

72. The Book of Romans 8:2-5

Paul's Epistle to the Romans
A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier

(12-4-24)

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Tonight, we find ourselves in what many consider to be the greatest chapter in the greatest book in the Bible!

Some have described the Book of Romans as a doctrinal '*Mt. Everest*' that rises out of and towers over the rest of Scripture—if that is true, then Chapter 8 represents the final ascent to the summit!

I. **Condemnation**—Romans 1:18-3:20

II. **Justification**—Romans 3:21-5:21

III. **Sanctification**—Romans 6:1-8:39

Each of the chapters in this 3rd major section of Romans—is built around a key word:

- The key word in Chapter 6 is ***Sin***.
- In Chapter 7 the key word is ***Law***.
- And in Chapter 8, the key word is ***Spirit***—used 23 times—more than any other chapter in the Bible.

That's why it's a chapter of victory that ends with a shout of victory—"***We are more than conquerors*** (thru our relationship with Jesus and the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit)."

Romans 8:1 (NKJV)

¹There 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.

Some of your Bibles may not have the last part of this verse, or if you do your Bible may have a footnote saying, "*Not contained in the best manuscripts.*" Many commentators believe that it shouldn't be included because they feel it wrongly adds a stipulation, a human work to Paul's statement of grace. But Paul isn't qualifying his statement that there is no condemnation for Christians—but only those who are not carnal Christians.

As we pointed out last time, the last part of verse 1 isn't *modifying* the first part—it's amplifying it.

Why is there now no condemnation? Because we are now in Christ who keeps us safe from the judgment that is coming upon this godless Christ rejecting world.

1 Thessalonians 1:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.*

Colossians 2:13–14 (NLT)

¹³ You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. ¹⁴ He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. [‘tetelistai—paid in full’]

Jesus didn’t just forgive you and me for the sins we committed up until the moment God saved us, but now it’s up to us to ‘*keep our noses clean*’ and hang on to Him to stay saved.

No, He wiped away all our sins, the complete debt we owed God and is now holding onto us giving the believer total security in Christ—for eternity! (Jude 1:24)

- Let me say it again, don’t make the mistake many have made as they read Romans 8 and believe that Paul is comparing carnal Christians with spiritual (mature) Christians.

They believe that Paul is teaching that carnal Christians are carnally minded and therefore are going to hell (verse 6); whereas as spiritual Christians are spiritually minded and therefore are not condemned to hell. But that would make our salvation totally dependent upon our faithfulness and base it on our works and not on God’s grace.

Paul is not contrasting *carnal* Christians with *spiritual* Christians—he is contrasting believers with unbelievers. There are of course carnal Christians (1 Corinthians 3)—but the comparison here in Romans 8 is between those who are ‘*in Adam*’ and those who are ‘*in Christ*.’

Romans 8:1–2 (NKJV)

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.* ² **For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.**

“**The law of sin and death**” was pronounced by God in the Garden of Eden—“*The soul that sins shall surely die.*” God said, “*You sin you’re condemned.*”

- *But what is this “law of the Spirit of life” that has set us free from condemnation?*

It was the Holy Spirit that gave us new life in Christ when we put our faith in Jesus.

At that moment we were born of the Spirit (John 3:3-8) and we became new creations, no longer children of Adam and therefore children of wrath—but now children of God, heirs of the manifold riches of God.

You say, “*But how can one law set us free from another law?*” (verse 2)

One pastor put it this way—

“If you go to the airport, you’ll see planes sitting on the runway. They’re not going anywhere because the law of gravity is keeping them on the ground. But as soon as their engines are turned on, the law of aerodynamics takes over. Although gravity is still in effect and still pulls on the planes, there’s a higher law, a more powerful force at work that allows them to overcome the law of gravity. That’s what Paul is saying. We’re free from this law of sin and death by the Spirit of Jesus Christ. He lives in us, enabling us to fly high and overcome the law of sin and death.”

