

Life In The Spirit – Romans 8

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 02 October 2022

Preacher: Henry Dyck

[0 : 00] Well, good morning, everyone. Welcome to the service this morning. A praise item in our bulletin, the fall season. If I had to actually pick a season, a favorite season, I would echo what Ben says.

I would probably pick fall as my favorite season as well. I enjoy summer, the warm weather, the longer days. Summer is very good, but come fall, yes, God's creation, the change is there, the different colors and so on.

It's really beautiful. And I go out in the fall and do some hunting, try to put some meat in our freezer for the coming year.

And it's these moments when I'm out there in the woods that you just sit there. It's totally quiet around me.

Maybe a little breeze through the leaves every now and then, but you're sitting there quietly and just listening for sounds of life in the woods around you. And it's just so quiet and peaceful.

[1 : 20] And those moments where I feel so close to God, then he just reveals himself to me through nature. Nature speaks.

It glorifies God. And so I enjoy those moments. There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

What a statement that is. There's no condemnation. So as we've been going through the book of Romans the past while here, we've gone through seven chapters now, what has it taught us so far?

If we reflect back on the first seven chapters, what kind of light or what kind of paint of mankind? Is it a very positive picture for mankind?

We had in Romans chapter 3 said that there is none righteous, no, not one. And also that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

[2 : 41] Chapter 5, it revealed again to us that our forefather Adam had left all of us in inheritance. And it is the sin nature which also brought a death sentence.

And then two, the law entered and offense or sin abounded. And in chapter 7, as we heard last Sunday, Paul's personal struggle that echoes the struggles of each one of us.

We all have these struggles of wanting to do good and not being able to do. Not being able to do that. Gone through these first seven chapters, we've also been exposed to God's righteousness, His holiness, and also our inability to keep His law.

And so, apart from God, mankind, we're in a pretty hopeless state. And yet, as we've gone through these chapters, we've been given little glimpses of God's grace from time to time.

So we get that sense of hope, though, when God is in our life, and God is in the picture. We've heard how God justified Abraham, and He was faithful to His promise to Abraham.

[4 : 26] No, Abraham was no better than any one of us. He was human. He had the human nature as well, right? He was a human.

And then also, having been justified by faith, we too, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. And we know that there is hope because Christ is alive.

He was raised from the dead. So as we've learned so far in Romans, it's kind of like we're walking through a deep, dark forest.

It's all darkness around us. But time and again, there's been there's been there's been a little bit of a glimpse of light through the trees.

Without God, it's all dark, but we see ahead little glimpses of light. And then, as we start into chapter 8 this morning, it's like we have finally reached the edge of that dark forest, and we step out into the full bright sunlight.

[5 : 43] There is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. So the Holy Spirit, who we haven't heard a whole lot about so far in Romans, he has been there.

Starting in chapter 8, he is front and center. So we'll see, we'll see the contrasts between those who walk according to the Spirit and those who walk according to the flesh.

And then, in the last couple of verses we'll be looking at in our text, Paul is speaking of what happens to our mortal bodies that we live in in this moment, that we inhabit in this world.

verses 1 and 2 in our text, 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.

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. So again, no condemnation.

[7 : 00] First of all, what is condemnation? Definition of condemnation is to give judgment against or to pass sentence upon.

So, any one of us that's ever followed a court case, you know that condemnation, it comes after both sides of the story have been heard.

The jury has had time to deliberate it. And they bring back a guilty verdict to the judge. The judge then announces that the accused has been found guilty of the crime.

and then depending on what the crime is, the judge gives a prison sentence of however many years. The accused has been condemned.

So all of us were born with a sin nature. We've inherited that from Adam. All of us are guilty of committing sin. Before we met God, each one of us was condemned as well.

[8 : 13] We had been found guilty. The punishment of our condemnation there for sin, punishment for sin, it is death.

It's not a short prison sentence for however many years. It is death. death. There was no hope. That has changed now.

There is therefore now no condemnation. To whom? To those who are in Christ Jesus. It's for every man, woman, and child who has died to the law and has been married to another.

As we heard in the start of chapter 7 a few weeks ago. married to another. To him who was raised from the dead. That is Jesus Christ. And so if we are no longer condemned, we are then justified.

