

(Romans) Debtors to the Spirit

by Brian Brodersen

Paul explains that believers have no condemnation in Christ and are free from the law of sin and death through the law of the Spirit of life.

Duration: 53:35

Scripture: Romans 5:1, Romans 7:24, Romans 8:1-2, Romans 8:17-18, Romans 8:38-39

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Victory Over Sin"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by recapping the previous teachings in the book of Romans, particularly focusing on the failure of the law to save us. He uses the analogy of light and darkness to explain how cultivating the nature of God within us can drive out the darkness in our lives. The speaker emphasizes the importance of feeding the spirit and indulging in the things of the spirit to experience lasting victory over sin. He also highlights the contrast between the spirit of bondage that the law brings and the spirit of adoption that we receive as sons of God, which implies the impartation of God's nature to us.

Transcript

Well, last week we did sort of a highlight of the eighth chapter, as you remember, and this evening we're going to pick up in our verse-by-verse study through chapter eight, and we'll get through tonight the first seventeen verses of this eighth chapter. But let me back up and just remember where we've been, what we've been talking about up until this point in Romans. We've seen in the seventh chapter Paul's final word on the law and the inability of the law to ever save us.

The law's utter failure to bring us into a state of justification. The best that could possibly happen under the law is we could want to do it, but we could not actually perform it because of the weakness in our flesh. And so as we come into chapter eight and looking at it now in its entirety, Paul is now going to elaborate on the ramifications of our salvation and what this means to us in a practical sense.

He's already done that in some ways back in the fifth chapter. He's pointed out to us the various results of justification by faith. We looked at that previously.

But in this eighth chapter, what he's really showing us is how what Christ did for us works out into our lives to give us victory in the spirit, to secure us for eternity, to give us that confidence in the Lord's grace and in his work for us. And so he says in verse one, there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in

Christ Jesus who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the spirit. So there's no condemnation.

Remember at the end of the seventh chapter, oh wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ. So Jesus has put us in a position of justification.

He's put us in a place of acceptance with God. As Paul says in Ephesians one, six, we have been made accepted in the beloved. Now, this is a hard thing to to grasp sometimes, but the reality is, and I think I've pointed out before, but I want to remind you guys again, you cannot become any more righteous than you were the instant you believed in Jesus.

From God's point of view, you cannot add to what Christ has done. He's given you a perfect righteousness, a total righteousness, a complete righteousness. So when God looks at you, when God looks at me, when God looks at us here collectively, he sees us as perfected in Christ.

He accepts us in Christ. We're sort of encased in Christ, and God sees us in Christ. It doesn't mean we lose our identity, or we're not individually loved by God.

It just simply means that God views us not in Adam any longer and subsequently in sin, but God views us in Christ and in righteousness. So there is no condemnation. God is not presently holding things against us, and God is not in the future going to condemn us.

We've passed from death into life. As Jesus said, we will not come into condemnation. That is a wonderful, wonderful reality.

You know, when you think about the things that Christ saved you from, when you really stop and think about the things that could be laid against our account, you know, you wouldn't even want to really think much about it, because there's plenty there. But all of that is taken care of. All of that is dealt with.

All of that is covered in Christ, and that's the key, being in Christ Jesus. So he says that there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. Now, sometimes people emphasize, well, you know, this latter part of the verse probably shouldn't be there, because it's not contained in certain manuscripts, but it's the manuscripts that we don't necessarily agree with that don't contain it.

So I think that it ought to be there, and it is repeated in the fourth verse. But what is Paul talking about here when he says to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit? Now, here's how some have interpreted this, and I think it's the wrong way to interpret it. They interpret it this way.

There's no condemnation for those who are in Christ, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. So they interpret it this way. As long as you're walking in the Spirit, there's no condemnation.

But if you start walking in the flesh, then you're back in that state of condemnation. But that's because they're misinterpreting what it means to walk in the Spirit and walk in the flesh. They're thinking of it in terms that are not really what Paul had in mind here.

Now, we use that terminology, don't we, as believers? We talk about how we were in the Spirit. Man, I've been in the Spirit all week, you know. I've just been doing great.

And hey, there's no condemnation for me because, man, I've been in the Spirit all week. Next week, you might show up with just the opposite experience. Man, I've been in the flesh all week.

I don't know what happened. I did so great last week. And man, this week, everything just blew apart.

