

# Freedom From Sin - Part 5

by Roy Hession

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*Roy Hession's sermon emphasizes the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in granting believers freedom from sin and assurance of their identity as children of God.*

**Duration:** 56:11

**Scripture:** Romans 8:2-3, Romans 8:9, Romans 8:11, Romans 8:14, Romans 8:16, Romans 8:27

**Topics:** "Freedom From Sin"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the law of sin and death, explaining that sin brings death and separation from God. However, Jesus, who became our substitute, took on our sins and became subject to death. Through his resurrection, both the sinner and the Savior are set free. The preacher emphasizes that the weakness of the law lies in our inability to fulfill its demands, but God has provided a solution. He sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to condemn sin in the flesh, so that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in those who walk according to the Spirit. The sermon concludes with a reference to Romans 8, highlighting the freedom from condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus and walk according to the Spirit.

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## Transcript

Will you turn to the epistle to the Romans, chapter 8. It is normally considered that there is a very real high peak at the end of Romans 8. The apostle goes on to other themes after that, but there's no doubt at all that there are, that this is the end of a wonderful first section of this epistle. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

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, translations give it, and as an offering for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. 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, for to be carnally minded is death. Once again, you have this tray in our authorized versions.

We never criticize our authorized versions. We criticize the other ones, but not the authorized. As the old lady said, if the authorized was good enough for Paul, it's good enough for me.

No, we don't criticize the authorized. We just give a little extra light from the other versions, but when they've done all their translating, we'll still go on with the authorized, but we're glad for extra light, just as quite a good thing may be in the Martin War Bible, if you go through the other translations, any real elucidations, put them in the authorized. But I would hate to see you living forever in the New English Bible.

Very helpful little bits and pieces. Well, as I say, there's a tray, as I've mentioned before, in the authorized. They wanted to show the wealth of the English language, and so they used all sorts of words to translate the same Greek word.

And thus it is, you get a little bit of the continuity of your thought obscured. To be carnally minded seems to be quite a different phrase than to mind the flesh. It's the same word.

It means the mind of the flesh. Carnal is really the adjective from flesh, fleshly, to be fleshly minded, or literally in the Greek, it says, for the mind of the flesh, the revised gives you that, for the mind of the flesh is death, but the mind of the spirit is life and peace. Because the mind of the flesh, and the mind of the flesh means the disposition of the flesh.

The disposition of the flesh is enmity against God. For it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

But you're not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the spirit of God dwell in you. For any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead, due to die, because of sin.

But the spirit is life, because of righteousness, that imputed righteousness which we've been thinking of. But if the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also make alive, quicken your mortal bodies, by his spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore brethren, we are debtors not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

For if he live after the flesh, he shall die. But if he through the spirit do mortify, revised version, do make to die the deeds of the body, he shall live. For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption. You're adopted into the family, and because of that fact God sent his spirit, and you find yourself crying, Abba father, my dear father. Abba is the diminutive word in Aramaic for father, what we call daddy.

What an intimacy there is in the newborn soul between himself and his heavenly father. The spirit himself, not itself, revised version, himself. The trouble you see is that the word pneuma in the Greek is neuter.

But the one of whom it's speaking, the word speaks, is a person. And so there is that, that's the reason why you find that itself. But more literally, more correctly, the spirit himself, not an influence, he's a glorious person.

The spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, unless that's a bit too vague, joint heirs with Christ. All that I have in resurrection, in glory, is yours or will be yours, joint heirs with Christ.

If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together with him. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation waited for the revealing of the sons of God.

What important people we are. The physical universe is waiting for its great transformation upon our manifestation in glory when Jesus comes. For the earnest expectation of creation waited for the manifestation, for the revealing of the sons of God.

For the creation was made subject to vanity. You know what that means? Well, God subjected as a result of man's fall, the whole creation to vanity. Thorns and thistles, where before it was sweet, vegetation.

Disease and death, where before there was life. You think this creation is beautiful, it's nothing to what it was before sin came into the world. And nature is not very beautiful, it's red in tooth and claw.

You may think your body is a wonderful thing, not what it was. It wasn't meant to run down and decay, but to sin. And is that state of things never going to be remedied? Of course it is.

