

**ROMANS**

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Romans chapter 8 as we continue our study through this letter that Paul wrote to the church in Rome and we continue our study through the Word of God!

Look at the road we have traveled so far in our study of Romans. We have seen that all of creation is condemned before God because, **“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”** Romans 3:23. And we saw this in Romans 1:18-3:20 – *CONDEMNATION!*

Paul needed to bring them to this place of despair so that he then could bring them to the place of hope as he speaks of our justification or that Christ paid in full the penalty for our sins and there is no longer any record of them. We are justified before God!

Paul put it like this in Romans 5:1-2, **“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”**

And we saw that in Romans 3:21-5:21 – *JUSTIFICATION!*

Tonight, as we continue in the third main division of this book, and as we have seen, it deals with sanctification or how God is molding and shaping our lives to be more like Him! He is purging out that garbage in our lives and the work He has begun He will complete! And this section covers Romans chapters 6-8 – *SANCTIFICATION!*

We saw in Romans chapter 6 that the main subject was sin, mentioned some 17 times, and that chapter concluded with Paul saying, **“For the wages of sin is death, but the [free] gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”** Romans 6:23.

Then in Romans chapter 7 the main focus was the Law, mentioned some 23 times and Paul concluded that chapter by saying **“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.”**

Romans 7:25.

Now in chapter 8 we are going to see tonight the power of the Holy Spirit working through the life of the believer to empower him to live a life of holiness unto God. In this chapter the word **“Spirit”** is mentioned some 23 times and thus, is the main subject in this chapter.

One writer put it like this in regard to this chapter. He wrote,

Because they are justified by faith, there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Since the Law could not save, Christ came in the flesh and offered Himself for sin. The Law then was fulfilled for those who walk according to the Spirit. Now the Spirit who comes from God, and from Christ, dwells within believers. This same Spirit will someday give new resurrected life to the mortal bodies of the children of God. Therefore, Christians have no obligation to live in the flesh.

- Woodrow Kroll, Romans – Righteousness in Christ, p. 121

This is such an important chapter that some have called this the greatest chapter in the entire Bible!

Others call it the Mount Everest of the Scriptures and as we move into chapter 8 this is kind of the final ascent to the summit of this great mountain!

In fact, as you read through this chapter Paul seems to be climbing higher and higher with every point that he is making until he reaches the summit and he cries in victory, **“... we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us!”** (Romans 8:37)

In regard to this chapter, J. Vernon McGee had these remarks in his commentary on the book of Romans. He wrote,

Chapter 8 is the high-water mark in Romans. This fact is generally conceded by all interpreters of this great epistle. Spencer said, “If Holy Scripture were a ring and the epistle to the Romans its precious stone, chapter eight would be the sparkling point of the jewel.” Godet labeled it, “this incomparable chapter.” Someone has added, “We enter this chapter with no condemnation, we close with no separation and in between all things work together for good to those that love God.”

My friend, how can you have it any better than that? We find that there is to be given to the child of God in this life joy and peace. He is to live for God in the very presence of sin. Sin is not to dictate his life’s program. It has already been shown that there is nothing in the justified sinner that can produce this ideal state. . . .

This chapter introduces us to the work of the Holy Spirit in sanctification. . . . we see the Holy Spirit and real sanctification. A life that is pleasing to God must be lived in the power of the Holy Spirit. As Paul said to the Ephesian believers, “And do not be drunk with wine wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5:18). Sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit, in the regenerated life of a believer, delivering the believer from the power of sin – even in the very presence of sin – and performing all God’s will in the life of the believer.

- J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible*, Vol. IV, p. 695

Remember that as Paul concluded chapter 7 he said **“For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. 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. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 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.”** Romans 7:22-25.

Paul is speaking of a battle that is going on in our lives as Christians, a battle between the spirit and the flesh or the Law of God and the law of sin and the cry of many if not all Christians is **“O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?”** Romans 7:24.