The law of the Spirit of life has **'made me free'** (the Greek aorist tense suggests a once-for-all act of freedom at salvation) from **'the law of sin and death'**—how? Because you and I are forever going to be in Christ—verses 38-39

When you are in Christ you are safe from judgment.

Colossians 3:3–4 (NKJV)

³ For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ *who is our life* appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

Proverbs 18:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ The name of the Lord *is a strong tower*; The righteous run to it and are safe.

Romans 8:3–4 (NKJV)

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, 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.

1) For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh—(verse 3)

As we have already said, there is nothing wrong with the Law—it is God's righteous standard. The problem is with the *weakness* of our flesh to keep it.

One author put it well—

"You can make for yourself a new rule you're going to live by that you're going to spend 3 hours a day in prayer! Great! Wonderful! Write it on paper—better yet chisel it on stone and set it up in your front yard. There is nothing wrong with that rule—it's good but as you're going to find out—'the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak!'

In a similar way, God wrote His laws on tablets of stone, and they were good laws the problem was that we were too weak in our flesh to keep them—as someone has said, "The law commands me to fly but it doesn't give me any wings."

"What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh...":

2) God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh... (verse 3)

Notice how carefully the Holy Spirit chose the wording here.

If He would have said that **"God sent His Son in the likeness of flesh"** that would have been heresy—Jesus didn't come in the *likeness* of flesh; He came in the flesh as a true flesh and blood member of the human race.

If He would have said that **"God sent His Son in sinful flesh"** that would have meant that Jesus was a sinner Himself—also heresy.

Hebrews 4:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin.

The Lord Jesus did not come in *sinful flesh* itself but in **"the likeness of"** sinful flesh.

He did no sin (1 Peter 2:22), He knew no sin (2 Corinthians 5:21), and there was no sin in Him (1 John 3:5)—but by coming into the world in human form, He resembled sinful humanity.

He came *in the likeness* of sinful flesh, as a man. He bore our sins in His body on the cross—Jesus was the virgin born, sinless ‘goel’ of the human race.

Warren Wiersbe—

“The “law of double jeopardy” states that a man cannot be tried twice for the same crime. Since Jesus Christ paid the penalty for your sins, and since you are “in Christ,” God will not condemn you.”

3) On account of sin—(verse 3)

Romans 8:3 (NKJV)

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...

Jesus came to be a sin offering for us—this is the doctrine of *substitution*.

John 1:29 (NKJV)

²⁹ The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

In the Old Testament a lamb had to be without spot or blemish (without birth defect or acquired scar)—in other words it had to be *perfect*. Jesus was born sinless (He had no earthly father), and He also lived a sinless life—He was the only one who could have, which made Him eligible to be our substitute (2 Corinthians 5:21).

4) He condemned sin in the flesh—(verse 3)

Sin used the flesh to condemn us—but God turned the tables and used flesh (a flesh and blood human body into which Jesus was incarnated), to condemn sin. This meant that someday He will banish sin from His presence and from His people forever. (Romans 8:18-23)

There is now no condemnation for us because we’ve been freed from it because Christ took our place—

Isaiah 53:5–8 (NLT)

⁵ But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. ⁶ All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God’s paths to follow our own. Yet the Lord laid on him the sins of us all. ⁷ He was oppressed and treated harshly, yet he never said a word. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep is silent before the shearers, he did not open his mouth. ⁸ Unjustly condemned, he was led away. No one cared that he died without descendants, that his life was cut short in midstream. But he was struck down for the rebellion of my people.

Isaiah 53:11 (NLT)

¹¹ When he sees all that is accomplished by his anguish, he will be satisfied. And because of his experience, my righteous servant will make it possible for many to be counted righteous, for he will bear all their sins.

Romans 8:4 (NKJV)

⁴ that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us...

Not fulfilled *'by us'* but *'in us'* because He is in us, and we are in Him—we are one with each other.

