



We began in Romans 8 with “*there is now no condemnation for those who are **in** Christ Jesus.*”

And we end the first paragraph with *those who are **in** the flesh cannot please God.*

In between we see:

Positional Freedom from

²⁴ Wretched man that I am!

Who will set me free from the body of this death?

Is there practical freedom?

How did Paul get free?

Answer

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

Why couldn't obedience to the law accomplish freedom from death?

Answer

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

The reason that the Law was unable to bring about this holy life of freedom from the power of the sin, lay in the flesh (Greek, sarks), the “mind” of which (verse 7) is enmity against God, and not subject to His Law or Will.

Repeating a passage we have considered under the subject of new birth- *“that which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit. is Spirit”- John 3:6*

We find that the conveyance of the new nature does not obliterate the old.

We are known by our new nature-the old man is crucified: but there is the presence of the flesh, which is incapable of alteration.

One of the great mistakes made by the saints is this effort to sanctify the flesh.

Paul goes into it in the second chapter of Colossians:

“If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances . . .after the commandments and doctrines of men?

Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility and neglecting of the body (not in a certain honor), to the satisfaction of the flesh.”

This provides a most striking illustration of the result of all efforts to improve the flesh. All keeping of ordinances-
“touch not, taste not, handle not”-

We can make the flesh moral-

We can even make it religious-

But we cannot make it please God.

Therefore, the seeker after holiness in the flesh may starve or mortify his body and merely please the flesh-puff himself up with pride. *“They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Gal. 5:24).*

What was God's plan to free Paul and all believers from the principle of sin and death?

Answer

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 for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,

God's plan is "apart from law," without law's help or "rule," but the very opposite—was to send His own Son, who had a body "prepared for Him." So, although sinless, our Lord Jesus Christ was born in the likeness of "flesh of sin,"—in the likeness of the bodies of the children of Adam.

It is most important for the believer to recognize the two great facts which Paul develops concerning Christ's work on the cross:

First, His blood shed for us in compensation of our guilt. The righteous claims of God's throne against us, and of their being satisfied, fully met, by Christ's shed blood; and of our being brought near to God.

Second, our death with Christ, as "*made sin for us.*"

Because of our condition of sinfulness, as connected with the first Adam, and we being "*in the flesh,*" we died with Christ. Christ became our Adam.

How is God going to satisfy His righteous demands in man?

Romans 8:4 (NKJV) *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.*

The fact that it was **not fulfilled by us**—we have no more power in ourselves than had the Old Testament saints: **but it is fulfilled in us**—

It is fulfilled experientially in us as we consent to reject the flesh and choose **to walk under the direction of the Spirit**. In the Spirit lies all the power. With us, the responsibility of choice!

*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 (belonging to) on the flesh is death, but the mind set (belonging to) on the Spirit is life and peace,

Can a believer have his mind set on the flesh?

Evan Hopkins:

How infinite are the forms in which self appears.

Some are occupied with good self. They pride themselves on their excellencies.

Others are just as much occupied with bad self. They are forever groaning over their imperfections, and struggling with the flesh as if they hoped in time to improve it.

When shall we be convinced it is so utterly bad that it is beyond all recovery?

Our experience, upward, in the power of God, is just in proportion to our experience, downward, in ceasing from self.

- “Is it, Reckon yourself to be weak in reference to sin? No, it is lower than that.
- Is it, Reckon yourself to be dying? No, lower still.
- 'Reckon yourself to be dead-([Rom. 6:11](#))-indeed unto sin.'
- Some believe they are very weak.”

But what does that imply? That they have some strength. But when a man is dead, he has no strength. Hopkins

We must act on the fact that we are dead in reference to sin. We shall not then speak of difficulty as to resisting temptation in reference to ourselves. We shall take the lowest place, and say it is impossible. But we shall know that what is impossible with self is possible with God. We shall take our place on the resurrection side of the cross, and in so doing we leave behind the old self-life for the new Christ-life. To live in Him who is our Life, is to be in the power of God.“ Hopkins

Would you say that the Romans 7 experience is healthy for the believer?

- Is it healthy for spiritual growth to become aware personally how the self-life functions?
- Would God have the Christian fail so he may learn to live the Christian “**not I but Christ’s life**”?

The secret of all true healthy spiritual development is finding out about the sinful self life - Miles Stanford

- **At a Spiritual Life Conference many years ago Dr. C.I. Scofield said, "Not everyone, by any means, has had the experience of the seventh of Romans, that agony of conflict, of desire to do what we cannot do, of longing to do the right we find we cannot do. It is a great blessing when a person gets into the seventh of Romans and begins to realize the awful conflict of its struggle and defeat; because the first step toward getting out of the struggle of the seventh chapter and into the victory of the eighth, is to get into the seventh.**

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“Of all the needy classes of people, the neediest of this earth are **not** those who are having a heartbreaking, agonizing struggle for victory, but those who are having no struggle at all, and no victory, and who do not know it, and who are satisfied and jogging along in a pitiable absence of almost all the possessions that belong to them in Christ.”

J.C. Metcalfe:

"Many a young Christian, who has not been warned of this necessary voyage of discovery upon which the Holy Spirit will certainly embark him (Rom. 7), has been plunged into almost incurable despair at the sight of the sinfulness which is his by nature. He has in the first place rejoiced greatly in the forgiveness of his sins, and his acceptance by God; but sooner or later he begins to realize that all is not well, and that he has failed and fallen from the high standard which he set himself to reach in the first flush of his conversion.

"He begins to know something of the experience which Paul so graphically describes: '*What I would, that I do not do; but what I hate, that I do*' (Rom. 7:15), and, in consequence, he feels that the bottom has fallen out of his Christian life; and then perhaps the Devil whispers to him that it is just no good his going on, because he will never be able to make the grade. Little does he know how healthy his condition is, and that this shattering discovery is but the prelude to a magnificent series of further discoveries of things which God has expressly designed for his eternal enrichment. All through life God has to show us our own utter sinfulness and need, before He is able to lead us on into realms of grace, in which we shall glimpse His glory."

- Self-revelation precedes divine revelation-that is a principle for both spiritual birth and spiritual growth.
- He is being taken through the experience (maybe years in extent) of self-revelation and into death, the only basis on which to know Him
- The believer who is going through struggle and failure is the Christian who is being carefully and lovingly handled by his Lord in a very personal way.
- *“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death” (Phil. 3:10). MJS*

"Many of us have probably known what it was to rejoice in the grace of God without having apprehended very much the true character of the flesh. It has often been noticed that where there is the greatest exuberance of joy in young converts, there is often a levity **which fails to take into account that the flesh is unchanged.** In such cases the grace of God is taken up in a self-confident way; there is very little self-distrust, or sense of weakness and dependence. And the inevitable consequence is a fall, or a succession of falls, that gradually brings home to the consciences of believers their utter weakness and incapacity as in the flesh" (C.A. Coates).

And those who are in flesh cannot please God

When a believer begins to discover something of the awful tyranny of the self-life or has been endlessly struggling against that tyranny, he becomes intensely concerned about the denial of self with the resultant freedom to rest and grow in Christ. Man has many ways of seeking to escape the thralldom (slavery) of self; God has but one way.

Ridout

“God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”

not I, but Christ (Gal. 2:20)