It's waiting for the moment when the sons of God are revealed, the coming of the Lord Jesus. They're caught up to meet him and they reign with him in glory. Then something stupendous is going to happen even in the creation, so says Paul.

For the creation was made subject to vanity. Not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it. And he did so in the hope, giving it the hope that the creation itself also shall one day be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.

For we know that the whole creation groaned and prevailed in pain together until now. Oh yes, he was a great scientist Paul, taught by the Spirit. I don't know what that means, how creation is groaning and travailing.

But he says it is. If you only knew what it once was and how in an inanimate way it longs for its lost glory. It groaned, it traveled, it sighed unto the bondage of men because of the deeds done upon its surface.

Well, then he says there's one thing you do know and you can guess by the fact that you groan that creation groans too. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit. Even we ourselves groan within ourselves waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

Well, that's within the range of our experience. You know what it is to groan a bit, don't you? And to travel in pain. And as you get older the old body seems to groan even more.

Paul likens our body to a tent. One day we're going to exchange a tent for a real mansion. Which would you prefer to have been doing on your holiday? Camping? Or living in a substantial house as we've been doing? Oh, they've groaned and traveled quite a bit, the campers.

And they've looked with envy at us here. As a matter of fact, I wrote to Clarendon School a few months ago, wondering how we were going to accommodate the larger crowds. Because we shall have to drop down about a hundred a week when we go back to Clarendon next week, next year.

And I hit upon the idea of a camp in the grounds. You see? And we'll have the party in the house, and then those that didn't want to pay so much would have the camp. Have to be entirely self-supporting, we couldn't accommodate any more even in the lounges, you see.

Well, I knew before I really asked it would be turned down. There's no harm in asking. And of course, I can see one of the difficulties was, if we had weather like this, those campers, you couldn't keep them out of the house.

And we should be absolutely jammed and overcrowded. Well, you know, the difference between living in this earth, even with Jesus, and living with him in glory, is the difference between living in a poor old tent that gets torn and lets the water in, and living in a substantial mansion. Well, and so it is we, he says in two parentheses, we that are in this tabernacle, we that are in this tent, who groan.

And the tent gets worn out. And so, if we can't see how creation is groaning and travailing, well, he says, you do, and you're part of it. So he goes on to say, not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit.

You see, you've got the down payment, so to speak, of what's coming. Is it so delightful and delicious to walk with Jesus now? To have the Spirit in your heart, manifesting his love toward you. What's it going to be like in glory? That which you have now is only the down payment.

What he calls elsewhere, the earnest of the Spirit. What he calls here, the first fruits of the Spirit. I tell you, we're in for a glorious future.

This is nothing. It's so wonderful at Cleveland. What is it going to be like in glory? And between now and then, there's many a pain, many a sorrow, the old body decaying.

And so, he says, and not only does creation travel, but we ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit. Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved in this hope.

We're not saved by hope, we're saved by Jesus Christ. But, the Amplified helps us a little bit there. We are saved in this hope.

But hope that is seen is not hope. For what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patient endurance wait for it and go through it, through it all, all things, with the Lord Jesus. Likewise also the Spirit helpeth our infirmities.

For we know not what we should pray for, as we ought. But the Spirit maketh himself, once again himself, in the revised. But the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered.

And he that searcheth the heart knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit. If you can't pray, there's someone else in you who's groaning over you, and uttering deep prayers on your behalf. And he that searcheth the heart knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit.

Because he maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God. All the provisions that are made for the child of God, on his way to glory. Yes, and lest you should have any doubt at all, the last section of this chapter just banishes them all.

And we know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, who are the called, according to his purpose. Oh, what a privilege to be among the called, according to his purpose. And a purpose that began way back in eternity.

It didn't begin the day when you turned to Christ. You turned to Christ because there was that purpose formed and had some for you. As Beverly Shea says in one of his songs, long before time began, you were part of his plan.

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, then in due season he called. So your calling began much, much longer ago than the time you first heard the gospel.

He called, and whom he called, then he also justified. And whom he justified, then he will glorify, no, then he glorified. In God's purpose you're seated in glory.

