

ROMANS 8: 1-13

As we concluded Chapter 7, the struggle was still going on, even in the midst of hope.

V 25 **"--- So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."**

Not a good situation, and not one that God can condone.

But, unfortunately, it's a situation that prevails in many a Christian's life.

And what are the consequences of this endless see-sawing back and forth?

Does a Christian continually gain and lose his salvation, based on his performance?

Some of our dear brethren are still labouring under that teaching, but that is not the case.

Certainly there are consequences of a life lived in the flesh, and, might I say, very severe consequences, but our eternal security is not one of them.

Which brings us to Romans 8:1 **"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."**

Before I go any further, I need to address the last part of this verse which says, **"who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."**

Certainly, such a requirement would immediately put our salvation in jeopardy, but it would also fly in the face of many other scriptures.

And as we all know, scripture doesn't
contradict itself.

So, how can we explain this requirement?

Well, one scholar by the name of Sanday says
these words are simply an
interpolation, or in other words, a
piece of information that has been
drawn from another source and inserted
into the sentence.

In this case, it seems to have come from the
end of V 4.

But how could such a thing happen?

I must confess I cannot answer that
question, or even prove that this is,
in fact, the case.

However, if we accept this explanation, the
rest of the verse takes on quite a
different meaning, and, might I say,
one that does agree with scripture.

Let me read it again.

V 1 **"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."**

However, even if we eliminate this rather troublesome qualification, one requirement still remains.

Salvation, and, indeed, eternal security, cannot be ours unless we are **"in Christ Jesus."**

It's an essential requirement not only for man, but for God himself.

You see, when God looks at the redeemed sinner who is **"in Christ Jesus,"** He only sees His perfect Son.

And as a result, He can **"be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."**

And this blessed condition of being "**in Christ Jesus**" is pictured in the Old Testament.

Actually, that's not too surprising, for the Old Testament is literally filled with pictures (or types) of the Lord Jesus. That's why He could point to "**Moses and all the prophets**" while on His way to Emmaus, and "**expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.**"

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Today, we will only consider Noah's Ark, and even then, only one of several types that are contained in that magnificent structure.

In Genesis 7:1 we read "**--- the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark.**"

That wasn't a suggestion. It was a command. You see, the ark was the only place of safety in a world under God's impending judgment.

And as we read on, we will discover that the wooden sides of the ark had been sealed both inside and out with pitch.

Certainly, there was a practical reason for this, for the ark wouldn't be seaworthy until its many joints were sealed.

However, if we search out the Hebrew word for pitch, we will discover that it can also be translated atonement.

In fact, it is translated atonement in several other scriptures.

Now, it's not too unusual for a word to have two meanings.

In fact, the English language is filled with such examples.

However, in this case, this double meaning
is quite profound.

You see, all those inside the ark were
effectively separated from the waters
of God's judgment by the pitch.

In like manner, all those **"in Christ Jesus"**
are protected from the judgment they so
richly deserve by Christ's atonement.

And as a result --- **"There is therefore now
no condemnation to them which are in
Christ Jesus."**

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

With the introduction of V 2, we turn our
attention from the certainty of our
salvation to the distinct possibility
of our victory.

Here again, as in the previous chapter, two laws are acting in opposition.

In this case, it is "**the law of the Spirit**" and "**the law of sin and death.**"

Let me illustrate their interaction by referring to another law, found in nature.

Supposing I'm sitting at the kitchen table, and accidentally knock my knife over the edge.

Immediately, the law of gravity would take over, sending the knife crashing to the floor.

But suppose I have quick reflexes, and simply reach out and grab the knife in mid-air, and return it to the table.

I haven't cancelled the law of gravity, but as far as the knife is concerned, I

have overcome the law of gravity by a greater force.

Likewise, because of our sin nature, it is certainly possible for **"the law of sin and death"** to drag us down, but it's not inevitable.

V 3-4 **"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:**

⁴ That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

Here is hope indeed!

Certainly the law, which was hampered by the weakness of our flesh, could not help us.

However, because of Jesus Christ, and because of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, **"the righteousness of the law"** can be **"fulfilled in us."**

How does that happen?

