

"The Doctrine of Sanctification"

Romans 5:12-8:13

Part 27

Introduction: Over the past three weeks we have been looking at "The CROSS Life" which was a look at how to apply what we have studied in Romans 6-8. We have looked at how it is God's will that we live our lives in a way that others see the life of Jesus Christ in us. The problem on our end is that our flesh often gets in the way. But God has provided a way for us to have victory over the flesh and that is by the CROSS. In Romans 6 we looked at how we were crucified with Christ and so we must keep the flesh on the CROSS if we are going to live unto God. The flesh must die if we are going to bring forth fruit unto God.

John 12:24

²⁴ Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

In order for fruit to be produced in our lives there must be death. So, God often leads us into situations that are difficult and painful. These are the crosses we have been given to carry and when we accept the cross given to us and we crucify the flesh (do not allow the flesh to rule and reign in our hearts) it is then that the life of our Lord is seen in us and we are then producing spiritual fruit. The cross must be applied/death must come in order for us to have victory over the flesh so that we can bring forth fruit to glorify God with our lives.

Now, tonight we are going to get back to our expository study of Romans 8 and we are going to continue to see how God has made it possible to have victory over the flesh so that we can bring forth fruit to glorify Him with our lives.

Just a reminder, the Holy Spirit is referenced 19 times in this chapter. It is the Holy Spirit who lives the life of Jesus Christ in us. Our hearts must be ruled by the Holy Spirit if we are going to live unto God. So far in this chapter we have looked at 4 points.

I. Free from Condemnation

Notice Romans 8:1

II. Free from the law of sin and death

Notice Romans 8:2

III. The Means of Freedom

Notice Romans 8:3

Before we move on to the next verse, I want to revisit this verse one more time so that we can get a clear understanding of what Paul is saying here. Paul is not talking about how Jesus Christ died to pay the penalty for our sin here in this verse, although He did die for our sin. But that was already dealt with in Romans 3 and 4 in the Doctrine of Justification.

But Romans 8 is not about the Doctrine of Justification it is dealing with the Doctrine of Sanctification. So, what Paul is stating here is that Jesus did what the law could not do and that was the law could not sanctify us, meaning the law could not set us free from the power of the sin principle within our lives. Remember how we discussed the Truth that the law stirs up sin and reveals sin? But it has no power to offer us to overcome sin. Here in this verse Paul tells us that Jesus condemned sin in the flesh. In other words, Paul is telling us that Jesus judged our sin nature when He died upon the cross. So, in Christ God dealt with our sinful flesh. Our OLD MAN was crucified with Him on the cross.

Romans 6:6

⁶ Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed [made powerless], that henceforth we should not serve sin.

The flesh has been stripped of his power and he has been stripped of his reign. We no longer need to submit to his desires and his lusts.

Ephesians 2:1-3

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

² Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

³ Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Notice that verse 3 here is in the past tense. We once lived (past tense) fulfilling the lusts and the desires of the flesh. But now we are free from the power of the sin principle in our lives. Now we have a choice. Sin has been condemned but not yet removed. The true believer longs for the day when he or she will be set free from the flesh.

2 Corinthians 5:1-4

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

² *For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:*

³ *If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.*

⁴ **For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened:** *not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.*

IV. The Power of our Freedom.

Notice Romans 8:4

We started to look at this verse 4 weeks ago, but we did not have time to look into the depths of what is said here. So, we shall look a little deeper tonight. It is very important to notice that the righteousness of the law is fulfilled **IN US** and not **BY US**. It is by the power of the Holy Spirit living through us that fulfills the righteousness of the law.

Notice the words of **Warren Wiersbe**:

"The believer lives a righteous life, not in the power of the Law, but in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Law does not have the power to produce holiness; it can only reveal and condemn sin. But the indwelling Holy Spirit enables you to walk in obedience to God's will. The righteousness that God demands in His Law is fulfilled in you through the Spirit's power. In the Holy Spirit, you have life and liberty and "the pursuit of happiness".

The legalist tries to obey God in his own strength and fails to measure up to the righteousness that God demands. The Spirit-led Christian, as he yields to the Lord, experiences the sanctifying work of the Spirit in his life.

Philippians 2:12-13

¹² *Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*

¹³ **For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.**

As you yield to the Lord, He works in and you work out; in this way, you fulfill His plan for your life. God cannot shine through you until He works in you, so let Him have His way. You are a light in a dark world, a runner holding forth the living Word to a dead world."

Another writer has recorded these words:

"So dear believer you must understand, believe and live out the truth that now you possess the power to reject those strong desires that come from the old corrupt Sin nature which is still resident in our physical bodies (and will be until we are glorified). As an aside,

remember that progressive sanctification has no effect on the fallen flesh. In other words, the old flesh nature will never be made "better" in this life. Its power was broken to be sure, but it is still the same "nasty" evil flesh and it will be until the day we are glorified. The basis of our victory over sin is not that the fallen flesh is getting progressively better. To the contrary, the basis for our new power is the New Covenant in which God has given each of us a **new heart** and **His Spirit** as foretold by the prophet Ezekiel:

Ezekiel 36:26-27

²⁶ **A new heart also will I give you**, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

²⁷ And **I will put my spirit within you**, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

V. The Contrast

In Romans 8:5-9 Paul is going to show a contrast between the believer and the unbeliever.

