

Romans

The Role of the Spirit - Part 1

May 10, 2015

I. Review of **Romans 2:1 - 7:25**

- A. In **Romans 2**, Paul tells us that God justifies those who obey His commands, regardless of their national or religious affiliations, or whether they are circumcised, or as we might say today, baptized.
- B. In **Romans 3-4**, Paul makes it clear that everyone has sinned, therefore everyone owes the penalty for sin – a penalty we either pay ourselves by spending eternity in hell, or someone pays it for us by dying in our place. Paul confirms that Christ paid sin’s penalty on our behalf, and we receive His gift of life by faith.
- C. In **Romans 5**, Paul’s primary focus is the logical and theological explanation of how one man (*Adam*) could bring sin into our world in a way that contaminated everyone, and how one man (*Jesus*) could pay the penalty for sin in a way that could redeem everyone.
- D. Then in **Romans 6**, Paul says a bit differently what he said in **Romans 2** about the necessity of keeping the Law to be justified before God. In **Romans 6**, Paul says that the requirement of faithful obedience to God is the only valid expression of living by faith and the only basis for God justifying us and giving us eternal salvation. Paul explains that we no longer have to sin, and we no longer ought to sin. If we willfully continue in sin, it means we are continuing to serve sin. If we willfully turn from serving sin to pursuing a life of righteousness, it means we are serving God, resulting in sanctification and the gift of eternal life.
- E. In **Romans 7:1-13**, Paul explains why we are no longer under the Law, how sin uses the Law to tempt us into sinning, and that in spite of the weaknesses of the Law, it remains holy and righteous and good.
- F. In **Romans 7:14-25**, Paul shows that those who are trusting in the Law to be justified and given the gift of eternal life, are trapped in an unwinnable struggle between their good intentions and the power of sin to lead them astray. Then he asks: “If the Law, which is holy and righteous and good and given to us by God, cannot save us from the power and practice of sin, what or who can? The answer is, God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, and by the indwelling work of the Holy Spirit.
- G. In the first part of **Romans 8**, Paul is teaching us about the presence, work, and necessity of the Holy Spirit for living a godly life.

H. Prayer

II. The work of the Holy Spirit in enabling us to life godly

A. **Romans 8:1-8** . . . Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. [2] For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. [3] For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, [4] so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. [5] For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. [6] For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, [7] because 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, [8] and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

B. The well known words of **Romans 8:1** begin Paul's answer to **Romans 7:24-25a** . . . "Wretched (*miserable, deplorable*) man that I am! Who will set me free from the body (*sinful passions*) of this death? [25] Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

1. As Paul makes clear in **Romans 7**, prior to repentance and faith in Christ's redeeming work, we are trapped in a losing battle against sin – be it the sinful influences of the world, our sinful passions, or the temptations of the devil. And we are also trapped under the penalty of sin. Therefore, we need someone to set us free from the penalty of sin, practice of sin, and the power of our sinful passions.
2. And as we well know, God sets us free, through the redeeming work of His son, Jesus Christ our Lord. But thankfully, God's work in us against sin does not end there. As we saw last Sunday, God goes beyond setting us free to giving us everything necessary to live a godly life while still in our human body and in this sinful world.
3. And this brings us to these wonderful words of **Romans 8:1**.

C. **Romans 8:1** . . . Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

1. In relation to God's dealings with us, **condemnation** begins when God exposes our rebellion, our faults, and our unworthiness to live with Him eternally. And His condemnation comes to fulfillment when He declares us guilty and casts us into the lake of fire.

2. Yet, in spite of what we deserve, God no longer condemns **those who are in Christ Jesus**. And this is an important truth, for it is part of the whole package of needing God to go from a guilty sinner to a saved child of God. Let me give you a small explanation.
 - a. From Adam to the resurrection of Jesus, believers were expected to sincerely and faithfully live up to the standard of righteousness which they knew, whether they had the Law of Moses or had to depend on nature, their intellect, and their conscience to lead them to truth. That was the OT life of faith and the path to being justified before God.
 - b. However with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ there was an added requirement to living up to the truth you know. **Now the path to justification** begins with repentance, **faith in Christ** as the Savior who saves us from the penalty and power of sin, and continuing on from there to live a life of faithful obedience to His will. In other words, faith in Christ is the required addition, and without faith in Christ, there is no justification and eternal salvation.
 - c. For example, Jesus himself said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father but through me (**John 14:6**).
 - d. While standing before the Sanhedrin and defending the disciples who had been arrested for preaching in the Temple, Peter said, “[Jesus] is the Stone which was rejected by you, the builders, but which became the chief corner stone. And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved” (**Acts 4:11-12**).
3. And so Paul says, “Therefore there is now no condemnation **for those who are in Christ Jesus**.”

D. **Romans 8:2** . . . For (*the reason being*) the law (*principle*) of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law (*principle*) of sin and of death.

1. Though Paul has already explained **HOW** those who are in Christ have been justified and set free from the penalty and power of sin (see **Romans 5 & 6**), he does it again here, but this time he emphasizes the involvement of the presence, power, and work of the Holy Spirit. And he does this, not as if the Holy Spirit is separate from God and Jesus Christ, but in a way which speaks of the Holy Spirit as directly connected to, and part of, and even interchangeable with God and Jesus Christ.

