**Romans 8 – The Work Of God In Our Life**

As we continue in our look at portions of Romans, we come to **Rom. 8**, which only makes sense considering last week we discussed the battle of the inner man and sin that everyone experiences. The point at the end of the message was that through Jesus any of us could come have victory over sin because it is promised to us.

**Romans 8** focuses on the Holy Spirit’s work in our life, what He does to show that we are Christians and how He helps us to live the new life that we have in Jesus. The Spirit is God just as the Father and the Son are God. He is a Person, not some mystical force.

I want to begin by looking at three great verses as we start. Here we go. Our first point is so refreshing,

**1) We are under no condemnation from God.** Some people love to condemn others. They find things to fault, to point out, about someone’s failures and mistakes. They spend time judging and condemning individuals. We are warned about this type of attitude in places such as **Jam. 3**.

I do understand that when someone has done wrong, we at times need to confront them. That is taught in Scripture. **Gal. 6:1-2** comes to mind where we are told that if we see someone stumble and fall, we are to help them, but to do so with the right attitude and being controlled by the Holy Spirit.

When it comes to our relationship with God, we know that we are at peace with Him. And we also know that from **Rom. 6-7** we have a new life in Christ, and we are not under God’s judgment any longer because we are in **“Jesus Christ our Lord “** (**Rom. 7:25)**.

That brings us to **vss. 1-3** of **Rom. 8**. The last three words of **vs. 1** say it all - **“in Christ Jesus.”** We are under no condemnation, or judgment of God because of our relationship with Christ. Again, as said many times, this does not give us the freedom to sin, but it reminds us of how much God cares about us and our relationship with Him. No condemnation in Christ.

The word **“no”** is important. **It tells us that there is none, not one bit of condemnation, no judgment, and the reason - Jesus**. God has already dealt with our sins in Jesus Christ through the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord. In the future we will not be condemned or judged for our sins.

**Vs. 2** tells us that the Spirit of God, the Spirit of life has set us free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. As we mentioned last week, the OT law and teachings found in books like Leviticus and Deuteronomy, is not bad. The issue is that the law reveals our sin, and our tendency as sinful people is to rebel against God. The law of sin and death describes our sinful tendencies.

Sin has no power or control over us, and death is not the end for us, nor for anyone. But even spiritual death does not have a rule or hold on us. We have been set free. I love that statement.

This setting free from sin and death was a one-time event. The moment we come to faith in Christ we are free from sin’s power and guilt. The word **“free” means “to set at liberty from another’s control.”** This is a reason that we are not under judgment because God has stepped in and freed us from sin’s power and control in our life.

**Vs. 3** tells us that the law could not save us, it could not deal with the issue of sin. Christ came to earth to deal with the sin issue. That is what **vs. 3** is about. When it says that Christ was in the **“likeness of sinful flesh,” it does not mean that He took on sinful flesh like we have sin in us**. It simply means that He took on a human body **(See Jn. 1:14)**. He could not sin for He was the God-Man.

This leads to a little side road that we are going to take. There is a debate over the issue of whether Jesus could sin or not. The terms used are impeccability and peccability, meaning He could have sinned, or He could not have. The idea is that temptation to be real requires the possibility of sinning. I disagree with that. We can be tempted but not respond whatsoever in a sinful way.

Temptation is not what is put before us, temptation in essence is our response to a sinful possibility. Christ never considered sinning though He faced temptations. Just read **Mt. 4** when he was in the desert and the enemy was trying to get at Him. Christ would not have given in. Though He was the God-Man, 100% man and 100% God, His divinity, His divine nature always ruled.

Passages such as **John 8:46**, where Jesus asked the religious leaders and the Jews, **“Which one of you convicts me of sin...”** and **1 Peter 2:22** tells us that Christ committed no sin. And Peter saw Jesus day in and day out for over three years. See also **Heb. 4:15; 1 Jn. 3:5**.

Again, temptations happen, and they happened to Jesus **(Heb. 4:15)**. **It is what we do with them that matters**. And Christ could not have sinned. And even in His human nature He faced temptations but even in those times He did not yield nor considered doing so. Again, read the account of Jesus’ temptations in the wilderness in Mt. 4. We see here that Jesus underwent temptations but chose, through the use of the Word of God and Who He was, to resist.

Much more could be said on this topic, but I want to move on. Jesus, by coming to earth, took care of the sin problem and the issue of the law pointing out how sinful we were and thus man responding to sinful opportunities. Christ, as **Rom. 6-7** points out, has made it possible to live as God wants us to. We receive the Holy Spirit because of Christ’s work on the cross.

**2) The Spirit helps us live who we are. Rom. 8:4-11** is crucial for us when it comes to our walk with God as Christ followers.

**Vs. 4** reminds us that we could not keep the law, nor was it intended for us to earn our salvation. The law shows how sinful we are not but does not provide the help we need to be saved. Christ came to offer us hope and a new life.

