

Good morning and thank you for joining us. You have lots of choices of places in which to fellowship, and we're grateful you're here with us. Would you please turn in your bibles to Romans 8?

Last week we made it through all of 1 verse, but this morning we're gonna do 10x that amount! We'll make it all the way to verse 11.

Remember in Chapter 7, we saw the struggle with sin, the struggle with the flesh, and Paul cried out in verse 19 **Romans 7:19 For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.**

We've all experienced that very same struggle haven't we? As Christians, we don't always do the things in our walk with the Lord we desire to do, in fact sometimes we do the exact opposite don't we?

It isn't that our spirit is not willing, rather it's because our flesh is weak. This is why Jesus told the disciples in the garden **Matthew 26:41 "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."**

And remember chapter 7 was filled with the focus on self-I, I, I. Paul used personal pronouns over 30 times as he detailed his struggles with sin. But look at how chapter 7 ends **24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25 I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!**

So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

So Paul now in chapter 8 describes the life of victory we can experience while still living in the flesh.

And how do we achieve this victory-by submitting our lives to the control of the Holy Spirit. Paul mentions the Spirit nearly 20 times in chapter 8.

The title of this mornings message is FREE TO LIVE!

Let's pray

It's important to remind ourselves of what we've studied so far in our examination of this incredible book, because there's a progression in Romans that has all led up to this moment in chapter 8.

Chapters 1-3 focused upon sin. We saw how righteousness is demanded and not achieved because of sin. These chapters show us how we all fall short of Gods standards.

Chapters 3-5 are all about salvation, which means righteousness declared. And how was righteousness declared-through Jesus because He died for our sins. We're free from the judgment of sin.

Now chapters 6-8 are all about sanctification. Sanctification is freedom from the power of sin. Sanctification describes the process of being made holy by the righteousness of God. These chapters declare the liberty and victory we have, despite sin.

So this brings us to the question: How is the Christian enabled to live a holy life while living in this mortal flesh?

BOXING STORY

So too it is for believers when we try to rely upon ourselves to live a life pleasing to God! Our tendency is to try harder, push further, give more money, attend more services, help more people, yet all of our self-effort only leads us exhausted and frustrated.

But there's a better way! It's living our lives through the power of the One who enables us to do what we are called to do, the HS.

1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus,[fn] who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. Verse 2 describes 2 laws that are in play, the law of sin and death, and the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

When you travel near an airport, you notice planes sitting just off the runway at their gates. **SHOW PICTURE OF TARMAC** The planes aren't going anywhere because the law of gravity is keeping the jets on the ground. The planes aren't just floating around like balloons drifting in the atmosphere, are they? **CLOSE PICTURE**

SHOW JET PIC But as soon as those jet engines are turned on, and the throttle is pushed, the law of aerodynamics supersedes the law of gravity.

Gravity is absolutely still in effect, and gravity still pulls on the planes, but there's a higher law, a more powerful force at work that allows that jet to overcome the law of gravity. **CLOSE JET PIC**

Verse 2 is describing something similar. We're not free from the law of sin and death by positive thinking. We're not free from the law of sin and death by good works. We're not free from the law of sin and death based upon anything we can try and muster ourselves.

We are free by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the HS.

The HS lives in us, He dwells in us as believers, and the HS enables us to change that which we could never change ourselves.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Aren't you so glad!

It's amazing how even our desires change so dramatically when we are in Christ and led by the HS.

Think of what dominated your thoughts prior to you walking with the Lord, and what is it that you think about now. The HS is working in us, the process of sanctification, transforming us into the image of Christ.

Romans 8:1 tells us we are free from the guilt of sin. Romans 8:2 tells us we are free from the power of sin and death.

This is why Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15 50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."^[fn]

55 "O Death, where is your sting?^[fn]

O Hades, where is your victory?"^[fn]

56 The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We're freed because of Christ and empowered to live this freed life by the HS!

Now, verse 3 tells us our position as believers. What the law could not accomplish, God accomplished on our behalf through Jesus.

3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, pause here. The OT law can do many things. It can guide us, teach us, and tell us about God's character. But the law cannot empower us to be sanctified. The law can give us the standard, but it can't give us the power to live a life pleasing to God. Because of my sinful flesh I've violated the law, demonstrating the law's weakness.

