

New Life: In the Spirit

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Date: 20 February 2011

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[0 : 00] Our text this morning as we hear again from the living God in his word is Romans chapter 8 verses 1 to 13.

I've not said enough from this pulpit what a privilege it is to stand before you and proclaim the word of God.

You may have noticed by now that I almost always open the sermon with the line I just did a moment ago because I believe it's true. In fact, I've staked my life on it.

That as we engage the Bible, we hear from the living God in it. Not just through it, but in it.

Because the living God reveals himself to the vast majority of humanity throughout the ages in this book. So it has to be translated and read and taught and preached.

[1 : 09] And it's only to the degree that what I say aligns with the contents of this book that you can be sure that you've heard from the living God.

The Bible is how we know who God is. The Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. And I think that you'd be hard pressed to find a better text to speak of who the triune God is than the one before us in Romans 8.

You'll notice that it reveals who God is by showing us what God does. Focusing on what God does in us. In the inner life of the Christian.

The child of God. The follower of Jesus. The one who is in Christ. Chapter 8 doesn't begin the way we might expect it.

To begin. Not after Romans 7. Not after Paul's torturous recounting. Of his wrestling against sin. Even as he delights in the law of God. In his inner being. All leading up to his cry.

[2 : 16] Oh wretched man that I am. He said. Seems like chapter 8 should begin. There is therefore now a lot of gloom and doom to be faced in the Christian life.

That's not Paul's perspective. Not because the struggle against sin isn't real and lifelong. Not because Paul is somehow a super Christian with whom we can't really relate.

But because Paul realizes the very real honest struggle against sin is never. A struggle that puts in jeopardy the assurance that in Christ the battle's already been won.

Because there is now, Paul says. Now in the midst of all our struggles and battles against sin. Now in the day to day reality of frustrations and defeats.

And often times doubts. There is now no condemnation. For those who are in Christ Jesus. In the original wording the focus is even more clear.

[3 : 25] Therefore condemnation is not now. For those who are in Christ Jesus. This is language Paul's used before.

In chapter 5 verse 18. When he says that Adam's one trespass. Led to the condemnation of all people. It's that condemnation.

That terrible result of Adam's sin. That's no longer applied to us. Christian you are not condemned. Not now.

And not ever. There is no condemnation. One commentator has it exactly right.

When he says this is a truth. Which always appears surprising. Even to those who have known it for years. And I realize it's early in the sermon to be quite this intense.

[4 : 27] But the text takes us right there. Christian. Christian. How do you feel this morning? Have you been fighting the battle against sin for years in your life?

But just right now or maybe for a long time. You just feel defeated. You are not defeated. There is no condemnation for you.

In Christ Jesus. Or are you new to the faith? And you are very aware that you failed to live. As you really wanted to live this week.

There is no condemnation for you. In Christ Jesus. No condemnation. No condemnation. No condemnation. No condemnation. No condemnation. No condemnation. No condemnation. No condemnation.

You just can't seem to get rid of in your life. And you wonder how it is that God will ever accept you. Then hear the words as if for the first time again. There is therefore now no condemnation.

[5 : 29] For those who are in Christ Jesus. No condemnation. This is one of those places to ask if you really believe what you believe.

Whether in your heart of hearts you believe. That this is true not just in principle. But in reality. And not just in reality for other people. But for you.

That if you are in Christ. God does not condemn you. He does not. Even if you failed. Again. And again. And again.

It does not matter what sin you are struggling against. It does not matter how you may have failed in the past. And I mean bring to your mind the biggest failure you have ever had. As your life as a Christian.

And the truth still stands. There is now no condemnation. God does not condemn you. If you are in Christ. Is that how you think of God?

[6 : 40] My wife read chapters 5 to 8 of Romans this week. In preparing for her time at Women at 10 on Thursday. And she said to me after reading chapters 5 to 8.

Something like I did not realize how much Paul talks about God's love in Romans. Romans. And that is how he starts this whole section of the book.