It's not the first shadow of doubt, and I to the end shall endure. As sure as the earnest is given. You'll do that.

If you fled to Christ for refuge, you'll be there. But what about my personal holiness? Listen, you will persevere in holiness, because God will persevere in grace. Ah, I know people, they've fallen by the wayside, but the end of the story is not yet.

Grace doesn't give up a man because there's failure. Grace knows how to reach him again. Grace knows how to restore him to fellowship with God.

So we shall be there. Well, in his final section, he just contemplates the whole scheme of God's grace and salvation. What shall we say then to these things? If God before us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all.

How shall he not with him also gratuitously give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies. The revised margin says you could have it either way. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Shall God that justifies.

He can't do the two things. If he's justifying me, he's not condemning me. He's not charging anything against me.

It's a father's thing. God himself justifying me. Well, then who can condemn me? That's his argument.

Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemneth? Shall Christ that died? He ain't rather that it has risen again. Who is he even at the right hand of God? Who also maketh intercession for us? Who's done all that for us? Is he likely to condemn that poor feeble one that's fled to him? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword? We may have all those things, for as it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long.

We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come.

You don't know what these all mean. But they're things you don't know. But they aren't going to separate you from the love of Christ.

Shall spacemen, shall atomic warfare and all the rest separate us? Nor height nor depth nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. My name from the

palms of his hand. Eternity will not erase my name.

My name. And my name expresses my character. You know what you are.

My name from the palms of his hand. Eternity will not erase. Impressed on his heart it remains.

I love this line. In marks of indelible grace. Ah, I can be sure.

My place there is by grace. And it's only grace which is indelible. Any other ground of standing with God is very indelible.

It can be erased by failure. But marks of indelible grace. And it isn't only my eternal salvation that's in indelible grace.

But all the way along. You feel so condemned and you hear him talk about indelible grace. You just quickly repent.

The indelible grace isn't there after you repent. It was there before you repented. It was that which led you to say, oh, how lovely to call it by its name.

And now I'm safe and secure. Well now, I've taken time to read the whole of Romans 8. Make an odd comment here or two here and there. Because I doubt if in our exposition this morning we shall get through it all.

I must confess I've been a bit ashamed of myself this morning. Because after yesterday I said, well, tomorrow is Romans 8. And I thought, well, that's it. That's Romans 8. That'll take care of itself when we come to it in the morning.

And when I came to it in the morning, of course, when I really began to meditate on it, I saw its vastness. And I saw how many very important issues are raised for us in this passage. And I had to repent of, how shall I put it, taking it easy.

Presuming that it would be just quite easy to carry on and finish off. And not giving time during yesterday for this wonderful portion. And so I've had to go back to the Lord and acknowledge my wrong there.

And trust that what comes will be as ever holy of grace. Because, as I say, this demand, in fact, I think we could have a whole five-day series on Romans 8 alone. And I certainly, I confess to you, haven't been able, haven't devoted the time that it really needs to expose its precious riches.

But as you can see, it's a wonderful, glorious, positive peak. It takes us all the way from no condemnation to no separation. It begins with no condemnation and it ends, no separation from the love.

Now, I wonder, did you notice something in which this eighth chapter is unique? Paul, you know, is giving perhaps his most complete and most orderly statement of God's way of salvation for man. But hardly has there been, up to this point, any reference to the Holy Spirit. It's only in Romans 8 that we're given an understanding of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in man's salvation and in his daily work.

Just cast your eye over and see the activity of the Spirit revealed in Romans 8. We are made free from the law of sin and death through the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. We shall have to see how he does that, what is his part in it. But there it's stated, verse 9, the Spirit of God dwells in you.

Indeed, if he doesn't, you're not even a believer unless the third person of the Trinity has come to abide in you. You are none of his. In verse 11, this Holy Spirit reproduces in you what he did in the Lord Jesus.

By the Holy Spirit he was raised again from the dead. And if the same Holy Spirit dwells in you, your own mortal body is going to be raised one day. That's what it says.

