

The Laws of the Spirit and the Body

by Zac Poonen

The law of the Spirit is life in Christ Jesus, which sets us free from the law of sin and death, and is essential for living a life like Jesus.

Duration: 58:14

Scripture: Romans 8:1

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Church Unity"

Description

This sermon delves into the deep teachings of Romans chapters 8 and 12, emphasizing the importance of surrendering to God and living in the Holy Spirit. It highlights the unity and acceptance within the body of Christ, urging believers to focus on becoming more like Jesus and to trust in God's transformative power. The ultimate goal is to see Satan crushed under our feet through the unity and strength of the church.

Transcript

Last month, a couple of Sundays, we had looked through Romans chapter 1 to 7 to try and understand what the gospel was, the real gospel, the full gospel. So today I want to take a little look at Romans 8 and Romans 12 and see how this gospel concludes because so many live in Romans 4 or 5. Some move on to Romans 6, some live under the law in Romans 7, and here we read in Romans 8 about life in the Holy Spirit. We need to remember that the distinctive feature of the new covenant is being baptized in the Holy Spirit or being filled with the Holy Spirit and remaining full of the Holy Spirit.

That's not something we must just understand an explanation for. Remember on the day of Pentecost, Romans 8 was not written and the people you read in the Acts of the Apostles were full of the Holy Spirit, they didn't have any New Testament book with them, but they were full of the Holy Spirit. The important thing is not understanding, the important thing is having the reality in our life.

The reality we have in our life is confirmed by what we read in God's Word, but it's very easy to understand something and because we understand it, we think we got it. Most theologians today in the world could probably explain a lot of things better than Peter and Paul, but their life is not even 1% of Peter and Paul's. So remember, life is the important thing.

So as we look at these two, the closing sections of Romans, we see two things, the law of the Holy Spirit and the law of the body of Christ. So I want you to see here, first of all, the law of the Holy Spirit. In Romans 8 too, it says the law of the Spirit is not like the law of Moses.

The law of Moses had 10 commandments. The law of the Spirit is not a written law. The law of the Spirit is life in Christ Jesus.

It's a life. The tree of knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden, that represented the law. The tree of life in the Garden of Eden represented life in the Holy Spirit.

And man chose the tree of knowledge of good and evil and most Christians, even good Christians, who want to have a good testimony of their lives before others, choose the tree of knowledge of good and evil. They say, this is good, this is evil. I'll avoid what's evil and I'll choose what's good.

It's the way of death. Second Corinthians 3 says that the letter kills. You can take the letter of the New Testament and it'll kill you.

You've got to take the letter of the New Testament and understand the Spirit, applying it to your life. Faith does not come by the Word of God. Faith comes by hearing, Romans 10, 17, and hearing by the Word of Christ.

So if you just stick to the letter, you won't have faith and it'll kill you. The law of the Spirit is life in Christ Jesus and you know that you have experienced this life in Christ Jesus when it sets you free from the other law of sin and death. That's how we know we got it, not just understood it.

Now as you hear truth, you know, it's good to understand because it's through the Word of God that we hear God speaking to us and we get faith. So how do I know that I have this life in Christ Jesus? It says here, it sets me free from the law of sin and death. And like I've often said, the law of sin is like the law of gravity.

It operates exactly the same on every human being in every part of the world. It pulls us down, down, down, down, wherever you go, 24 hours a day. This Bible, it's a good book.

The law of gravity pulls it down too. If I leave it, it drops. But here's the law of life in my body, holding it up against the law of gravity.

And as long as I have life in my body and I have strength, I can hold it up against the law of gravity. Gravity can pull as much as it likes. It can't make it fall.

That's an example of how Jesus keeps us from falling. It's not the Bible determining, I'm not going to fall. It's not you determining, I'm not going to fall.

It's faith, or in other words, helpless dependence on Christ, like the branch in the tree. It's the perfect picture of faith. The branch can produce nothing apart from the tree.

So the law of life in my body sets this book free from the law of gravity, which would pull it down. That's what it says in Romans 8 too. The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus sets me free from the law of sin and death.

And it's only if I live like that, that I can really be free from all condemnation. Now, theoretically, it's true. But once our sins are forgiven, and we're sure of it, cleansed in the blood of Christ, there is no condemnation.

Romans 8 one is clear. There is therefore no condemnation in Christ Jesus. But it doesn't stop there.

It says because, for means because, so you should read it together. So there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Why? Because the law of the spirit to set you free from the law of sin and death.

And that's why you find a lot of people who theoretically understand that, yeah, I'm in Christ, there's no condemnation. But you find in their life, they condemn themselves, they find and they allow the devil to accuse them. They get into bondage, they get into condemnation, because they're not living in the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

This is our privilege and our birthright, brothers and sisters. This is where we must live. This is the gospel.

