

“The Greatest Blessing of All Is Ours, Christ In Us, the Hope of Glory”

Review: “Paul Learns Liberty From His Bondage to the Flesh Through Its Dominion”

- ***The Law Is Good But It Provokes A Deep Seated Task Master Within, Sin***
- ***The Facts of Our Struggle Prove the Bondage of the Will***
- ***This Conflict Between the Flesh and the Spirit Has No Human Solution***
- ***Oh Blessed Grace: Christ Himself Is Our Deliverer from This Enslavement!***

- ***The Law Is Good But It Provokes A Deep Seated Task Master Within, Sin***
 - ***Our disappointments with life’s spiritual journey as believers teaches us that we may have a multiple personality disorder due to indwelling sin, a nature devoted to that and one that dominates our spirit so easily. But, as the apostle teaches us here, this is not really so, since we only have one human spirit, not two. Paul will conclude that next, but here he states the reality of the conflict with a nature within that desires evil. Praise God, we have a new nature as well that desires God’s path of joy and peace. Amen.***

Romans 7:12-17

12 Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

13 Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that *it is* good.

17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

- ***The divine logic and purpose is seen here so clearly. The Law revealed the depths of sin present in us all as he had taught so powerfully in chapter 3:***

Romans 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

The Law had not been given to bring righteousness for the Jew but to magnify the sin within so its true depth might be known. This is one of the foremost teachings in the Romans, Dispensationally Considered, as we have seen so well.

- ***The conflict is now described in unforgettable terms — verses 15-16 — where he describes his own experience in which he saw clearly that there were two opposing principles or faculties within him with the evil one dominating. This was a hopeless condition for him for he desired to keep the law which was good and honorable.***
- ***His conclusion is quite unavoidable — verse 17 — and here many have disagreed, since their view of human nature is so different from the apostle's. But his logic here is inescapable. His chosen wording is telling. We could spend some time here but will not. Let's keep it simple as in fact he does: "Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." Or, he, Paul, did not desire the outcomes but he was overwhelmed! So he blames the nature of sin indwelling him. It might seem that this is a convenient escape, blaming something else seemingly beyond his control. But in fact it is in line with the entire teaching here. There is one person only though (the "I") but two natures in the believer, the one oriented towards evil and sin, and the other oriented towards good and righteousness.***

We do not have two spirits with a dual personality See 2 Corinthians 7:1 for confirmation: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

So, the apostle teaches, we as persons possess a spirit and that spirit is what Paul here calls "I". The grand question is, of course, how can we be delivered from this bondage? He already answered it so well in the previous chapter, but here he through his own testimony underscores the ease with which a believer may still be deceived by legalisms and religiously inspired false teachers.

This is critically important teaching indeed. Many refuse it, sadly. But we are caught as it were between the two with the

sin nature in dominance. He now continues on this theme knowing that many will not be easily convinced of its truth:

- ***This Conflict Between the Flesh and the Spirit Has No Human Solution***
 - *Paul summarizes his teaching here before closing this subject in the next verses.*

Romans 7:21-23

21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

- *The word “law” is used 7 times here in this one chapter and not always in quite the same way. Sometimes it refers to a part of the Law of Moses. In other places (and more commonly here in chapter 7) it refers to a principle of action that describes realities within all believers. In other words, “this is just how things work.”*
 - *Many have written (especially anti-dispensational, so-called “covenant” teachers), that we have here the natural state of the unbeliever. But that cannot be since Paul in that case would have to be lying when he writes that “when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man...”*
 - *This then is the ongoing state of the believer. He is teaching from his own experience, that two principles operate within us all, and not only one. They co-exist and the believer finds himself enslaved by the dominating influence of the power of sin dwelling within, the sin nature, so that he was led “into captivity to the law of sin which [was] in [his] members.”*
- ***Oh Blessed Grace: Christ Himself Is Our Deliverer from This Enslavement!***

Romans 7:24-25

24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

- *These are the most wonderful and hopeful words found here in this chapter. They are truly blessed and they delivered me so many years now from a truly dark night of the soul into the glorious liberty Christ had already secured for me and all believers once and for all through his completed sacrifice.*

Our Outline Today: “The Greatest Blessing of All Is Ours, Christ In Us, the Hope of Glory”

- *Our Constant Hope and Comfort Is That We Shall Never Be Condemned*
- *The Greatest Blessing of All Is Ours, Christ In Us, the Hope of Glory*
- *Our Opportunity Today Under Grace Is to Live After the Spirit*

I. Our Constant Hope and Comfort Is That We Shall Never Be Condemned:

[READ] Romans 8:1-4

1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

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

3 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.

- *The keys to our understanding here are these:*
 - *Verse 1 draws a conclusion from the earlier verses, where the apostle confesses regarding his life before when he had given up his liberty in Christ for bondage to a law. The conclusion is as we have seen, that though believers do place themselves under laws and by so doing give themselves over unwisely to the power of the flesh, they nevertheless, as believers with the indwelling spirit and a new nature, still are walking after the spirit and as verse 25 of chapter 7 says, serve with the renewed mind a law of God. They are lawful as God sees them. We do not lose our righteous standing before Almighty God when we turn aside from his gracious provisions for a time, in other words.*