Verse 14, it's those who are led and actuated by the Spirit who are the sons of God. Verse 16, it is this dear Holy Spirit, and when you come to know his ministry, you'll love him like you love Jesus. He's called a comforter, to comfort those that mourn, to comfort those that are convicted and who repent by showing them the finished work of Jesus.

And here, lest you should have any doubts of your standing with God, the Spirit himself beareth witness with your spirit that you are now a child of God. Verse 26, we find his helping of our infirmities. The Spirit himself helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for, but the Spirit himself expresses the love of God and knows our need, dwelling in our heart, makes intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered.

And sometimes he communicates some of those groanings to your own heart too, you begin to express groanings that can hardly be uttered. And God knows it comes from the Spirit, that's an acceptable prayer that's going to be answered. Now what is the significance, do you think, that the Holy Spirit is not mentioned until Romans 8? It's not until, I suggest to you, that you have seen and understood that you have been made an end of at the cross of Christ, that the Holy Spirit is able to continue a real ministry in your heart.

Of course it's true, you don't understand what I've just said, apart from the Spirit. But it's only when we've been given to appreciate and accept and yield ourselves to that, that then the Spirit of God begins to operate in any real way. If you think that God's going to help you to be a better person, if you think the Spirit of God's come to improve that nasty old man to whom you've been married for so long, you're mistaken, you're on the wrong line.

You can only know the Spirit working deeply in your heart when you're on the same line that He is on. We've seen that at the cross, man in the flesh, as good as well as as bad, was terminated, we were judged. God expressed what He thought of us when He judged the one who wore our likeness.

He wasn't judging the Lord Jesus as the Son, He was judging the Lord Jesus as us. That's me under the judgment of God, me at my best and my most educated and cultured and religious as well as at my most dissolute. The work of the Holy Spirit is not to improve the old man, the life, my life, but to impart to me another's life.

No more let it be my working, nor my wisdom, love or power, for the man who tries to work and the man who thinks he knows has been ended in God's reckoning at least on the cross. No more let it be then my working, nor my wisdom, love or power, but the life of Jesus only flowing through me hour by hour. Save me from myself my Father, from each subtle form of pride, lead me now with Christ to Calvary, show me I with Him had died.

And then the chorus of that great hymn goes on, we have it in our book, seeking now, seeking now, let thy Spirit meet me now. And so the Holy Spirit only comes into His own as we're willing to let Him take us to Calvary and show us that we with Christ have died. As we've seen some of those implications, it's a

wonderful relief not to have to go on improving that old man.

It's a wonderful relief, in a sense not to be surprised if some of those expressions come out, it's part of that man that's finished with. You can say I can well understand that God has judged the old man, this is what he is. Please turn the cassette over now, do not fast wind it in either direction.

Instead of mourning over it, even seek to improve him, you judge him afresh or rather you accept that judgment meted out to him in the person of your substitute. Go back there, confess it, confess it and disown it. By the way, you know how the Lord Jesus said we are to take up our cross and deny ourselves.

Well that's what Peter did, he denied not himself but Christ. And we are to deny ourselves in the same way that Peter denied Christ. How did he deny Christ? He said I don't know the man, no connection, no connection with him at all.

And you know God gives you permission to take that man, to recognize that man as a man who's been finished with, that man of old. And your severance with him has been disconnected, judicially, in the death of Christ. And you can, we don't want to presume on this, but you have the privilege of saying I know not the man.

The man, that man, I'm not going to worry about him, I'm going to judge him. The only I, I acknowledge as me, is Jesus. That's my I now.

Well it's when we're prepared to see the end of all flesh, come before God. The other one a little bit down, the other one, just a trifle, only a trifle, no up more. It's only as we're prepared to see the end of all flesh that the Spirit comes.

Now he can show us the Lord Jesus. Now he can take of the things of Christ and show what Christ is made to be. So I suggest to you that the fact that the Spirit of God is only mentioned at this point.

After we've seen ourselves having died with Christ, to that old man, to the law that bound us to him, that then you're in a new ground altogether, the ground of utter grace. And it's where grace reigns that the Spirit is free. His conviction is only to give you to take grace more.

And so you have that fact. Now there's another thing, I think, you've got to do a little sorting out I think, you know, with here. You have this phrase walking not after the flesh but after the Spirit.