2. Therefore, Paul says that the reason there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus is because the Holy Spirit, operating through the redeeming work of Jesus Christ, sets us free from the power of sin and the penalty of sin.
 - a. Again, I want to remind you that this is not an additional work, but rather another way of explaining what has already been explained in previous chapters. For the sake of where he is taking us – which is to see the necessity of the presence and work of the Holy Spirit in living a godly life – Paul, is referencing God, the Holy Spirit, instead of only God or only Jesus Christ.
 - b. And for the sake of reminding you of the bigger picture, I want to remind you that this work of the Holy Spirit is preceded by His convicting work (**John 16:8-11**), and His work of drawing unbelievers to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ (**John 6:44; 12:32**). Then, this work is followed by the Holy Spirit’s work of sanctifying us by empowering, assisting, and educating us.
3. Continuing on with **verse 2**, I want you to see the oneness, or interchangeableness of the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ when Paul says that it is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus who sets us free from the law of sin and death. And to do this, I want you to consider the following scriptures.
 - a. These have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name (**John 20:31**).
 - b. God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life (**1 John 5:11b-12**).
 - c. By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him (**1 John 4:9**).
 - d. And speaking about Himself, Jesus said, “I am the bread of life,” and then He went on to say, “I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever” (**John 6:48, 51**).
 - e. Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies” (**John 11:25**).
 - f. And finally, Jesus explains the inseparableness of the Holy Spirit’s nature and his nature in **John 14:16-17** . . . “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; [17] that is the Spirit of truth, whom the

world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but **you know Him** because He abides **with you** and will be **in you.**”

4. The point is simple, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are one just as Jesus and the Father are one, and just as the Father and the Holy Spirit are one.
 - a. Therefore, it is not God alone or Christ alone or the Holy Spirit alone who sets us free, nor is it all three, as if they are separately doing some particular part of the work. It is God in Christ in the Holy Spirit who sets us free from the law of sin and death.
 - b. This truth is a mystery, and though a mystery, it is vital for understanding where Paul is going with his explanations of the different ways and means of the Holy Spirit here in **Romans 8**.
5. And so with this in mind, lets move on to **verses 3-4**.

E. **Romans 8:3-4** . . . For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, [4] so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

1. There are four main points we ought to look at in these two verses.
2. **First**, Paul speaks of the Law as being incapable of doing something because of the weakness of our humanity. So what is it the Law cannot do and how is it related to our human weakness?
 - a. As we saw from **Romans 6**, the Law cannot pay the penalty for sin, it cannot break the enslaving power of sin, and it cannot empower and assist us in living a godly life. So in spite of the fact that the Law does many good things, and that it is holy, righteous and good, it still has these inherent weaknesses that leave us in need of something more in order to die to sin and live unto God.
 - b. But Paul also says the Law is weak because of the weakness of our humanity. This issue he addressed in **Romans 7**, where he speaks of those who are living under the Law apart from faith in Jesus Christ. In this example, Paul says that even though the Law motivates good intentions (*in the mind*), the sinful passions overpower the good intentions so that sin repeatedly gains the victory in our fleshly body. Therefore, it is the power of our sinful passions that exposes the weakness of the Law to enable us to live a victorious Christian life.

3. **Second**, Paul says that God solved the weaknesses of the Law by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh **AND** as an offering for sin. In doing this, God condemned sin in the flesh, that is, He judged the sinful part of our flesh and condemned it to death, and in so doing broke the power of our sinful flesh to rule over us. And it is the outcome of what God has done that is important for us to see, for because of what God has done through Jesus Christ, we are now able to fulfill the requirement of the Law.
4. **Third**, Paul affirms the inseparable being of God by pointing to the work of the Holy Spirit as the reason we are no longer under condemnation.
 - a. And he does this by showing that we are free from condemnation because we are living according to the requirements of the Law – both outwardly and inwardly – by the empowering and assisting work of the Holy Spirit.
 - b. In other words, if we live by faith, our resource for gaining daily and repeated victory over sin is the Holy Spirit.
 - c. Therefore, as we live according to leading and directing work of the Holy Spirit by the empowering and assisting work of the Holy Spirit, we will fulfill the requirements of the Law for righteousness, and we will be free from condemnation.
5. **Fourth**, Paul affirms that the Law still matters for living a NT Christian life, which means we can and ought to live as those who fulfill the Law. Jesus said the same thing in **Matthew 5:17** . . . “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill [the Law and the Prophets].”

F. **Romans 8:5** . . . For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

1. The simple truth here is that if we are living according to the flesh it is because we value the world, ourselves, and the devil’s sinful, selfish, and prideful ways over God and His righteousness. And when we value the world, our sinful passions, and the devil’s ways the most, we set our mind, our focus, and our interests on living according to the flesh in order to satisfy the cravings of our flesh.
2. But if we are living according to the Holy Spirit, it is because we value God and His righteousness over sin, selfishness, and pride. Therefore, when we are living according to the Holy Spirit, we set our mind, our

focus, our interests on the Holy Spirit's leading in order to please God and fulfill His will here on the earth.

3. Next, Paul explains why the mind set on the flesh is so inhibiting and destructive to living a godly life, that is, to living according to the will of God and the principles of the Law.

G. **Romans 8:6-8** . . . For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, [7] because 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, [8] and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

1. Let us keep in mind that sin always and only leads to death in one form or another. Therefore, Paul says that the mind set on the flesh is death. It is hostile toward God (*in open rebellion against God and His rule*). It does not subject itself to the law of God because it is committed to going its own way rather than God's way. And, in fact, it is not able to subject itself to the law of God – as Paul previously showed in **Romans 7**. Therefore, there is no way for those who are living according to the flesh to please God.
2. However, the mind focused on the Holy Spirit so as to live according to His will and way and empowered and assisted by Him, is life and peace – that is, peace with God, which means we are pleasing God and therefore pleasing to God.

III. Conclusion

- A. Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, and being in Christ Jesus is conditioned on being set free from death to life by the Holy Spirit. It is conditioned on God condemning sin in the flesh through the redeeming work of Jesus Christ. It is conditioned on fulfilling the requirements of the Law by walking according to the leading, teaching, and influence of the Holy Spirit. And it is conditioned on setting our mind on the Holy Spirit.