

### A Bit of Church Humor—

A pastor was 10 minutes into his sermon when he noticed his young son in the balcony with a pea-shooter. He was leaning over the balcony aiming and popping people in the head. As the pastor prepared to deliver a very public scolding of his boy—the 7-year-old son hollered out, "You keep preaching Dad, and I'll keep them awake!"

## Summer Series 2: Broken-Good News for Tough Times

July 16<sup>th</sup> through August 20<sup>th</sup>

### UPDATE-PILL BOTTLE COLLECTION

The collection of pill bottles has come to an end. Thank you for your contributions to that mission project. We shipped many bottles!

### Buchanan Highlanders

The Buchanan Highlanders will be with us Saturday morning, August 26 from 10:15 am until Cobblestone Parade time. They bring a wonderful reminder of our church's Scottish heritage. They are based in St. Joseph, Missouri and will play a selection of patriotic, historical and religious songs on the church balcony. Shade, chairs and cold water will be provided. The sound carries about two blocks and the concert is a great way to start the parade. It is also a great place to watch the parade as it makes the turn from 20<sup>th</sup> street onto Harlan.

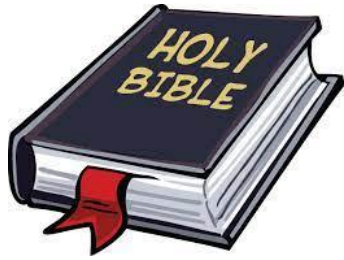


The Nebraska Early Childhood Collaborative, in partnership with We Care For Kids, launched a year-long campaign to highlight the importance of the early childhood workforce. Each month for 12 months, two persons in the childcare field were recognized for their commitment to excellence and service to their communities. Chris Crawford, owner of Breezy Hill Childcare, was selected in July! Chris has provided daycare for more than 27 years. Congratulations to Chris not only on her award, but for providing a much-needed service!

An understanding in the hope and encouragement in difficulty with Paul's letter to the Romans. Paul's letter to the Romans is addressed to people he had never met, in the hopes of encouraging and building up this community to which he only dreamed of traveling. He knew the Christian life was a perilous one, and the world in which the church was growing and spreading was unpredictable and increasingly diverse. In this series covering some of the letter's most intriguing and inspiring passages, we learn how God sustains us in the midst of brokenness, both within and without, helping us to find wholeness and unity, no matter what crises we are facing.

I invite you to join us for this insightful sermon series which began on July 16<sup>th</sup> and continues through August 20<sup>th</sup> at our regularly scheduled Worship Hour at 11:00 am.

7/16/23	Broken Spirits, Broken Bodies	Rom. 8:1-11	Our sin and pain damage our human bodies as well.
7/23/23	Labor Pains	Rom. 8:12-25	God will bring restoration, in spite of our pain and brokenness.
7/30/23	Inseparable	Rom. 8:26-29	No matter of brokenness can separate us from the love of God in Christ.
8/6/23	All-Inclusive Grace	Rom. 9:1-5	God chooses us all, despite human differences.
8/13/23	The End of the Law	Rom. 10:5-15	Grace restores what is broken-not anything we can do.
8/20/23	God is in control	Rom. 11:1-2a, 29-32	Though brokenness remains, we can trust in God's mission of restoration.



In Matthew Christ is our Messiah!  
In Mark He is our Servant King!  
In Luke He is the Great Physician!  
In John He is the Son of God!

In Acts He is the Risen Lord!  
In Romans He is our Righteousness  
In Corinthians He is our Holiness  
In Galatians He is our Justification

In Ephesians He is our Perfection  
In Philippians He is our Provider  
In Colossians He is our Hope  
In Thessalonians He is our Coming King

In Timothy He is Our Shepherd  
In Titus He is our Rewarder  
In Philemon He is our Encourager  
In Hebrews He is our High Priest

In James He is our Wisdom  
In Peter He is our Inheritance  
In John He is our Lover  
In Jude He is our Warrior

In Revelation He is the Alpha and Omega!  
The Beginning and the End!

The Good News sustains and empowers us, providing strength to overcome brokenness and offering hope for a brighter future.

There you have it. The fundamentals in knowing how to live a life of freedom and joy. I know, it is easier said than done. For me, I found Romans 8:2 an additional foundation block in better understanding of my faith.

Blessings and Peace to you.

Pastor Rick

## RECOMMENDED READING

*Lead Me by Matt Hammitt*  
*Love on the Run by Shari McDonald*  
*The Facts of Life by Lisa Whelchel*  
*Average Joe by Troy Meeder*  
*Summer Promise by Robin James Gunn*

## NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

All newsletter articles for the October-November newsletter will be due to the office by **SEPTEMBER 11th**. Thank you for marking this *important* date on your calendar and submitting good news to be shared!

## -----PARISH NEWS-----

## DIAPER CLOSET

First Interstate Bank, Falls City, had a Diaper Drive during the month of May. They collected diapers for our Diaper Closet, especially the much-needed larger sizes. We also received some very cute bibs from them! A big thank you goes to Joleen Stoller and her staff!