You can hear the anguish upon Paul’s heart but then he tells us it is Jesus who gives to us the victory in this battle.

What does that mean to us, Paul tells us in Romans chapter 8, beginning in verse 1. So let’s begin reading this section of Romans beginning in Romans chapter 8, starting in verse 1 and let’s see what the Lord has for us this evening as we study His Word and we see the victory we have in Jesus!

## **ROMANS 8**

### **VERSE 1**

Let me start out by saying this and you will see why. The Law, legalism, always leads to condemnation. Why is that? Think about it. With all the Laws we find in the Scriptures, how many of you are keeping *ALL* of them?

None of you. Now some may say, “Hey, I am doing the best I can, and God will accept that!” No, He won’t. James tells us, **“For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.”** James 2:10.

So what does that mean? It means you are condemned before God! That is what legalism will do, it always leads you to condemnation because you fall far short of keeping it and you are miserable and you make others around you miserable!

But notice what Paul says here in contrast to legalism. He says, **“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus . . .”** Romans 8:1. Notice he didn’t say that there was no condemnation in the Law, but **“in Christ Jesus.”**

In other words, Christ paid in full the penalty for our sins and thus, the Law of double jeopardy applies – we can’t be tried again for something that has already been paid for. Jesus became sin for us so that we could become the righteousness of God in Him!

It is as Jesus said in John 3:16-17, **“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”**

Martin Luther put it this way, “It is impossible for a man to be a Christian without having Christ, and if he has Christ, he has at the same time all that is in Christ. What gives peace to the conscience is that by faith our sins are no more ours, but Christ’s, upon whom God hath laid them all; and that, on the other hand, all Christ’s righteousness is ours, to whom God hath given it. Christ lays His hand upon us, and we are healed. He casts His mantle upon us, and we are clothed; for He is the glorious Savior, blessed forever.” Amen to that!

Now, in saying that, are there people today that are condemned, who are judged? Absolutely and it is their own choice because Christ has paid in full the penalty for their sins and they have rejected that free gift, and thus, they are condemned!

Jesus made that point in John 3:18-20 when he said, **“He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.”**

It is as Spurgeon said regarding those who are not in Christ Jesus, “It is no pleasant task to us to have to speak of this matter; but how are we that we should ask for pleasant tasks? What God hath witnessed in Scripture is the sum and substance of what the Lord’s servants are to testify to the people. If you are not in Christ Jesus, and are walking after the flesh, you have not escaped from condemnation.” Sometimes the truth hurts!

Now, in knowing what Paul said here in Romans 8:1, how many of you have felt condemned in your life? I am sure all of us have and maybe we are feeling that way tonight! Why do we feel that way?

Hear me out on this. It is because we are listening to the Devil instead of God. The Devil will condemn us, which leads us away from God. We do something wrong and we don’t go to church because the Devil tells you that you are not worthy to go. We stop reading our Bible because what is the use, God doesn’t love us. We stop praying because God won’t hear us and you have been deceived by the Devil!

Again, remember what Paul said in Romans 8:1, **“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”**

The Lord does not condemn us; he draws us closer to Him through the conviction of sin. If you are feeling condemned, it is not of God!

Now let me also say this. Paul did not say, *“There is therefore now no SIN.”* He did not say, *“There is therefore now no WEAKNESS!”* He did not say, *“There is therefore now no FAILURES!”* He did not say, *“There is therefore now no DIFFICULTIES!”* He did not say, *“There is therefore now no more ANGER!”* But he did say, *“There is therefore now no CONDEMNATION!”* Praise God for that!

One more point before we move on. That phrase at the end of verse 1, **“. . . who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”** is not found in some of the earliest manuscripts of Romans and some feel that it may be a copyist error for this same phrase is found in verse 4.

