

Romans Chapter 8
New American Standard Bible®

Copyright © by The Lockman Foundation
Used by permission." (www.Lockman.org)

Romans Chapter 8

Deliverance from Bondage

¹Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ²For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. ³For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

⁵For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. ⁶For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,

⁷because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, ⁸and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. ⁹However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. ¹⁰If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. ¹¹But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. ¹²So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh-- ¹³for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

The Greatness of Chapter 8 of Romans

Many consider Chapter 8 of Romans to be one of the high points of New Testament Scripture. Beginning with verse 17, Paul lays the foundation of our understanding of our relationship with God, through Christ Jesus. Verses 1-16 of Chapter 8 provide a restatement of the basis of verse 17, and onward from that point.

It should be noted that chapter 8 of Romans begins with the word "Therefore" indicating it is a continuation of Paul's thoughts from Chapter 7. The last line from Chapter 7 and the first two verses of Chapter 8 actually might be better stated as a single line of thought.

In the first 7 chapters of Romans Paul has noted that we are joined with Christ in the spirit, but still subject to the failures of the flesh.

And so Chapter 7 ends with verse 25 and may be better stated by attaching the first two verses of Chapter 8 to finish the thought.

²⁵Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin. ¹Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ²For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

Paul wants us to understand his humble acceptance of God's grace in what He did. God's actions (sending Christ) is salvation for all of us, freeing us from the failures of righteousness under the Law to follow the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. The key words here are:

“the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus”

Without “the Spirit of **Life in Christ Jesus**”, we are still doomed.

Those who are in Christ Jesus have been set free of the law of sin and death by the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Paul says we are not to be condemned (by the Law), because of what we have with Christ.

“...for those who are in Christ Jesus (there is now no condemnation)”

As a believer, Paul (and us) was extremely concerned with holding close and faithful to the Law. To love God is to desire discipline to keeping the things that are his Holy Law. As a Jew, remaining faithful to the Law was everything to him and still in spite of the desire of his will (what he calls his mind), he knew that he (what he calls my flesh) was subject to failure. Paul certainly knew the hopelessness of trying to remain faithful to the Law (legalism) relying solely on human power. He says this himself:

“I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.”

As a Pharisee, Paul would have understood legalism very well. The Pharisees had hundreds of laws stacked on top of God's Law that assured they (failed in compliance) complied with every self defined nuance of God's Law. To remain righteous under the yoke of Pharisee law was an impossible task. Paul likely knew this and certainly wrote words that indicated he knew how difficult compliance with the Law was.

“Thanks be to God Through Christ Jesus our Lord”

All of the struggle of Romans Chapter 7 is answered in Verse 1 of Chapter 8.

¹Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ²For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

Many Christians think that acceptance of Christ should bring on an end to the struggle to do what is right in God's eyes each day, that there should be no struggle any more. This simply isn't true. What is true is that when we fail, there is no longer any condemnation. We have been set free from the law of sin and death (Death coming as the result of sin). As long as we are “in Christ” there is no condemnation. That is the covenant God makes with us through Christ.

What is “in Christ”?

It must include allowing his Lordship in our lives.
It must include following him.

It must include considering his wants and direction for our lives.
It must include a desire on our parts to leave the fleshy life and enter the life of the spirit.
It must include walking away from old things (flesh) and taking up new things (spirit).

What does no condemnation mean?

God does not reject us.
God does not kick us out of his family.
God will treat us as His own.
God will not be angry with us.
We will remain separate from God's wrath.
With no condemnation, there will be no punishment. (We certainly may be corrected, but we will not be punished.)

How have we been set free?

³For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Before Christ it was not so, but after Christ, Paul writes that what the Law was unable to do (Make us righteous before God – end the condemnation), God accomplished by sending his son to us – as Paul writes “in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin”. God did not hold back His condemnation of sin in the flesh. It never changed. He transferred his wrath against sin to His son, who (willingly) served as a sacrifice, for us, so that we might walk, not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. What he did was to send Christ Jesus to become sin on the cross and to die to sin there so that we could be free from it to walk in the spirit with him.

This is the good news in Jesus Christ. To free us from sin, God sent his son to become sin for us, so that the power of sin (death) in our lives might be cancelled. The Law cannot make us righteous. It is powerless to do that and only serves to condemn us. The power to make us righteous comes through Christ's offering on the cross.

Someone said that the beautiful tenderness is that God did not send an Angel. He did not send a man. He sent His own Son. That is the beauty of God's gift. Nothing else would do. The new covenant required His Son as an offering, and that is what he did.

The beauty is that Christ was not sent for Christians who rise to some specified level of goodness, or some attainment of righteousness. He was sent for everyone who calls on him as Lord.

⁵For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. ⁶For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,

Where we are (how successful we are) in the ongoing battle of how we live, depends on where our minds are set. If we are “of the flesh” that is where our minds operate – in the flesh. If we are “in the spirit” then that is where our minds, our actions, and our lives operate.

Paul reminds us that the mind set on flesh = death and the mind set on spirit = life and peace. Obviously, this is a peace of the spirit. The battle may get easier, but it never goes away. There is a struggle, but there is no condemnation for those who walk with Christ (in the spirit). For those who walk in the flesh, there is only condemnation and death.

So, what does it mean to walk in the Spirit? Walking in the Spirit means that as we seek to make money and have fun, gaining fame and fulfilling ourselves, we remain committed to showing love, helping others, speaking truth, and, above all, loving God and seeking his glory. The mind set on the Spirit desires that God will be glorified in all things, which are proper and right. The Spirit controlled mind looks at the events of life from God's point of view, not from the world's, with a value system changed to God's values.

Death, Life and Peace:

Death is fear. Life is trust, hope, and confidence.

Death is guilt. Life is a feeling of acceptance, security, and assurance.

Death is hostility. Life is love, friendliness, kindness, and reaching out to others.

Death is emptiness. Life is a sense of well-being, fulfillment, excitement, vitality, and fullness of life.

With life comes peace, an inner calm, a quiet spirit, a remarkable sense of being able to cope and to handle life. That is what comes when the mind is set on the Spirit.

Why is this so?

⁷because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, ⁸and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

We cannot be of the flesh and not be hostile to God. If we do not subject ourselves to God's law we are hostile to it. There is no middle ground of neutrality with God. If we are of the flesh, there is no way we can please God.

⁹However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. ¹⁰If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.

Paul reminds us that we are of the Spirit if the Spirit of God (God's Holy Spirit) dwells within us. This is what happened at Pentecost. Many have heard the question, "Have you received the Holy Spirit?" Paul reminds us that the presence of Christ's spirit is required and with him, we are dead to sin and alive to righteousness (made righteous in God's eyes) through Christ in us.

If we do not have the spirit of Christ in us, we cannot and do not belong to God.

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

What makes our mortal bodies alive? The spirit that raised Christ from the dead makes us eternally alive through its presence (dwelling) in us.

¹²So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh-- ¹³for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

Through our desire to have Christ in us, we place ourselves under an obligation to stop living by the flesh "not to the flesh" and to begin living by the Spirit and to put to death the deeds of the body, so that we might live.

God has not ended the power of the life to the flesh in our lives. The battle will continue as we try to sanctify our lives – to change how we are and how we act. The law of sin and death continues. It will never die. What has changed is God's Spirit and Christ's spirit now dwells within us so that we can turn away from the flesh to the spirit so that we might live.