Jesus died and rose again and sent the spirit so that we might live in this. And if you don't appreciate the ministry of the Holy Spirit, if you get caught up in all these theological disputes going on in this camp and that camp, there are extremes in this area, you'll never get there. The law of the spirit is life in Christ Jesus.

And when we want to know whether anything we see in Christendom today on Christian TV or on a platform or anywhere is according to the law of the Holy Spirit, it's very easy to check it. Is it according to the life in Christ Jesus? That thing which I see, the way that preacher behaves, the way that preacher keeps on asking for money, is that according to the life in Christ Jesus? Immediately you'll know. But if you say, well, he's a good man, he's saying a lot of good things, then you deserve to be deceived because you don't respect the word of God or the life in Christ Jesus.

Jesus Christ is our example. He said, follow me. And Paul said, follow me as I follow Christ.

That's the only type of preacher I want to follow. The one who can say, follow me as I follow Christ's example. Show me a preacher like that and I'll follow him.

Paul was one like that. He could say to people, follow me as I follow Christ. There's a super spiritual approach, super spiritual, false spiritual approach that some preachers have who say, don't look at me, look at Christ, because my life is a mess.

My family life is a mess. My children are wayward. Don't look at me, look at Christ.

That's rubbish. You shouldn't be in the pulpit then. Get down from the pulpit and sit in the back seat and repent and turn to God.

But if you dare to stand in the pulpit, you should be a witness for Christ, not just bear witness. When the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you shall not only bear witness with your lips, you shall be a witness by your life and by your words. And I want to say this is very important, brothers and sisters.

If you make the law of the spirit life in Christ Jesus, your guideline, you will know what's right for your life. You'll be protected from false preachers. You'll be protected from false manifestations of what is called the Holy Spirit, which is sometimes mere human psychology, 90% human psychology and 10% evil spirits.

That's what we see in a lot of cases. Of course, there is a small percentage, which is really of the Holy Spirit. It's very small.

The way to life is narrow. You there be that find it. So you'll never go wrong if you recognize this is the law of the spirit.

Remember it all your life, life in Christ Jesus, life in Christ Jesus, the life of Jesus Christ that I see the way He lived on earth, who could say, follow me, who never said, admire me, who always said, follow me. We're not to admire the life of Jesus. We're to follow it.

And it's impossible to follow it without being filled with the Holy Spirit. You can't follow it by study. You can admire it by study.

But if you want to follow, how can you follow Jesus who never got upset when people called him prince of devils, spat on his face, crucified him? How can you follow him and say, father, forgive them? How can you follow him who walked in purity? Impossible without the power of the Holy Spirit. That's why I urge you, brothers and sisters, seek for the power of the Holy Spirit. My life was completely changed when I understood, when Jesus baptized me in the Holy Spirit and showed me that if I could live in this continuous fullness of the Holy Spirit, not just one experience, my life would be different.

Not only my life, my family life, my, the way I brought up my children, my church life and everything changed. And that's how I seek to live today by the grace of God. It's impossible without the grace of God.

And then it goes on to say in verse three, because you see this because, because, because very important to see that there is no condemnation for those who are in crisis because why there's no condition because the law of the spirit has set me free from the law of sin in it because, because of what, because what the law could not do, God did. Why couldn't the law do it? Because of the weakness of my flesh, because this Bible can't stand up by itself. It's so weak.

It just falls. Gravity pulls it down every second. My flesh is like that.

Weakness of the flesh. I can't stand. You know, the Bible is realistic.

It doesn't pretend that we can grit our teeth and make it. You can't. It'll be like Abraham gritting his teeth and saying, I'm going to produce a son for God.

And he produces Ishmael and God says, get rid of him. No, it's, we got to recognize the weakness in our flesh. So that's a very important thing also in understanding the life in the spirit.

You will never understand the need for the power of the Holy spirit until you first recognize the weakness of the flesh weak as it was through the flesh. The law could not accomplish in me what God wanted. As I said earlier in our study of Romans seven, nine of the 10 commandments in Exodus 20 were external.

Most people could keep it. Even today, a lot of people keep it, but the 10th commandment was internal. You shall not desire.

You shall not covet. You shall not lust. And that's the commandment that caught Paul.

You know, we saw that in Romans seven. When I read verse seven, last part, you shall not covet. Oh boy.

It produced verse eight, Romans seven, eight lusting in my heart of every possible kind. Do you experience that brother, sister lusting after women, after money, after honor, after revenge, after desire that your enemies might get hurt, that bad things may happen to people who don't like you, that good things might never happen to people who don't like you. That's a lust.

There are many lusts, the lust to gossip, the lust to backbite, the lust to pass on bad information. We hear about others. Paul had it.

He says, lusting of every kind, the law could not set him free from that. It could set him free from idolatry. It could set him free from murder.

It could set him free from adultery, stealing, keeping the Sabbath and all that. He could do all that honoring father and mother. But when it came to lusting, the 10th commandment, he says, I was floored.

