

Romans 8:1-11 (Part 1)

INTRODUCTION

At the end of chapter 7 Paul says that Jesus Christ has the ability to overcome the sin in our lives. But he also reminds us that during this lifetime, there is battle between our new desire to follow Christ and our old desire toward sin and the self directed life.

In chapter 8 Paul describes the victory and hope that we have in Jesus Christ. Up to this point Paul has only mentioned the Holy Spirit twice. From this point on the Holy Spirit is mentioned nineteen times. Chapter 7 is a chapter of honest struggle. But now Paul turns his attention to the power of the Spirit of God that is at work in our lives.

1Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

God has declared us innocent, we are no longer condemned. But Satan uses past guilt and shame to get us to question God's love and promises and even our salvation. But in Christ there is no condemnation for the believer. God has made us acceptable to him right now in Christ. Condemnation can come when:

- We remember things we are ashamed of.
- People point out inconsistencies in our lives.
- Personal doubts, fears and compulsive behavior get us to act goofy.
- We compare ourselves with other Christians and we react by feeling inadequate.

We have learned that until the day we die there is a part of us that will always gravitate toward sin. That is called the sin nature. But also from the moment we receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior we are born again and indwelled by the Holy Spirit. There is now a part of us that cannot sin. The

new nature in us is dead to sin. Therefore we cannot be condemned of sin. When we die the old sin nature, will get shaved off and taken away and the new nature will never again be dragged back in to the things that our old sin nature pulled us into.

2For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

The Spirit of life is the Holy Spirit. When we receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior we give ownership of our lives over to God. And when we respond to God in that way, the Holy Spirit moves in and creates new desires and brings spiritual power into our life. When the Holy Spirit moves into us we suddenly want to live holy and pure just like the Holy Spirit does.

I will say more about the law of the Spirit verses the law of sin and death when we get to verse 4.

3For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did:

Notice the words, “God did”. You can underline the words; “God did” in your bible. Everything that is described in this chapter has to do with the work of God, not the work of man. Everything in this chapter and in fact in the bible comes back to this phrase, “God did”.

Freedom over sin never can be obtained through obedience to the law. Freedom from sin does not come to us by trying hard. The law cannot help us because we are too weak willed to obey it perfectly. But what the law cannot do, God did by;

sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin,

Jesus Christ was a likeness of us. Jesus added a complete human body and nature to himself. He had the same desires that yield to sin, yet he never

gave in to sin. Jesus Christ took on humanity in order to be our sin offering. God was satisfied that the death of Jesus was a great enough sacrifice to pay for our sin.

He condemned sin in the flesh,

Jesus gave himself as a sacrifice for our sins. In the Old Testament times, animal sacrifices were continually offered at the temple. These animals brought to the altar had two important characteristics: they were alive, and they were “without flaw.” The sacrifices showed the Israelites the seriousness of sin: innocent blood had to be spilled before sins could be pardoned (see Lev. 17:11). But animal blood could not really remove sin (Heb.10:4); and the forgiveness provided by those sacrifices, was more of a stay of execution than a pardon.

Those animal sacrifices only pointed to the sacrifice of Jesus that paid the penalty for the sin of every believer. The human life of Jesus was identical with ours, yet unstained by sin. So he could serve as the flawless sacrifice for our sins. In him, our pardon is complete so that not only is there “no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,” but also our sin is condemned or taken away by Jesus Christ.

Why did Jesus do this? What was he trying to accomplish? Let’s look in verse 4 to find that answer.

4so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

What does it mean that the requirements of the law are fulfilled in those who walk according to the Spirit? The law is a reference to the Ten Commandments. Let’s look at a summary of the Ten Commandments taken from Deut. 5.

TEN COMMANDMENTS

1. Have no other gods before Me.
2. Do not make or worship idols.
3. Do not take the Lord's name in vain.
4. Observe the Sabbath and keep it holy.
5. Honor your father and mother.
6. Do not murder.
7. Do not commit adultery.
8. Do not steal.
9. Do not bare false witness (lie).
10. Do not covet people or things.

All of these commandments will be in place until the second coming of Christ with the possible exception of the Sabbath. Some of the early New Testament churches worshipped on Sunday because that is the day of the week that the Lord was raised from the dead. So we do not have to worship on Saturday as did believers in the Old Testament, but I believe God still requires us to set aside a day of the week to come to a house of worship and praise the Lord with other believers as well as abstaining from work.

Now before we received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior we did not have a deep desire to follow the Ten Commandments.

STORY - THE TEN COMMANDMENT / MY RESPONSE

The first commandment says; "have no other god's before me". When I was not following the Lord, money and power were my gods. My goal in life was not to follow the Lord. My goal was to do whatever I could to make a load of cash and buy a lot of expensive toys. I did not care about the poor. I did not care about what God wanted me to do. And if I needed to work 7 days a week to get more money it would not bother me in the least. Before I knew the Lord I saw the Ten Commandments as The Ten Suggestions.

After I received Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior God put it in my heart to love him and serve him even at the expense of my career. Because of what Jesus Christ did to my heart, I now want to follow his command of having no gods before him. He fulfilled the law in my life when he put that law in my heart. When I put the Lord first it is because the Lord has fulfilled the law by writing it in my heart and giving me the desire to obey the Ten Commandments.

STORY – WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE?

A couple years ago someone tried to get Shelly and I to buy into a pyramid sales business. I don't have anything against pyramid sales, although as a pastor I cannot use my personal relationships to sell things. But someone Shelly knew called her and pretended that she wanted to renew their friendship. But when Shelly's long lost friend came to the door she came with a guy who was carrying a white board and a bunch of catalogs.

We invited them in and his opening line went something like this; "how would you like to be a millionaire in 5 years?" He was shocked when I said; "I could care less if I have a million dollars. God calls some people to be rich so that they can support the Lord's work, but that is not his call for me."

Well, this guy did not know what to say next because his presentation was developed to appeal to the greed of the sin nature. You can ask Shelly about the rest of the story. Things went down hill from there but I don't want to get off the point.

The point is that before I received Christ money was my God. I would do anything to make a dollar. But Jesus Christ put a new heart in me so that when I am connected with God's power and with the mind of Christ my first goal is to ask God what he wants me to be doing. I no longer worship

money, at least not on a regular basis. Because of what God did in me, I am fulfilling the law that I should have no other gods before him.

The idea of God putting the new and holy desires in our hearts was prophesied long ago.

HEART OF STONE / TABLES TO FLESH

Ezekiel 36:26

"Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

2 Corinthians 3:3

being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

5For those who are according to the flesh

The phrase; “according to the flesh” is a referenced to the pre-Christian. What is the mindset of the pre-Christian? They;
set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, 7because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, 8and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Before we come to faith in Christ we live the self-directed life. Some of the Ten Commandments are appealing to us, while there are others that we don't want to follow nor do we have the power to do so. Before I became a Christian I made up my own rules so that I could come across as one of the

good guys. But I did not have the Spirit of God within me to help me care about following all of God's commandments and do things his way instead of my way. Before Christ I could not please the Lord.

9However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you.

When we receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior the Holy Spirit moves into us and overrides the desires of our sin nature. The Holy Spirit is eternal. He will live forever. Therefore since the Holy Spirit lives in you, you can be certain that you also will live forever with God.

But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.

1 John 4:13 says; By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the seal of our salvation. He seals the deal. He guarantees to us we are saved. When we become a Christian the Holy Spirit does many things to change the course of our lives.

First, he moves in and takes possession of our Spirit. He lives in us. And then he gives us the fruit of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is the new attitudes that God gives us when we are born again. Each Christian is also called into ministry. And the Holy Spirit gives each Christian a spiritual gift so that he or she can serve the Lord's work in the church.

We cannot become a Christian or go to heaven or do anything that is pleasing to the Lord apart from the Holy Spirit. We cannot have the right attitude and motives in life apart from the Holy Spirit.

11But 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.

If you want to have the light of Jesus shine through you, this is a great verse to read. Think of it. After the crucifixion the body of Jesus lay lifeless in a dark tomb. Suddenly, the Holy Spirit descends with great power breaking Jesus right out of his grave! And the same power that broke Jesus out of his grave lives inside us! If that is true, then in God's power anything is possible. We can live a new life. And we can be over-comers. And we can be used by God to bring light and hope and truth to this community. In Christ all things are possible. Don't settle for the ordinary life when the same power that raised Jesus from the dead lives in you.

TAKING IT HOME

1. Have you ever fallen prey to Satan's condemnation? Do you feel inadequate when you compare yourself to other Christians? Or do you have doubts, fears or compulsive behaviors that compel you to act in a way that is embarrassing? If so, will you cling to the truth that Jesus paid enough for you? Will you cling to the truth that if God does not condemn you, you can lift up your head and walk with confidence in God and His plans for your life?
2. What does it mean in your practical every day life that the same power that raised Jesus from the dead lives in you?