One writer who feels this way put it like this,

These words are not found in the earliest ancient manuscripts of the Book of Romans and they do not agree with the flow of Paul’s context here. They were probably added by a copyist who either made a mistake or thought he could “help” Paul by adding these words from Romans 8:4.

- David Guzik, Romans 8:1

I don't think so. Here and throughout this chapter Paul is describing the difference between the Christian and non-Christian. The Christian habitually follows after the Spirit; whereas the unbeliever habitually follows after the flesh. So I think this fits in perfectly with what Paul is saying here.

As we read on we will see Paul share why there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Listen to what he has to say!

#### VERSES 2-4

When was ***“the law of sin and death”*** pronounced upon man? It was in the garden of Eden when God told Adam that, and I will paraphrase it, ***“The soul that sins shall surely die.”*** Genesis 2:17.

For Adam, he sinned, and he was condemned and that is true for all of us as well. The Law shows us that fact!

But notice what Paul says here. He speaks of ***“the law of the Spirit of life”*** and it has set us free from condemnation!

You see, the Holy Spirit gave us new life in Christ when we put our faith in Jesus. At that moment we were born of the Spirit (John 3:3-8). We became new creations, no longer children of Adam and therefore children of wrath, but now children of God, heirs of the manifold riches of God.

And, as you can see, we are not only free from the guilt of sin, (Romans 8:1) but also by the power of sin, (Romans 8:2).

As we have seen, there are two laws, the Law of the Spirit and the Law of sin and death. One brings a person life and the other drags one down to death. Why people want to hold onto the law of sin and death I don't understand, but they do.

Let me give you this example to show you how these two laws work.

We understand that the law of gravity keeps a plane on the ground, it can't just float away.

But, if that plane gains enough speed as it goes down the runway the law of aerodynamics will supersede the law of gravity and the plane will fly. The law of gravity is still there, just kill the engines and you will see how that works. But as long as they keep up the speed, the law of aerodynamics supersedes the law of gravity!

The Law of the Spirit supersedes the Law of sin and death and we can fly you might say, we have life, liberty in Christ!

The Law of sin and death, even though it is still in effect, has no power over the Spirit of life!

The Law commands us to fly but it does not give us the power to do so, but the Spirit of God enables us to fly!

Interestingly enough, up to Romans chapter 8, in the first 7 chapters of Romans the Spirit is only mentioned twice.

The first was just a passing reference to the Spirit in Romans 1:4, "**and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.**"

The other is found in Romans 5:5, "**Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.**"

Now, as I have said, here in Romans chapter 8 the Spirit is mentioned some 23 times showing us the liberation we have through God's Spirit.

It is as Paul said in II Corinthians 3:17, "**Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.**"

Now let me also say this because some may come to the conclusion that the Law of God must be bad then. It is not good. Not at all, that is not what Paul is saying!

The Law is good, the Law is perfect as Psalm 19:7-11 tells us, "**The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them Your servant is warned, And in keeping them there is great reward.**"

The problem is not with the Law but with sinful man. The Law is not weak, but we are, we can't keep the Law.

The weakness of the Law, if there is one, is that it was never meant to save us but to show us the holy standard, the holy requirements of God, which we can't keep.

Thus, as I have said, the Law really is not weak, but we are in the flesh. It is as Manson said, "Moses' Law has right but not might; sin's Law has might but not right; the Law of the Spirit has both right and might."

You see, what the Law couldn't do Jesus did as God sent His only begotten Son "**in the likeness of sinful flesh.**"

Notice that it doesn't say "*in the likeness of flesh*" which would say that Jesus was not flesh and blood, maybe some kind of spirit or ghost. But that is not what the Bible tells us.

In John 1:14 we are told, "**And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.**"

Nor did he say that the Son was sent "*in sinful flesh*" which would say that Jesus was born in sin and yet the Bible tells us that Jesus was without sin.

