

[Romans 8:1 – 8]

~ Every book, every chapter, every passage and every verse in the Word of God has an intricately important place in God's plan and purpose for our understanding of the Lord Jesus Christ. Every thought contained in the Bible forms together and pertains to validating Godly wisdom in a believer. Naturally, some sections of Scripture stand out amongst others like peaks and summits. Well, we have climbed dreadfully high onto the mountain of God's government in our Spiritual Safari over the last several reports; and, suddenly, we find ourselves in the stratosphere of higher learning in Holy Writ. It's extremely dangerous here. One slip and you are finished; and our last report was severe, serious and audacious.

We have examined sanctification intensely in our previous several reports; and we have exhausted the subject as far as my understanding goes. Remember, we could temporarily rename our expedition "*Believer Only Safari*" – because the unbeliever cannot receive these truths of God. In this report, we will begin to examine three tremendous *new* subjects: (1) We will continue to sharpen our understanding of sanctification; (2) We will learn of the assurance of our salvation, and; (3) we will come to understand there shall never be any separation from God for the believer. They may wander very far from Him, but there is always a way back.

This section of Scripture could be labeled *Powerful Sanctification*; and that is in contrast to *Powerless Sanctification*, which we considered in our previous two reports. In this chapter, we will consider the *provision of God to perform our sanctification*. This is definitely the high-water mark of Romans; and probably the entire Bible. The Gospel of John had some dizzying heights, but these in the remainder of Romans are simply dazzling. 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.*" This has also been labeled "***This Incomparable Chapter!***"

What we learn in this lesson is that the believer is to be given a life of joy and peace as he lives for God amongst the presence of sin. Sin is not to

dictate the life program of the son of God, though. The truly converted and born-again sinner realizes there is nothing within himself that can produce an ideal state of ethic. We saw in chapter seven the new nature has no power in and of itself; and we saw the old nature has no good in it! So, how in the world is a child of God going to live for God? Well, that's where Paul broke down and cried out for help. Verse twenty-four of the last chapter is serious business in a man's life, friends. When someone writes like that, they've had enough. Who's going to enable *YOU* to live for God? If Paul wasn't sure how he would be enabled to live for God – then how are *you* so sure about *YOU*?

In this chapter, we're going to learn to depend on the Spirit of God – for a very *real* sanctification. We've only had casual references to the Holy Spirit so far in Romans; but, in this chapter, the Holy Spirit is mentioned nineteen times! You could say our safari is bringing in a new element. If you and I are to perform a service in this life that is well pleasing to God, then it *MUST* be done in the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul told the Ephesians to '*be not drunk with wine wherein is excess but be ye filled with the Holy Spirit.*' Ephesians chapter five verse eighteen.

Sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit in the regenerative life of a believer! This is our only deliverance from any and all power of sin – even in the very presence of sin that is everywhere around you. God can perform His will in the life of any believer who will submit under any and all circumstances. That, my friends, is a glorious and wonderful relationship we are brought into! That brings us to the first part of our study which someone has labeled *The Victory of the Holy Spirit Over Sin and Death...*

1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

~ Interestingly, verse one ends after "Christ Jesus" and the last ten words belong only in verse four. There is not one condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus - period. In spite of the awful experience of failure Paul went through in chapter seven, he never lost his salvation. If we have no condemnation in Christ, then there is no chance of us being lost. There is a chance we can be total failures. There is a possibility we will be miserable in

our lives due to disobedience. Paul was a total failure and he called himself a wretched man. But even when we are in that state, God wants *JOY* in our lives, friends....

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

~ The word “*for*” occurs seventeen times in this chapter; it’s lingual cement that bind the content. It is also a seemingly insignificant word that, as it turns out, requires advanced mental effort to place in context. There is a logic Paul the apostle incorporates that must be followed in order to understand him properly, correctly and completely. One great expositor of Romans made the following statement, “... *if you do not find Paul logical then you’re not reading him right.*” Paul has communicated everything we have read so far and that I have written about in Romans crystal clear. There is no sound doctrinal interpretation that differs; and this sure isn’t my opinion, you can bet your life on that!

The ‘*law of the Spirit*’ encompasses more than a single principle of the law; it refers to an all-inclusive authority exercised by the Holy Spirit Himself. The ‘*Spirit of Life*’ means the Holy Spirit brings life; because the Holy Spirit, in fact, is life. The Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus Christ are in complete union in the life of the believer when said believer presents themselves to God and submits to His will accordingly. That’s when Christ liberates the believer.

