

Romans 8:1-11

Intro:

--Here the Spirit of God is mentioned more times (17 as either Holy Spirit or human spirit depending on debate of which is which) than any other place save Jesus' teaching with His disciples in Jn. 13-16.

--Many see this as the finest description of true Christian life. Wonderfully, we begin with **no condemnation** and we end with **no separation**. Praise the Lord!

Verses 1:

--(1) Being carnal wretched men we will all have to deal with condemnation. From others, yes, but mostly from ourselves! Satan knows this so he will push us one of two ways: to despair in ourselves or to despair in God.

1) We despair in ourselves when we sin and begin to look within or at our own actions for self-defense instead of looking at and to Jesus Christ. The problem that we just saw is that we all fall short of the good we desire to see in ourselves.

--So then, finding imperfection and weakness within, we agree with the devil in our sin rather than God and His Word in our forgiveness. Why are we teaming with a liar and murderer from the beginning over the Way the Truth and the Life? This is the outcome of spiritual pride.

2) We despair in God when looking at ourselves and begin to believe God's work and God's Word are not enough. And in rebellion to God's work and God's Word we begin to demand a "sign" or "mark" or "experience" of our spirituality or we will no longer listen to God or trust His Word. Then we despair of self like Saul or Judas or we turn to other spiritual realities like pagan magic.

*Dietrich Bonhoeffer (Temptation): *"We should never argue with the devil about our sins, but we should speak about our sins only with Jesus."**

*Tozer (I Talk Back to the Devil): *"As for myself, I have learned to talk back to him on this score. I say, "Yes, Devil, sin is terrible—but I remind you that I got it from you! And I remind you, Devil, that everything good—forgiveness and cleansing and blessing—everything that is good I have freely received from Jesus Christ!"**

*Martin Luther: *"It's the supreme art of the devil that he can make the law out of the gospel. If I can hold on to the distinction between the law and gospel, I can say to him any and every time that he should kiss my backside. Even if I sinned I would say: 'Should I deny the gospel on this account?'"**

--There is some manuscript debate as to whether this should be placed here or only in 4. Theologically I have no problem with this because I see it as a repeated principle such as Paul just laid out in **7:17+20**.

--Walking according to the flesh will lead to condemnation but walking according to the Spirit will lead to conviction. The difference between *condemnation* and *conviction* is one draws us closer to Christ while the other drives us away from Him.

--One is from the Holy Spirit and the other is from the devil, a liar, murderer, and accuser.

Think Judas Vs. Peter

--***There is therefore no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus!*** God is not looking for us to pay off or work off the debt that Christ died for.

Verse 2:

--Here we are brought back to the discussion about *laws* as acting principles. Paul is now contrasting the ***law of the Spirit of life*** with the previous ***law of sin***. *Aerodynamics & Gravity*

--Notice this is a truth that is already accomplished in them: ***has made me free***. This is a fresh discovery of the life God has already given that Paul has been speaking about since chapter 5.

--How does this life work? How does the freedom from sin come?

--Through life ***in Christ Jesus!*** It is abiding in Christ as in **John 15** and grows as the lilies grow—***they neither toil nor spin***—Trust in a person Vs. Trying a method.

*Nee (The Normal Christian Life): *“And this is the truth. God will not give me humility or patience or holiness or love as separate gifts of his grace. He is not a retailer dispensing grace to us in packets, measuring out some patience to the impatient, some love to the unloving, some meekness to the proud, in quantities that we take and work on as a kind of capital. He has given only one gift to meet all our need: his Son Christ Jesus. As I look to him to live out his life in me, he will be humble and patient and loving and everything else I need—in my stead. . . The life of God is not given us as a separate item; the life of God is given us in the Son. . . Our relationship to the Son is our relationship to the life.”**

1 John 5:11-12: And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

--Errors and mistakes and wrongs in imperfect and sinful human beings will not disprove this reality. Christ’s promise is of torrents of living water from our innermost being. Abundant life! And there will always be some humble men and women who testify that they have found this life—this ***law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus***—and that life has set them free.

Verses 3-4:

--Here Paul gives a further description of what God has done *for us* and *in us*.

--**(3)** The requirements of the law—though ***holy and just and good***—could never be fulfilled in men who lived in the fleshly nature of sinful Adam’s line. So, God made an offering ***on account of sin—His own Son*** (as in **8:32** with ***His own love*** in **5:8**).

--In His own Son, come in the love of God, the righteous requirement of the law was fulfilled. He was the OT ark—where the tablets of the law of God were inside His very heart—His true delight. And in Him, who never broke the law, all that is ***holy and just and good*** in the law has been kept, its honor vindicated, its commands obeyed from the heart, and also, its penalty exacted.