In II Corinthians 5:21 we are told, "**For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**"

And in I John 3:5 we are told, "**And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin.**"

What we do see is that God sent His Son into this world to fill the righteous requirements of the Law and as He did, we were set free from the power of sin to live a life after the Spirit if we receive Jesus as Lord and Savior.

I like the way the nineteenth century Scottish evangelist, Robert Haldane, put it. He wrote, "We see the Father assume the place of judge against His Son, in order to become the Father of those who were His enemies. The Father condemns the Son of His love, that He may absolve the children of wrath."

Wow, amazing grace – How sweet the sound – That saved a wretch like me!

The word "**fulfilled**" in verse 4 is an interesting word in the Greek. It is written in the passive voice which means we don't do it, we don't fulfill the work, but Christ has done it, it is in the past tense, it is ***FULFILLED!***

As we turn over the control of our lives to the Holy Spirit, He empowers us to love God and to love our neighbor, and that, after all, is what the law requires.

And please understand that when Paul says that this is for “**those who live according to the Spirit . . .**” he isn’t speaking of a condition for keeping your salvation. This is a description for those who are in Christ! For those who are in Christ, we walk in the Spirit!

But for those who are not redeemed, they walk in the flesh because the Spirit of God is not in them.

The contrast is clear. Paul will tell us in Romans 8:9, “**But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.**” I hope that makes sense to you.

Spurgeon put it like this, “Observe carefully that the flesh is there: he does not walk after it, but it is there. It is there, striving and warring, vexing and grieving, and it will be there till he is taken up into heaven. It is there as an alien and detested force, and not there so as to have dominion over him. He does not walk after it, nor practically obey it. He does not accept it as his guide, nor allow it to drive him into rebellion.”

#### VERSES 5-8

Now we as Christians can be carnally minded and we need to be careful what we are feeding, the flesh or the Spirit. Because whatever you are feeding will control your life!

But here Paul is speaking of those who are carnally minded as being the unsaved and it is their body appetites, the “*lust of the flesh*” you might say that is controlling their lives.

One author summed it up like this, “These people are completely consumed and dominated in their thinking by the things that gratify their fleshly desires. There is no desire or thought of future rewards or future glory, they live for the moment and for the pleasure they can get now. They are hedonists and materialists, who have no desire for spiritual things except to give God lip service at the appropriate times.”

On the other end of the spectrum, those that are saved, are “**spiritually minded**” and it speaks of a person who is focused on the things of God. And thus, what will flow from his life is the fruit of the Spirit!

Now, again, for us as Christians, I hope you see the battle that is going on here. This battle is being fought in the mind and the flesh tries to control the mind and the spirit tries to control the mind. What is your mind set upon, the flesh or the spirit?

As we walk in the Spirit, as we have made peace with God through Jesus Christ, then the peace of God will guard our hearts and minds.

The thing we must all remember is we all go through good times and bad times, times of calm and times of storms, both on the just and the unjust, the difference being is where the set of your sails are. May the sail of your mind be set upon Jesus as He leads you through those storms of life!

Now here in Romans 8:7 this is a powerful point that Paul is making here. He is saying, “**The carnal mind is enmity against God.**”

Did you see that? Not, “*The carnal mind was at enmity with God.*” You see, that would be implying that because of that condition they are in they can only please God when they really do good? That is not what Paul is saying, not at all!

Paul says that those who are not born again, those who remain in the flesh can never please God until they are born again! How can that be? That is not fair! Why is that true?

Because you are created to bring pleasure to God and thus, if you are at war with Him, you will not please Him, and you will be at war with Him until you receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior!

In Revelation 4:11 we are told of this very thing, the reason why we were created, and this is from the King James Version of the Bible, **“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”**

Of this enmity against God, Spurgeon said, “It is not black, but blackness; it is not at enmity, but enmity itself; it is not corrupt, but corruption; it is not rebellious, it is rebellion; it is not wicked, it is wickedness itself. The heart, though it be deceitful, is positively deceit; it is evil in the concrete, sin in the essence, it is the distillation, the quintessence of all things that are vile; it is not envious against God, it is envy; it is not at enmity, it is actual enmity.”