"Fulfilled" is in the passive voice in the Greek which means we don't do it for ourselves—righteousness was attained for us and given to us at the moment of salvation—in Christ it's already done (past tense—*'fulfilled'*)

Romans 8:4 (NKJV)

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.

This isn't a conditional statement by Paul for getting saved or for staying saved—this is a description of those who are saved. In other words, it's not calling us or commanding us to walk in the Spirit—it's saying those who are in Christ *do* walk in the Spirit!

As someone has said,

"Those of us who have been redeemed are those who have entered the sphere of the Spirit, those who are not redeemed still live in the sphere of the flesh."

Romans 8:9 (NKJV)

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.

The word **"walk"** (verse 4) is often used in the Bible to denote the *"bent"* of a person's life.

1 John 1:7 (NKJV)

⁷ But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

As Christians, our bent is towards God—towards the light—towards the Spirit and righteousness. If the bent of person's life isn't towards these things—it makes their supposed Christianity suspect.

"Who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit"—is simply saying that the evidence that you're in Christ and a child of God will be that the bent of your life will be towards the Spirit not the flesh.

God the Holy Spirit is not offering *happiness* as the objective of the gospel—He is offering *holiness* as the objective of the gospel.

There's a saying, "He isn't the *Happy* Spirit, He is the *Holy* Spirit." The goal of the gospel is not our happiness but our holiness—

1 Peter 1:13–16 (NKJV)

¹³ Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest *your* hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; ¹⁴ as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, *as* in your ignorance; ¹⁵ but as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct, ¹⁶ because it is written, *"Be holy, for I am holy."*

Let me say it again, the goal of the gospel is not your happiness but your holiness—but happy are the holy for they shall see God—

Hebrews 12:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ Pursue peace with all *people*, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:

Romans 8:5 (NKJV)

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 is going to be using the word “**For**” numerous times from verses 5-8 and when he does understand that he is *comparing* believers with unbelievers.

“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh...”

The ‘*mind*’ is different from the brain. The *brain* is a physical organ that is a part of our *physical* body—whereas the *mind* is the non-physical part of our being often referred to as the *soul* or *consciousness* of a person.

When Paul talks about the *mind*, he’s not talking about the ability of the brain to think or to reason—he is talking about the mind in the sense of—the ‘*focus or pre-occupation*’ of one’s life.

To be ‘**carnally minded**’ speaks of someone who is dominated *by* and pre-occupied *with* the things that pertain to our body appetites under the control of our fallen nature—what Paul called “the lusts of our flesh.” (Gal. 5:16)

To be ‘**spiritually minded**’ speaks of someone who is *dominated by* and *pre-occupied with* the things of the Spirit of God.

Unbelievers are *2-dimensional* beings like the animal kingdom—they have a body and a consciousness (soul); Christians are *3-dimensional* beings—they have a body, soul, and spirit (“*God has put eternity in their hearts.*”)

Unbelievers continually set their minds on the things of the flesh (success, money, pleasure, entertainment (restaurants, parties, movies, sex etc., just to name a few things).

That doesn’t mean that they never go to church or volunteer in their local soup kitchen—it simply means their soul (consciousness) is basically under the control of their flesh (fallen nature).

One author—

*“These people are completely consumed and dominated in their thinking by the things that gratify their fleshly desires. There is no desire or thought of future rewards or future glory, they live for the moment and for the pleasure they can get **now**. They are hedonists and materialists, who have no desire for spiritual things except to give God lip service at the appropriate times.”*

Many of them call themselves Christians and yet they still reason from a very fleshly standpoint—“*I can be a Christian and still live with my boyfriend/girlfriend*” or “*I can be a Christian, read the Bible and still get high...*”

The reason Paul is drawing a comparison between believers and unbelievers is because he wants us to know there is a difference between them—if you’re saved there will be a change in your life!

Galatians 6:7–8 (NKJV)

⁷ Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. ⁸ For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

1 Corinthians 6:9–10 (NKJV)

⁹ Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.

As Charles Spurgeon said: "*The grace that does not change my life will not save my soul.*"

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower—please reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

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