Well, we will be looking at that in a moment, but first of all, let's consider our incarnate Lord as He is presented to us in V 3.

If we look carefully, we will notice that V 3 says Jesus was made **"in the likeness of sinful flesh,"** but it doesn't say He was made in the likeness of flesh.

It doesn't say that, because Jesus wasn't made in the likeness of flesh. He was made flesh.

Certainly, angels have appeared in the likeness of flesh, but at no point were they human.

They were simply masquerading in human form.
But Jesus was a real man.

He entered this world as a baby.

And I have no doubt that like any other
baby, His mother would have to teach
Him how to walk and how to talk.

But when it comes to **"sinful flesh,"** Jesus
was only made in its **"likeness."**

He looked like the rest of us. In fact, He
was like the rest of us, but He **"did no
sin."**

Hebrews 4:15 says He **"was in all points
tempted like as we are, yet without
sin."**

Yes, for 33 years, Jesus lived among us as a
perfect human being.

He **"did no sin."**

And yet V 3 also says, He came **"for sin."**

What does that mean?

And while we're trying to answer that question, what about His perfect life? Was it of any benefit to mankind?

To answer these questions, let me refer you to an interesting revelation found in the book of Hebrews.

In Hebrews 10:20, we are told that the veil in the temple that separated sinful man from a righteous God was a type (or picture) of Jesus' flesh.

Looked at from this point of view, it becomes quite apparent that Jesus' perfect life would only highlight our shortcomings.

That's one reason why so many self-righteous individuals, such as the scribes and the Pharisees, hated Him.

Certainly, we should try to follow Jesus' example, for we can have no better.

But as an example, Jesus' sinless life can never save us any more than God's perfect law can justify us.

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However, looked at from a different point of view, it can be truly said that His sinless life was absolutely essential in obtaining our salvation.

John the Baptist identified Jesus as ---

"the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

But He couldn't have taken away a single sin if He hadn't been **"a lamb without blemish and without spot."**

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In the book of Matthew, Chapter 27, we are told, that when Jesus **"yielded up the ghost"** --- **"the veil of the temple was rent in twain,"** effectively removing

the barrier between the outer sanctuary
and the Holiest of all.

I'm sure the priests repaired the veil as
quickly as possible, but God had made
His point.

The rent veil of His Son's perfect flesh had
opened the way into His presence.

And that's why Jesus left His ivory palaces
and was made **"in the likeness of sinful
flesh."**

Oh certainly He came as Israel's Messiah,
thus fulfilling God's promises.

But He also came **"for sin."**

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So then, having looked at Jesus' reasons for
being made flesh, let us return to the
subject of our victory **"in Christ
Jesus."**

In Chapter 6, we discovered the true significance of our position **"in Christ Jesus."**

In today's lesson, we will discover the true significance of the power of the Holy Spirit Who resides within every believer.

Romans 8:5-8 **"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.**

⁶ For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

⁷ Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

⁸ So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."

Here we see the rewards of living **"after the Spirit"** and the consequences of living **"after the flesh."**

It is a battle that must be won, but it's also a battle that will require outside help.

V 9-10 **"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.**

¹⁰ **And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness."**

So, there you have it.

If you are a believer, you can count on the Holy Spirit's presence within you.

So much so that His absence is positive proof that salvation has never taken place.

Well, for the Christian, that's good news. But how does His presence affect our battle against sin?

Here we have V 11-13z: **"But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.**

¹² **Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.**

¹³ **For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."**

Did you notice the extent of the Holy Spirit's power?

Yes, it's the same power that **"raised up Jesus from the dead."**

Can you imagine that?

The same power that raised Jesus' physical body from the grave is available to quicken our **"mortal bodies."**

And yes, we are still talking about our **"mortal bodies."**

It's the same subject that occupied us in Chapters 6 and 7, and it will occupy us throughout the rest of this lesson.

And this might be a good time to consider the fact that our physical bodies have been **"bought with a price."**

Yes, the "For Sale" sign in front of our house has a "SOLD" sticker pasted across it!

The price has been paid, and the transaction has been sealed in blood.

1 Peter 1:18-19 **"--- ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;**

¹⁹ But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

And secondly, as we discovered in our last lesson, there is a new occupant living in Christ's house.