But here's the good news of the gospel. What the law could not do. Why could the Lord not deliver me from this inward lust? Because of the weakness of my flesh.

This law of sin, like a law of gravity pulling me down. God finally did it. God had to do it.

I couldn't do it by determination, gritting my teeth or by some refinement. I fear, my brothers and sisters, that many a time in many churches which preach holiness as well, and that's possible for some of you, that what you hear in the church becomes a self-improvement program. You know, you hear, we must deny ourselves.

Oh, that's a good thing. I'll deny myself. I must be good to others.

I must do good to others. These are all laws and I try to do it. It doesn't change me on the inside.

It just makes me a nice person on the outside. May I get a good testimony like the Pharisees on the outside. The outside of the cup is very clean.

The people appreciate me. Oh, what a Christ like. And if I am a good actor, what a humble man.

It's all deception. It's in the inside God begins to work. God does something on the inside where my inner life gets changed, where I partake of God's nature, which is very different from a self-improvement program.

The self-improvement program, you know, it can keep you looking nice for a while, but once in a moment of terrific temptation, the real nature comes out. Like you've heard me use the illustration of the dog who was trained to meow like a cat. You know, dogs can be trained to do amazing things.

And you train a dog to say, meow, meow, meow, meow. And you, this wonderful dog of yours behaves like a cat every time, meow, meow, meow, until some other dog grits its teeth and barks at it. And boy, it's no longer meowing.

It's barking back. Do you find your nature like that? Do you find that you, when self-control and you grit your teeth and you're okay, and suddenly in a moment of provocation, and you said that person made me sin. He did not.

He just exposed your real nature. Thank him. Thank him that he delivered you from hypocrisy and acting so that you could see God for the genuine life in Christ Jesus, where you partake of his nature, where he, only God can do this.

It says what the law could not do, God did. What man cannot do, change a dog into a cat's nature. God can do it.

And only God can change our nature into something like the life of Christ. Isn't it crazy to think that I can manufacture the life of Christ with a little more determination? You got to be off your head to think that you can manufacture the life of Christ. You can improve yourself.

I mean, these unconverted management executives in corporate companies and all, they have management programs conducted by management gurus who teach them how to speak better to your staff and how to speak better to your clients so that your sales can increase. This is not Christianity. Haven't you seen in commercial street, in the shops, the salesmen are so nice.

You look through 25 pairs of shoes and you say, I don't want any of them. And he says, oh, thank you, sir. Please come again.

He hates the sight of you inside, but he won't let you know it. That's not Christianity. That's acting.

But ask yourself if it's like that in your case, because you want a testimony as a Christian, you can behave. That's not life in Christ Jesus. And that's why it's a strain.

Some people say this Christian life is a strain. Of course, it's a strain. You ask that salesman at the end of the day, when 25 people have come like that, whether he doesn't feel a strain.

He certainly does because it's not his real life. But you ask a cat, is it a strain for you to keep saying meow the whole day? No problem at all. That's his life.

Why do you find the Christian life a strain? Because you haven't come to this life. There is a battle. Jesus had a battle with Satan too, but it wasn't a strain for him to be holy.

In the beginning it is, because we're switching from one type of life to another, to something like learning swimming. It's a bit of a strain in the early days to learn swimming. But you ask that guy who's floating around merrily on the water as if not even making an effort to lie on his back, and you say, how in the world do you do it? Practice.

So if we work at it and say, Lord, teach me this life in the spirit, teach me what it means to walk in the Holy Spirit, to depend upon you all the time. I'm so used to this old life of depending on my own ability. Teach me what it means to live in the Holy Spirit.

You think God won't do it? You think God would send his son to die on the cross, such a terrible death, and send his Holy Spirit to live permanently on the earth for 2000 years? And when you ask him, he won't give you? Of course he'll give you. You've heard my definition of faith, to believe that God is more eager to give you what he has promised than you are eager to receive it. Got it? Anything God has promised, I'm not talking about things God has not promised, like better house, better car, which is what people are talking about today.

I'm talking about something God has promised, sin shall not have dominion over you, that you can be filled with the Holy Spirit, that you can partake of God's nature. These are God's promises in Scripture, that God is more eager, more eager, 10,000 times more eager than you are to give you that than you are to receive it. If you can say that, you've got faith.

But if you think, I've got to cry out, I've got to somehow convince God he's reluctant, he's not so eager, he's a hard man, he's a hard taskmaster, you can go for 40, 50 years and never get it. That's why some

people just receive so quickly, particularly those from non-Christian backgrounds. The big problem is with people with Christian backgrounds who've got all that garbage, false theology in their heads, but people who come from non-Christian backgrounds, come to Christ, they seem to receive the power of the Holy Spirit so much more easily.

I've seen that. That's because they don't have all those hang-ups from false teaching of Christianity. So unfortunately, those of us who've got false teaching Christianity, we've got to get rid of it.