Notice Romans 8:5

This verse opens with the word "for" which tells us this verse is an explanation of what has been said previously. What we are going to see within these verses is an explanation as to why believers walk after the Spirit. Someone has said:

"Men walk according to the inward inclination, bent, or disposition that they have."

Paul is going to point to the contrast between the disposition of the unbeliever and the believer. He is set on showing to his readers the power of the Spirit in the life of the believer.

Here in this verse the unsaved are referred to as ***"They that are after the flesh"***. The saved are referred to as ***"They that are after the Spirit"***.

Paul also gives us insight as to the disposition of both.

1. The disposition of the unsaved.

"they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh"

The unbeliever's focus is upon the things of the flesh. He or she is consumed with fulfilling the desires of the flesh. The words "do mind" are in the present tense and so what Paul is

saying here is that the unbeliever lives a life style that is consumed with the things of the flesh. Notice the words of an unnamed writer:

*"Note that this verb is in the **present tense** which depicts this as their the continual practice, their lifestyle, their habitual mindset. The **active voice** indicates that the subject carries out the action as a choice of their will! In a word, the object of all their thinking and striving is fleshly. Their mind is continually regulated by the flesh. These are unbelievers whose basic disposition is to attempt to gratify the cravings of their unredeemed flesh (a futile effort), which results in "corruption that is in the world by lust. They obey the impulses of the **flesh**. They live to gratify the desires of the corrupt (and ever corrupting) nature. They cater to the body, which in a few short years will return to dust."*

The unbeliever lives according to the flesh and the sin which they indulge in does not bother them. There is no remorse or sorrow over their sin because it is what they live for.

2. The disposition of the saved.

"but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit"

This person is consumed with spiritual matters. He or she thinks about God in all they do. It is their desire to live in a way that is pleasing to God and when they fail there is a brokenness and a Godly sorrow. The believer's priorities are completely different after salvation. Notice the words of Newell concerning the saved:

"There are those who are according to Spirit, who mind the Spirit's things: salvation, the person of Christ, the fellowship of the saints, the Word of God, prayer, praise prophecy, the blessed hope of Christ's coming, walking as He walked before men. True, many, many of these fall woefully short (as they well know); yet they mind the things of Spirit, the things of God, to some degree, while others will have nothing of them."

The Holy Spirit which is given to us the moment of salvation is the power that changes our lives. It is the Holy Spirit that longs for that which is spiritual and so the Spirit's desires are going to manifest themselves in the life of the believer.

Notice the words of Charles Simeon:

Take both the characters, and consider them,

1. In their judgment—

A carnal man may feel a general approval of religion; but he does not regard it as of paramount importance. What he allows to religion, he rather concedes from necessity, than claims as its unquestionable due. He will conform to religion so far as his temporal

interests will admit of it: but where the two come seriously in competition with each other, the world will have a decided preponderance in its favour. The good opinion of men will limit his exertions for God; and the attainment of some earthly object be prosecuted in preference to the best interests of his soul. To attend to the interests of time and sense will be esteemed by him as of the first necessity; and his spiritual welfare will be subordinated to it.

The spiritual man, on the other hand, will decidedly declare himself on the side of God and of religion. He will not neglect his earthly duties; for he considers them as a part of his duty to God: but if any thing earthly stand in competition with what is heavenly, he hesitates not to which he shall give the preference. The things of time and sense are in his eyes but as the dust upon the balance, in comparison of the things which are invisible and eternal: and in the contemplation of his God and Saviour, he gives this as the deliberate judgment of his mind, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of thee."

2. In their will—

The will of man, for the most part, is determined by his judgment: for though he may see a better path, and pursue a worse, yet, at the time, he wills that which he thinks will, under the existing circumstances, contribute most to his happiness.

Hence the carnal man, though he may feel some good desires after religion, and some purpose of heart to seek after it at some future period, determines that he will, for the present, give himself to the prosecution of his earthly objects. Hence, too, he chooses as his associates those who are like-minded with himself, and who can participate with him in his enjoyments. He may know of persons capable of advancing his spiritual welfare: but he has no sympathy with them, nor any desire after their company, Any excess in worldly-mindedness he can forgive and palliate: but any thing that approximates to excess in religious matters is deemed by him an unpardonable offence: and one instance of it will do more to repel him from religion, than ten thousand instances of the opposite habit to deter him from a conformity to the world.

The spiritual man, on the contrary, chooses, with deliberate purpose, his spiritual pursuits: nor will he be deterred from them by any regard to the things of this world. His heart is fixed; and though he finds that the world has yet too great an ascendant over him, he maintains his conflicts with vigour, and becomes daily more dead to the world and more alive to God. He uses diligently, too, the means of spiritual advancement; and takes for his friends and associates those who will help him forward in his heavenly way.

Conclusion:

A study of Romans 8:5 certainly begs for us to look at and examine our own lives. We all fit in one of these two groups of people. Either we are in the flesh (unsaved) or we are in the Spirit (saved). Our thoughts, our desires, and our wills will reveal which group we fit into. God has given to the believer the Holy Spirit and He will completely change your life.

Paul here is not so much focused upon man's outward actions, but he is focused upon the mind. The mind is the true test. Let me ask you a question, "Where do your thoughts lead you?"

If your thoughts are constantly bent toward that which relates to this world then you are in the flesh.

If your thoughts are bent toward that which is eternal and spiritual, then you are in the Spirit.