The ‘*law of sin and death*’ is the authority sin had previously over our old nature. It’s end result is a complete severance of fellowship with our Father in Heaven. Remember, we saw the shackles of the believer and the new nature could not break those shackles. Only visitation from a Higher Authority and Power could ever accomplish regeneration and set us free. The Holy Spirit operates in our life when it is joined to Christ Jesus. As an unbeliever, we were joined to a dead body of flesh; but now, we have new life in Christ....

3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

~ Walking after the Spirit of God is certainly the crux of the matter. It was impossible for the law to produce righteousness – or anything good – in man. The fault in us is the result of the sin of our flesh! Paul has already confessed he knew there dwelleth no good thing in his flesh. You can argue with me all day long, but that's what the Word of God teaches, friends. Let's keep this real: this is accurate because it's true of you and it's true of me; and is the result of a totally depraved mankind. The heart is desperately wicked and deceitful above all things.

This passage is talking about *YOU* – and *ME*! Only upon realization of that perspective can we ever agree with God. Only when we are in agreeance with Him can the Holy Spirit perform the impossible task of producing a holy life in sinners like us. Only grace can lift us up, and only the understanding of the Holy Spirit can produce the joy of grace. The law is not able to lift us up; it can only ever drag us down.

You and I are to live on a new principle. See, it is big business to talk about pulling yourself up and making resolutions to do better in your life. We've all tried that, and we know it doesn't work. Did you ever do better? Or did you just do the same old thing? Well, God is able to do this impossible thing in your life if you are willing to *submit*. That impossible thing, of course, was sending the Lord Jesus Christ to die for our sins. When Jesus arrived in Bethlehem, He had the same fleshy problems we all have. The difference is He was apart from sin.

Hebrews 2:14 *Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 16 For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took*

on him the seed of Abraham. 17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people ~

Hebrews 7:26 *For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens ~*

Hebrews 10:5 *Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me ~*

God is going to get to the roots of sin in our bodies, minds and spirit. God Himself executed sinful flesh on the cross so that it had no more rights in humanity. God dealt with sin in full; and He did it His way! Christ is identified with us as believers. I seriously doubt we understand the depth of condescension extended to us as a courtesy by God! The power of sin has been condemned in these bodies of flesh, but it has not been eradicated. I know some believers do not accept that; and it's too bad because they seem to have no problem being wrong. We crucify the flesh daily. Paul said, "...I die daily." Well, their sinless perfection problem is not my problem because that isn't my philosophy; and theirs is a problem. The Word of God just happens to have worked out exactly this way in my life, my beloved; and in the life of every one else I have ever known – and yours, too, if you are honest.

Some people ask, "... wouldn't it be nice if Christ would come and rapture the church from this world of sin right now?" They sit around waiting and doing nothing with their bags packed for Jesus. They think Heaven will be so wonderful to have them there; of course, the world hasn't been any better of a place with them here! I'm not sure what makes them think Heaven will have had such a contribution made to it when they arrive? Well, I'll be honest with you because I always am honest with you readers: I wish the rapture would happen right now, too; it would be wonderful – but not for everyone. Examine yourself and see if you are in the faith. What's a good way to know? Ask yourself: when was your last sincere, educated, systematic Bible study class? That's a great indicator of whether or not we are in the faith.

However, there's something even more wonderful than all of that! You and I are enabled to live a Christian life right here where you read, and I type this report; squarely in the middle of a world *rampant* with sin! That's *MUCH* more wonderful than anything else I can think of, frankly. In the Gospel of John, in chapter seventeen verse fifteen, Jesus said He didn't pray for the Father to take believers out of the world; but, rather, that the Father would keep them safe *IN* the world! Christ gets His victories down here through us, my beloved; because that's what He wants to do.