We've got to demolish the old building before we start building a new one. So let's learn this. There's a weakness in the flesh, but God did something and how did he do it? This is very interesting.

Verse 3, he sent his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh. The scripture is very exact. Way back in the beginning when God was about to make man, he said, let us make man in our likeness.

Same word. But that didn't mean man became God. No, no, no.

Man was like God, but he was not God. So when it says God sent his son in the likeness of sinful flesh, it means it was not sinful flesh, but there is no likeness of sinful flesh. That means it looked like that, but there was no sin in him because the angel Gabriel said about Mary, that holy thing shall be born of thee, shall be called the son of God.

There was no sin in Christ. Zero, but it was in the likeness of sinful flesh in this way, in this one area only that he had a will of his own. And that's what we need to understand.

Jesus had a will of his own. And let me say something more, which may trouble some of you, which was contrary to the will of his father. Don't ever believe me until I show you from scripture.

John 6 38, you've heard me call this the one line autobiography of the life of Jesus Christ. Autobiography written by himself. One line autobiography.

What did I do for 33 and a half years on earth? Here is Jesus answer. I came from heaven, lived 33 and a half years on earth. Here it is not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me.

Why didn't he do his own will? Because it was not the will of his father. When he was in heaven for eternal ages, equal with the father, the son of God, he could say, I do my own will because it is the same as the will of my father. But the moment he came to earth in our flesh without any sin, he had a will, which he had to deny.

He never had to deny his will in heaven to deny our will is what's called taking up the cross. We won't have to take up the cross when we go to heaven. And Jesus didn't have to take up the cross when he was in heaven.

He could say, I do my own will. But the moment he came to earth, he said, I have to not do my own will, but the will of my father. This is a point of controversy.

And that's why so few people enter into a godly life. He came in the likeness of sinful flesh without sin, but at the will of his own, which he had to deny not once or twice, 33 and a half years. And you see the struggle in the garden of Gethsemane.

Oh, father, my will is not to drink this cup. Was that the father's will? No, the father's will is drink the cup. And he had to pray for one hour.

And he said, father, my will not to drink the cup, but I deny my will. I will do your will. It wasn't just in Gethsemane.

He lived like that all his life. How did he do it? By the power of the Holy Spirit. And that's why he's made a way for us to go in the same direction.

So that again, so that, so that, so that. Why did he come in sinful flesh? And as an offering for sin, he condemns, God condemns sin in the flesh of Jesus. So that purpose of all this, so that this requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, Romans 8, 4. What is the requirement of the law? Thou shalt not lust.

Thou shalt not covet. Thou shalt not desire. You shall not have a lust for revenge.

You shall not lust after women or for money or anything God has forbidden. You shall not lust. You shall not lust.

That requirement of the law, which the law could not do, God did by sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh. Now it can be fulfilled, praise the Lord. In us.

And I'll tell you something, the only person who can appreciate this is the one who's so desperate for inner holiness, who's so desperate to be holy before God and not just holy before his fellow believers. If you are one person like that, you will see the secret. The rest of you will understand what I'm saying, but you'll remain defeated.

I'll tell you that plainly. But if you have such a desire like Paul had, such a desire that he cries out in Romans 7, 24, oh, wretched man that I am, how will I ever be set free from this? If you have a desire like that, any of you, oh Lord, how will I ever be free from this wretched, sinful thinking, way of thinking, which leads to fights and quarrels with my husband and my wife, and which leads me into all types of sins. I fight with my neighbors, with my people in the work and all types of things because I have this lust I cannot conquer, but Lord, I'm sick and tired of it.

Oh, wretched man that I am. See, most people in the world say a wretched man that he is, a wretched woman that she is. The person who keeps saying that, you might as well forget about victory.

If your language is, oh, wretched man, that person's wretched, my neighbor's wretched, my boss is wretched, and the elders are wretched, and oh boy, you should know my wife, she's the most wretched of all, or my husband, wow, you should see him. You know, you have this type of attitude, I can prophesy without being a prophet that you'll never come to this life. But if you can come to this place one day where you said, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me? You will come to this life.

And if you haven't come to this life, my brother, sister, you know the answer now. You're spending too much time looking at the wretchedness of people around you. And that's exactly what the devil wants.

He wants you to focus your mind in the microscope on the wretchedness of people around you. Throw it away. Start focusing it on yourself.

See the wretchedness of your own inner life, and he will set you free. What God has done for others, he will do for you. What God did for Jesus, how he could deny himself every single moment.

Never sinned once in 33 and a half years. The greatest miracle that Jesus did was not raising Lazarus from the dead. There was no effort in that.

Lazarus come forth. How much effort is there in that? But see how he struggled in Gethsemane, not to do his own will. Was there more struggle in Gethsemane for one hour, or more struggle in raising Lazarus from the dead? You know the answer.

