

Lesson Ten — Romans 8:1-17

“No Condemnation”

Introduction:

In Chapter 7, Paul clearly laid out the struggle with the sinful nature and the new nature. The sinful nature hates God and does not want to please God. The New Nature loves God and wants to please God. Listen again as Paul brings Chapter 7 to a close:

My Constant Struggle With My Sinful Nature

¹⁴ Certainly we know that the law is spiritual, but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. ¹⁵ For I do not understand what I am doing, because I do not keep doing what I want. Instead, I do what I hate. ¹⁶ And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷ But now it is no longer I who am doing it, but it is sin living in me. ¹⁸ Indeed, I know that good does not live in me, that is, in my sinful flesh. The desire to do good is present with me, but I am not able to carry it out. ¹⁹ So I fail to do the good I want to do. Instead, the evil I do not want to do, that is what I keep doing. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who am doing it, but it is sin living in me.

²¹ So I find this law^[a] at work: When I want to do good, evil is present with me. ²² I certainly delight in God's law according to my inner self, ²³ but I see a different law at work in my members, waging war against the law of my mind and taking me captive to the law of sin, which is present in my members. ²⁴ What a miserable wretch I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? ²⁵ I thank God^[b] through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my sinful flesh I serve the law of sin.

Now in Chapter 8, we will enjoy the journey from one vista of the triumph of God's grace to another.

8:1-4 There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ

God Placed Our Judgment on Christ

***8** So then, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.^[c] ² For in Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me^[d] free from the law of sin and death. ³ Indeed, what the law was unable to do, because it was weakened by the flesh, God did, when he sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to deal with sin.^[e] God condemned sin in his flesh, ⁴ so that the righteous decree of the law would be fully satisfied in us who are not walking according to the flesh, but according to the spirit.^[f]*

Verse 1 Now Paul sounds the trumpet to herald the triumph of grace. Of what can we Christians be confident?

Verse 2 What is the law of sin and death?

What is the law of the spirit of life?

Verse 3 How did God condemn sin and its power?

Verse 4 Compare these two paraphrases of this verse and comment on them:

- If we serve God according to the Spirit, we can be sure that Christ’s righteousness is ours.
- We who have come to faith in Christ’s work and serve God according to the Spirit are people who have Christ’s righteousness belonging to them.

There is no condemnation for the one who is joined with Christ.

8:5-17 Our life in Christ means that we are engaged in a struggle to kill the flesh

Living in Harmony With the Spiritual Nature

⁵To be sure, those who are in harmony with the sinful flesh think about things the way the sinful flesh does, and those in harmony with the spirit think about things the way the spirit does. ⁶Now, the way the sinful flesh thinks results in death, but the way the spirit thinks results in life and peace. ⁷For the mind-set of the sinful flesh is hostile to God, since it does not submit to God’s law, and in fact, it cannot. ⁸Those who are in the sinful flesh cannot please God.

⁹But you are not in the sinful flesh but in the spirit, if indeed God’s Spirit lives in you. And if someone does not have the Spirit of Christ, that person does not belong to Christ. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, but your spirit is alive because of righteousness. ¹¹And if the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will also make your mortal bodies alive through his Spirit, who is dwelling in you.

¹²So then, brothers, we do not owe it to the sinful flesh to live in harmony with it. ¹³For if you live in harmony with the sinful flesh, you are going to die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the actions of the body, you will live.

The Spirit Assures Us We Are Children of God

¹⁴Indeed, those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. ¹⁵For you did not receive a spirit of slavery so that you are afraid again, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom^[b] we call out, “*Abba, Father!*” ¹⁶The Spirit himself joins our spirit in testifying that we are God’s children.

¹⁷Now if we are children, we are also heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, since we suffer with him, so that we may also be glorified with him.

Verses 5-17 Below is a paraphrase of these verses. Study verses 5-17 in the Bible. Then read the paraphrase and work on the discussion questions.

⁵Those who have only the sinful nature, that is, unbelievers, think of nothing but rebelling against God and living in sin. But those who have come to faith in Christ and have the Spirit living in them think about serving God and living righteously. ⁶The person who is only sinful flesh will die in his sins. But the person who believes in what Christ has done for him and naturally lives to serve the Lord lives in the hope of eternal life and in peace. ^{7,8}Make no mistake about it. The sinful flesh can do nothing to please the Lord. It is hostile to God. The last thing anyone should want is to be found by God “in the flesh” on the Last Day. Don’t depend on the sinful flesh to help you then.

^{9,10}But if Christ lives in you through faith—and this applies only to those who are in Christ by faith—you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit. Yes, you must confess that you are still sinful, sold as a slave of sin, and that your sinful body will someday die. But your spirit is alive because Christ has given you his righteousness. ¹¹And if the powerful Spirit—powerful enough to raise Jesus from the dead—is living in you, you can be sure he will raise your dead body from the grave as well.

^{12,13}As we said, our sinful natures are still active, daily trying to lead us into sin. Some may serve this sinful nature, enjoying the pleasures of sin while they are on this earth, and feeling no struggle within them to fight against their sinful cravings. If that's how it is with you, you will experience eternal death in hell. But if the struggle goes on with you—the struggle that begins when you hear and believe the gospel—and if you put that nature to death because of what you have become in Christ, you will live eternally with God in heaven.

¹⁴Why? Not because your struggle and the victories you experience earn eternal life. But because the Spirit who is producing the struggle and giving you the victory is the Spirit of Christ, God's Son. ¹⁵That makes you God's sons and daughters. Your sins are forgiven and you can call God your Father. This relationship makes you an heir of the treasures of heaven.

¹⁶Jesus confessed God as his Father and served him and suffered for it. ¹⁷Realize that your confession of God as your Father puts you on the same path of suffering that Jesus walked.

Agree or disagree:

- We are heirs of eternal life because we struggle against sin.
- All that matters is that we are engaged in the struggle against sin.

Make a list of the blessings being in the Spirit brings to you.

What does it mean that we have an *obligation* to put to death the misdeeds of the body?

Relate these verses to 2:6,7,13,29. How do the present verses help us understand those verses in chapter 2 which seem to some to be teaching work-righteousness?

Those in whom the Spirit of Christ is living put to death the misdeeds of the body and are sure of eternal life with God.

Summary

Sin uses the law for its own sinful purposes. Instead of curbing sin, the law reacts with our unspiritual sinful nature and stirs up sin. Even though we are new creations, in this life we are sold under sin.

But we are not condemned for this. In Christ we have his righteousness credited to us, and as those who serve him, we are sure of eternal life.

For next time

1. Think about suffering. What are people's reactions to suffering?
How does suffering impact people's ideas of God?

2. Read Job 1 and 2. Where did Job place the origin of the suffering he was experiencing?

Footnotes:

- a. [Romans 7:21](#) The word *law* is used in different senses in this chapter. Sometimes it is a moral code. Sometimes it is a fixed principle.
- b. [Romans 7:25](#) A few witnesses to the text read *Thanks be to God*.
- c. [Romans 8:1](#) Some witnesses to the text add *who do not walk according to the sinful nature but according to the spiritual nature*; others omit *but according to the spiritual nature*.
- d. [Romans 8:2](#) Some witnesses to the text read *you* singular.
- e. [Romans 8:3](#) Or *Son in the likeness of sinful flesh as a sin offering*
- f. [Romans 8:4](#) Or *Spirit*; also in 8:5-10. In this section, *the spirit* refers to the new nature in contrast with the sinful flesh.
- g. [Romans 8:15](#) Or *the spirit of adoption by which, or the Spirit through whom we are adopted as sons and call out*