So I'm condemned now. No, that's not it. This terminology is Paul's way of describing those who are believers and those who are not believers.

Those who walk according to the flesh are not regenerate people. Those who walk according to the Spirit are those who are regenerate. So he's making a distinction here between believers and unbelievers in the truest sense.

You know, there are people who say they're theoretically, but they're not really regenerated because they don't believe in him in the sense that's caused them to have this new birth. But that's what he's making a distinction between, those who are genuinely born again and those who are not born again. They might even be religious, but they're not born again.

And so for those who are in the flesh, they're not in Christ, and therefore condemnation is applicable to them. But to those who are in the Spirit, they are in Christ and there is no condemnation. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

Now here in this second verse, Paul introduces another law. He has not yet in this epistle introduced this law. He's talked about the law of God.

He's talked about the law of sin, which is in our members. But now he talks about the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. You see, there's another law or principle would be another way to understand it.

And it is the Spirit of life, which is in Christ Jesus. And this is what I've mentioned before. When we talk about grace, we're not talking about a theological proposition merely.

We're not talking about theological concept merely. We are talking about an actual power. The grace of God is the power of God.

The grace of God is the law of the Spirit of life. You see, in Christ Jesus, there is a law. Just like in you, there is a law.

It's the law of sin. And it works in us as men, all men, all people. That law of sin resides in us.

And that law of course produces death. In Jesus, there's a law also that resides. It's the law of the Spirit of life.

And you see, when Christ comes and lives in you, that's what happens when you are born again. He comes and lives in you and he brings with him that law of the Spirit of life. He brings the life to us, that spiritual life, which then is the power of God that enables us to live the life of God.

See, this is the wonderful thing about the Christian faith. It's not simply a list of things that you ought to do. God tells us the way we ought to live, but then he says, don't worry, I'm going to come and inhabit you and

I will actually live this through you.

There's an interesting passage in Hebrews, I think it's the last chapter, the 13th chapter, where the author refers to the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ. You see, the fruit of righteousness in my life, it's by Jesus Christ. It's because he resides in me and he lives his life out through me.

That's what the Christian life is. Somebody defined it like this. The Christian life is the life of God in the soul of man.

God plants his life inside of me. That's how I change. That's how I go from being unrighteous to being righteous.

That's how I go from living in defeat to living in victory. God comes and lives inside me and as I yield to him, he lives his life out through me. Jesus illustrated it in another way.

You remember, he illustrated it by talking about the vine and the branches. He says, I am the vine, you are the branches. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.

But if you abide in me, which is what a branch would do, if you abide in me, you will bear much fruit. A lot of times we get caught up in this mentality of, you know, oh, I've got to bear fruit for God. I've got to do something for God.

I've got to be better for God. And we try to do that and we find that we end up not doing it. We end up failing.

You know, the way to really do it is to just remember, realize, wait a second, I'm just a branch. A branch can't really do anything except stay connected to the vine. As long as I stay connected to the vine, everything else is just going to happen.

It's just going to be the natural byproduct. The branch doesn't have any life of its own and it can't produce any fruit by itself. It only has life and only produces fruit by virtue of the fact that it's connected to the vine.

So that takes the burden off me of trying to be something that I can't be by just remembering, wait a second, I'm connected to the vine. And all I have to do is just stay connected, maintain that connection, and automatically, fruit automatically is produced in that way. That's what Paul is really talking about here.

It's the law of the spirit of life in Christ. What has it done? It has made me free from the law of sin and death. You see, back in chapter 7, you remember he was describing the impossibility of being freed from this by trying to be freed from it through the law of Moses.

Through the law of Moses, the best I can do is want to serve God with my mind, but I can't practically work it out in my life. But now, because of the law of the life in Christ Jesus, now I'm free from that law of sin and death. It no longer has that dominion over me that it previously had.

So now, I can live that life for what the law could not do, the Mosaic law. What it could not do in that it was weak through the flesh. You see, that was the problem, remember? The law is spiritual.

I am carnal. That which was ordained to life, I found to bring death. Why? Because I can't do it.

So, what the law could not do, what could it not do? It couldn't give me the victory over sin. It couldn't give me the spiritual life that I needed. But what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh on account of sin.

God sent Jesus into the world for the specific purpose of conquering sin. That's what Paul is saying. When he says on account of sin, that's what he's talking about.