Now is that word the Spirit a reference to the Holy Spirit or not? Well, you must, if you're a student of the word, come to your own conclusion. The authorised put it with a capital S, and doubtless they thought that phrase refers to the Holy Spirit. The revisers put it with a C, that the word Spirit in those cases refers not to the Holy Spirit but to that which the Holy Spirit has created in us, the new nature.

Perhaps you'll turn back to John 3 and to see that that last view is not without real scriptural ground. The other two. But you have in John 3, verse 6, the famous passage on the new birth.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh. That which I receive by natural generation is the fallen nature of my Father. And that which is born of the Spirit, of the Holy Spirit, is Spirit.

A new creation. A new nature. With as much an affinity for God as the other had an affinity for sin and so.

A new range of appetites, new capacities, new understandings. And I imagine that it is to that there is reference when we're not to walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Not in that old fallen nature, but in the new, but even there empowered and actuated by the Holy Spirit.

For not even the new nature has power in itself apart from the mighty presence within us of the one that produced it. By the way, here you have some of the great contrasts of Paul. We've had them.

He contrasts law with grace. He contrasts words with faith. And here is one that comes up through all his writings.

He contrasts flesh with Spirit. And I must take a little time further on this word, walking after the flesh, after the Spirit. What does it mean? I've had to ask myself that this morning afresh.

Well, I would suggest then, firstly, it means the flesh, as we've seen, you drop off the last date, spell it backwards, F-E-L-F. It is that nature, that disposition, with which we were all born, that has its back to God naturally and its center on itself. And the Spirit, in that sense, is that which the Holy Spirit puts within me when I come to Christ and am born again.

That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. And dear one, you are made the possessor of an utterly new nature. It's not the old one improved.

God has judged that. It's a new one, a divine one imparted. A little girl at Sunday school misquoted a text.

And she was trying to quote the text, the peace of God shall rule our hearts, or garrison our hearts, something like that, you know the verse. And she got it wrong and said, a peace of God shall come into our hearts. Well, that's exactly what happens.

A peace of God. We are partakers, it says in Peter, of the divine nature. And so there is the first meaning, as I understand, between flesh and Spirit.

By the way, before we pass on to that, will you please notice what Paul says then about this flesh, because you get some more information here that you haven't had before. He says, verse 7, the disposition of the flesh is enmity against God. That's his disposition.

It hates God. It doesn't want to bow to God. It is not subject to the law of God.

It's absolute rebellion in its essence. Neither indeed can be. So if you're working on that old man to whom you are married, he's incorrigible.

He is enmity against God. He is not subject to the law of God and with all the prayers and religious rituals, he neither indeed can be. Now you have that disposition in your heart.

You are born with it. There's another one if you've been born again, but you've got that one. So quite apart from what God's done, we are completely wrong in trying to improve our natural selves because of the nature of naturalness.

This is what God says. All the religious heroes in the world will never change the flesh. He's fit for only one thing.

I'm fit for only one thing as a man in the flesh and that is judgment. And I'm so relieved it's been executed and finished with. It's accomplished.

And you and I are grateful to accept the judgment which has been already passed upon us. Indeed every visit to the cross should always go as deep as that. Don't only repent of the expression of the flesh, but say, Lord, that's me.

That's characteristic of me. It's so easy, you know, to try and put something right. I've done it with a little laugh in order to try and make it a little easier for me.

Especially when I have to sometimes put something right about jealousy. I hate to have to confess jealousy. And I like to feel, well of course it doesn't really like me at all, you know.

I think on this occasion I really acted out of character. You didn't. You were never so true to your real self, this flesh, this self apart from grace, as when you manifested it.

And sometimes the spirit has pressed me and maybe he's done it to you. When putting that thing right, when it has to be, you sometimes are called upon to add, so you see brother, what I'm really like. Well, that's what I'm like.

Enmity against God. Not subject to the law of God. Neither indeed can be.

Oh, what a relief to know that he's being judged and God is satisfied with that judgment. And in simple faith when I go to Calvary, not only to confess his fruit, but accept the fact. The judgment that is due is over.