In other words, they are more interested in their own will than God’s will. They are the master of their destiny and refuse to bow their knee to God.

Thus, they are not subject to God’s Law and they are warring against God for Jesus said, **“He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.”** Matthew 12:30.

But for us as Christians, Paul tells us what we are to focus on in Colossians 3:2, **“Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.”**

And in Romans 12:2 he wrote, “**And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.**” Where is your focus?

#### VERSES 9-11

Because the Holy Spirit is given to each believer when they are born again, every Christian has within themselves a principle higher and more powerful than the flesh.

The problem is like Newell wrote, “Many sincere people are yet spiritually under John the Baptist’s ministry of repentance. Their state is practically that of the struggle of Romans Seven, where neither Christ nor the Holy Spirit is mentioned, but only a quickened but undelivered soul in struggle under a sense of ‘duty,’ not a sense of full acceptance in Christ and sealing by the Holy Spirit.” That is where many are at and if you are living to accomplish your salvation, then you are not saved! The Spirit of God does not indwell you!

And what we see here is that Paul is showing us how we are when we have crucified the flesh, put the old man to death. We are then alive in the Spirit and because of that, the things we do in the Spirit are pleasing to God.

You see, by the power of the Holy Spirit we are completely new. Listen again to what Paul said in II Corinthians 5:17, “**Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.**”

Also, it is the Holy Spirit that indwells us, and bears witness to us that we are saved; we have been adopted into the family of God. Paul, in Romans 8:16 tells us this fact as he says,

“**The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.**”

On the other hand, if the Spirit of God is not in you, then the Spirit of Christ is not in you, and you are not saved, you are still lost in your sins.

Now, let me ask you this question. Why does Paul speak of the **“Spirit of God”** and the **“Spirit of Christ”** in Romans 8:9? Is he speaking of two different things?

Not at all. What Paul is saying is that the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, which tells me that Jesus is God, it testifies of His deity! I do realize that some like to deny the fact of the deity of Jesus or say that He is a lesser God, but that is ridiculous!

Let me clarify that for you so you can see what the Scriptures say regarding the deity of Jesus. And we will just look at a few, there are many and really, the Gospel of John has the deity of Jesus as the focus of that book!

In Isaiah 43:10-11 we are told, **“You are My witnesses,’ says the LORD, ‘And My servant whom I have chosen, That you may know and believe Me, And understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, Nor shall there be after Me. I, even I, am the LORD, And besides Me there is no savior.’”**

So Jesus can’t be a lesser God, He is God, the second person of the Holy Trinity.

If you still have doubts then listen to what Paul said in Titus 2:13, **“looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.”**

Not only is the Father God, but Jesus is God and the Holy Spirit is God as we are told in Acts 5:3-4 as Ananias lied and we are told, **“But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.’”**

Please understand, I am not saying that there are three God's, but one God manifested in three distinct persons. I don't fully understand it with my finite mind, but our infinite God has told us this in His Word and I believe it!

So what is the identifying mark of a believer? I believe it is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and as the Holy Spirit indwells us the characteristics of Jesus will flow through us; like love, compassion, joy, forgiveness, kindness, gentleness, self-control, and-so-on. What is controlling your life?

Jesus put it like this in John 13:34-35, "**A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.**" It truly is the fruit of the Spirit that is produced in our lives as the Holy Spirit indwells us!

William MacDonald put it like this, "When a person is born again, he is no longer **in the flesh but in the Spirit**. He lives in a different sphere. Just as a fish lives in water and a man lives in the air, so a believer lives in the Spirit. He not only lives in the Spirit, but the Spirit lives in him. In fact, if he is not indwelt by the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ." Absolutely, that is how it should be!

And this should just make sense. As we come into this relationship with Jesus by His Spirit, our lives should be radically changed.