Let's read all of verse 3

3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, The law couldn't defeat sin; it could only detect sin. Only Jesus could defeat sin, and He did just that through His work on the cross.

In order to defeat sin, Jesus had to identify with those who are bound by sin, which is all of mankind, by coming in the likeness of sinful flesh. Jesus was not in sinful flesh, but He identified with it entirely.

This is important-Jesus didn't come in sinful flesh, because He was sinless. **1 John 3:5 And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin.**

AND

2 Corinthians 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

The end of verse 3 tells us that Jesus condemned sin in the flesh: and he did this as He took upon Himself all of the punishment for our sins that we deserved.

And notice the glorious truth-since we are in Christ, the condemnation we deserve passes us over. That's something to praise God for right?

4 that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Notice with me in verse 4 Paul doesn't say that we fulfill the righteous requirement of the law. He carefully says that the righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled in us. It isn't fulfilled by us, but in us. How? Jesus! **Matthew 5:17 "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill."**

Jesus is our substitute. Jesus endured God's wrath so we can be treated as righteous. We're free from the punishment we deserve!

Walking in the Spirit means that the course, the direction, the progress of one's life is directed by the Holy Spirit. It's a continued and progressive motion.

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, the things of the Spirit. Paul gives an easy way for us to determine if we walk in the Spirit or walk in the flesh – to simply see where our mind is set. The mind is the battleground where the flesh and the Spirit fight.

We shouldn't think those who set their minds on the things of the flesh are only the diabolical sinners. In fact, they may be followers of Christ who have good intentions.

Peter meant well when he told Jesus to avoid the cross. **Matthew 16:21 From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders**

and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.

22 Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!"

23 But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."

Now I'm going to take a rabbit trail for a moment, but it's relevant to these verses.

If a person is controlled by their bodily appetites, if a person is living predominately after the flesh, then they have what is described here as the mind of the flesh. Their entire focus is on their bodily needs and desires.

This is the state of every person who is not born again in Christ. When you talk to the average person who's apart from Jesus Christ, they are going to be talking to you about things that relate to the body. They are going to be talking to you about every subject matter that relates to their wants and desires. Because that is where the mind of natural mankind is, because the body is in control, their thoughts are about constantly meeting the body's needs and desires.

But when a person is born again by the Spirit of God, and the Holy Spirit is in control of their life, that person is now concerned with spiritual things. They're going to be talking about God, the work of God in their heart, serving the Lord, Jesus will be their focus and not their needs and desires.

This is an important subject because all of our schools and textbooks brainwash kids into thinking evolution is fact, and that

we all come from animals. And it's easy to see why non-believers fall into this fallacy.

The person who lives dominated by their bodily urges, desires and appetites is living like an animal, because animals are body-controlled beings. Animals are constantly absorbed with their bodily desires.

I love all animals, including dogs, but if you put a steak next to a dog's owner and ask the dog to choose, that dog is going to the steak-why? They are controlled by their body.

Non-believers are likewise consumed and controlled by their bodily desires, and are actually living just like animals, and that is why the humanists today are so certain that we are related to the animal kingdom.

SHOW MONKEY PIC They look around and they say, "Will you look at that monkey over there? All he thinks about is his bodily need. His only concern is feeding himself, and of procreation, and so on, and he looks a little bit like me. I guess I am related to that monkey." **CLOSE PIC**

And they feel a close similarity to it, because the monkey is living just like they live.

But a person who is living after the HS realizes that they aren't related to the animal kingdom, rather we're related to God through the HS because of Jesus Christ.

Paul then declares,

6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Today mankind classifies death as the separation of our consciousness from the body. When the EEG reads flat the doctors will say there is no brain movement or brain

activity at all, and often they'll pull the plug and see if anything happens on the monitor.

When they pull the plug and the patient has oxygen deprivation, and so the heart no longer is being pumped artificially. And they watch that monitor, because if there is any life at all then the brain will start searching for oxygen, and there will be a little bit of movement.

But if the monitor stays flat they'll say, there is no brain activity, the consciousness is gone. They'll be declared dead.

But the Bible says that if your consciousness is separated from God, that is, you don't have a relationship with God through Jesus, that you are dead spiritually, because you're separated from God.