We fulfill the law when we love God with all our heart, soul, and mind and others as ourselves **(Mt. 22:37-40)**. We would be unable to do that if Christ had not come and died and rose again for us.

These verses that we are looking at right now are important as we discuss living the Christian life. We are called to be holy **(1 Peter 1:15-16),** and we can only do that through the help of the Holy Spirit Who now lives in us. We are called to a higher plane of living made attainable because of Christ and the Spirit.

We needed Christ to intervene so that we could love God and others, fulfilling the law. But it was impossible on our own. We are no longer condemned, and we have been set free in Christ from sin’s power and control and we have been given the Holy Spirit.

If we are a Christian, we do not **“walk” (conduct, act) “according to the flesh.”** We do not live our lives in the standard or fashion of the flesh, where sin dwells, where the conflict is as **Gal. 5:16-26** points out. We can choose to disobey God but the new life we have in Christ helps us to walk **“according to the Spirit” (Gal. 5:22-23)**.

This fulfilling of the law’s righteous requirements we could not accomplish thus we needed Christ and the Spirit and the Father. The fulfillment was accomplished by Christ, and we accept by faith what He did for us. Now we walk after the Spirit’s leading or should. That is our aim.

How we live shows where we are at in our relationship with Christ. The new life we now have in Christ enables us to love God and others.

**Vss. 5-8** show that there the two types of people in the world. Those who know Christ and those who do not. Paul draws very distinct lines between the two.

In **vs. 5** Paul says that those who live according to the flesh are setting their minds, presently and as a rule, on the things of the flesh (the sins found in our body and mind). A person without Christ cannot help themselves, this is where they drift and lean to.

Now, believers can also act fleshly, but Paul is showing a distinction here, between those who know Christ as Lord and Savior and those who do not. Those who live according to the flesh desire those things. It is just part of who they are.

Believers, on the other hand, though not perfect, and prone to stumble, have, as **Rom. 7** tells us, a desire to set their minds on the things of the Spirit, to honor the Lord, to live out grace and peace and patience and kindness, etc. We can do so because we are under the power of the Holy Spirit, but we must yield by faith to His work and leading in our life. We do our part, He does His.

The differences are seen in the choices we make. To live according to the flesh is to be selfish, greedy, gossipy, a slanderer, to be led by the world’s values and beliefs. To walk after the Spirit is seen in our desire to study the Word of God, to pray, to reach out, to serve. Attitude and choices do separate the two contrasting views here. Believers will sin but our natural pull is to be like Jesus.

The idea of **“setting our minds” (vs. 5)** on either the flesh or Spirit **means that we “direct our minds, seek or strive for” things that are worldly or things that are spiritual**. Though believers can set their minds on worldly things, that is not what we normally do. Nor can we live that way because we have the Spirit of God living in us.

Now, note **vss. 6-7** and then we will look at the next section of these verses, which are **8-11** and then wrap up this morning in **vss. 12-17**. Now, to **vs. 6**. This verse begins by telling us that if we set our minds on things of the flesh, it leads to death. Again, Paul is talking about the person who is not “in Christ.” They are not a believer.

The word for **“set the mind”** has the same meaning in **vs. 6** as it did in **vs. 5**. What do we seek after, what do we strive for? Things of the flesh **(Gal. 5:19-21)** or things of the Spirit **(Gal. 5:22-23)**. Paul is speaking of two different types of people, those who know Christ and those who do not.

**Key:** In the second part of **vs. 6** Paul says that the believer, the one who sets their mind on the Holy Spirit, allowing Him to lead and control our lives, will have **“life and peace.”** Does this mean that we never have problems or struggles? Of course not. We have moments of worry, fears. But we know that because of our relationship with God we have a new life, the promise of a future life, and peace can help us and guide us as **Phil. 4:6-7** tells us.

Peace comes from God. It is the assurance that God is with us, and we rest in Him, believing that He knows what is best. Plus, I believe that the more we understand our position as a child of God, the more our sin bugs us, when we do have fleshly moments **(1 Cor. 3)**, where we act carnal, or worldly.

**Vs. 7** does not describe a believer in the first part of this verse. Paul notes that the mind that is set on the flesh, that is seeking after things of this world, of a self-centered life, of being influenced by the lost culture around us, is **“hostile” (actively opposed)** to God, and note this, it cannot **“submit” (obey, subject one’s self, yield)** to God’s law. Why? Because this person does not have the Spirit of God living in them. The flesh is powerless to submit to God.

**Vs. 8** wraps this section up with another statement of fact. Those who are **“in the flesh”** as opposed to those who are **“in the Spirit”** cannot please God. It is impossible. Some may argue that Christians can be **“in the flesh.”** We could say, yes, at times, but Paul is talking about a condition of how people live. The person **“in the flesh”** describes someone who does not know the Lord.