Isn't it? Chapters 5 to 8. Romans 5 verse 8. But God shows his love for us. In that while we were still sinners. Christ died for us. And since therefore we have now been justified by his blood. Much more shall we be saved. By him. From the wrath of God. I don't know how you are engaging these sermons from Romans.

I know they are heavy. I know there is a lot of theology in them. But please. Don't hear the great truths of Romans.

[7 : 40] About justification and righteousness and salvation. And the law and the spirit. And the realities of our lives. Don't hear all of those things. And miss that standing behind all of it.

Is one thing. And it is the love of God. And I know that is not explicitly here in chapter 8 verses 1 to 11. But I think.

That unless that stands somehow in our minds. Behind everything we do read here. About what God has done. And is doing. And will do for us. We are missing the point.

There is therefore now no condemnation for those. Who are in Christ Jesus. That is the main point of our text. And the rest of it is here to explain why that statement is true.

How can it be that there is no condemnation. That is Paul's burden here. But as we look at what he says. I want us to remember that behind all of it.

[8 : 37] Is the fundamental truth of the gospel. That God loves you. And that he has shown you that love in Christ. He wants to be your enemy.

And he doesn't want to be your enemy. He wants to be in relationship with you. And if you realize. As we look through this passage. That you don't know. In your own life. The reality that Paul is describing. You can know it. If you turn to God.

By trusting in Jesus Christ. And Christian. As you hear in this text. About how God is at work. And you. Rejoice in it.

Revel in it. Why is there now no condemnation. For those who are in Christ Jesus. Because God loves you. And his love moves him.

[9 : 34] To be at work. In you. And it's because of the work. He's doing in you. That Paul can say. There is now no condemnation. Because there is not going to be.

Any condemnation. That on the judgment day. Those who are in Christ Jesus. Will stand before God. And there will be this declaration. Made over them.

Justified. No condemnation. And that declaration. On that day. Will be made. Because God. Will have done everything. He needed to do. For you. And in you. To save you. And that is so. Absolutely certain.

That Paul says. There is now no condemnation. God. God. God. Just. Doesn't. Look at you. That way. If you're a Christian. Because he knows.

[10 : 34] He knows. All that he's done. And is doing. And will do. For you. And in you. To save you. So what does God do?

Well. Well. I think there are. Three movements. In this text. After verse one. And very simply. I just think. Paul rehearses. Our past. And our present. And our future.

As Christians. The past. And the present. And the future. And this is our story. Brothers and sisters. It's the whole thing. Mapped out. Even in the midst.

Of your life now. Even as you live. Struggling against sin. And this is the perspective. We need. To persevere. Isn't it? To fight. The fight of faith.

Knowing that God's at work. All through our lives. To save us. Now we're going to cover all this. Very quickly here. There are preachers.

[11 : 29] I admire. Because I. Check this out online. You know. And just see how other people. Structure these things. And there are preachers. I admire very much. Who take three. Or five. Or one. Took eight sermons.

On these verses. Just these. Eleven verses. And it wouldn't be a waste of time. For us to do that. But. You'll have to settle. For the very rapid summary.

Because. I did feel strongly. As I. Prayed over this sermon. That I needed to spend time. On verse one. That I just did. And I just think.

When the spirit. Gives me that kind of direction. It's because. God knows. That there's somebody here. Who. Needs it. It. Or maybe we.

All. Need it. Now in verses two. And following. We're looking at the past. And the present. And the future. And I'll give you.

[12 : 26] What I think is the key element. Of each section. As we go. So you just have something. To hold on to. Okay. We're starting in the past. In verses two and four. Two through four. And the key thing.

That God has done. In the past. Is there in verse three. God. Condemned. Sin. Now let's read into that point. Starting at verse two. Four. Paul's explaining.

How verse one is true. For the law. Of the spirit of life. Has set you free. In Christ Jesus. From the law. Of sin and death. The law is still. On Paul's mind.

Because I hope it's clear. By now. That Paul's view. Of the law of God. The will of God. Expressed in the old covenant. Is not negative. I delight.

In the law of God. In my inner being. Paul says. In chapter seven. Though by now. In Romans. We surely understand. That when we're under. The governing power. Of sin.

