

Fighting Sin with the Spirit

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: 26 June 2022

Preacher: John Lau

- [0 : 0 0] Good morning. Have you ever sat in a courtroom? Maybe as a jury, a witness, or an observer, but hopefully not as a defendant.
- Imagine that you are sitting in a courtroom right now. The prosecutor and the defendant attorney are right in the middle with a big table with all the evidence and paperwork.
- Across from you to the far left are the juries, and followed by the box where the witness will answer the questions. The judge sits next to the witness box.
- There are a couple of court cards between you and the judge. And to the right, behind the prosecutor and your defense attorney, is where people interested in the case can sit and observe.
- Some of them you might know. Some want to see you being acquitted. And others hope to see what verdict you get. Have you got the picture yet?
- [1 : 1 8] Now the prosecutor stands and declares, Your Honor, this person sitting here today is guilty of all the sins committed. Past, present, and in the future.
- Yes, you. You are in the defense box. You are the one being judged. What sort of pleading will you enter into?
- What kind of judgment or furtive do you hope to get? We have been studying the Apostles Paul's letter to the Christians in Romans.
- A church of committed but young believers that God loves. They live in a world that is not too different to any contemporary readers.
- A world that is broken by sin. The people are the same. People steal God's glory. Worshipping many kinds of idols.
- [2 : 1 9] The creator thinks, not God the creator. Indulge in the desires of our flesh and are often hypocritical and judgmental towards others. Even towards God.
- We deny God's sovereignty and judgment on our life. And falsify evidence to support our self-declared righteousness. By doing religious or charitable deeds.
- What Paul has pointed out about our condition in the first seven chapters is so true that it could leave any reader heavy-hearted and dismayed.
- But Paul did not just lay out our problem like the prosecutor crying out, this person's guilty as charged. He also highlighted that Christian has the best defense team that will not lose.
- Christian has our Lord Jesus as our greatest defender, the greatest attorney. That is Christian's greatest assurance. I want to show you our greatest assurance today and how we overcome sin in the spirit today.
- [3 : 3 3] So please keep your Bible in Romans chapter 8. As we are confronted and confused about being accused, Paul gave us the greatest assurance in verse 1.
- Therefore, there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Why is it there is now no condemnation? He goes on in verse 2.

Because through Christ Jesus, the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. The power and authority of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the power of sin and death.

It's the greatest assurance you have about your standing with God. Especially when you are accused. For those who are in Christ Jesus, you can be fully confident that there is now no condemnation.

But only guarantee future inheritance as a child of God. Because in verse 3, For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh.

[4 : 50] God did by sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offerings. And so he condemned sin in the flesh. In order that the righteous requirement of the law may be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

God sent his only son, Jesus Christ, to do what the law cannot do. The law can only tell us what wrong we have committed and what penalty are due.

But it cannot pay out the penalty for us. Last week, when we looked at chapter 7, The purpose of the law were laid out clearly for us by Steve.

And he said, The law was never meant as a means to salvation, as if we could obey it and be right with God. The law cannot save us, but pawn us to the only one that can, our Savior Jesus.

The law requires a sacrifice to be offered to fulfill its righteous requirement regarding our sinful flesh. Not just any sacrifice, but one that is perfect and without sin.

[6 : 06] That is why Jesus is sent to be our replacement in the likeness of sinful flesh. For he is the only one without any blemish.

In AD 33, sin was condemned at Jesus' crucifixion. So no condemnation is left for those in Christ Jesus.

Two thousand years ago, at Jesus' death and resurrection, The righteous requirement of the law was fully met by those living according to the Spirit.

There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. What a great assurance of our relationship with God. When you stand in the heavenly courtroom, When accuser lay out the sin you have committed, You may and should feel ashamed, But you should not feel condemned, Because the penalty of sin was paid back in AD 33.

When you are asked to go into a plea, You can say, I was credited righteous in AD 33 by Jesus Christ. He condemned sin back then, So there is now no condemnation for me, For I am in Christ Jesus.

[7 : 25] No more penalty is required for my past, present, and future sin. That is the assurance that we are promised and provided in this passage today.

