

Romans 8:1-4

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE SIN NATURE

- In some ways this chapter is the climactic goal of Paul's argument in the first 7 chapters. The material in this chapter is what he has wanted to say from chapter one on. To make the points that he makes in this chapter, he had to give us the first seven as background.
- In essence, he is saying, "I want you to walk in the newness of life in the Spirit."
 - 1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
 - 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.
 - 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 {as an offering} for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,
 - 4 in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

INTRODUCTION

"The Christian life is not difficult. It is impossible. It is so impossible that only one person has ever lived it – Jesus. But the good news of the Gospel is that only one person had to live it for its benefits to be spread to all who are found by faith to be "in Him."

1. The confession and question raised by Paul at the end of chapter seven is the confession of many disciples who experience the power of a sin nature.
 - 24 Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?
 - 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.
2. Paul recognizes that the holiness required by the just moral law of God cannot be obtained by or in himself no matter how much he desires to perform it. He feels and is trapped by a nature that has been put to death in baptism but continues to prevent him from doing what he knows he should.
3. In verses 1-4 of chapter eight he breaks forth with a shout of joy as he proclaims the wonders of God's grace in Christ who's righteousness is imputed to the believer by faith, setting him and her free from the condemnation of the law which they had deserved.

OBSERVATIONS

1. The Gospel proclaims our freedom from the principle of condemnation because of our sin.
 - a. **In Christ we are not to experience condemnation (8:1)**
 - 1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

- The freedom from condemnation is not for those who have been able to fulfill the demands of the law in their own lives.
- The freedom comes to those who are “in Christ” which is achieved by faith apart from human merit.

b. In Christ we are under a new law (force) (8:2)

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

- All believers no matter what their moral record in being free from sinful behavior, are judged not by the principle of sin and death but by the principle of life in Jesus (by faith).
- This is our position in Christ

Our position in Christ	Our experience in Christ
regeneration	trust
sealing with the Spirit	assurance of salvation
indwelling of the Spirit	filling with the Spirit
justification	freedom from condemnation
member of the body of Christ	fellowship with believers
Children of God	Disciples of Christ
Static	Dynamic
Complete and perfect	Incomplete and imperfect
Christ's work for us on the cross	Christ's work in us through the Spirit
Passive righteousness	Active righteousness
Legal position	Living performance
Coming to Christ	Following after Christ

c. In Christ we see our “flesh” condemned in His sacrifice for us (8:3)

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 {as an offering} for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,

- He (Jesus) through His flesh condemned (rendered it powerless to condemn us) sin. He fulfilled the just demands of the Law for atonement because of our sin.
- The law was unable to provide a path by which we could obtain eternal life because its just demands were more than we could deliver.

2. But Jesus offered us not only freedom from the penalty of sin. He also offered us free from the power of sin to enslave us.

a. We now have a choice to “walk according to the flesh or the Spirit” (8:4) - We will fulfill the demands of the Law by walking in the Spirit.

4 in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

- At first it might appear that Paul is contradicting himself by saying that we really are not frustrated sinners but able (by the power of the Spirit) to fulfill the demands of the law so as to be reconciled to God through our performance (in the Spirit).
- This misses the point of the Gospel. While it is true that we do have power to overcome sin by the power of the Spirit, this has nothing to do with our justification. It is the fruit of our new life in Christ not the root of it.
- This is one of the areas where the Protestant Reformation broke from the Church of Rome. Luther made a distinction between the righteousness of Christ (for) us and the righteousness of Christ (in and through) us. The first we call justification, the second we call sanctification. We are saved not by sanctification (discipleship) but by justification (baptismal faith).

POINT

Justification is distinct from sanctification but expected to lead to it.

IMPLICATIONS

- A. We are not to confuse our hope for eternal life with our faithfulness to the law.**
- B. We are not to conclude that the benefits of the Gospel stopped with justification by faith.**
- C. While no one will be perfect in this life, we can expect to experience power to walk in the Spirit and to the extent we do this we will be free from the power of sin to enslave us.**

CONCLUSION

For further study look at the theology notes in apptoteach.org theology files:

#107 Law and Grace

#108 Problem texts on Grace

#706 Our position in Christ

#711 Holiness

#713 Lordship Salvation

#715 Sanctification