No condemnation equals justification. It is the opposite. We're justified. guilty verdict, that death sentence that was hanging over us, it's gone.

[9 : 39] To those who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the spirit. And so this is where we have the Holy Spirit fully in the humans.

if we are in Christ, if we have been married to him, we also have the Holy Spirit inside of us.

So the part or the work of the Holy Spirit clearly revealed here. This work of the spirit has been revealed in part as a walk.

We, the justified, we walk according to the spirit. So what is the meaning of walking according to the spirit?

Walking according to the spirit is a process called sanctification. So to be sanctified is to be set apart by God for a special purpose.

[10 : 50] It is at first a privilege of those who have been justified and yet sanctification is not a privilege alone.

It is a duty and expectation that comes with it. This is the walk that is being talked about here. We must walk in obedience to the spirit.

how does this justification and sanctification come about? Verses 3 and 4 in our text.

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 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. So in chapter 7 we went through the last couple of weeks Paul focused mainly on the law and here in verse 3 he mentions it again.

[12 : 05] Could the law justify us? No it couldn't. It was weak through the flesh. See the law was a system dependent on absolute compliance.

Yet there was no promise of pardon or grace in keeping the law. It demands and we were powerless to keep them. And it wasn't through fault of the law.

We read in chapter 7 that the commandment is holy, just, and good. We were powerless to keep the law because of the fallen, corrupt nature we are in.

So and if the law was not able to justify and sanctify us, then how? God did it. God did it by sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh on account of sin or because of sin.

sin. He condemned sin in the flesh. Christ came to do what the law could not. And the example that we would put in here would be the exodus of the Israelites out of Egypt heading to the promised land.

[13 : 29] Moses was the leader of the Israelites and he led them to the border of Canaan. But that's where Moses died there.

They were on the outside of the promised land looking in. Moses represented the law. Joshua then rose up, became the leader, given leadership there.

Joshua did what Moses could not do. He brought God's people into the promised land. And so in the same way, what the law couldn't do, the law couldn't lead us to the promised land we are waiting to inhabit.

Christ did it for us. Hebrews chapter 10 explains it in a little more detail. So let's turn to Hebrews 10, the first 10 verses.

Hebrews 10, 1 to 10. Hebrews 10, 1 to 10.

[14 : 45] Hebrews 10, 1 to 10. Hebrews 10, 1 to 10. For the law having a shadow of the good things to come and not the very image of the things, these same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year make those who approach perfect.

For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshippers once purified would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year.

For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. Therefore, when he came into the world, as Christ, he said, sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you have prepared for me.

In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin you had no pleasure. Then I said, behold, I have come. In the volume of the book it is written of me to do your will, O God.

Previously saying, sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings and offerings for sin you did not desire, nor had pleasure in them, which are offered according to the law.

[15 : 55] Then he said, behold, I have come to do your will, O God. He takes away the first that he may establish the second. By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Explains it very well. The law not able to do it. Christ did it. Christ. Going back to our text, let's take a bit of a closer look at the manner of Christ coming.

What it doesn't say is that Christ came in sinful flesh. It says Christ came in the likeness of sinful flesh.

There's a big difference there. Did Christ really come in a human form? Did he have a mortal human body like we do? Yes, he did.

And how do we know that? Well, we know he was circumcised in the Jewish tradition. He was baptized with John's baptism. He too had need to sleep, just as we do.

[17 : 15] So what then is the meaning of in the likeness of sinful flesh? Christ was holy, sinless, undefiled.

He was the Son of God. Yet in order to save mankind who was in the flesh, to save mankind from sin and death, he had to come in the likeness of the corrupt nature we were in, or we were in, to condemn sin in the flesh.

Had he come in sinful flesh, this could not have been so. Christ would not have been a worthy sacrifice. He would have needed saving as much as any one of us.

So he came in the, of sinful flesh. Good example to illustrate this, again, coming from the exodus of the Israelites.

That example is found in Numbers 21. I won't turn there, but I'm giving a bit of an outline on it. Do you remember the story of the fiery serpents in the wilderness?

[18 : 34] The Israelites, they're, they've left Egypt, they've crossed the Red Sea. They're journeying from Mount Hor to going around the land of Edom.

They were instructed to go around the land of Edom, not through. The Israelites become discouraged here, and they begin to complain against God and Moses.