Raising Lazarus from the dead was the easiest thing in the world. And I tell you, if God wants you to raise the dead, he can give you the power. You'll say to somebody, come out of the grave, it'll come out.

That is the mighty power of God. But what Jesus had to struggle with was saying no to his own will. He had to fight it, and he fought it.

And if you want to know how he fought it, let me show you another verse, Hebrews 5, 7. Hebrews 5, 7, it says, in the days of his flesh, or I could paraphrase it, during all his 33 and a half years on earth, this means the same thing. During all his 33 and a half years on earth, what did he do? He offered up prayers and specific requests. How did he pray with loud crying and tears? Boy, was he crying for himself? Oh father, people are calling me the prince of devils, and people are spitting on me.

Rubbish. He was not praying the stupid prayers that other human beings pray. He wasn't crying for silly things like that.

He was praying with tears that he might not sin, to one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard. He was heard means he didn't die. He was prayed, save me from death, father, and he was saved.

He did not die. There are two deaths spoken of in the New Testament, physical death, spiritual death. Which death do you think Jesus was praying that he might be saved from? Definitely not physical death, because he was not heard, and he was not a coward to pray for that.

He was praying to be saved from the only death that would break his fellowship with the father, spiritual death, which is the result of sin, and he was heard. Some people think Jesus didn't have to overcome anything. His battle over sin was so easy, like a bird flying through the sky.

No, it wasn't. Here's one verse, prayed with loud crying and tears. Show you another verse, Revelation 3 21.

These are not so well-known verses by Christians. That's because most Christians don't have a desperate desire to overcome sin in their life. Revelation 3 21.

He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with me on my throne, exactly like I also overcame. Lord, did you have to overcome something? I thought you just smoothly sailed through the earth without a struggle. No, he says, I overcame.

And you, how shall I overcome, Lord? Exactly like I overcame, the Lord says. He who overcomes, exactly like I overcame. You will get the same reward I got.

I sat with my father on his throne, and you will sit with me on my throne. That's how he overcame. And as we go that way, this requirement of the law will be fulfilled in us.

It's not automatic, Romans 8 4. If day by day we walk according to the spirit and not according to the flesh, there is no once for all experience that guarantees that from now on you'll never sin again. Sometimes I wish there were, but there isn't. I might as well tell you honestly.

But the battle gets easier as you walk with the Lord, much easier. You know that song, yield not to temptation for yielding is sin. Each victory will help you, what? Another to win.

So as you progress, it becomes easier. But Jesus did say, you can't take up the cross once for all. You have to take it up every day.

And that means I have to say no to my own will every day. That's why I need the power of the Holy Spirit. And my brothers and sisters, I'm not saying we'll never fall.

I mean, but we would have learned to walk. And there's a lot of difference between a 10 month old child falling and you falling. Can any of you say I'll never again fall in my life? You can fall when you go outside the road, trip on something and fall.

But you have learned to walk, right? There's a lot of difference between you falling and a nine month old child still. That's the difference between a person who's still defeated by sin, falling, falling, falling, falling, and one who has learned to overcome sin, but may still trip up and fall. And one who's careless may trip up more frequently.

But you've learned to walk. So we must be realistic. And if we walk daily in the power of the Holy Spirit, each victory will help us another to win.

Then we understand this freedom from the law of sin and death and experience the life of Jesus more and more. I remember once the Lord telling me, don't say you got victory over sin. Say Jesus keeps me from falling.

Much better way to say it. The focus is on Christ, not on what I accomplished. Jesus keeps us from falling.

Wonderful words. And in NASB, it says Jesus keeps us from stumbling, even from stumbling. It's amazing.

Dear brothers and sisters, this is the secret of godliness. 1 Timothy 3.16 says, 1 Timothy 3.16, great is the mystery of godliness. It's a great secret.

Many people do not know it. That's why they're defeated. I was born again and for 16 years and more of my life, I did not know it.

And even when I understood it in theory, it didn't work till it became a revelation in my heart one day. Like the apostle Paul said, it pleased God to reveal his son inside me. Galatians 1. It pleased God to reveal his son inside me.

I say it pleased God to reveal his son inside me that my savior walked on earth with a will like mine and in the power of the Holy Spirit denied himself every day. I was so gripped by that. That's when I wrote that song, what God has done for Jesus, he will do for you.

He loves you as he loved Jesus. As he cared for Jesus, he will care for you. Changed my life.

Changed my family life. Changed the way I brought up my children. Changed the way my understanding of the church and how to build the church, how to serve God.

Changed my attitude to money. Changed my attitude to sin in every area. Changed my attitude to God himself.

The secret of godliness, he came in the flesh and was righteous in his spirit. That's the meaning there, righteous in his spirit. How can a man with a self-will like Adam, like me, even if he is without sin, how can he never, never do his own will? By the power of the Holy Spirit.