Let me finish the section here, **vss. 9-11**. As Paul addresses the Christians in Rome, he is clear, that we who have the Spirit of God dwelling in us, are **“in the Spirit.”** We are not **“in the flesh.”** That is the contrast here. Literally, we have the Spirit of God dwelling in us now. And if He is, He never leaves. We are sealed by Him until the day we are in the presence of God **(Eph. 1:13-14)**.

Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ **(those “in the flesh”)** does not belong to Him. That can only describe a person without Jesus as Lord and Savior. **Vss. 10-11** remind us that though we still dwell in this physical body, because we have the Holy Spirit living in us, will one day have that body, where sin still dwells, completely renewed. But for now, we belong to Christ and He helps us to live a right kind of life, an ethical, honest, morally right life as we yield to Him **(vs. 10)**.

**3) God’s unbreakable promise.** Let us wrap up this part of Romans by looking at **Rom. 8:12-17**. Because of our new life in Christ, Paul says that we are debtors, not to the flesh, but to the Spirit of God Who indwells us.

What does Paul mean here in **vss. 12-13**. The word **“debtors” has the meaning of being “held by some obligation, bound to some duty, to be obligated to do something for some one.”** We are not obligated to do anything for the flesh, to be controlled by it, to give in to it, and the reason is, that is not who we are. We are obligated to be under the control of the Holy Spirit.

**Vs. 13** shows this sharp contrast in how we live our lives. If we live according to the flesh, which a believer as a norm cannot do, we die spiritually and literally if unsaved, we miss out on knowing God. This is why it is so important to understand our identity in Jesus. We are adopted, forgiven.

Now comes the tricky part, the end of **vs. 13**. It is important to remember that, though sin has been defeated and is literally dead (the old man died in Christ), the flesh, our body, still has what some call the residue, or remnants of sin.

That is why **Eph. 4** and **Col. 3** are so important where we are told that we are a new person in Christ and because of that we are to live different than we did before. Put to death practically speaking, the things we have factually died to as **Col. 3:5-17** tells us to do. Live who we are.

That is what the end of **vs. 13** tells us. This is experiential. We already have died to these things, the deeds of the body, but we need to live out the fact that the old person we were in Adam, the person we were before becoming a Christ follower, has died and does not need to control us in any way.

Paul says, that because of our life in Jesus, we are putting to death the deeds of the body, the flesh, we will live. **We will experience the life Christ wants us to**. The Spirit-flesh conflict is real **(Gal. 5:16-26)**, that cannot be ignored. But we have, because of Christ, the ability to live who we are. We don’t have to get angry. We don’t have to lie, be greedy, gossip, or slander others.

The word **“put to death” means “to subdue, to render extinct”** and is a key for us as believers. We have the Spirit of God living in us and are children of God. Believers are led by the Spirit of God. This fits only for Christians. This does not mean we never mess up. It does mean the Spirit of God lives in us. The Holy Spirit affects us, guides us, leads us.

A key to all of this is **vs. 14**. If we are **“led”** by the Spirit of God, we are children of God. You know if you are being led by God’s Spirit. Are we convicted of sin? Are we studying the Bible and learning? Is the Lord leading us to serve in an area? Are we showing the fruit of the Spirit **(Gal. 5:22-23)**.

We are adopted into God’s family **(vs. 15)** and we can address God in a way that no one else can that He will here. The term **“Abba”** is Aramaic, and it is a term of endearment and intimacy. That speaks to our closeness to God and He is the perfect Father Who loves us unconditionally.

The Spirit, by His work in our lives bears witness that we are children of God **(vs. 16)**, and heirs of the Father and fellow heirs with Christ **(vs. 17)**, provided we suffer with Him. We will face difficulties just as Christ did.

**A few thoughts to take with us:**

**1) We must not excuse behavior that we know dishonors God.** Paul is clear that we cannot “walk according to the flesh.” But since we do sin, we must take responsibility for when we do wrong and deal with things. This is nothing new, we have talked about it before. The more, though, that we deal with sin, the easier it becomes to do so.

**2) Develop tunnel vision.** This does not mean that we are blind to the culture around us. What I am talking about is focusing on our relationship with God, learning by studying the Word of God, by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead and work in our lives (yes, it takes faith), and keep in mind the impact our life can have on others for Gid’s glory.

**3) Learn to let God love us. Rom. 8:15** shares with us the close relationship we have with the Creator of the universe. His love is unconditional, and we can talk to Him about anything, and He listens. He cares for us deeply and wants us to know Him, to learn of the relationship that He gives us with Him.

Sometimes our view of God is skewed. We think we know Him, but we don’t. We need to maybe recalibrate how we view God and what we know of Him. Learn about Him from the Scriptures, where He has shown Himself in His character.