[13 : 20] When sin. Is what reigns. In our lives. Then we don't delight. In the law. Because when sin. And the law. Work together. The law. Only. And always. Condemns us. Paul says.

But not now. Not now. Because now. As Paul said. In chapter five. God's love. Has been poured. Into our hearts. Through the Holy Spirit. Given to us.

And with the spirit. In us. The law. Looks very different. Doesn't it? I delight. In the law. Of God. Paul says. I delight.

In doing. What God says. I delight. In living. More and more. In conformity. To God's will. And God's character. This is the new. Delight. Of our life. In Christ.

And it's the delight. Of walking with God. Of living out his will. It's the delight. That the psalmist. Talks about. It's the delight. That Dan read. At the beginning. Of the service.

[14 : 16] I'll run in the way. Of thy commandments. I'll run in them. When you set my heart. At liberty. How did God make that possible?

He made it possible. By verse three. For God has done. What the law. Weakened by the flesh. Could not do. By sending his own son. In the likeness.

Of sinful flesh. And for sin. He condemned sin. In the flesh. God condemned sin. And that doesn't just mean.

He pronounced a verdict. Against it. It means he carried out. The sentence. He executed sin. Sin is the reigning power. In our lives.

Has been condemned. And we're free from it. And we're set free from it. In the unfathomable mystery.

[15 : 15] Of the atonement. That this all somehow happened. Paul says. In the death of Jesus Christ. God's son. He came in the likeness.

Of sinful flesh. That doesn't mean. He was almost like sinful flesh. But not really like it. Means God was just like it. That Jesus had to struggle.

Against the same temptations. That come to us. In this life. That he came to live the life. As we live it. But that he did so.

Without sinning. And at that moment. When the one who is like us. In every way. Yet without sin. Died the criminal's death. God condemned sin.

In his own flesh. As Jesus became the sin offering. For the world. God condemned sin.

[16:15] And the purpose of it all. Verse 4. 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. The purpose is that we walk differently. That we live differently. And in that way. Begin to fulfill.

What it is. That the law always required. But more on that concept. To come later. In Romans. We're already into the present.

I guess then. By the time we get to verse 5. And the key thing here. That God does in the present. Is to give us. The Holy Spirit. 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. Now there in verse 5. Where the ESV translation. Has live.

[17:11] Two times in that verse. You should probably substitute something. Like the word exist. I'd tell you to cross it out. And write in a different word. But I don't think you should do that.

In the pew Bibles. But if you have your own Bible. Go ahead and do it. Cross it out. Write in exist. It matters. Because Paul's not just describing.

Two ways of life here. He is. But more than that. In the language. He's contrasting. Two kinds of persons. Those who exist.

According to the flesh. And those who exist. According to the spirit. They're two modes of life. Two manners of existing. And they're mutually exclusive.

You cannot exist. You cannot be. At the core of who you are. According to two different realities. You see.

[18:05] Part of the key. Is what Paul means. By setting the mind. On the things of the flesh. Or the things of the spirit. To set the mind. On something. Doesn't mean. Just to think about it.

It means that. At a minimum. But the language. That Paul uses here. Describes. A whole. Stance. A whole. Life. Shaping. Attitude.

To set the mind. On something. Is to show a mentality. That determines. What you live by. It shapes your whole existence. You see.

The point isn't that. You need to change your behavior. In order to become. A different person. Because if your mind. Is set. On the things of the flesh.

If you're someone. Who lives fundamentally. For prestige. Or fame. Or wealth. Or happiness. As the world defines it. Or if you're someone.

[19:01] Who's motivated. At the core of who you are. By pride. Or jealousy. Or you can't help. But slander others. Because what really matters. At the end of the day. Is you. And it may be.

That you're living that way. Even as you go through. The motions of being a Christian. And no one. But God. And you. Know it. If that's you. If you know.

In your heart. That you're living. For something. Other than God himself. And you can't just. Change your behavior. And make yourself. A different person.

You need to be. Made. A different person. And that's God's work. That's what God does. When he pours.

His spirit. Into our lives. That's what happens. When you're born again. The whole point. Paul's working with here. Requires that we see. That the Christian life.

