Romans 8:1-11

Intro:

--In this chapter, the Spirit of God is mentioned more times (17 as either Holy Spirit or human spirit, depending on the debate of which is which) than in any other place save Jesus' teaching with His disciples in **John 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)** ***There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.***

--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 in 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 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 type of condemnation is the bad harvest of unrecognized and unrepentant spiritual pride.

2) We despair in God when we look 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. In this spiritually manipulative state, 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 the phrase ***"who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit"*** should be placed here or only in **4**.

--I am not going to wade into the technical manuscript discussions.

--Theologically, I have no problem with its inclusion here because it is natural for Paul to insert 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 that conviction draws us closer to Christ while condemnation drives us away from Him.
--Conviction is from the Holy Spirit, while condemnation is from the devil, a liar, murderer, and accuser. *In terms of outcomes, 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:
--***For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.***
--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 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 **Romans 5**.
--How does this life work? How does the freedom from sin come?
--Through life ***in Christ Jesus!*** It is abiding in Christ **(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, 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! 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:
--Paul gives a further description of what God has done *for us* and *in us*.

--**(3)** ***For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,***
--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, my Lord and my 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 that 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)** ***that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.***
--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 fulfilled all the law.
--This is fulfilled ***in us*** and not *by us*. The language here is passive.
--The Holy Spirit is 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. Living with the Holy Spirit is way better than trying to follow a long list of commands in our own strength. To be led by the Spirit is not a sporadic and haphazard experience. It is the very 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 lives in understands what it is to walk ***according to the Spirit***. Walking according to the Spirit of God is something natural for the believer. Conflict with the flesh is still present, yes, but victory and new life are 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 is miraculously accomplished 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*. The Father loves us. The Son took on our flesh and gave Himself for us. The Holy Spirit lives in us.

Verses 5-8:

--Now, Paul describes those who ***walk according to the flesh*** from verse **4**.

--**(5)** ***For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.***

--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.

--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 who 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.

--**(6-8)** ***For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.***

--Notice the progression: Carnal people 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 ultimate fruit of such a life is death.

--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. Isn't it a remarkable gift that God would send His Holy Spirit to live in our conflicted lives!? Like Jesus walking and living among the constant sin and evil of humanity, overcoming all our evil with His good.

Verses 9-11:

--**(9)** ***But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.***

--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! *Salvation is more than correct doctrine. It is the reality of spiritual life. A miracle.*

*Tozer (The Divine Conquest): *"The Christian message rightly understood means this: The God who by the <u>word</u> of the gospel <u>proclaims</u> men free, by the <u>power</u> of the gospel actually <u>makes</u> 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)** ***And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.***

--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 a separation between the two. When God saves a man by His Spirit, He also immediately begins the work of sanctification as well.

--**(11)** ***But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.***

--I find it interesting that Paul binds this life to a man's final position in resurrection. Ultimately, we will each be living spirits with proper dominion 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!