Yes, we can say that, But I cannot confidently do so. I know I have been credited righteous by what Jesus achieved.

And this passage says that there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. But I do not feel right. I feel guilty about my failure and sin.

Last week, we were also shown this reality of every Christian living in a sin-broken world. A war raged within every Christian between the freshly and spiritual self.

Struggling with sin is a reality for all Christians. But we are not alone in our struggle. Being fully human came in the likeness of sinful flesh.

[8 : 30] Our Savior Jesus was tempted in every way as we, But did not sin. And can sympathize with our weakness.

So, He gave us the best counselor. Our greatest advocate, the Holy Spirit, To guide us and help us defeat sin in our life.

Chapter 8 and the rest of the letter lay out what living according to the Spirit looks like. God intended for His creation to flourish and live victoriously, But not without suffering and struggles.

I will highlight four points of overcoming sin with the Spirit from verse 5 to 15. Firstly, setting our mind on what the Spirit desires.

Reading from verse 5 to 6. Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires. But those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.

[9 : 42] The mind governed by the flesh is death, But the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. In the book of John, chapter 14 to 16, Jesus told His disciples that the Holy Spirit would teach and remind them of everything He taught.

The Spirit decides for us to remember Jesus and His teaching. He is sent to help us and be with us forever. Guiding us and living with us.

He is in us. The Spirit testify about Jesus to our broken world. Jesus is a gospel we proclaim. And the Spirit also help us to testify about Jesus too.

His desire is to glorify Jesus and tell us all He hears and receives from Jesus. Desire Jesus. Desire life and peace.

Set your mind to the joy of being in Christ. Have the confidence to testify that there is now no condemnation for those who are in Him.

[10 : 51] The first point of living according to the Spirit is setting our minds on what the Spirit desires. It is adopting a godly and Christ-focused mindset that treasures Jesus.

Trusting God to care for any worries you might have about life. Every Christian has two selves. The old self, the flesh, and the new self in Christ.

The one that you feed and nurture more will grow. I say that again. The one that you feed and nurture more will grow.

The flesh is anything without God. So seek the things above. Set your mind on things above. Not on the things on earth.

Feed and nurture your new spirit self. Secondly, understand that our minds cannot deal with sin. From verse 7.

[11 : 57] The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.

Without the Spirit, our fleshly mind is not just incompetent to deal with sin. It is hostile to God. It does not and cannot submit to God and His intended purpose for our life.

We see from chapter 7 last Sunday that the essence of all sin is we have a deep desire to be in charge of the world and our life.

We want to be like God. To sin and do wrong for the adrenaline rush that it provides. There will be no room to please God.

Far too concerned with how we can keep feeling our addiction as junkies, as repeated offenders. This second point is a very important realization and a reminder to stop us from dealing with our sin foolishly.

[13 : 06] The following may sound ridiculous, but often true for many of us. Even though God, the judge of life, has declared us not condemned and free to go, with no record of wrong against us, because a guilty record has been laid on His Son Jesus, We instead insist on living in a system of good behavior bond.

Instead of accepting the generous grace and mercy of the judge, we think we can pay off sin's penalty by doing community service. We rather keep doing religiously by living a good and moral life under a probation office.

We think by our behavior, and after a certain period of time of proving our corrective remorse, we deserve to have our wrong record wiped out.

If you foolishly believe that we can deal with our sins, we will never come to the realization and cries that Paul had at the end of chapter 7.

We will not get to appreciate the deliverance that God has given us through Jesus. Instead, keep living under God's judgment.

[14 : 32] There is no condemnation means there is no record of wrong against us. Living according to the Spirit means living freely to please God according to what He purposed for us to live.

We do not take on too many things and assume a crushing number of responsibility to try to work off or make up for our sins.

Thirdly, being sure that the Spirit can deal with sin, starting from verse 9. You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh, but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you.

And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. We must make a very important distinction between a believer of Christ and an unbeliever because it is a matter of life and death.

We are either in Christ, who has a Spirit and life, or outside of Christ, without the Spirit, do not belong to Christ, and only sin and death remain.