It's a finished work. And I'm free from the condemnation of the thing. Free from the accusation of it.

And I can refuse to know that man as me. The only me I can go out acknowledging is Jesus in me. And of course, he loves to bear witness to that thing.

If against hope you believe in hope, as Abraham did, you say, well it isn't me. Lord, I deserve that man. As completely as Peter deserves his own being.

You're the only I I know. Counting on you is my new life. You'll find he will implement that in your experience.

Fresh impartations of his life and love and his holiness will become manifest in us. So when we visit Calvary we need to go as deep as that. But, but, there's another meaning between the flesh and the spirit.

I think both are implied here. Now this other meaning is seen in Galatians. Verse, chapter 3, verse 2. This only would I learn of you.

Receive ye the spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith. Are ye so foolish, having begun in the spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? And there are other references too, where flesh and spirit is not merely my fallen nature and my new divinely implanted one. How shall I put it? But the two systems of law and grace.

I haven't time now to show you other places where it appears that that is the sense in which it is used. You see, you began in the spirit, the spirit led you to Christ, the spirit showed you grace, but now you've gone

on in the flesh. Now did that mean they'd gone on being dissolute or selfish or proud? They doubtless did, I don't know.

Oh no, going on in the flesh, seeking perfection by the flesh is seeking perfection by the way of works. Now these two are the same, basically. You see, the flesh, although he is so incorrigible, is subject to good intentions.

But it's the same flesh, the flesh that can go to communion on Sunday morning hoping that that's the way to get into a greater peace with God. And by the way, you must get that clear. Your peace is not by any ritual, not even by the Lord's supper, it's by the blood.

As a result of receiving grace, you love to remember him in his death. But it isn't the ground of your peace, it doesn't produce your peace. Your peace is produced by the blood as you repent of those things that disturb you.

Well now, but the flesh of course thinks that of course you really become a good Christian by devout and attendance at this, that or the other. You become better and better that way. That's walking after the flesh.

That is walking after the flesh. And you know the extraordinary thing is, the very flesh that can feel right to be pious Sunday morning at eight at the communion table, can be ratty and selfish and resentful at the breakfast table afterwards. And the extraordinary thing is this, the more you try to improve the flesh, the more it thinks it works the other way.

It's the same flesh. I know sometimes I've been striving to get power and to get a wonderful message, and I feel I'm only going to get it by terrific prayer and terrific time in study. That's the flesh.

And I know it is because when my wife comes and interrupts me, I slap at her. My very attempt to get peace by my work predisposes me to sin. You've disturbed me.

I'm in important business. And I give you my testimony. I give you my testimony.

And it's this, that my wife and I, in about 1935, it reached an end. After years of doing evangelistic work on our own, on my own, God made it possible for our boy to go to boarding school so that my wife could join me in the work. That was the beginning of greater difficulty.

Because, you see, there'd been so much of me trying, trying to get the power. I had the idea at one stage that I had to pray for 60 solid minutes before every meeting at which I was to speak. Well, that wasn't too bad when I was on my own.

I could shut myself in a room and groan and pray and strive and pace the room and raise my hands to heaven and sometimes the voice too. My quiet times weren't always very quiet. But when my wife joined me, we were so delighted, the prospect, I was never alone.

And she couldn't be a party to this sort of thing. But I would hardly expect it. And I got so frustrated that I couldn't go through my ritual.

And I thought, I'm ruining my ministry of it. And then, of course, all the things that came between us. And I never repented of it.

I never saw the source of it. I'd try and preach the gospel and come back humbled and abashed. And, you know, it came to a place where liberty in preaching this message of the gospel was far more the exception than the rule.

I don't know where I would have gone. I thank God for that day when Brethren came from another land in 47 and showed me a more excellent way. The way of repentance.

The way of grace. And I had to say, Lord, if you don't give me the message, it's no good for me trying. And I never would have dreamt that we could have gone across America, lived in small hotel rooms and so on, got our messages quickly, easily, in one another's presence.

And see, God bless you. That's no license for carelessness or lack of time. My, when your heart is filled with the message of grace and your heart too, you want time and you get it, but you get it as you give it to it.