1 Corinthians 3:16 **"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"**

And when the Holy Spirit moved in, He found quite a few things that were not to His liking.

Yes, I'm sorry to say, the house that cost
Jesus so dearly turned out to be a
handyman's special.

It would not be a suitable environment for
its new occupants until some extensive
renovations have been done.

Oh, did I say occupants?

Actually, I did.

You see, our new nature also lives here.

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So, how exactly does the Holy Spirit fit
into this new situation?

What are His rights, and what are His
responsibilities?

Perhaps the best way I can approach this
subject is to tell you a story about an
old mill.

Like any illustration, it's bound to have its shortcomings, but I hope it will be helpful.

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As you entered the City of Cambridge Ontario, travelling along Fisher Mills Road, you would pass an old rundown mill.

The place was a disaster, and I wouldn't be surprised if the inside was as derelict as its exterior.

But all that has changed.

Today, if you pass that same mill, you will hardly recognize it.

The old roof has been replaced with expensive new tiles.

It now sports new siding, and up in the peak, there's a beautiful picture window.

And I can only imagine what the inside must
look like.

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I asked my son what he knew about this
marvellous transformation.

He had heard that a mechanical engineer had
bought the property with visions of
making it his new home.

Obviously, in addition to the purchase
price, he had the financial resources
to complete the job in style.

So now it stands in all its glory, a
testimony to the new owner's resources
and his architectural skill.

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Actually, that's all I know about the old
mill, and even that is second-hand
information.

However, I would like to use a little imagination in order to fill out my story.

I hope you don't mind.

I would like to imagine that back in the bad old days, a tramp used to take refuge in its dark interior.

He had found a loose board on its crumbling exterior, and had just managed to squeeze inside.

And the place suited him.

After numerous visits, his muddy boots had built up a layer of grime on the floor, and old wine bottles gave testimony to his principle activity.

However, in return for its shelter, he had used it disgracefully.

When the weather turned cold, he would rip
off a few boards from one of the
partitions, and make a small fire.
It's a wonder he hadn't burnt the place
down!

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So that's my imaginary story about an
imaginary old man, and the very real
old mill.

And you know what? That's about the way our
old nature treats our bodies if he is
given full sway.

However, the time came, when the old mill
got a new owner.

And upon conversion, the Christian has a new
owner also, and a new occupant in the
person of the Holy Spirit.

And just like the mechanical engineer, the Holy Spirit possesses considerable resources.

Yes, as we have already discovered, the Holy Spirit possesses the very same power that raised Jesus' physical body from the grave.

And with power like that, you would expect some big changes.

In fact, **"the righteousness of the law"** will be **"fulfilled in us"** if we **"walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."**

And, actually, that's the crux of the matter, isn't it?

If the fruit of the Spirit is not evident in a believer's life, then something is definitely wrong.

And might I add, the absence of victory has nothing to do with a lack of personal ability.

Victory is completely dependent upon the Holy Spirit's power. Failure can only point to an ignorance of the facts, or a complete lack of obedience.

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Well, let's get back to our story.

Let us suppose that after the mill was enjoying its new life, the old tramp showed up one dark night.

He was carrying an empty wine bottle in his hand, and he was trying to get in.

You see, he had always considered the old mill to be his.

Oh, he hadn't built it, and he certainly hadn't purchased it.

It had simply been there to supply his
rather dubious needs.

On that particular night, the new owner was
in the back of the house working on
another renovation.

Of course he had no idea that an old tramp
was wandering around outside, looking
for a loose board.

But there wasn't any loose board, was there?
And in the darkness, and in the confusion of
his mind, the old man just couldn't put
it together.

However, as he shuffled along in the
darkness, the front door suddenly swung
open of its own accord.

Yes, you guessed it.

The new mill recognized the old man, and for
some unaccountable reason, still liked
him.

Staggering into the kitchen, he looked
around in disgust.

The old mill wasn't dark any more.

In fact, it was lit up like a Christmas
tree!--not the best thing for a
hangover.

"What's going on in here? Someone's made an
awful mess of the place."