[15 : 48] A believer of Christ is someone who accepted the gospel by faith and turned away from themselves and the world. They stop tracing after their desires, turn towards Jesus, and keep turning back to Jesus for the rest of their life.

If you have not accepted the gospel, let me encourage you to speak with any Christians you know, or speak with myself, to find out how to accept God's gospel by faith, to become righteous in God's sight.

Paul goes on in verse 10. But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness, and if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal body because of His Spirit who lives in you.

Because of sin, our body is mortal and subject to death. A reality of all believers and unbelievers, there is no escape. But for Christians, the one who believes in the promise of God, there is a new and immortal body waiting for us.

The Spirit can deal with sin because the Spirit has a power that raised Jesus from the dead. It was a direct assault and total defeat of sin when death was conquered in the resurrection of Jesus Christ in AD 33.

[17 : 28] Sin, the stink of death, was defeated, and what awaits all believers at the end of their mortal life is that immortal body to enjoy eternal life with God.

This third point should give us a new perspective and freedom regarding this mortal body we live in with Christ and the Spirit. Are you spending much money and time on therapeutic products or focusing on the latest trend in healthcare products to achieve certain looks?

Have you fallen into the body confidence and self-esteem of our consumer world? And on the other hand, if you are suffering from a debilitating sickness, that puts many restraints on your mortal body.

Take courage that there is a guaranteed future inheritance of new body awaiting for you. How you look and feel is not the deep and true identity of who you are.

If you are in Christ and the Spirit lives in you, your body and your sickness and suffering are never a curse but a blessing.

[18 : 53] A blessed assurance that as you suffer in your mortal body, as Jesus has suffered in His body for us, you will surely be glorified with Christ in your resurrection.

Lastly, living according to the Spirit means killing sin with the Spirit. Let's look at verse 12 to 13. Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation, but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it.

For if you live according to the flesh, you will die. But by the Spirit, you put to death the misdeeds of the body. You will live. In the conclusion of today's passage, Paul further points out that living according to the Spirit carries an obligation.

We are obliged to put to death the misdeeds of the body because killing sin carries with it the reward of eternal life. There are two actions involved in putting sin to death by the Spirit.

Firstly, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus was very definite about how we should deal with sin. We must deal with sin from the heart.

[20 : 07] The deepest motive. Jesus said, If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it from you.

And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it from you. Paul also told Timothy to flee the evil desires of youth and the Ephesians to have no hints of sexual immorality, impurity or greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.

To kill sin with the Spirit is a ruthless, foolhardy resistance to sinful practice. Total rejection of everything we know to be wrong declaim war on attitude and behaviors.

Christian does not play games with sin. We get as far away from it as possible. Not just avoiding things you know are sins, we avoid things that lead to sins, including doubtful things.

The second action we take is we turn towards the gospel, our Lord Jesus. By the power of the Spirit, we can repent of our sins. Repenting means turning away from sins towards something else.

[21 : 27] That something or someone needs to be Jesus. Jesus once said, An unclean spirit has gone out of our person and it traveled through waterless places to search for rest.

When it finds no rest, it says, I will return to my house from which I came out. And when it arrives, find the house wiped and put in order, it goes in and bring along seven other spirits more evil than himself.

And they go in and live there. And the last stage of that person becomes worse than the first. Don't just wipe sin from your body. Swiping it in, putting it in order, and leaving it unoccupied.

You need to occupy your body with your strongest defender and advocate. Fill your heart and mind with what Christ has accomplished for you on the cross.

In that way, sin cannot return to you. It may become more restless and try to cause you more trouble, but it will not be able to get back into you.

[22 : 39] Sin will cry loudly at the heavenly courtroom as a vicious, homeless accuser. It might even put your heart in the witness box because that is where it used to live and where all our sins start.

But in 1 John 3, 20 says, if our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts and he knows everything. Set your mind on what the Spirit desires.

Cherishing and glorifying Jesus, put to death the things of the flesh, live according to the Spirit. And the final verdict will always be no condemnation for you are in Christ Jesus.

Thank you.