Why have you brought us from Egypt to die here in this wilderness? There's no food or water here. This manna that we've been given, we hate it. They're complaining.

God is angered by their complaints, and so he sends fiery, venomous serpents into their midst, sends them among the people. Many are bitten, and they die.

The people realize their sin, and they ask Moses to intercede. They ask him to pray to God to have the serpents removed.

[19 : 41] God's instruction to Moses, remove the serpents. He instructs Moses to create, to shape a bronze serpent, which is not one of these fiery serpents, but is a likeness of them.

And then anyone who looked at the bronze serpent after he had been bitten, lived, did not die. So as this bronze serpent was in the likeness of these fiery serpents, Christ also was a likeness of sinful man.

So Christ coming in this manner, he condemns sin in the flesh so that the righteous requirements or the demands of the law are fulfilled in us, not by us, but in us, when we walk in the spirit and not in the flesh.

It is only by God's grace, through his provision of a spotless, unblemished life, a perfect sacrifice, that we have been justified and sanctified.

So how then do we know if we are walking according to the spirit and not the flesh? Let's continue on in our text. Verse 5.

[21 : 41] So again, the question was, how then do we know if we are walking according to the spirit and not the flesh?

The answer is very plain here in these verses. What is our thought life? What do we think mostly about?

If we look at ourselves, it isn't very hard to answer those questions. Who knows our thoughts better than ourselves? It's only God. Do we know our thought life?

The answer comes out of that. So those who walk according to the flesh set their minds on what? The things of the flesh.

Sinful desires of the flesh. Could be desiring worldly wealth and honor. Could be coveting a neighbor's possession.

[23 : 01] Keeping up with the Joneses. List of examples. Be endless. It gets worse.

To be carnally or fleshly minded is death. What does that mean? Put it simply, it means exactly that. Death.

The carnal man's soul is dead. He is spiritually dead. He is not in Christ. He is separated from God. And he is dead in the law, meaning he is guilty.

We know the penalty of sin is death. Death sentence has been passed. All in all, death equals misery.

Carnal souls are miserable. Have you known or do you know of anyone who always seems to be miserable? Never seems to be a happy moment in their life?

[24 : 10] It's never anything positive. Always everything is negative, negative. negative. Their talk, their actions, every negative light.

How do you feel around someone like that? You notice that their attitude seems to drag everyone around them down as well.

And if death isn't bad enough to describe the carnal minded, the fleshly minded, verse 7 says, carnal mind is enmity against God.

So what is enmity? We've come across this word in our Bible study on Wednesday nights. And speaking of it in Ephesians, it was in the light of, in the context of being hostile, of hostility.

In the context here, in Romans, it is defined as hatred, the opposite of love.

[25 : 28] So the carnal mind is hatred against God. It's not enough to say that the carnal mind or the fleshly mind is an enemy of God, but worse, it's enmity against God.

It's an open opposition of God. It's a rebellious mind, dangerous place to be. As I was studying this, I came across a line.

I didn't write down the exact wording, but it was something to this effect. It said, it is better to be an enemy than enmity.

An enemy can be won over, but enmity cannot. So then going on in our text in verse 8, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

They have rejected Him. They hate Him. They cannot please Him. On the other hand, those who live according to the Spirit, set their minds on the things of the Spirit.

[26 : 46] There's a desire to please God. They have a concern for the soul and eternity. Where the fleshly mind was death, the spiritual mind is life and peace.

A soul who is justified and sanctified is a living soul. Life is peaceful, both in the spiritual world as well as in the physical.

Verse 9 sums up the look into these two walks. 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. So if you have examined your thought life, and you find that you mind the things of the Spirit, the Spirit of God indeed dwells in you.

But if you find the opposite to be true, that you mind the things of the flesh more than the things of the Spirit, sadly, the Spirit of Christ is not in you.

[28 : 04] You are not His. And so the questions each one of us must ask ourselves today are, does the Spirit of God dwell in me?

Is the Spirit of Christ welcome in my heart, in my life? Is the Spirit free to dwell, to live in my heart, and do I surrender my mind, my thought life to Him?

I trust all of us can answer yes to these questions. So what then of our mortal bodies? Verse 10, And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

If Christ is in you, the body because of sin. Our mortal body remains unchanged. It still becomes ill.