And it says here in verse 15, 1 Timothy 3 15, the church must be the pillar and support of this truth. Every church is supposed to be through 2000 years, the pillar and support of one truth. In those days, buildings did not rest on beams like this.

They rested on pillars. You remember when Samson pushed down the pillars, the whole house collapsed. And the devil has tried through the years to push down this pillar so that the churches collapse.

And all the confusion in churches and believers is because this pillar has been pushed down. The chiller church is supposed to be the pillar and support of this truth that Jesus came in the flesh, was tempted like us in all points and never sinned. And that we can follow him in the power of the Holy Spirit.

That's the secret of godliness. And why should God reveal the secret of godliness to people who are not interested in godliness? Why should he reveal the secret of godliness to somebody who's only interested in having a good testimony before others in the church? You don't need to know this secret to have a good testimony before others in the church. The Pharisees had a good testimony.

A lot of Hindus and Muslims and atheists have a good testimony externally, but the secret of inward godliness that's here. And this is only revealed to those who are desperate for inward godliness, who cry out, oh wretched man that I am. And it goes on to say 1 Timothy 4.1, but 1 Timothy 4.1, after talking about the secret of godliness, says, but the Holy Spirit specifically says that in the latter times, some will fall away from this faith.

And you go on to the next few chapters, they will seek other methods of becoming holy, like fasting, and don't get married, and so many other things like that. Don't eat this type of food, don't eat, don't get married, and trying to become holy like that, that's not the way to be holy. It says very clearly in the last days, the Holy Spirit says people will fall away from this faith of the secret of godliness.

The church will no longer be the pillar and support of this truth. It's happened. But God still raises up men and churches once again to support this truth.

And I have seen the result of this in the last 35 years in many parts of India and other parts of the world. I've seen it in my own family. I've seen it in my children.

I've seen it in godly elders who've been gripped by this truth that what the law could not do because of the weakness of the flesh, God did by sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh and forced sin, condemned sin in the flesh, so that this righteous requirement of the law that I might lust in my heart can be fulfilled in those who walk according to the spirit, not according to the flesh. And Romans 8 5 now, because now our minds are set on the things of the spirit, and it goes on to say in verse 6, Romans 8 6, the mindset on the spirit is life and peace. This is the way to peace, inward rest, peace in our fellowship

with one another, peace of conscience, no matter what happens on the outside.

In my ministry, I tell you, I've been serving the Lord 46 years full time. And I've heard, you can imagine how much the devil would have sought to attack me. But I'll tell you, I sleep peacefully at night.

No matter what turmoil there is around me or in the churches, it doesn't disturb me. I'm committed to God. The government is on his shoulder, not on mine.

So I have peace because the mind of the spirit is peace. You find turmoil, you toss and turn at night, unrest due to something, the mind of the spirit is not there then. Mind of the flesh is unrest, like the troubled sea that throws up dirt, so is the mind of the wicked.

But it's a wonderful thing. This is the Christian life. Okay, let's move on.

Romans 8, we don't have time to look at the whole thing. Romans 8 28, God causes everything to work together for good. To those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.

Some people know only Romans 8 28, they don't know the next verse. The next verse says, because. Why do you stop before the because? Romans 8 28, all things work together for good.

God causes it because he has predestined that I should become like Jesus. So when it says God's going to work things for your good, it's not your material good. It's not that you wanted to marry a girl and she married somebody else.

So God's going to give you a prettier girl, not necessarily. He'll give you a more spiritual one, but she may not be as pretty as the one who turned you down. You didn't get that job.

God worked it for good. Doesn't mean you'll get a job with a bigger salary, maybe a lesser salary so that you don't become covetous. Because his aim is not to make us prosperous.

His aim is to make us like Jesus in our character. So he works everything for our good to make us like Christ. If that's your goal, you can be absolutely sure that he makes everything work for your good.

But if our focus is always on money and comfort and all, we think, ah, God made it all work for my good. I live a comfortable life. Is that what you want? Jesus didn't live a comfortable life.

The foxes had holes and the birds of the air had nests, but the son of man didn't have a place to lay his head. And we think if God gives me a nice house to live in, ah, God worked for my good. Brother, okay, that's the level you live in, live at.

But that's not the level the apostles lived at. And that's not the level I want to live at. The only good I seek in my life is that everything that happens in me, happens to me, will make me a little more like Jesus, a little more like Jesus, a little more like Christ, a little more patient, a little more loving, a little more humble, a little more pure, a little more gracious in my conversation, etc.

That's your goal. And if that is your goal, we can say this. Verse 31.

What shall we say to this wonderful gospel that we have heard? If God is for us, who can be against us? Who can say those words? Only one who's gone through all those previous 30 verses. I was in Commercial Street once in a furniture shop run by some Muslim businessman. And, you know, he sits at

the counter where he collects the bills.