[19:58] Isn't just about. Having our sins forgiven. And then going on. With things as they always were. That's not the Christian life. According to Paul. Or according to Jesus.

If all we could say. About who we are. As Christians. Is that our sins are forgiven. And yet. Our lives are not changed. We're not even close. To Paul. Paul. Doesn't that make sense?

And doesn't the world. Need to see. That reality. In us. A woman. Or a man. In whom the spirit dwells. Will begin to be. At peace with God. They will submit.

To God's will. More and more. They will begin. To live. In a way. That is actually. Pleasing to God. Because the presence. Of the spirit. Makes a difference. Not just to how we feel.

To how we live. And if we want. The gospel. To sink in. With the people. Around us. If we want. To take the message. Of the gospel.

[20 : 57] To the world. The world. Better be able. To see. That we're different. Because of it. That something. Is controlling. Our lives. That makes the words. That we say.

Ring true. And that something. Is the power. Of God. In us. It's the spirit. Of God. The spirit. Of Christ. Who changes.

Our priorities. And changes. Our loves. And changes. Our desires. And changes. What we live for. That's what the world. Needs to see. In the church. Isn't it? We cannot separate.

We dare not separate. The forgiveness. Of sins. From the life. Of the spirit. Because in Christ. We are freed. From both the penalty. And the power. Of sin.

Or else. We haven't really been freed. From either of them. Why? Because verse 6 says. For to set the mind.

[21 : 54] On the flesh. Is death. It is death. It will lead to death. And it's death now. 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. It can't. Those who are in the flesh. Cannot please God. Now let's remind ourselves.

That Paul doesn't just mean. Living in the physical body here. He means being under. The control of sin. There are two classes of persons.

In the biblical view. Those in the flesh. And those in the spirit. Those who are. Under sin. And those. Paul says elsewhere. Who are under. Grace.

One of those two things. Controls you. The flesh. Or the spirit. And if it's the flesh. Then no matter what.

[22 : 54] Good. And noble. And charitable. Actions. We might do. God cannot. Be finally. Pleased with us. Because such actions. Cannot.

Merit. His favor. Peter. But Paul knows. That the people. To whom he writes. This letter. They do have the spirit. And so he continues.

In verse nine. You however. Are not in the flesh. But in the spirit. If in fact. The spirit of God. Dwells in you. In that translation. Can make it sound. As if Paul had some doubt.

About them having the spirit. That's not the sense of it. Their response would be. If we have the spirit. Well of course. We have the spirit. That we're not under the control.

Of the flesh anymore. Paul means. To encourage them. They do have the spirit. And that means. They don't live in the flesh. Controlled by the desires. Of the flesh.

[23 : 47] They live in the spirit. And it's the spirit. Who controls them. And so the rest of verse nine. Is the summation. Of God's work. Anyone who does not. Have the spirit of Christ. Does not belong.

To Christ. The apostles. Very clear. That every Christian. Has the spirit. Of God. Dwelling in him. Or her.

There is no such thing. As a Christian. Who does not. Have the spirit. And that means. There can be no such thing. As a Christian. Who does not.

Walk. In the spirit. And with the spirit. And yet. We're back again. Now. To where we were. At the end of chapter seven. In a way.

Life. Because. With all of that. Being true. There is still. A struggle. It's reflected. In verse 10. But if Christ. Is in you.

[24 : 42] Although the body. Is dead. Because of sin. Nevertheless. The spirit. Is life. Because of righteousness. Death. And life. Both.

Are found. Within us. Still. The spirit. Indwells. Believers. They're no longer. Slaves of sin. They're no longer. Controlled. Controlled by sin. But. We still die. Because of sin.

Sin's no longer. The master. In our lives. But that doesn't mean. It's not existent. And so. This can't be.

The end of the story. The final. Resurrection. Awaits. And that's. The future. In the past. God. Condemned sin.

In the present. God gives the Holy Spirit. And now. We come finally. To verse 11. In the future. When God. Will give you. Resurrection. Life. That condition.