Paul says, "*.... the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us....*" This is the passive voice of the Holy Spirit saying a life of obedience will be produced; which the law demanded but could not produce. The Holy Spirit furnishes the power, and the decision is ours; for sin shall not have dominion over us. I hope that is as wonderful and glorious to you as it is to me, friends. That's really the wonder of it all. This is what makes the Word of God *precious....*

5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

~ That brings us to a new struggle, but this is not a struggle we should be involved in: the war of the Holy Spirit and the flesh! God has no plan or program to change or reform this flesh – He is giving us an entirely new program. Being born after the Spirit is new and radically different. No longer is our struggle with a powerless new nature, nor is it the believer striving for mastery over sin and body; the new struggle is the Holy Spirit contending against the old nature. What we need to do is get out of His way! The old nature of the flesh is a bully. We can't control the old nature, so we turn it over to Someone Who can. The Holy Spirit wants to and will indwell believers who trust Christ today! Paul said, "*.... Grieve not the Holy Spirit.*"

Verse five presents two diametrically opposed standards of living. No two lives could be more radically and fundamentally different than this. Paul gives a complete picture of a fleshy person in Ephesians chapter two, also. God hath quickened those who were dead in trespasses and sins; those

who had walked according to the course of the world and the prince of power of the air – the spirit that now worketh in the children of *disobedience*! They had their conversations in times past in the lusts of the flesh fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind...Well, that was the condition of *all of us* until we were saved.

Colossians 1:21 *And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled ~*

The flesh includes the mind. So, this verse from Colossians includes the total person completely alienated from God. The class we're talking about set their hearts and minds on the things of the flesh. They cannot receive spiritual discernment because they perceive the things of God to be foolishness. That's the diet on which the works of their flesh feed. Some are humanists. Some are fatalists. Either way, it's ugly, to be sure. Jesus said, *"it's not what goes into the mouth that defiles a man but what proceedeth forth from the heart is what defiles a man."* Those things Jesus listed as coming from the heart were pride, adultery, thefts, fornications, hate, lies, strife, envy, jealousy and murder – all bad – very bad! I know it's humiliating, but it just happens to be true. The child of God retains the old Adamic nature and to live by the flesh means defeat and death!

No child of God can be happy living for the flesh. The Prodigal son may have gotten in the pig pen, but he was never content to stay there. The pigs loved it; and the pigs didn't even say good-bye to the prodigal son when he left! The genuine child of God can't stay in filth. They have to arise and say they will go home to their Father! Only the pigs stay in the pigpen.

Those who are of the Spirit are those who are born again and are truly regenerated. They are indwelt by the Spirit of God, and they love the things of God. We need to set our affections on the things above – not things on this earth, friends. Spiritual things are the things which the child of God strives for in this life. You and I cannot attain it by effort. Only as we allow the Holy Spirit to work through us in our lives can we realize true spiritual connectivity to the Lord Jesus Christ....

6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

~ When the carnal mind is dead, it is separated from fellowship with God. That dead condition is the state of our flesh in the here and now. Christ indwells the believer and brings life and peace today. Death, as a separation from God, has a whole lot of implications for this life. When you and I sin, we are to confess that sin immediately to our Holy High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ. Only then can we be washed and brought back into fellowship with the Father. The life available to Christians as offered by Christ is a life of full satisfaction and the exercise of one's total abilities. Do you want to live life at its fullest and best? So many people think they're living their best life today, but they are as dead as they can possibly be. Peace means we are to experience tranquility and well-being in the present and in the future!

You and I have an old nature that is a literal spiritual communist! Any theory that attempts to establish there is a divine spark in man for God is simply not credible, my friends. Anyone who says man has a secret desire to find God is not worthy of thoughtful consideration. Man is the *enemy* of God; *dead* in trespasses and sins and active in his open rebellion against God! That man will become very religious in order to stay as far away from the Living and True God and the Person of Christ as he can possibly get! You might want to think all of this through completely, friends. Jacob, in his natural condition, wrestled against God. Jacob didn't seek that fight, but he sure did fight back! Only when Jacob yielded and turned it all over to the Lord did he win.

Anything this flesh produces is not acceptable to God, my friends. Man's vaunted progress of civilization, style and culture today are nothing in the world but a stench in the nostrils of Almighty God! The religious works of churchy people who drag through the motions in lukewarmness of the flesh

make Christ ill at heart! Are you willing to accept God's estimation of our boasting? This is an awful picture we're leaving off with in this leg of our Spiritual Safari; accurate – but awful! Well, we have deliverance available in the Spirit of God. Are you willing to turn it *ALL* over to the Spirit of God and stop trusting your weak sinful nature that has you so frustrated? Oh, how I pray that God will make His Word *REAL* to you today ~