And in front of the counter, he had this verse, If God be for us, who can be against us? To scare anybody who doesn't pay his bill, you go there, you see that verse and you pay your bills properly. That's not the purpose of this verse. Not at all.

It's not to threaten people, pay up your bills. No. If God be for me against sin, against the devil, people may cheat me.

So what? God will be for me that I can forgive them. That's how God's going to be for me. You've got to understand these verses correctly.

So many Christians will also use it the same way that businessman used it. Don't misuse the word of God. And finally, here, verse 37.

In all these things, we overwhelmingly conquer, not just conquer, we overwhelmingly conquer through him who loved us, through him. That is how our personal life becomes in everything, whether it is tribulation, verse 35, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, pedestal. What all God allows Christians to suffer.

We are used to such a comfortable Christianity today. Most Christians live in a five-star hotel type of Christianity today that you talk about tribulation. Oh no, God will make us escape tribulation.

Distress. No, no, no. If you have faith, we'll have no distress, no persecution, no famine, no nakedness, no pedal, no sword.

You don't know how the apostles lived. You don't know how godly missionaries lived through so many years. Get out of this comfortable five-star Christianity and learn more about how the apostles lived.

Every one of them was killed except perhaps John. Paul was beheaded. You think God couldn't save him from that? God allows his greatest new covenant servants to suffer more than others.

If in my private life I have not suffered more than you, I will not be able to minister to you. I'll tell you that. Every ministry comes out of suffering, which you may not know about, secret.

Jesus suffered a lot in the 30 years in Nazareth. He doesn't tell us about it. Most godly men will never tell you about it, but all ministry comes out of that.

Second Corinthians 1.4. We thank God who strengthens us in all our trials and tribulations and sufferings so that with the same strength that we receive in our sufferings, we can strengthen others who go through suffering. We overwhelmingly conquer, not when we get promotions and we are married pretty women and we got a big house and a big car. No.

When we have famine, nakedness, perils, sorrow, distress, persecution, take the worst things on earth, we are conquerors. I want to say something now about Romans 12, the laws of the body of Christ. Romans 8 is about the individual life, but there's no such thing as individual Christianity.

Individual Christianity is a first step to being a godly life, to be joined together with other people who also want to go this way and we become one body. We're like little fingers and little parts of the body. God stitches us together through the Holy Spirit.

I think of 120 waiting on the day of Pentecost, like 120 pieces of iron put into the furnace of the Holy Spirit and they came out as one piece, or like 120 parts of the body, one finger, one toe, one eye, one ear, all lying around like that praying and the Spirit of God came upon them and they joined together like in Ezekiel 37. You read the bones came together and the flesh came together and these disparate things, the wind blew there it says in Ezekiel 37 and made them an army. That is the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

It makes us one body. It's not just an individual thing. And so it says, what shall we do in such a gospel? First of all, present your body, verse 1, to God.

Give him your eyes and ears and hand and everything and renew your mind. Allow the Holy Spirit, verse 2, to renew your mind, body and mind. If you give your body and your mind to Christ, what will happen? We who are many members, verse 5, will be one body in Christ.

Then individual members. And so if I spend my life just producing a bunch of holy individuals, I've not fulfilled God's purpose. Jesus did not say, I will build holy individuals.

He said, I'll build my church and I want to spend my life on earth building the church. If I were living in Noah's time, I'd spend all my energy building the ark. Sure.

If I'm living today, I want to spend my energy building the church. And then he tells us in this church, we have gifts. God gives us gifts to serve one another.

Verse 6, different type of gifts. Somebody has prophecy. Somebody has service.

Somebody has teaching. Somebody has exaltation. Last part of verse 7, verse 8, sorry, middle of verse 8. Somebody has the gift of giving money.

Anybody sought for that gift? No. We seek for healing and prophecy. One of the gifts here is the gift of giving money for God's work.

Wow. There are some people like that. Praise God.

That's why we don't have to beg for money in this church. That's why we don't take an offering in this church. Because some wonderful brothers have the gift of giving money.

They never tell anybody about it. It's one of the gifts. He who leads, there are people who have the ability to lead, etc.

These are gifts. But the main thing is, at the end of the gifts, like in 1 Corinthians 13, verse 9, here it says, let love be without hypocrisy. And if you have a problem with a brother, verse 14, bless those who persecute you.

Bless and don't curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice. If one member suffers, all suffer with it.

If one rejoices, all rejoice. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. One important thing it says here is, don't be haughty.

Verse 16, in the body of Christ, very important principle, be of the same mind toward another. Don't be haughty in mind, but associate with lowly people. Associate with lowly people.

Learn to fellowship with poor people. Learn to fellowship with those who are not as educated and cultured as you are. Are you a Greek? Learn to fellowship with the barbarian.