Of this D. L. Moody tells us of his conversion experience: "I was in a new world. The next morning the sun shone brighter and the birds sang sweeter. . . . The old elms waved their branches for joy, and all nature was at peace."

You see, we truly look at life differently through the eyes of Jesus and the new life He has given to us. May we not lose sight of that and return to the old ways, the old view of life for Jesus truly enriches our life!

Listen again to Romans 8:11 and what the Lord has for us. Paul wrote, “**But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.**”

The Amplified Bible puts it like this, “**And if the Spirit of Him Who raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, [then] He Who raised up Christ Jesus from the dead will also restore to life your mortal (short-lived, perishable) bodies through His Spirit Who dwells in you.**”

God has given a promise to all who receive Jesus as Lord and Savior, a spiritual resurrection not in the future, but here and now!

Thus, if the Holy Spirit makes our spirit alive, then also by the Holy Spirit the flesh will be and is crucified. It is a spiritual resurrection now!

And I understand, we still drag around this flesh and it does try to resurrect itself from time to time, but God has given us a new life in Christ by His Spirit, may we walk accordingly.

Not only that, but we look forward to a future, to another promise, a future physical resurrection for our mortal bodies. Remember, flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God and thus, something must happen to these bodies.

That is what Paul tells us in II Corinthians 15:53-57, **“For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’ ‘O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?’ The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

Paul also speaks of this physical resurrection of our mortal bodies in Romans 8:23 where he tells us, **“Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.”**

Two precious promises of God, one for us now, a spiritual resurrection and one in the future, a physical resurrection of these bodies of flesh as God prepares for us a new body for our spirit and soul to dwell in.

### VERSES 12-13

Paul opens with the word, **“Therefore.”** And the point here is that in light that all that God has done for us, may we live for Him!

This is not saying that a believer who sins will face eternal death in Hell, but he will lose the joy of walking in the Spirit.

The thing is what do you owe your sinful flesh nature? Absolutely nothing! What benefits did your old sinful nature give to you? Absolutely none! Then why are you feeding it, why do you go back to it? Feed the spirit and starve the flesh. You owe the old sinful flesh nature nothing, but you do owe the Lord everything!

Thus, live accordingly as Paul tells us in Titus 2:11-12, **“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.”**

You see, God is not necessarily making us into happy people but holy people by the power of His Spirit! Thus, He did that for us so that we might live. Can't we live for Him in holiness, not out of obligation or constraint, but out of love? We should be able to do that, not in our own strength, but by the power of God's Spirit working in us and through us, the sanctification process! It is as the Scottish Theologian David Brown wrote, “If you don't kill sin, it will kill you.”

Now in Galatia there was a problem. They thought that they could begin in the Spirit and then find some kind of spiritual perfection, of drawing closer to God through the flesh. Paul put it like this in Galatians 3:3, **“Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?”**

The Amplified Bible puts it like this, **“Are you so foolish and so senseless and so silly? Having begun [your new life spiritually] with the [Holy] Spirit, are you now reaching perfection [by dependence] on the flesh?”**

I think that shows us how foolish it is to try and accomplish in the flesh what can only be accomplished by the Spirit of God working in us. You see, not only are we saved by the work of the Spirit of God, but we must also walk by the Spirit of God if we want to grow and pursue holiness in the Lord!

VERSES 14-15

Many people in America claim to be Christians, the sons of God, but claiming something is a far cry from being something. Let me explain.

I could claim to be the world's greatest repairman! Stop laughing, it could happen! And as the world's greatest repairman I have all kinds of tools for the work, have signs made up, shirts claiming this fact. But if my work is not reflecting what I claim, then what I claim is worthless!

The same is true for us. We can claim we are Christians, have all kinds of Bibles, have all kinds of tee-shirts and bumper-stickers to claim this fact, but if it doesn't match up with our walk, it is worthless, it is empty, we truly are not sons of God!

