

THE LAW OF SPIRIT OF LIFE HAS SET ME FREE!

(Romans 8:1-4)

INTRODUCTION

To many Bible students Romans 8 is the high water mark of the book of Romans. In fact to some it is the high water mark of the Bible. *Someone has said, "If the Scriptures were a ring, Romans would it's diamond and Romans 8 would be the sparkling point of the jewel."* Why would someone say that? Could it be that the chapter begins with the declaration of "No condemnation to those in Christ Jesus" and ends with no separation from the love of God? Could it be that it speaks about being heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ? Could it be that we have the promises that "all things work together for good to those who love God and who are called according to his purpose?" It certainly could and not the least reason for this chapter being the sparkle in the jewel of the book of Romans is that it tells us about life in the Spirit. It tells us that the "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death."

I preached last week on the declaration "There is therefore no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." No condemnation. We learn from Romans 3:19 that the law of God declares that we all are guilty before God! We learn from Romans 5 that in Christ we have been declared righteous by faith, i.e. we are justified in God's sight. Hallelujah!

But many of us, who believe in Christ, are still wearing our prison clothes. What do I mean? I mean we are still thinking that we have been declared not guilty by the grace of Christ, but we are still walking about as if nothing actual has happened in our daily living. We are living like we are carrying out our jail sentence as guilty sinners before God. We are still walking around being directed by the flesh and we are still obeying to the law of sin and death! Even Paul felt this way at the end of Romans 7. He concluded in **Romans 7:25, "... So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin."**

Now God has some good news for each of us. We don't have to serve the law of sin with the flesh. God has made me free from the law of sin and death that is at work in my body. How? By putting inside of me another law, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Is this not what He says in verse 2 of chapter 8? Yes, it is. **"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death."**

Now let's explore this more thoroughly to see what we need to do to live as free from the law of sin and death by living according to the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

HOW IS THE WORD 'LAW' BEING USED?

Before we get into the how to, let make sure that understand the 'what.' How is Paul using this word 'law' in verse 2? The word 'law' can refer to more than one thing even in the book of Romans.

Many times when Paul uses the word 'law' he is referring to the written 'law of Moses' as in **(Rom 3:21 NKJV) But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets.**" This is the law God gave through his servant Moses.

Sometimes the word 'law' is referring to the moral law built into creation. **(Rom 2:14 NKJV) for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves.**" This is the moral requirements God built into creation.

Sometimes the word 'law' is referring to a principle like in **(Rom 3:27 NKJV) Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith.**" The 'law of faith' is the principle of faith.

Sometimes the word 'law' is referring to inward energizing force or power. **(Rom 7:25 NKJV) 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.**" The 'law of sin' is an energizing and directing force within.

The "law of the Spirit of life" is this last one. It is the energizing, directing, and motivating power that dwells within the believer. The 'law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus' is the new life generated by the Holy Spirit who indwells the believe. It is the indwelling Spirit who energizes and directs the believer's life. Just like the 'law of sin and death' is still within the believer as Paul teaches in chapter 7, there is another law at work within us, i.e. the 'law of the Spirit of life' in Christ Jesus. This law has set us free or has delivered us from the law of sin and death.

HOW THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE SETS US FREE

Next let's consider how the 'law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus' sets us free from the law of sin and death. How does one law overcome another law?

A helpful illustration is riding in a hot air balloon. I have never done this, have you? In riding in a hot air balloon there are two laws at odds with each other. There is the law of gravity that pulls you down, and there is the law of hot air that is lighter than normal air and it rises up. The hot air law will overcome the law of gravity and you will go up, up, and away!

In order for the law of the hot air to overcome the law of gravity in your experience you must get into the balloon. In like manner for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus to overcome the law of sin and death you must first get into Christ! You do this by faith in Christ. You do this by committing your life, your future, your present, your heart to the Person of Christ who is the Savior.

Does this make sense?