It becomes weak. It ages. It gets old. It is dying. It must die. It doesn't change it. But the Spirit is life.

[29 : 25] Yes, our mortal bodies will die, but we're not held by that. Our spirit, our soul, will live on in eternity and the death of our mortal body, it only serves to free our soul from this sinful world we live in today, to pass into glory, free from the temptation of sin forevermore.

our identity in Christ has made us righteous before God. We will be in His presence forever. Verse 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.

Amen. Christ had a mortal body. His mortal body had to die and it did.

Bearing our sin, all of it, His body was laid in a tomb. But did Christ's body stay in that tomb? We know that early the third morning after the crucifixion, the tomb was found empty.

His body was gone, raised from the dead. Our corruptible, mortal bodies will one day too be raised from the dead, be raised to life incorruptible, immortal, because His Spirit dwells in us.

[31 : 03] His Spirit has raised our soul to life and it will raise our body to life too. Our souls and bodies will be reunited, clothed in glory.

Remember too that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. To Israel today, the Jewish temple Solomon built was destroyed, was brought to ruin and today in its place stands a temple of a different religion.

And yet we understand and we believe that someday God's temple will be rebuilt and stand in that same place. as it stood many years ago.

And so if that physical earthly temple, if we trust that it will be rebuilt, it will not remain in ruins, would our bodies, the temple of the Holy Spirit, be left to lie in ruins?

1 Corinthians chapter 15 verses 29 through 54 talks about our bodies glorified.

[32 : 35] And let's read those verses in closing. It's 1 Corinthians chapter 15. A bit of a lengthy read here, but it talks about our mortal bodies here.

So let's read it. Starting in verse 29. Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized for the dead if the dead do not rise at all?

Why then are they baptized for the dead? And why do we stand in jeopardy every hour? I affirm by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.

If in the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me if the dead do not rise? Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die. Do not be deceived.

Evil company corrupts good habits. Awake to righteousness and do not sin. For some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.

[33 : 39] But someone will say, how are the dead raised up and with what body do they come? Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies.

And what you sow, sow that body that shall be but mere grain, perhaps wheat or some other grain. But God gives it a body as he pleases and to each seed its own body.

All flesh is not the same flesh but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish and another of birds.

There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies but the glory of the celestial is one and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon and another glory of the stars for one star differs from another star in glory.

So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory.

[34 : 47] It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown in natural body, it is raised in spiritual body. And so it is written, the first Adam became a living being, the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

However, the spirit but the natural and afterward the spiritual. The first man was of the earth made of dust, the second man is the Lord from heaven.

As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust. And as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly man.

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet, for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

[36 : 06] So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory.

So today in Romans, we have seen the Holy Spirit working, sanctifying us. Christ took our condemnation upon himself, bearing the sin that had been ours, hanging on the cross with us, all for our sakes, that we might be justified.

The moment we first believed, our condemnation was taken away, it was removed. The death penalty was changed to a life sentence in eternal glory, and we began a new walk according to the Spirit.

As long as we dwell in our earthly mortal bodies, let us be sure we are continuing the sanctifying process. Let us be sure we are ever walking in the Spirit.

Let's examine our thought life and bring it into subjection under the Spirit. Let's fill our minds with spiritual matters.

[37 : 27] They are of far greater concern than fleshly desires. Remember too, being spiritually minded is life and peace.

rest assured, if the Spirit abides in you, you are His. If you do not have the Spirit dwelling in you, today is the accepted time, for tomorrow may be too late.

It's today. Let's close in prayer. Lord God, we are grateful today for Your grace and for Your great mercy toward us.

While we were yet lost, You sent Your own Son, Jesus, in the likeness of sinful flesh to die for us, to redeem us back to Yourself. We are grateful that our debt has been paid and that we have been justified, that we are no longer under condemnation.

We are most grateful for the Holy Spirit that dwells in us, that leads us in walking according to Your will. Father, continue to give us the strength so that we may resist the temptations of the flesh, rather giving way to Your Spirit to have control in our lives and in our minds.

[38 : 51] Lord, bless each one of us who came out today to hear Your Word. And as we part from here, may You walk with us day by day throughout the week ahead. In Jesus' name, Amen.