--All our condemnation—our just condemnation—was settled in Christ Jesus. Thank you, Savior.

John 3:17-18: For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

--Paul's emphasis here is the power of sin in the flesh was broken at a specific point in history. There was a crucial and cosmic moment in time when our sin was condemned in Christ Jesus. This was our point of freedom from our old man, from the power of sin, from the demands of the law, and from the condemnation of sin in the flesh.

--(4) And that is not all! Now, we have been set free—not for a new list of laws without an inner power to fulfill them—but with a new life and a new Spirit. The very Spirit of Him who walked around and fulfilled all the law.

--This is fulfilled *in us* and not *by us*. The language here is passive.

--This was the fulfillment of the OT promises: (See also **Ez. 11:19-20; 36:26-27**)

Jeremiah 31:33: But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

--So we do not live—*walk*—in the power of our unredeemed flesh but in the life of the Holy Spirit. This is way better than a long list of commands. To be led of the Spirit is not supposed to be a sporadic and haphazard experience but the foundation of born again Christian life.

Galatians 5:16-18: I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

--Paul is writing, but he is inspired by the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is taking it for granted that anyone He is in gets what it is to walk **according to the Spirit**. There is something natural in this for the believer—conflict still present yes—but victory and new life as well.

--The real secret to holy living is Someone from outside of us, coming inside of us, and offering us their strength!

--All this must be done by spiritual life—divine life from God. This means that as I walk with Him I cannot try to also be independent of Him—as Paul will now bring up.

Augustine: "A vine does not produce grapes by act of Parliament; they are the fruit of the vines own life; so the conduct which conforms to the standard of the Kingdom is not produced by any demand, not even God's, but it is the fruit of that divine nature which God gives as the result of what he has done in and by Christ."

--And so the life of God is fulfilled *in me* rather than *by me*.

Verses 5-8:

--Here we find a description of those who **walk according to the flesh** from verse 4.

--Paul tells us that those who *live* in the flesh—believers sometimes *act* in the flesh/old man but they do not *live* in it—also ***set their minds on the things of the flesh.***

--To *mind* has the idea of more than *intellect* or *knowledge* but rather *attention to* and *occupation with*. Therefore, their attentions and occupations are consistently in line with their true character.

--Notice the progression: They live in the flesh, so they are occupied with the things of the flesh, so their occupations are hostile to God and His occupations, they don't please God, and the ending fruit of such a life is death.

--The flesh has its ***things*** and the Holy Spirit has His ***things***. Things to do, to desire, to think about—goals and purposes and ways of life. A carnal—or we might say fleshly—believer is one that lives without minding the things of the Spirit! *Not denying God, just ignoring Him*

--There should be something noticeably different in our lives, in our families, in our attitudes, in our goals, in us. If I am just like the world—something is wrong.

--This is where many believers struggle. A carnal life will rob the son or daughter of God of life, peace, and a sense of God's pleasure. *Am I living to please God or myself? Who is first?*

--Paul would make clear in **15:1-3** we are not to live to please ourselves and would say of himself in **1 Thess. 2:4+15** that he lived ***not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts*** while there were others who ***do not please God and are contrary to all men.***

1 John 3:22: And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.

--So through the work of Christ, by the Spirit of God, in faith, we can now serve Him with acceptable works and not dead works.

Verses 9-11:

--**(9)** Here Paul makes it clear that these Roman believers are no longer living ***in the flesh but in the Spirit.*** We are born again if the ***Spirit of God dwells in you!*** If not, you are not saved! *More than right doctrine. Reality of spiritual life. Miracle.*

*Tozer (The Divine Conquest): *"The Christian message rightly understood means this: The God who by the word of the gospel proclaims men free, by the power of the gospel actually makes them free. To accept less than this is to know the gospel in word only, without its power."**

--Christianity is a divine work of the Godhead—notice even in this one verse: ***the Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ.***

--**(10)** Does the Spirit dwell in you? Then you are His! And if so, then you are dead to the body of sin and alive because of the law of ***the Spirit of life.*** *I find it interesting that the Bible doesn't struggle with the same things we do. God knows what is true and has no reason to doubt it.*

--Again, Paul draws distinctions between justification and sanctification but never separation between the two. When God saves a man by His Spirit He also then immediately begins the work of sanctification in that man as well.

--Now, I find it interesting that this all ends with a picture of man's final position in resurrection. In the end, we will each be living spirits with proper domain over our resurrected mortal bodies. That is the Spirit's promise who dwells in us and raised Christ as our firstfruits.

****2 Corinthians 5:5: Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.****

--God dwells in us through His Spirit and He is not the God of the dead but the God of the living!