So the mind of the flesh is death, because it is a consciousness that is separated from God and absorbed with the things of one's own body and those needs.

7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. The carnal mind is opposed to God, because God has declared that the spirit is superior to the physical. And Jesus declared that mankind ought to be more concerned with the spiritual realm than the material realm. **Matthew 6: 25 "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?"**

28 "So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; 29 and yet I say to

you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

31 “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Now everything in our world today cries out the opposite, saying we ought to be more concerned with the material realm than the spiritual realm. But that’s not what Jesus tells us!

Tragically there’s countless pastors and bible teachers that have turned into fear-mongers. They get people all worked up about current events and what’s going to happen with the economy, the 1 world gov’t, and all these things. Folks-we already know the end-we win because of Jesus! Let’s keep our eyes upon Him...

8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. This can be a frustrating statement to every part of us that desires to drift into legalism. So often, in our flesh, we’re seeking to offer to God the works of our flesh, and desiring that God would accept the works of our flesh.

But God will no more accept the works of our flesh than He would accept Cain's work of the flesh. Remember in Genesis 4 Cain sought to offer to God the works of his flesh and God rejected Cain’s offering.

So now we’re building up to a crescendo or a climax, see cuz Romans is a study in grace. And as you read these verses it can almost cause frustration as the realization settles in-God will not love me any greater because I try do something for Him.

So often believers are divided into 2 categories. Those that are living for God's approval, and those that are living FROM the God approval. There's a huge difference isn't there? Lots of Christians keep trying to impress God. But how our life can change, the freedom we experience when we live in the reality that God already loves us completely.

When Jesus was baptized, something remarkable occurred.

Matthew 3:16 When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He^[fn] saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. 17 And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

When God roared from heaven 'this is my beloved son', how much ministry had Jesus done at that point? NONE!!! Folks its not our works that causes God's approval, it's His grace!!

In chapter 4 of the book of Revelation, God is upon the throne, surrounded by the twenty-four lesser thrones of the elders and the angelic beings who are worshipping God Revelation 4: 8 The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying:

"Holy, holy, holy,^[fn]

Lord God Almighty,

Who was and is and is to come!"

9 Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, 10 the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne

and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying:

11 “You are worthy, O Lord,[fn]

To receive glory and honor and power;

For You created all things,

And by Your will they exist[fn] and were created.”

God created you and me for His own good pleasure. That's the basic purpose for our existence.

Sin has twisted and distorted this truth, and Satan tells us that we should live for our own pleasure. But the Bible tells us that if a person is living for their own pleasure they are really dead while they are still alive.

Why? Because they're not answering the call of their very existence. God created us for His pleasure.

So if a person is living in the flesh and after the flesh, their life is doomed to emptiness and frustration, because they're denying the very purpose of their existence.

9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. This is pointing to the necessity of being born again. Look at **John 3: 1 There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.”**

3 Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

5 Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

We are not in the flesh but in the Spirit when we trust in Jesus as our Savior.

But if anyone doesn't have the Spirit of Christ in them, then they're not Christ's. They aren't a part of God or His kingdom.

We'll wrap up our study in verses 10 and 11 this morning...

10 And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. Even though you and I are still living in this fleshly body that still succumbs to temptation and sins, we can experience victory over our flesh. We don't have to live as a subjects of our flesh anymore. We can live in victory over the flesh, because the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead, makes us alive in Him. Folks we're free because of the power of the HS that indwells us and empowers us!

We often can't rejoice in our circumstances can we, but brothers and sisters we need to rejoice in these truths! We have a new life through the power of the HS who dwells in us!

Christians should be the happiest, most joyous people the world has ever seen. We're free! What happens when a prisoner of war is released? Are they grumpy, do they say 'I wish I was still

back there?' Of course not, a freed prisoner rejoices they are free from their captor!

Is that our attitude as believers this morning? There's a simple way to tell...

When you worship God, because you know worship times here are more than just song signing, when you worship are you rejoicing and praising God for who He is and what He's done?

Or are you singing the words but thinking about how you gotta go grocery shopping, or the party you're going to, or you gotta cut the grass, all those things. That's fleshly thinking isn't it?

Folks we've been set free. We've been given the HS to empower us to walk according to God's will, and when we die we'll spend eternity with Jesus forever? How can we not praise Him?