And everything else as well. Oh yes, you see, so walking after the flesh is either, as I see it, indulging those self-centered desires or, equally culpably, trying to improve my own natural self and get what God's got for me merely by my own efforts. And in which repentance figures hardly at all.

Oh, but to walk after the Spirit is to go on as it began. How did I begin? Did you receive the Holy Spirit and the message of grace? Did you receive that? By the works of the Lord? By striving? No, it was when I came to the end of my struggles and came to the cross. Right, now why have you gone back on that system? You are no longer walking after the Spirit in whom you began, who leads you constantly to Calvary.

You've gone back to the flesh. And I think those are those two meanings all bound up together when Paul talks about walking after the flesh, after the Spirit. Now I'm going to take a few more minutes, we were a bit delayed, and we are going to just get as far as this whole theme.

The other glorious part we've already read and I trust the warmth of them came to your heart, but this is a very important part. Now these last few minutes, with all that in mind I trust we are more in a position to understand what Paul is saying. There is therefore now no condemnation which are in Christ Jesus.

Now when you see that word therefore you must always ask, what is it therefore? It's not original, I heard someone else say that. And that word therefore I think points you right back to verse 6 of the previous chapter. We have become dead to the law that would condemn us in the death of Christ.

Not as he died for me, but I've died in him, I've paid the penalty. The law can say nothing more to a man who's already in his person suffered the penalty of the law. I haven't actually, but my substitute has, and God accounts that I have too.

And as faith takes it, I say well, the law can no longer condemn me for my sins. There is a great foundation, dear one, there is no condemnation. And the word no, I understand from the Greek and it's purely second handers, means there is no sort of condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.

I suggest there are two sorts of condemnation. Judicial condemnation, experimental condemnation. Judicial is the fact that I know I'm a sinner for my past sins, and I'm under the judgment of God.

Now that's where we all begin. But even when you come to Christ you can go on suffering experimental condemnation. What we've been talking about, the accusation of sin.

But if you've seen what we've been talking about, if you don't strive to get better but acknowledge the truth and go to Jesus, and see the meaning of that finished work of his, there needn't be even the accusations of Satan. There may be, but you know what to do. Be thou my shield and hiding place, that sheltered in thy side, I may my fears accuse of faith, and tell him thou'st died.

But, you've got to admit the truth. You see the devil is the great blackmailer. The only way to get free from blackmail is to admit the truth.

The devil does tell the truth up to a point. He tells you you're a failure. He doesn't tell you that Jesus died for failure, but he does tell you then.

Well, don't argue with him, he loves you to do that. You get onto the ground of works more than ever. Oh no I'm not really, I am more.

And more than the devil knows. But there's a hiding place, there's a city of refuge, there's Jesus. And we can be free.

And I believe that's freedom as we shall see, real freedom. Not the absence of things never coming, but coming free from sin in that total concept which we've been thinking about. There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit.

Now that is not a condition of your no condemnation. That doesn't mean that there'll be no condemnation provided you walk as a Christian. Oh no, that would wreck the thing altogether.

I would not have peace and assurance. How do I know whether my walk has been up to it? No, that is not the condition. It simply describes those who are in Christ.

They walk not after the flesh but after the spirit. And it's the working of the spirit in your heart which is the evidence to you that there's no condemnation. There are three sorts of assurance as I see it spoken of in the New Testament.

Basically external assurance. I don't anchor my faith in my feelings or my attainment. I cast the anchor not inside the boat but outside the boat on the promises of grace to save that can never be forfeited.

I may not always feel as if I'm saved but if grace tells me God accepts Christ on my behalf as my righteousness I make him God alive. I don't accept it and believe it. He that believeth not maketh God alive.

So you can be assured there's no condemnation because if you're fed to Christ grace tells you so and he cannot forfeit his promise. Secondly there is internal assurance. External, internal.

That is referred to here in verse 16. The spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. There's an internal witness.

You find an internal affinity for God and you know he's your father. And even if there weren't the promises you'd know. But you can't really basically depend on that internal witness because the devil knows sometimes how to cloud it.

Oh I don't feel as I did yesterday. But the promises were said. You may have heard of the mother who got saved in one meeting.