It is as James tells us, "**Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead . . . For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.**" James 2:17, 26.

Also, in James 1:22 we are told, "**But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.**"

It is not that the good works save us, because then God would owe us heaven. No, the good works are the evidence for our faith and without the evidence, then our faith is truly dead.

You see, our life should reflect the new nature we have in Christ, not the old nature of sin. In other words, it is not what you claim but what you are, what you are living that shows you are a child of God!

Now, how are we led by the Spirit of God?

Some have taken this to bizarre or weird extremes when the reality is; being led by the Spirit of God is very simple.

First, we see the Spirit of God led us by *illumination* or by opening up, clarifying, helping us to understand the Word of God. Have you ever read a Christian book or commentary, maybe you heard an unsaved person speak of a portion of Scripture and you wonder where in the world did they get that from, that is not what the text is saying? I have! Why is that? Because it is the Spirit of God that illuminates to us the Word of God as Paul said in I Corinthians 2:14, “**But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.**” And even so-called Christian books are worthless when they go against Scripture!

But as we read *God’s Word*, as we pray and meditate on Scripture, *God’s Spirit speaks to our hearts*, exposes sin in our lives, directs us and-so-on. This process begins from the moment we are saved on through our whole Christian life, until we go to be with the Lord.

Paul put it this way in II Timothy 3:16-17, “**All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**”

And, The Living Bible puts these verses like this, “**The whole Bible was given to us by inspiration from God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives; it straightens us out and helps us do what is right. It is God’s way of making us well prepared at every point, fully equipped to do good to everyone.**”

The second aspect of being led by the Spirit of God is the *empowering* to do those things He has shown us to do, the sanctification process. You see, that is where the Law fell short, it showed us our sin but had no power to deliver us or help us to walk in holiness. But now, by the power of God's Spirit we are able! It is as Paul put it in I Thessalonians 4:7, "**For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.**"

And in Romans 6:13, 19 Paul tells us, "**And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God . . . I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.**" We are thus willingly led by the Spirit of God and follow Him!

J. Vernon McGee summed it up like this. He wrote,

They are the ones who are safe and secure; they follow Him. They are led by the Spirit of God. They hear His voice because they have a new nature, and they follow Him.

I have been preaching the Word of God for a long time. I have found that those who are His sheep will hear His voice. The others - they hated me and wanted to get rid of me. Why? They were not His sheep. The Lord Jesus said, "If the world hates you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you" (John 15:18).

A young pastor came to me and said, “I’m having all kinds of trouble!” I asked, “Who is giving you trouble?” He said, “My church officers and my Sunday school teachers.” So I asked him what he had been doing. He said, “Well, I’ve been preaching the Bible, following your Thru the Bible method.” I said to him, “Well, thank God. You will find that a lot of your folk are not really His sheep.” Friend, His sheep will follow Him – they have to because they are His, you see. That’s what Paul is saying here.

- J. Vernon McGee, Thru the Bible, Vol. IV, p. 701

And notice in Romans 8:15 how we now respond to God. We don’t respond to Him from a distance, not in fear, but as a child to His Father.

In fact, the word “**Abba**” is an Aramaic term that can be translated “daddy” or “papa”!

It was an intimate term for an intimate relationship we have with God. I never said to my dad, “Hello father” but “Hi dad!” an intimate relationship, not a distant one and the same is true with our relationship with God.

How did this happen? Jesus has allowed us to be adopted into the family of God, not a second-class citizen but as Paul said, “**joint heirs with Christ.**” Romans 8:17.

Imagine that, we are joint heirs with Christ! Of this we are told, “Under Roman adoption, the life and standing of the adopted child changed completely. The adopted son lost all rights in his old family and gained all new rights in his new family; the old life of the adopted son was completely wiped out, with all debts being canceled, with nothing from his past counting against him anymore.” (David Guzik).

