

• LESSON 13 (July 13) •

Romans 8:1-17

Led by the Spirit of Life

Romans 7:4 was a significant bit of God-shaped news in our understanding of what our Savior is doing to “bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations” (1:5).

Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God.

In Romans 6, Paul made clear the fact that if we belong to Christ, our foolish relationship with sin must change.

We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. (6:9-11)

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, we who have been justified by faith “have peace with God” (5:1). All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, but all can be justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (3:23).

Having methodically developed in Romans 1-7 the means of our justification in Jesus, the Spirit of God leads Paul in Romans 8 to new heights as the glory of the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages is now summarized.

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. (8:1)



Consider where we have been led by Paul throughout this letter:

- Rom 1: Gentiles are guilty.
- Rom 2: Jews are guilty.
- Rom 3: None is righteous, not one.
- Rom 4: Justification depends on faith.
- Rom 5: Grace can reign through Jesus.
- Rom 6: How can we who died to sin still live in it?
- Rom 7: We have been released from the law that we may serve in the way of the Spirit.

In your own words, what does Paul mean when he affirms that there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ?

Why? On what basis?

For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. (8:2-3a)

Where has the breakdown occurred? The law was not weak in its God-defined purpose; people were weak in that they failed to abide by and fulfill their Creator's expectations. Law is only a source of deliverance to those who flawlessly obey it. Once violated, law provides no way of escape. Quite to the contrary, it demands accountability and punishment. But God has intervened. He had promised,

"Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah..." (Heb 8:8)

One of the hallmarks of this new covenant would be:

"For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more." (Heb 8:12)

Meditate on this further explanation:

For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sin? But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. (Heb 10:1-4)

Sin has been committed and the law demands justice, but God has done what the law could not do.

He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Col 1:13-14)

In what way was the law "weakened by the flesh"?

How would you summarize some of the most significant differences between the old covenant and the new covenant?

Why was it impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins?

By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. (Rom 8:3b-4)

This brings Paul back to us. In light of what God has done, what should we do now? What *must* we do now?

Throughout his letters, Paul describes the Christian life as a “walk.” It is a walk with behavioral boundaries. It is a walk that is Father-defined, Christ-centered, Spirit-led, gospel-empowered, faith-fueled, and glory-focused (2 Cor 5:7; 10:2-3; Gal 5:16; Eph 2:10; 4:1, 17; 5:2, 8, 15; Phil 3:17-18; Col 1:10; 2:6; 3:7; 4:5; 1 Thes 2:12; 4:1, 12; 2 Thes 3:6, 11).

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 set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. (Rom 8:5-8)

In what way was sin “condemned in the flesh” by the sending of God’s own Son?

What was “the righteous requirement of the law” that was fulfilled in Jesus?

FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION: Whose lead will I choose to follow?

Those who walk according to the flesh



Have their minds set on the things of the flesh



Such a mind is hostile to God because it does not submit



This is DEATH

Those who walk according to the Spirit



Have their minds set on the things of the Spirit



Such a mind is pleasing to God because it submits



This is LIFE and PEACE

For the Christian, this issue should already be settled.

You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 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.

So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. (Rom 8:9-13)

Paul has already explained how this Spirit-led execution takes place.

How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? (6:2b-3)

In his letter to the Galatians (5:16-23), Paul very specifically describes the works of the flesh, the fruit of the Spirit, and the mindset demanded of the Christian.

Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. (Gal 5:24-25)

This is not an easy walk. Will it be worth it?

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. (Rom 8:14-17)

“If in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you...if Christ is in you...” What does this mean? Perhaps Ephesians 3:14-19 will be helpful.

In your own words, what does it mean to “walk by the Spirit”?

“You have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’”
Practically speaking, what does this mean? How should it shape our understanding of our new identity in Jesus?

CLOSING THOUGHT: If there is any further doubt as to whether walking by the Spirit now will be ultimately worth it or not, Paul will seek to remove all lingering doubt in Romans 8:18-39.