She went back to her small son, woke him up and said look mummy's been saved. And she showed him the scripture. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life shall not come into condemnation but is passed from death unto life.

I believe she had external assurance and she had internal too. But the next day something had happened to the internal one. Because mum came down to look real glum and very sad.

The devil said you don't feel like you felt last night. No I don't. You can't be saved.

And the little boy saw his mum looking glum. He said mummy what was that you told me last night. Oh she said it can't be true after all.

He says mum shall I go and get the bible and see if the text has changed. External assurance. There's your basis.

Doesn't change. Internal. There may be variations but oh hallelujah when you have it.

It's wonderful. The spirit bearing witness is yours. I had it this morning as we sang that hymn didn't you.

Goodness I nearly cried. I had the internal. My name from the palms of his hands.

Eternity will not arrest. Engraved on his heart it remains in indelible grace. Well isn't that wonderful.

Wonderful. Oh many a time. The spirit bearing witness.

That you're a child of God. Heavenly a home. But then there's a third assurance.

External. Internal. Evidential.

Says Paul. Says John. We know that we've passed into the life of the dead.

Because we can see evidences. Maybe they may not be all that they might be. But they're evidences.

Because we love the brethren. The brethren. I was scared of them before.

I always thought they were people who went around with squeaky boots. And harsh expressions. I was scared as we would get at me and ask you what they were saying.

But he said it's a change. I love them now. It's the evidence.

I love them. They're my people. External.

Internal. Evidential. Now this is evidential.

Maybe you may not always walk after. Not after the first and after the spit but you do. In measure.

Oh what a difference. Others can tell. That's a blessed ever confirming evidence.

There's no condemnation. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Has made me free from the law of sin and death.

Very simple. Keep it simple. The law of sin and death.

We've seen what that is. There is a law that sin brings death. There is a law that sin brings accusation.

Reproach. Coldness. Cut offness from God.

But we've seen that our shorted. Became subject to that law himself. He took our sins and therefore became subject to death.

But when the shorty was set free in resurrection. The sinner for whom he was shorty. Was set free too.

Born on the tree. The sentence of me. And now both the sinner.

The savior. The shorty and the sinner are free. It's a question of that old superstructure.

The foundation finished. And therefore the superstructure falls down. And it's the Holy Spirit.

Who manifests that to you. Wesley's thing. Spirit of God.

The faith come down. Reveal the things of God. And make to us that God had known.

And witnessed with the blood. Design the blood to see. Design the blood to apply.

And give us eyes to see. Who did for every sinner die. Has surely died for me.

And the Holy Spirit wants to know. For you to know freedom. If Satan comes you can be free.

You didn't spend a day. Down. Own up.

See that finished work of Christ. See that you've actually in him. Paid the price of that thing.

You've paid the price of that genesis. Finished. Confess it.

Get it in the life. Give your testimony if necessary. And you're as free as the spirit of life.

Under grace. That makes us free from the law. Of sin and death.

We're going to finish at verse four in a little bit. What the law could not do. In that it was weak through the flesh.

Now Paul has been at pains to show us. There was nothing wrong with the law. Its weakness lay in the one to whom the law was to be applied.

It couldn't give me life. Because I couldn't fulfill its demand. And therefore where it offered me life if I could keep it.

It was completely unable to give it me because I couldn't. If there had been a law says Paul elsewhere that could have given life. Verily righteousness would have been by the law.

It was weak through the flesh. That old nature that thought it could but never can. And so God's done something else.

What the law could not do God's done. And he's done it in this way. He sent his own son.

In the likeness of sinful flesh. And as an offering to sin. He's condemned that flesh that was so weak.

He hasn't improved it. He hasn't given it a second chance. He's condemned you as a man joined to that flesh.

Finished you. Put you away. And he's done it in his son.

His son on Calvary was in the likeness of sinful flesh. He was in the likeness of me. He if you like was an effigy.

But a living pulsating effigy. An effigy normally Guy Fawkes is an effigy. It's a dead thing and you burn it.

To express your abhorrence of the traitor years ago. But this effigy is a living holy sensitive son of God. And he was made an effigy of me.

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