Romans 7:24-25

24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

- ***And so he concludes in verse 1 of chapter 8, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” So he cannot be writing as some believe of only the mature or the more spiritual believers but of all, in fact, of all those who are “in Christ Jesus”. That, of course, is all believers, not only some. All believers are in fact therefore “walking” after the spirit though they are not always pleasing God.***
- ***Verses 2 - 4 explain in terms much like in the earlier chapter what the facts are regarding those who have been transformed by God through their salvation. Those facts are these, all of course stated in the past tense:***
 - ***Verse 2: We have all been set free from the last of sin and death by the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus! This is wonderful indeed and provides the spiritual foundation for what is in verse 4, “... that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”***
 - ***Verse 3: How that was accomplished is here, God’s own Son took upon himself “the likeness of sinful flesh”, but not human flesh corrupted by sin itself. But from God’s point of view, it was enough. There is a lot there, but we must save it for another time, Lord willing.***
 - ***Verse 4: The requirement of the law therefore was met, it was fulfilled. There is an ending on the Greek word here so he is not talking about the hundreds of “acts” of righteousness that the law required but rather what could fulfill that law. Verse 3 explained what that was, only that perfect sacrifice that had already been offered for the sins of the world. Amen.***

So we who are “walking”, whose entire “way of living” is “after the spirit” have fulfilled in us the “righteous requirement or judgment of the law”, through Christ’s perfect offering, for we are, as the Lord God sees us, “in Christ

Jesus". So now we better know what it means to be in Christ Jesus, do we not? Amen. Praise God.

[READ] Romans 8:5-8

5 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.

- ***Now Paul shows the contrast with not carnal believers but with the unsafe. He writes of those "... that are after the flesh" as opposed to those "... that are after the Spirit". His conclusion regarding them is simple: they live in the realm of death and not life, and are not even able to be subject to the law of God. They have no capability spiritually of any kind. Again, we see that he is boldly contrasting believers and unbelievers and not spiritual or maturing believers with believers who are carnal and fleshly. It is so clear.***

Unbelievers are "after the flesh", are "in the flesh", and "walk after the flesh", all three. They, therefore, have no hope and only have condemnation ahead while we shall "never be condemned" for "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." What a promise we have in our Lord Jesus Christ.

II. The Greatest Blessing of All Is Ours, Christ In Us, the Hope of Glory:

[READ] Romans 8:9-11

9 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.

11 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.

- ***Now our apostle turns to us and our unique and detailed blessings, dispensationally considered. In so many ways he teaches us how very distinctive our blessings are now, under grace. There are two fundamentals detailed here, and both are called indwelling, first the***

Spirit in verses 9 & 11 and then Christ himself, in verses 9 & 10. These are not the same as is often taught:

- ***“The Spirit of Christ”: Verse 10 gives us the focus on his resurrection life which we possess. Verse 2 summarizes what the apostle has taught us in chapters 5 and 6. There are many verses there and elsewhere such as in Gal. 2:***

[READ] Galatians 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

- ***And there are so many more. Consider also Rom. 5:17, 21; 6:4, 23; Col. 3:3, 4.***
- ***“The Spirit of God”: He is an enabler as verse 11 indicates. It seems to be the application of Christ’s life in us and through us that is the focus here. But surely both Spirits work together in unison to accomplish the purpose of God through us.***

- ***There is much teaching compressed here in few words, but having both the Spirit and Christ indwelling us is most wonderful indeed. We should expect some differences in their ministries to us and such there are. Gal. 5 outlines some of them. But perhaps the greatest of all is in Col. 1:***

[READ] Colossians 1:25-29

25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;

26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:

29 Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

- *Paul now draws a very practical conclusion about our lives with the blessings and provisions for our lives as believers living by grace with its many critically important distinctive. We are most blessed!*

III. Our Opportunity Today Under Grace Is to Live After the Spirit:

[READ] Romans 8:12-14

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.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

- *Again, a “therefore”, for he is continuing the previous thought of a resurrection quality of life as verses 10 & 11 say so well.*
- *“We are debtors ...”, not to the flesh, but to the Spirit indwelling. Indeed. Such great blessing ask of us a reasonable response, do they not?*
- *Now verse 13 troubles some since under grace what kind of punishments might be appropriate for carnal living, surely not what the law of Moses demanded for many failures to keep that law, the death penalty. But that seems to be the understanding of the KJV translators here in using the future tense: “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.” This is just as it would have been under Moses. But the Greek text though it does have future tenses, they are not future tenses of the verb “to live” as implied in the translation here, but rather future tenses of the verb “to be about to be”. He is writing as he did in verses 6 & 10, where it is the realm of living that is contrasted so definitively between those who are unbelievers and we ourselves blessed as he has written here. Verse 13 is restating what verse 11 already has taught, using the wording “if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” where verse 11 had “he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you”. This restates in very concrete and practical terms the blessings we have under grace to “walk in the spirit” not any longer fulfilling “the lust (or desires) of the flesh”, as written so powerfully in Gal. 5:16.*
- *And now this wonderful statement, again, like the others, true of ALL of us who have believed and have been so transformed by God*

as Paul has so faithfully shared with us here: “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” This leading is something we all have by virtue of the indwelling Spirit of God and not therefore some only who have a special enabling from God as the charismatics and pentecostals are so willing to boast. Indeed, as he writes next “they are the sons of God”, and indeed we all are. Praise God. And I have a testimony here, perhaps.

- ***We must stop here for the tone now changes significantly from doctrinal teaching with a practical aspect to a major subject in Paul’s letters, the suffering of believers, its purpose and glorious consequence. That is a large subject indeed, and we will save it for next time.***

Conclusions / Exhortations: