

## Romans Part 24 – Chapter 8

Sunday, September 11, 2022

With input from John MacArthur and David Jeremiah

**Review:** We understand Paul is not saying he is thinking about sin all the time. Paul was living a crucified life. He was not serving the law of sin with his mind. But, his mind and spirit are in a body of flesh and so he verbally declares that there is a war going on within his own body.

**Romans 7:14-25:** *For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am fleshly, sold into bondage to sin. <sup>15</sup> For I do not understand what I am doing; for I am not practicing what I want to do, but I do the very thing I hate. <sup>16</sup> However, if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, that the Law is good. <sup>17</sup> But now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin that dwells in me. <sup>18</sup> For I know that good does not dwell in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. <sup>19</sup> For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. <sup>20</sup> But if I do the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin that dwells in me.*

*<sup>21</sup> I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. <sup>22</sup> For I joyfully agree with the law of God in the inner person, <sup>23</sup> but I see a different law in the parts of my body waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin, the law which is in my body's parts. <sup>24</sup> Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? <sup>25</sup> Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.*

Problems in life, challenges we face, and our own fleshy desires should all lead us to a constant reliance upon our redeemer who knows we are dust and cannot live without Jesus. It brings more clarity to Henry Blackaby's statement "Life is the opportunity to experience God."

**Romans 8 is a pivotal point in the book where the result of what Jesus has done is understood and celebrated. It also important to note that the Holy Spirit is mentioned 20 times. We see that the Holy Spirit is doing work in us, not inside condemning us, but guiding us in our relationship with God the Father.**

**John MacArthur:** "The Holy Spirit is to our spiritual lives what the Creator is to the universe. Without God as Creator, the universe would never have come into existence. And without God as the continuing, sustaining, preserving power, the universe would crash out of existence.

Similarly, without the Spirit of God, the Christian would never have been born again, never have come into existence. And without the Spirit's ever-present, sanctifying influence, the spiritual life of the Christian would drop back into spiritual deadness from which it came."

**Romans 1:1-8:** *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.*

*<sup>3</sup> For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup> in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*

5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. 6 For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. 7 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. 8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Let's dissect:

**Romans 8:1:** *There is therefore now...* Up to the time before Christ paid the penalty of our sins, there was condemnation. With this simple word, Paul is exalting Jesus, the lamb of God, who died for the sins of the world.

**Romans 8:1 in the Kings James reads and adds to the text:**

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

These words come from Romans 8:4 added here. It is not a problem if it is used here as a descriptive and not a qualifier to "no condemnation." Which is why many commentators believe this should not be in the text. AND, because it was not in the original text. This was likely added pre-King James, or during the time of the writers of The King James Version. Therefore, it was also included in The New King James Version because that version was not a reinterpretation of scripture. It's goal was "to retain the purity and stylistic beauty of the original King James Version while incorporating a modern, more up-to-date language."

**Romans 8:1:** *There is therefore now no condemnation* – Who would be condemning us? This is God the Father. But there is now no condemnation because of Christ paying the penalty for our sin and God's faithfulness to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Christ becomes that mediator James talked about. It is Christ who represents us as mediator to God the Father. We are not guilty. Guilt is gone.

**Romans 8:1:** *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.* Those who reject Christ, those who want nothing to do with God, or even believing in His existence are condemned. We see this in **John 3:18**: "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

**Romans 8:2:** *For the law of the **Spirit of life** has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.* This is a purposeful contrast between the law and the Holy Spirit, in this reference, the "Spirit of life."

This is the first of 20 references to the Holy Spirit in chapter 8. If we want to clearly understand this chapter we must understand the role and attributes of the Holy Spirit:

**John MacArthur:** The Holy Spirit should never be referred to as it, but as He. That's the way He is always referred to in Scripture. And if you need some proof that the Holy Spirit is, in fact, a person, you need only to study the Scripture and find out that the Scripture ascribes to Him intellect, emotion, and will. The intellect of the Holy Spirit is indicated in 1 Corinthians chapter 2, where it says, "The Holy Spirit knows the deep things of God." The intellect of the Holy Spirit is such that He can plumb the depths of the knowledge of the eternal God.

The emotion of the Holy Spirit is indicated in Romans 5:5 by His love for the saints, and by the fact that He can be quenched. And He can be grieved.

As to the will of the Holy Spirit, we are told in 1 Corinthians 12:11 that the Holy Spirit makes decisions, that He renders to every person certain spiritual gifts according to His will. This Being with intellect, emotion, and will then manifests all of the essential ingredients of personhood.

Further, Scripture indicates that he is revealed as one who speaks. Act 13:2, Revelation 2:7. He prays, as we will see in Romans 8:26 and 27. He teaches, as John 14:26 tells us. He guides, as John 16:13 indicates. He commands, as in Acts 16:6 and 7. And He communes or fellowships, as in 2 Corinthians 13:14. As I said, He may be grieved, Ephesians 4:30, He may be lied to, Acts 5:3. He may be tested, Acts 5:9. He may be vexed, Isaiah 63:10. He may be resisted, Acts 7:51. He may be blasphemed, Mark 3 and Matthew 12. This is a person in every sense.

Further, we have to understand that the person of the Holy Spirit is also God. There can be no doubt about the deity of the Holy Spirit. He is God and always has been. This is made plain in three ways: His attributes, His works, and His titles. Now the Scripture is clear about that. In the Bible, for example, thinking about the attributes of the Holy Spirit, it tells us in Scripture that he is eternal. He is omniscient. He is omnipotent. He is omnipresent, that is everywhere at the same time. He is holy, and He is glorious. All those are attributes of God. And then if we were to turn to the titles of the Holy Spirit, just in a brief survey, if you read Scripture you will find that he is called the Spirit of God. Therefore, he is given the title God. He is called Lord, in 2 Corinthians 3:18, Hebrews 10. He is called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of the Lord. He is called "His Spirit," that is associating Him with God. He is called, in Judges 3:10, the Spirit of Yahweh; in Isaiah 61:11, the Spirit of the Lord God; in Matthew 10:20, the Spirit of the Father; and in 2 Corinthians 3:3, the Spirit of the Living God.

In relation to the Son, He is also called the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of Jesus, the Spirit of Christ, and in Galatians 4:6...6, the Spirit of His Son. In Philippians 1:19, He is even called the Spirit of Jesus Christ. In John 14:26, He is "another comforter" just like Jesus Christ. Titles of deity, titles showing a relationship of equality with the Father, and a relationship of equality with the Son. Therefore, by attribute and by title, He is clearly God.

Furthermore, if you are to study the works of the Holy Spirit, you find, again, evidences of deity. Genesis 1 makes it clear that He did the creation. "The Spirit of God moved upon the waters" you remember, in creation." It is the Spirit who works by indwelling certain people. In the Old Testament, the Spirit of God came upon them, and they speak mightily on behalf of God. It is the Spirit who convicts men of sin, Genesis chapter 3, John chapter 14. It is the Spirit who enables men and women to serve God, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. It is the Spirit who energizes, by means of inspiration the writers of Scripture, to pen exactly the inerrant Word of God.

During the life of Christ, the Spirit was the agent of Christ's birth, Christ's baptism. The Spirit was there strengthening in His temptation. The Spirit was there anointing Him for ministry. The Spirit was behind His teaching, so that what He taught, He taught as the Spirit gave Him to teach. The Spirit was the power behind His miracles, so that blaspheming His miracles was blaspheming the Spirit. The Spirit was even participating in His death, burial, and resurrection.

When it comes to the world, the ministry of the Spirit continues in dramatically powerful and divine ways as He convicts, as He calls, as He witnesses to Christ, as He regenerates, as in the believer, He glorifies Christ as He indwells, in-fills, imparts the fruit of the Spirit, imparts the gifts of the Spirit, seals, communes, fellowships, teaches, prays, wars with the flesh, comforts, sanctifies, empowers for service. With regard to the church collectively, He forms the body of Christ, appoints offices, and gives guidance to the church as indicated in Acts 15. Wow, that's a fast study of pneumatology, as it's called, to acquaint you with the blessed person of the Holy Spirit, who is the main feature, the main person of this great chapter.

Now let's see why the phrase "*who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit*" fits better here.

**Romans 8:3:** *For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, (How?) who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*

**Romans 8:5-8:** *For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. 6 For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. 7 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. 8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*

### **David Jeremiah:**

Four times in these verses, the apostle Paul uses the word "mind" to contrast two different ways of thinking. "It all starts in your mind," says Paul. "Those who are of the flesh think about fleshly things, and those who are of the Spirit, think about things that please God". In the first few parts of this passage, he actually uses a term which is really interesting. He said, "They set their minds". It's a Greek word that refers to the basic orientation of your whole system. It's your bent in life. It's your thought patterns of the mind. I wrote down another word in the margin of my notes. It's your grid. It's how you open your mind up to things and that's a word we all understand because of computers. It's the grid, it's how you look at things.

How you look at things is everything, isn't it? It's how you interpret them, how you come at them. What is your bent in life? And Paul says, "You need to set your grid on spiritual things so that you look at life through a lens that isn't just what's going on in the world around you". It is what we think about, it's our assumptions, it's our values, it's our desires, it's our goals. It's what we are most deeply interested in. What we constantly talk about. When you set your mind, that's what you're doing.

Now, Paul is not simply saying that people are either fleshly or spiritual because of how they think. No, he is saying instead that people think about fleshly or spiritual things because of who they are. You get to make a choice. You get to set the grid. You get to determine the ramifications of how you're gonna think about life and how you're gonna go through life. This is the message that Jesus tried to give to Nicodemus one day. Remember he said to Nicodemus, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit". The fleshly mindset, according to this passage of Scripture, doesn't mean that people who have that mindset are some sort of criminals or gross or vicious people.

How many of you know the flesh can be very educated? The way you think about life if you don't think about godly things you can still be refined and cultured. I know a lot of really refined, cultured people who wouldn't know Jesus from a swear word. But I want to help you understand what the word "flesh" means. I told you it's not the skin that's hanging on your bones. I mean, that's a certain kind of flesh but that's not what Paul's talking about.

I found a little way to remember what the flesh is and if I share this with you, it will probably help you remember and understand it. So you have the word "flesh," F-L-E-S-H. Here's the little deal: take your pen and scratch out letter "H". You got it? The letter "H," let's say that stands for Him. Now, spell the word backwards and what does it spell? S-E-L-F. Flesh is yourself without Him.

Someone told me one time that your flesh is who you were before you got saved. That's a pretty good statement. You say, "You mean it's possible for me as a Christian to go back and live my life the way I used to live before I got saved and live in the flesh"? Absolutely, and all of us have done it, have we not? So flesh isn't what's hanging on your bones. Flesh is self-centeredness. Flesh is living your life without God. You can be a Christian, listen to me, and a practical atheist, did you know that? You can be a Christian and live your life and you're still a Christian but you've put God over here. Maybe you've put him on a time warp and you're gonna get to him when you get to be 80. But you can be a Christian and not live like a Christian. You can be a Christian and live a self-centered, fleshly life. Flesh minus "H" spelled backwards is Self.