That is what God has done for us and thus, we can cry out “**Abba, Father**” and He will listen for we are His children, adopted into His family through Christ!

VERSES 16-17

Here is the picture that is being painted for us. One writer wrote, “When believers are compelled by love for God, feel deep hatred for sin, reject the world, long for Christ’s return, love other Christians, experience answered prayer, discern between truth and error, long for and move toward Christlikeness, the work of the Holy Spirit is evidenced, and those believers have witness that they truly are children of God.”

And look at the blessings that God has given to us!

In Ephesians 1:3 Paul tells us, “**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.**”

In Matthew 25:34 we are told, “**Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’**”

All that the Father has is ours and when Jesus returns to set-up His Kingdom on this earth, we will rule and reign with Him as we are told in Revelation 5:9-10, “**And they sang a new song, saying: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth.’**”

In Revelation 20:6 we are told, “**Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.**”

And in Revelation 1:5-6 we are told, **“and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”**

Now some may wonder, “How do we know this is all true, that we are children of God? That we are joint heirs with Christ? How do we know all that Paul has told us is true?”

Because, as the Jews believed, and God said, by the mouth of two witnesses this shall be established and here the Holy Spirit confirms with our spirit these truths – it is true – and it will come to pass! And the Word of God confirms this to us!

Now this is all great, it is wonderful and then Paul has to go and say, **“... if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.”** Romans 8:17.

Why in the world do we have to suffer? If we are children of God, why do these things come upon our lives? Those are great questions.

The reason is simple. Because this is where we grow. This is where we mature in the faith.

That is what we are told in James 1:2-4, **“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”**

God is working in us through these times and helping our faith to grow. Why is that? Because if everything was perfect we would not look to Him. But in the darkest night we call out to Him and He answers our hearts cry.

C. S. Lewis gives to us this insight into suffering. He wrote, “Now God Who has made us knows what we are and that our happiness lies in Him. Yet we will not seek it in Him. As long as He leaves us any other resort where we can even plausibly look for it. While what we call our own life remains agreeable we will not surrender it to Him. So what can God do in our own best interests but make our own life less agreeable to us and take away the plausible sources of false happiness.”

And Norm Geisler put it like this, “This is not the best of all possible worlds, but I think it’s the best of all possible ways to get to the best of all possible worlds. A true believer is something like tea, their real strength comes out in hot water. God permits suffering to produce the greatest virtues in us. Job said, ‘When He has tested me I shall come forth as gold.’”

Not only that, but our suffering in this life is just as our Lord suffered and it is out of that suffering that we will receive a future glorification!

It is just part of being His Son and before the glory comes the cross, the suffering.

And when you think about it, there can be no loss of our salvation between our justification and our glorification because there can never be justification without glorification.

Let me explain it this way. If justification is the beginning of our salvation and glorification is the completion, then what God has begun in us He will complete, He will finish it in us. What a comfort to know and apply that to our lives!

We are not going to finish up this chapter tonight, there is just far too much in it. We will finish it up next week as Paul speaks of more work the Spirit of God is doing in our lives. In other words, walk in the Spirit and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh!

Let me close with this.

There was a French painter by the name of Pierre Renore. He was afflicted with arthritis; his hands became twisted and deformed so much so that even something as simple as holding a brush was excruciatingly painful.

In time he was confined to a wheel chair, but he would not give up painting. One day his friend, Henry Mateese visited him and watched as he painfully grasped a brush with only his fingertips. Every movement caused him pain, yet he doggedly kept at this painting.

Mateese asked his friend, “What do you do this for? How can you paint at the expense of such torture?”

Renore replied, “The pain passes but the beauty remains.”

- Source Unknown

That is what God is doing in us. It is like having surgery, there is pain but out of that there is healing. God is using His scalpel to cut away the garbage in our lives and He uses trials in our lives to do that. Remember, and I will leave you with this to think about, “*The pain passes but the beauty remains.*”