Jesus came into the world primarily for one reason, to deal with sin. That's why he came. Remember that.

There's been in the past and there is, I think, growing today an attitude toward Jesus that is one of looking at him more like a philosopher, more like a moral teacher. Jesus had a lot of great things to say. We ought to follow his example, that sort of thing.

But let's not talk about that death thing, that blood thing, you know, all of that sacrifice and, oh no, no, that's barbaric, you know. But no, that's the primary reason that Jesus did come. The other things are secondary.

Jesus did not come primarily to teach us. He did teach us, but that wasn't the primary purpose of his coming. He did not come primarily to set an example for us.

He did leave us an example, but that's not the primary reason he came. The reason he came was on account of sin, to deal with sin, to do what nobody else could do, to take sin and to destroy it. And that's what he did on the cross.

So it was on account of sin and he condemned sin in the flesh 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. You see, this is what he did. The righteous requirement of the law.

God said, do these things and you shall live. I can't do them. That's the problem.

So what does that mean? It means I won't live. I'm condemned. But because of what Jesus did, as I put my trust in what he did, now the righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled in me.

This is not saying that now I'm going to be able to live up perfectly to that righteous standard of the law. Jesus did that already and now it's placed on my account. That's why when God looks at us, he sees us as righteous.

He doesn't see your infractions of the law that you have committed, that I have committed, but he sees the perfect righteousness of Christ. And so the righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled in us. Who's he talking to? He's talking to those who are in the spirit.

He's talking to those who are in Christ. He's talking to believers. Again, the contrast.

Those who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh. But those who live according to the spirit, the things of the spirit.

For to be carnally minded is death. But to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Here's a good way to evaluate your life.

Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh. The fleshly man, the carnal man, the natural man, that's what we're talking about here. Man as he is in his natural state apart from the grace of God.

What marks that man? His mind is set on the things of the flesh. His whole mental process is primarily engaged in the realm of the flesh. Now, not just the flesh in the bad sense that we normally think of it.

You know, something lustful or something perverse or something like that. It's not merely that. It's just the mind of the flesh is the mind of the world.

Just thinking the things that the world thinks. Following the philosophy of the world. Living basically a life that is unconscious concerning God for the most part.

And this is obviously how most people live. Even people who acknowledge God to some extent. Even people who might visit a church even once a week.

Yet the general tenor of their life is the flesh. They get up in the morning thinking primarily about the things of the flesh. They spend the day thinking about the things of the flesh.

They go to bed at night, put their head on their pillow, and they're still thinking about the things of the flesh. That's the natural man. That's the way he thinks.

That's the way you thought. That's the way I thought. Occasionally I'd have a thought about God.

Something was not going so well in my life. I think about God. Maybe God could help me out in this.

Or if I had some frightful encounter. Maybe a near miss on the freeway or something. Oh, I better think a little bit about God now.

What if I wouldn't have made it today? And so you think a little bit about God there. But then that quickly dissipates and then you're right back to where you were before. You're just thinking about the things of the flesh.

That's the way man is. But those who live according to the Spirit, they set their mind on the things of the Spirit. See, the believer is a man who is spiritually minded now.

He's a man who's thinking a lot about God and the things of God and ultimately wanting to glorify God and please God. It doesn't mean that you only think about God 24-7. It doesn't mean that you never have another thought that comes into your mind.

But it does mean that the general direction and passion and tenor of your life, it's all in the direction of the Lord and the things of the Lord. That's the contrast between the natural man and the spiritual man. That's the contrast between somebody who's a Christian and somebody who's not a Christian.

A Christian is a man whose mind is set on the things of the Spirit. I want to know God. I want to please God.

I want to serve God. I want to understand Him better. And so my thinking process is saturated with the things of God and then the direction of my life is going in the direction of what I believe God would have me to be doing on a daily basis and also just in the general sense of my life.

So the person who's really a believer doesn't go out and just make decisions about major things. That person stops and says, Lord, what do you have to say about this? What is your word on this? What kind of direction do you have for me here? What is your plan? What is your will? What is your purpose in this? A person who never does that might, as I said, be a church-going person, might be a religious person. But when it comes down to the real issues of life, they rarely, if ever, factor God into the equation.

See, that's not a believer. A believer is somebody who's inviting God into each and every situation in their life and is seeking to glorify God. Not always succeeding, but nevertheless, that's what we're seeking to do.

And when we fail to do that, we come to the Lord and say, Oh, Lord, forgive me. Help me. I want to do right, be right.

The carnal mind, to be carnally minded, is death. To be spiritually minded is life and peace. The carnal mind is death.

It is death, and it leads to death. See, that's the situation. A person who is not born of the Spirit is a person who is dead spiritually.

That's the whole issue. Paul, in writing to the Ephesians, you remember in the second chapter, he talks about those who are walking according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the Spirit that now works in the children of disobedience. And there he describes this very thing.

Just flip over there real quick. Ephesians chapter 2. And you he made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the Spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lust of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as others. So there it is.

The natural mind, the carnally minded person, the carnal mind is death, living in the realm of death, dead, as Paul said, in your trespasses and in your sins. So the carnal mind is death and then will lead to death. Presently, spiritual death is the issue, but spiritual death, unless remedied, leads to eternal death.

That's the radically dangerous aspect. Spiritual death is dangerous enough, but it leads to eternal death. So this is the carnal mind.

The carnal mind is death, but to be spiritually minded is life. That's where life is. And that's what happens when a person is dead in their trespasses and sins, but they receive Christ.

Then, as Paul goes on to say there, he says, you he made alive. You were dead in your trespasses and sins, but he's made you alive together with Christ because the carnal mind is enmity against God. For it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be so than those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Now, this stuff is really, this is potent stuff. He says here that the carnal mind is perpetually at enmity with God. He says here that the carnally minded man cannot even please God.

You see, our condition, as I pointed out before, is much worse than we think it is. We look at ourselves, we're often tempted to draw the wrong conclusion. You know, I'm not that bad.

I've got some problems and sure, I've done some things wrong, but I'm not that bad. But we're worse than we think we are. That's why we've got to take God's word for it rather than how we feel about it.

And what he tells us here is that the carnal mind, the carnal mind, again, guys, this is the natural mind. This is where you were by nature. This is where everybody else outside of this building tonight is who is not following the Lord Jesus Christ and not born of the Spirit.

They are the carnal mind and that carnal mind is enmity against God. There's a hostility within human nature toward God and His laws. That's the reality.

Now, there are people, of course, who say, oh no, but I love God and I'm trying to follow God. But when you get real close and you start getting some definition, you find that the God they're admiring, the God they're maybe following, the God they claim to be serving is really a God that they've invented for themselves. It's not the God of the Bible.

And you find people all the time who say, oh, I believe in God and I love God. And you just say, are you talking about the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? Well, no, I'm not talking about that, you know, fundamental Bible. No, not that.

I'm talking about God. So you're basically talking about a figment of your imagination, something you've invented. That's what God is.

But you see immediately the response of the carnal mind to God. All of a sudden the enmity comes out. You know, it is absolutely amazing how you can talk to people about God in a general sense and they'll be fairly tame about it and some people can be even very nice about it.

But man, you bring up Jesus Christ and all of a sudden the fireworks begin, the lid blows off of it, they want to punch you out. It's true. I've been to Israel quite a few times.

You can have wonderful conversations with Jews about God. They'll talk to you about God. A lot of atheists, but there's a lot of believers in God.

And they will talk in glowing terms about God and their love for God and all of God is wonderful and on and on and on. But you suggest for a moment that Jesus Christ is God and they'll throw you out of the country. Seriously, they will become irate.

They can't believe that. When Simeon was dedicating the baby Jesus to the Lord in the temple area, you remember what he said to Mary? He said an interesting thing. He said, this child is destined for the fall and the rising again of many in Israel and for a sign that shall be spoken against that the hearts of many may be revealed.

Let me tell you this, a person's attitude toward Jesus Christ reveals their true attitude toward God. That's what happens. You get people talking to you about God, just interject Jesus into the equation, see how they respond, see how they react.

If they embrace that, well, of course, Jesus is God. Then, you know, they're of God. But if they're repelled by that, if they're angered by that, if they're upset by that, if they oppose that, then what's happening? Their hearts are being revealed.

The true nature of the human heart, the animosity that is there by nature toward God, it manifests itself. The carnal mind is enmity against God. It is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

Man will always fight against the law of God, always try to find a way around it, come up with something to circumvent it. So then those who are in the flesh cannot please God. You see, apart from being in Christ and born of the Spirit, there's not even the remotest possibility of pleasing God.

You can go through all of this religious gymnastics you want. You can say endless prayers. You can give endless amounts of dollars to support religion or charitable causes, whatever.

But in the end, none of that weighs in with God. They that are in the flesh cannot please God, no matter how hard you try. It is an absolute impossibility to please God while you're in the flesh.

The only way you can please God is to be in the Spirit. And the only way you can be in the Spirit is to embrace God's Son, Jesus Christ, and have through Him the law of the Spirit of life imparted to you. And so Paul says to them, to us, he says, but you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit.

You see, the believer is not in the flesh. We, by virtue of our faith, we are in the Spirit. The believer is not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you.

Now, if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. You know, there are those folks that will say things like, you know, I'm a Christian. I'm just not one of those born agains.

And they use that terminology. I'm not one of those born agains. You know, if you're not one of those born agains, you're not a Christian.

You cannot be a Christian and not be born again. It's through being born again that a person becomes a Christian. Now, for some people, of course, it's a semantical thing.

They just don't really understand the semantics. A couple years ago, I was traveling by train up to the north of England, and I sat down next to this lady, and I just began to talk with her. And, you know, I was hoping to have an opportunity to share with her.

And the opportunity did open up, but I just was asking her some questions, and we were kind of getting around to the God issue, you know. And at a certain point, she said to me, she said, you know, I'm a Christian, but I sure don't like those born agains. She said, you're not a born again, are you? I said, well, you know, yeah, I hate to break the news to you, but I am.

But, you know, but gently, I said, you know, okay, I understand what you're saying. And she was feeling, you know, that a lot of times people were pointing the finger down at her and condemning her and all that. I said, no, I understand that, but let me explain to you something.

These born agains, people that are born again, they're actually following what Jesus said. And, you know, I took her to John chapter three and just showed her that. And a lot of times people don't even realize that it's the Bible.

It's Jesus himself. I remember when I first got saved back in the 70s, I was working at a surf shop down in Huntington, and I was talking with a guy one day, and he says, you're a born again. I said, yeah, yeah, I'm a born again.

He says, but Chuck Smith invented that. I said, well, you know, actually, it predates Chuck just a little bit, you know, and I happen to have my Bible with me. I take it to work with me every day, and I open it up, and I showed him.

I said, look right here, you know, this is Jesus Christ, and he's the one who actually originally said it. You must be born again. The guy was shocked.

He couldn't believe it, but I remember that too. I never heard the term born again until the 70s when the Jesus people thing was going on, and then you start hearing all this born again stuff. I grew up in Roman Catholicism.

I never, ever heard the term born again. Never heard it, but Jesus said, unless you're born again, you won't go to heaven. So, and what does that mean? It means having the Spirit of Christ.

If any man does not have the Spirit of Christ, he doesn't belong to Christ. So, now, if Christ is in you, which he is if you're a believer, then the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. So, because Christ is in us, the body is dead because of sin.

Jesus came to deal with sin. He came to destroy sin. So, the body is dead because of sin.

Remember in chapter 6 that the body of sin might be put out of business. So, a Christian who's sinning is really a contradiction in a practical sense. It is a possibility, but it's a contradiction.

It's a person who's operating their business when their business license has been revoked. You see, you're no longer to operate because God put that sinful man out of business. That's what he's talking about here.

If Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin. That's what Jesus did. He dealt with sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

But if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. We talked about this in our previous study and showed how this is really the key here. The key to victory over sin is the realization that the Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead dwells in me, and now I just live according to that Spirit.

I yield to that Spirit. Now, he says this in verse 12. He says, Therefore, brethren, we are debtors.

You know, somebody who's indebted to somebody else is somebody who is under an obligation. You know, if somebody has done something for you, some magnanimous act toward you, you know that feeling. You just feel, I'm indebted to this person.

I'm indebted to them because of this. And there's an appreciation for what they've done for you, and there's a determination on your part to reciprocate back toward them. We are indebted not to the flesh.

The flesh has never done anything for me. All the flesh has done is put me in a state of condemnation. I have no indebtedness to the flesh.

We are debtors not to the flesh to live according to the flesh, for if you live according to the flesh, you will die. The life of the flesh leads in the end to death. It is the life of death presently, spiritual death.

It leads to eternal death in the end. We have no debt to the flesh. I owe the flesh nothing.

The flesh never did a single thing for me. I have no debt there. But if by the spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

Now notice the way Paul states that. If by the spirit you put to death the deeds of the flesh, that takes us back to verse 11 and what we talked about a little bit last week. You see, this is the key.

I put to death the deeds of the flesh not through my best effort, because my best effort amounts to the flesh trying to conquer the flesh, and the flesh cannot conquer the flesh in the long run. I might have temporary success and victories. It's what the guys do that go off to the monasteries.

They get away in that monastery, and for a few weeks they feel like, I've done it. I've conquered the flesh. This is wonderful.

Here I am in this robe, and I'm hot, and I'm miserable, and I'm depriving myself of all of the pleasures of this life, and I'm eating tasteless food, and I'm not listening to anything carnal or sensual, and I'm not even speaking my own thoughts, and oh, this is bliss. And that lasts about two weeks, and pretty soon you just hate it. Man, I hate this wretched robe.

Oh, it's so hot here. It's so miserable. This food stinks.

I can't stand this place. And then, you know, all of those lusts and passions start rising up and in, and I got to get out of here. You see, what the monastic life was, was an attempt in the flesh to overcome the flesh.

You know what it led to? It led to all kinds of vile, gross, sick, perverted activity, because the flesh can't conquer the flesh. God never intended that we conquer the flesh with the flesh, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body. It's what we talked about before.

You yield to the Spirit, and guess what the Spirit does? The Spirit takes care of the flesh. That's the beauty about this whole thing. It's a beautiful thing, because it's just simply a yielding.

Lord, I'm yielding to you. Lord, I'm investing in the things of the Spirit. Lord, I'm sowing to the Spirit.

And you just keep doing that, and the Spirit automatically deals with the flesh. The flesh has no place. As the Spirit rises and is strengthened in your inner man, the flesh withers and fades in the presence of the Spirit.

But you keep trying to fight the flesh with the flesh, and you'll find that there's no contest. You can't do it. You can have temporary victories, but they won't last.

By the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body. You will live for as many as are led by the Spirit of God. These are the sons of God.

For you did not receive the Spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry out, Abba, Father. You know, the law was a spirit of bondage again to fear. It's a spirit of bondage, and that's what the law does.

It puts a man in this bondage, the bondage of not being able to do what needs to be done, which leads then to fear of judgment, because I know that I'm failing. But we haven't received the Spirit of bondage

again to fear, but we've received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry out, Abba, Father. See, we've received that Spirit from God that has made us sons of God.

And as sons of God, what does that imply? It implies the nature of God imparted to me. And so again, as I just let the nature of God develop in me, the nature of God be cultivated in me, again, it's just that it's the automatic result. It's the same result as turning on a light to drive out the darkness.

You can go into a dark, dark place, and you can shout and scream and wish and hope all you want that it would be light, but all of your efforts will not alter the fact that it's dark. But all you have to do is just simply bring light to bear on the darkness, and the darkness flees. The darkness, you know what they say about darkness? Darkness is the absence of light.

So how do you expel darkness? You just turn on the light. How do I get rid of the darkness in my life? I turn on the light. I stoke the light.

If you think of the light, say, from a flame, the light grows brighter. The more you stoke the flame, the brighter the light gets. And again, it's that same thing.

The more I feed the Spirit, the more I indulge myself in the Spirit, the more I give myself over to the things of the Spirit, then the brighter things become, the lighter things become, and the darkness, the darkness is just gone. I don't have to just grit my teeth and keep doing it. I'm not going to do it again.

See, if you're doing that in any area of your life, understand this, you're never going to succeed that way. You're just setting yourself up for one defeat after another, after another, after another. You've got to come to the place of realizing, I can't beat this this way.

God, have mercy on me. God, help me. And you have to just dive headfirst into the things of the Spirit.

That's how you're going to beat it. The Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. You're a child of God, and that implies the nature of God imparted to you.

Peter tells us that we have been made partakers of the divine nature. We've escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. God has imparted His very nature to us.

He's placed it in us. And then he says, and if children of God, then we are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. I'm a child of God.