That's Christianity. I thank God that 80% of our churches is in the poor villages where people don't know English and are very uncultured, but they are part of the body of Christ, as much as you are. But if you don't know how to fellowship with the illiterate and barbarians who are not cultured, I want to say to you in Jesus name, you have missed something tremendously.

It has enriched me. It has made me a spiritually richer man. Associate with the lowly.

I would urge all of you, the law of the body of Christ, associate with the lowly. And recognize that, verse three, don't think of yourself more highly than you ought to think. God has given each person a measure of faith.

Humble yourself. Associate with the lowly. Respect all men.

Then we go to Romans 14. Supposing you meet somebody who is weak in the faith, who doesn't have, who's born again, but doesn't have exactly the same convictions as you have in certain matters. What should you do? Receive him.

Accept him. One person regards one day above another, verse five. Another regards every day alike.

In those days it was Sabbath. Some Jewish Christians said, hey, we got to keep the Sabbath. Paul said, fine, but don't force other people to do it.

That's all. Another Gentile says, hey, Sabbath, what do you mean? Every day is the same for us. Let them bear with one another.

Holiness is not through keeping the Sabbath. Today it's not the Sabbath. It may be Christmas.

Some people don't celebrate Christmas. Fine. Don't force them to celebrate.

You celebrate Christmas. Don't force them not to. One person's esteems one day.

I don't celebrate Christmas at all, but I have perfect respect for those who do. Because to me, that's not the basis of my fellowship with anyone in Christ. I don't, my wife and I don't wear jewelry.

It's our conviction from God's word. But if somebody wears jewelry, I don't bother about it. I say that's their conviction.

That's freedom. The salvation is not by removing jewelry. These are just examples I'm taking how we can be fussy about these little, little things and break fellowship over something silly.

Learn to accept one another. Somebody has a different opinion. Why do you judge your brother? Verse 10.

He will stand before God and answer to God. He will answer to God why he's celebrating Christmas and why he's wearing jewelry. Why do you have to go and judge him? I often think of this verse that helps me a lot.

You know Hebrews 9, 27? It is appointed unto men once to die. And after that, the judgment. So when does God judge people? After death.

When do you judge people? You see why you're different from God? He waits till a person dies. I mean the thief on the cross. Everybody said hopeless, hopeless, hopeless, hopeless.

God said, wait, wait, wait. He may be converted at the last minute. And lo and behold, he's converted at the last minute.

Wasn't it good that God didn't judge him before that? Dear brothers, can you be a little more patient with your wife and your husband and others? Say, after death, the judgment. Why do you judge your brother? There's a law of the body of Christ in Romans 15. It says here in verse 7, beautiful verse, accept one another just as Christ accepted us.

Tell me, when Christ accepted you, were you perfect? I was not. I was thoroughly imperfect. What about you? Did you have a lot of sinful habits which you were still trying to get rid of when Christ accepted you? Did he accept you like that? Did he say, no, no, I can't wait.

I can't receive you till you're improved at least 90%. No, he took me when I had zero. I didn't even get pass marks.

Zero. He said, come. Like the prodigal son.

He didn't have to tidy up before he went home. Can you accept others just like Christ accepted you? That's the trouble with Christians. He's like that.

How can I accept him? You must be holier than Christ because Christ accepted you in a pretty bad state. But he didn't leave us in that bad state. Of course, we want people to improve.

That's different, but I'm willing to accept him. Someone comes to the church and he doesn't know so many things. He does wrong things.

It's fine. Come along. We'll help you.

It's like, you know, somebody, some child comes to the kindergarten and the teacher says, hey, do you know trigonometry and geometry? You don't know trigonometry and geometry? Get out of this class. We don't want anybody like that in the kindergarten. We're not like that.

You don't know ABC? Come. This is the place to learn ABC. Accept one another.

I thank God my kindergarten teacher accepted me when I didn't know ABC. Spiritually, people accepted me 50, nearly 55 years ago when I didn't know the first thing about a Christian life. Christ accepted me.

Accept one another. And then we will be built together so that we're six with one accord, with one voice. We'll glorify God.

This is the body. And what will happen? The final conclusion, Romans 16, 20. The God of peace will crush Satan under your feet.

That's the ultimate end of the gospel. And that's what God is going to do through the church, not through some individual, through the body of Christ being brought together. Satan crushed under our feet, like

Jesus said in Genesis three, God said in Genesis three, to Adam, to Eve, to the serpent, the seed of the woman will crush your head.

That's Christ. We are the body of Christ. It's going to be under our feet that Satan is going to be crushed.

Hallelujah. Will you say praise the Lord with me? Praise the Lord for such a wonderful gospel. Let's bow our heads in prayer.

Heavenly Father, I thank you. We thank you together that you're our father and you made such wonderful provision for us. Help us to enjoy it all and not get to heaven discovering we missed out on most of what you purchased for us on the cross.

Help us, fill us with the spirit. Help us to realize the need of that every day. Pray in Jesus' name.

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