[25 : 39] Of life. In verse 10. With death. And life. Both found in us. Is. Not. Permanent. Why? Because. If the spirit.

Of him. Who raised Jesus. From the dead. Dwells in you. And he does. Then he. Who raised. Christ. Jesus. From the dead. Will also. Give life. To your mortal.

Bodies. Through his spirit. Who dwells in you. Life. And death. Are both at work. In us now. But it will not. Always be so. Because in that. Final day.

We shall be. Rescued. Saved. From the corruption. And decay. Of death. Itself. Will be.

Resurrected. God. And all. Because. The spirit. In you. Is. The spirit. Of the one. Who resurrected.

[26 : 33] Jesus. Himself. There is. Therefore. Now. No condemnation. For those. Who are in Christ. Jesus. How can it be. Paul. One.

Because in the person. Of Jesus Christ. God. Condemns sin. In the past. Two. Because God. Gives us. His own life. In the present. As he pours the Holy Spirit.

Into our hearts. And three. Because in the future. God. Will eliminate. Death. Itself. And give us.

Resurrection. Life.

And all of it. Is because he loves you. Brothers and sisters. What more absolute assurance. Can you possibly need.

Than that. Paul. Would have us know. For certain. That there is no. Condemnation. For those. Who are in Christ. Jesus. Who will deliver me.

[27 : 31] God will. Through Jesus Christ. And by the spirit. May it be. The unshakable.

Confidence. Of your daily life. In Christ. In the name of the father. And of the son. And of the holy spirit. Amen. Let us pray.

There will be moments.

Of silence. Between spoken prayers. When you may add. Your own intercessions. In the quietness. Of your hearts. For the being.zeniu.

of others. Heavenly father. We give you. Thanks. And praise. That there is. Now. No condemnation. For we. His people.

[28 : 42] Who are. In Christ. Jesus. Father. Thank you. For your great. Love. For each. One of. Us. thank you father that you haven't left us to struggle against the sin in our lives in our own strength but have sent your dear son jesus who died and rose for us who lives within us to set us free from sin's dominion thank you father for this gift and for the wonderful assurance affirmed by paul that by your holy spirit we are enabled to walk in this new life now and in the life to come father we turn to our world and pray for protection from violence for whole nations as they struggle for freedom from oppressive regimes in the arab world in north africa and the middle east father we pray that corrupt leaders would be convicted in their hearts and step down we thank you for the peaceful transitions in egypt and tunisia and continue to pray for the people in these countries and elsewhere that you would raise up leaders who are wise and just father we pray for christians both in these countries and around the world who stand for your truth this morning we remember we remember sharon thompson in burkina faso working with wickliffe bible translators brian gonnaghy with the ratnak foundation in cambodia and closer to home catherine gwinnett serving with the north american indigenous ministries in campbell river be very present to each of them and their families protecting them and giving them your strength and guidance day by day heavenly father we thank you for our own country of canada for the peace and order we know here we thank you for many who have come from around the world to make this country home father guide those men and women in public office in all levels of government to fulfill their roles in a way that honors you and as political parties in this province prepare to choose new leaders we pray now for wise and competent people to emerge and we pray for our bishops father we thank you for our large anglican family in canada and pray for our bishops don harvey trevor walters charlie masters and stephen leong we are thankful for our own clergy here at saint john's david dan jim keith erin and eric lord god for each one we ask that you will renew their spirits and draw their hearts ever closer to you be their counsel and strength we pray for their families and ask that you will be their strong tower of defense

father thank you for the negotiated settlement that was agreed upon in the diocese of ottawa just this past week as we wait to hear from the supreme court of canada about our appeal we do pray most earnestly father that such a settlement might be possible in our own situation keep our hearts ever trusting in your provision for us and now father we bring to you those in our church family who are in need of our prayers we lift to you rita rowena mel and marguerite we thank you for your love and care for them and pray that by your holy spirit you would continue your work of healing in their lives lastly father we offer to you a concern or a thanksgiving that may be on our hearts at this time we thank you for your love and pray that we thank you for your love and pray that we thank you for your prayer we offer in the name of the father the son and the holy spirit amen you you