WHAT GOD DID TO MAKE THIS FREEDOM POSSIBLE

Before we go to how to experience the freedom of life in the Spirit, we need to see how God made this possible. Paul explains again what God had to do to make this possible. Verse 3

{3} For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,

The 'law' here is the law of Moses. The law of Moses, given by God, is holy and good, but it was weak. It was weak in terms of providing the power to overcome the flesh. In fact Paul tells us in chapter 7 that the law actually excites the flesh to more sin. In 7:8 he writes: **(Rom 7:8 NKJV) But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire."**

The law of Moses was given for one reason to tell us what sin is, not to empower us not to sin. But 8:3 tells us that **"God sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin."** Notice the careful wording of this statement. Jesus came in the flesh, i.e. as a true human being, but he didn't come in sinful flesh. He came in the "likeness" of sinful flesh, but Jesus was sinless. Jesus is "God's Son." Jesus is God's unique Son. Verse 14 will say that we are all 'sons of God' but Jesus is God's unique Son. This is Paul's way of saying that Jesus is the only Begotten Son of God. Jesus came 'on account of sin.' Jesus came to do something with sin. He did do something with sin. He condemned sin in the flesh through his death on the Cross. His cross not only 'despoiled powers and principalities, as Colossians says, but His cross condemned sin. When Jesus condemned sin in the flesh, he not only passed judgment on sin, he carried out the execution of that judgment. We hear the statement, "Jesus is the answer." But what is the question? The most significant question is, "What will God do with the

guilt and the power of sin in my life?” This answer is Jesus. Jesus came and condemned sin in the flesh. And because of this “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes us free from the law of sin and death.”

When a person comes to Jesus, who does He meet? He meets the Holy Spirit. He meets the Spirit of Christ. The believer gets new life, spiritual life, the life of the Spirit dwelling within.

WHAT IS GOD’S GOAL OF GRANTING US LIFE IN THE SPIRIT?

Another issue we need to deal with before we get into the practical how-to’s of being freed from the law of sin and death by the law of the Spirit of life is to understand God’s purpose or goal in giving us new life in the Spirit. Verse 4 reveals this to us:

{4} that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

God’s purpose of life in the Spirit is that the “righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us.” God’s law is His holy standard for us. But because of the weakness of the flesh no man can fulfill this law perfectly. But because of what Christ has done for us and the new life in the Spirit the law can be fulfilled in us.

Note that it says that the law can be fulfilled ‘IN US’, not ‘BY US’. What is the import of this way of stating it? It is emphasizing what God is doing in us more than our actions. In other words God is more interested in WHO we are, our character, than WHAT we do, our actions, although there is a connection between the two. F. F. Bruce reflects on this by saying,

Christian holiness is not a matter of painstaking conformity to the individual precepts of an external law-code; it is rather a question of the Holy Spirit’s producing His fruit in the life, reproducing those graces which were seen in the perfection in the life of Christ.”

Now when we say that God is more interested in producing a holy character within us than our outward actions is not so say that we are to avoid using the law as a standard of actions.

Think of it this way. Suppose there is this murderer who is finally pardoned by the Governor and released from prison. He is no longer under the penalty or condemnation of the law. He is not under law but under grace, under the grace of the Governor. But he is still expected to live by

the requirement of the law which says that he is not to go out and murder? Of course not. In like manner the Christian is not under the law as to its condemnation, but he is still expected to live by its holy requirements. And the Holy Spirit was given to the Christian so that the requirements of the law may be fulfilled in us.

Another helpful insight into what fulfilling the 'requirements of the law' entails is given to us in Romans 13:8-10:

(Rom 13:8-10 NKJV) Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. {9} For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." {10} Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Romans 13:8-10 makes it pretty clear that one of the chief ways of fulfilling the righteous requirements of the law is to love your neighbor! "He who loves another has fulfilled the law."

God's goal of providing the 'law of the Spirit of life' to those who are in Christ Jesus is that his good law would be fulfilled in us. The ability to do this is the indwelling Holy Spirit who sets us free from the law of sin and death.

CONCLUSION

Now let's get to the practical 'how-to's' of using the 'law of the Spirit' to free us from the 'law of sin and death.' Enough of this talk about what it means, what God did to provide it, how Christ relates to it, and what it would look like if we are living according to this law. The last part of verse 4 gives us the game plan of the how-to.

who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

The practical how-to of being free from the law of sin and death is to walk according to the Spirit, not according to the flesh. How does this work? Well, Paul tells us in verses 5-11, but we'll have to wait until next week because our time is about over today. But until then you need to do these things:

- Thank God that there is no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus.

- Make certain that you are in Christ Jesus. How, but putting all your trust in Him.

- Understand that the 'law of sin and death' still is operating within you, but God has placed another law within you to overcome it. That is the 'law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.' This law is the guiding principle and power that will lift you above the pull of sin in your life.

- Realize that Christ came to make all this possible in your life.

- Adopt God's purpose to work the righteous requirements of the law, i.e. the principle of love, IN your life, into your very character.

Then respond in your daily walk to the impulses of the Spirit rather than the impulses of sin.

Amen? Amen!