I'm an heir of God. All of God's resources, they belong to me because I'm His child. And just like a child is the heir of its parent, and so all that the parent has is brought to bear upon the child's life, so as sons of God, we are heirs of God, and all that He has is made available to us to live the life of victory here on earth, and then, of course, to bless us eternally in heaven.

We're not only heirs of God, but we are joint heirs with Christ. We are joint heirs with Him. Jesus, according to Hebrews chapter one, is the heir of all things.

You know, we're funny as people, aren't we? If you know somebody that's maybe got a few bucks or, you know, somebody that's maybe well-known or something, we are so excited to talk about our friendship with that person, aren't we? Hey, I know so-and-so, and, you know, it's something that makes you feel important. It makes you feel good to say, you know, the owner of this or, you know, that, you know, famous person or whatever. Well, guess what? Jesus Christ is the heir of everything.

He's the heir of everything, and we are joint heirs with Him. Now, we might not have much now, but it's not over yet. Remember what Jesus said, that the meek shall inherit the earth.

There's an eviction notice that's going to be served on this planet someday, and God's going to boot out all of those that have opposed Him, and He's going to give everything that there is to those who have followed Him. Jesus said that to His disciples. He said, just as my Father has appointed me a kingdom, I'm going to appoint you a kingdom, and you're going to sit with me, and you're going to judge the tribes of Israel on thrones.

We are joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him that we also may be glorified with Him. Now, just a last point of clarification here. If indeed we suffer with Him, we're heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Christ.

Well, what if we don't suffer with Him? Does that mean we're not an heir? Well, that's the implication, but here's the point. Everyone who is genuinely a believer does suffer with Christ. You see, Christ suffers today.

He suffers rejection. He suffers that humiliation. He still suffers those blasphemous things, and we suffer that with Him.

You know, guys, you figured this out, I'm sure, already, but let me remind you again. The world is never going to really embrace us, accept us, love us, because we belong to Christ, and the world has rejected Him. Jesus said, if they hated me, they will hate you.

If they love me, they will love you, too. So, when you are joined with Christ, by virtue of your union with Him, you begin to suffer with Him, and that's the lot of the people of God in this present age. The idea that's floating around out there that we could somehow create a Christian society where Christians can have the dominance in the culture and lead the culture and be, you know, the trendsetters and acceptable and rule the culture, this is, it's a dream that isn't based in biblical reality.

That will happen when Christ comes again and sets up His kingdom, but the present situation, until Jesus comes back, is that we are going to suffer with Him. We're going to suffer the rejection and the humiliation, because that's the attitude of the world toward Him, but the promise is being suffered or suffering with Him. In the end, we will be glorified with Him as well.

Some people would actually draw back from following Jesus because of that particular aspect, because of the possibility of suffering, because of that element of rejection. Don't let that keep you back, because just as much as there is an element of suffering and rejection, there's going to be an element of glory in the future, and it's like Moses. You remember what we're told, that Moses weighed the things out, and he considered suffering reproach, the reproach of Christ, to be greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.

Because he looked forward to the recompense of reward. Moses weighted out, here I am, I've got Egypt over here, all the treasures of Egypt, I'm related to the royal family, I can stay here and live like a king for the rest of my life. Or I can go over here with these Hebrews, they're despised, they're slaves, and I can suffer affliction with them.

Moses weighs them both out and he says, I'm going to go with the Hebrews because I know that in the end, God's going to require an answer from my life. He looked ahead to the recompense of reward. Anybody who opts for acceptance today over rejection because of Jesus Christ is making a huge mistake.

Because one day, the tide will be turned in the other direction, the tables will be turned, and Christ will come to reign. And those who have suffered with him will then be glorified with him. And those who have been pitted against him will of course be judged by him.

But that's us. We will be glorified with him. We are joint heirs with him because we do suffer with him by embracing him in this season.

So, we'll pick up in verse 18 next week. Lord, we thank you for these truths, the truth that sets us free. And Lord, I pray that there wouldn't be a single one of us in any sort of bondage to any sin.

But Lord, that we would know that great victory that you accomplished for us through your death and resurrection. That the law of the spirit of life, which is in you, Lord Jesus, would make us continually free from that law of sin and death. Lord, help us again to feed the spirit.

Help us, Lord, to set aside the things of the flesh. Lord, turn on the light and drive out the darkness. We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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