Flopping down on the new chesterfield, he
banged his wine bottle on the coffee
table, and tried to get some sleep.

But it was no use.

All of those lights gave him a headache.

Well, actually, he already had a headache,
but they weren't helping!

Finally, he climbed the stairs and sacked
out in a dark bedroom.

Or, to be more specific, he sacked out on
the new bedspread, muddy boots and all.

About this time, the new owner entered the kitchen with the idea of making a sandwich.

Of course, he saw the mud on the floor, and the large dent in the coffee table. He also saw the muddy footprints leading upstairs.

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Well, I'll leave it up to you to fill in the rest of the story, but there could only be one conclusion, couldn't there?

After all, the old man had no right to be there in the first place, and there wasn't the remotest possibility that they could live in harmony.

Yes, everything seems quite predictable, but that part about the front door was quite a surprise, wasn't it?

Of course, apart from my rather flowery
imagination, mills don't have a will of
their own, but we do.

And it is possible to swing our *front door*
open, and welcome the old man in, muddy
boots and all--but it will be a
disaster.

As Romans 8:7 says, "**--- the carnal mind is
enmity against God: for it is not
subject to the law of God, neither
indeed can be.**"

And V 8 assures us "**--- they that are in the
flesh cannot please God.**"

Is that what we want?

I don't think so.

After all, "**--- to be carnally minded is
death,**" but "**to be spiritually minded
is life and peace.**"

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I would like to conclude this lesson with one more illustration, but don't panic. This one has nothing to do with my imagination.

In fact, it comes from scripture.

Both the church of Jesus Christ and God's Chosen People have been created for a purpose, in fact, several purposes.

However, today we will only concern ourselves with the nation of Israel, and we will limit ourselves to one of its purposes.

For hundreds of years, the land of Canaan was occupied by a number of nations.

In return for the bountiful land that God had given them, they lived in debauchery and idolatry.

And like in Noah's day, evil was so rampant that something must be done.

However, this time, God wasn't going to destroy them with a flood, or rain down fire and brimstone from heaven.

He would create a nation that would exercise His judgment upon them.

Now, there were a couple of advantages to this method.

First of all, there would be no need to destroy that wonderful land that flowed with milk and honey.

And secondly, the inhabitants would have another 400 years to change their ways.

However, this method was not without its dangers.

Certainly Israel would inherit that beautiful land, but they must walk a straight path.

Listen to God's words in Deuteronomy 7:16-18: **"And thou shalt consume all the**

people which the LORD thy God shall deliver thee; thine eye shall have no pity upon them: neither shalt thou serve their gods; for that will be a snare unto thee.

¹⁷ If thou shalt say in thine heart, These nations are more than I; how can I dispossess them?

¹⁸ Thou shalt not be afraid of them: but shalt well remember what the LORD thy God did unto Pharaoh, and unto all Egypt."

There were at least two dangers that Israel needed to be wary of.

First of all, acting upon their own initiative, they might spare the very nations God had condemned.

Of course, that would lead to a long series
of compromises in which they would end
up serving "**their gods.**"

And even if they agreed with God's judgment,
and recognized the absolute necessity
of destroying the enemy, they could be
paralyzed by fear.

Yes, even with all the resources of God
behind them, they might say, "**How can I
dispossess them?**"

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Today, Christians face much the same
situation.

Oh, God hasn't asked us to destroy nations.
In fact, He has told us to go to them in
love.

No, nations aren't the issue here.

It's those hidden sins which we might be
unwilling to judge, or the

"principalities and powers" that
paralyze us with fear.

But really, defeat shouldn't even be an
option.

We need only **"remember what the LORD"** our
**"God did unto Pharaoh, and unto all
Egypt."**

And we need only rely upon the power of the
Holy Spirit **"that raised up Jesus from
the dead."**

No, victory has nothing to do with our
abilities. It's simply a matter of
faith and obedience.

With the Holy Spirit at the helm of our
lives, **"the righteousness of the law"**
can be **"fulfilled in us."**

And why shouldn't He be at the helm of our
lives?

After all, we **"are bought with a price:
therefore glorify God in your body, and
in your spirit, which are God's."**

1 Corinthians 6:20