

Bible Hour

An Exposition of:

Romans 8:2-4

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Romans 8:2-4 (NASB)

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death. **3** For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God *did*: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and *as an offering* for sin. He condemned sin in the flesh, **4** so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Lesson Outline:

1. The **pardon** received from bondage to the Law of sin and death (**Rom 8:2**).
2. The **powerlessness** of the Law to deliver us from sin and death (**Rom 8:3a**).
3. The **powerfulness** of God to deliver us from sin and death (**Rom 8:3b**). →

Lesson Outline (cont'd):

4. The *purpose* of God in delivering us from sin and death ([Rom 8:4a](#)).
5. The *posture* of those who have been delivered from sin and death ([Rom 8:4b](#)).

Romans 8:1

“Therefore there is now no **condemnation** for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

condemnation = katakrima [κατάκριμα]
= damnable penalty

Jacobus (Jacob) Arminius (1560-1609)



Arminianism

God offers saving grace to everyone, and people can **freely choose** to accept salvation or reject it.

5 Points of Arminianism

(Five Articles of Remonstrance, 1610)

1. Conditional Election
2. Universal Atonement
3. Total Inability
4. Resistible Grace
5. Conditional Perseverance

5 Points of Calvinism (Synod of Dort, 1618–1619)

1. Total Depravity
2. Unconditional Election
3. Limited Atonement
4. Irresistible Grace
5. Perseverance of the Saints

Westminster Confession of Faith 9.3

Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so, as a **natural man**, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or prepare himself thereunto.

Westminster Confession of Faith 10.2

This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from any thing at all foreseen in man, who is **altogether passive** therein, until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it.

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981)

Notice that he [Paul] **does not** say that ‘the law’ was weak. Read superficially it sounds like that; but he is not saying that the Law itself was weak; but that because the Law, of necessity, had to work through us, in us, and by means of us, it was bound to fail. The Law does not work automatically; the Law for the purpose of carrying out its righteousness was dependent upon us and upon our efforts. So, **the weakness was not in the Law**, the weakness was in us—‘in that it was weak through the flesh.’ In other words, the failure of the Law was due to the fact that **it had to work through our flesh.**

R.C. Sproul (1939-2017)

The law is **impotent**. Not only does the law **not** save us, but it **cannot**. It **does not** have the power. Paul is not being critical of the law. This weakness is **not the law's fault**. The law **cannot** redeem us because it is **incapable** of redeeming those in the flesh. People in the flesh are **incapable** of obeying the law, so when they look to the law as a **means of salvation**, they exercise futility and reach for an **impossible dream**.

John Owen (1616-1683)

Trying to be holy from a *self-strength*, carried on by ways of *self-invention*, unto the end of a *self-righteousness*, is the soul and substance of all *false religion* in the world.

Theological Doctrines in Romans 8:3b:

1. **Incarnation** (“God sending His own Son into this sinful world in the likeness of sinful flesh . . .”)
2. **Penal Substitutionary Atonement** (“as an offering for sin . . .”)
3. **Justification** (“condemned sin in the flesh . . .”)
[see also **Psalm 103:12** and **Colossians 2:13-14**]

Richard Baxter (1615-1691)

Nothing can be rightly known, *if God be not known*; nor is any study well-managed, nor to any great purpose, *if God is not studied*. We know little of the creature, till we know it as it stands related *to the Creator*.

R.C. Sproul (1939-2017)

No Christian can avoid theology. Every Christian is a theologian. Perhaps not a theologian in the technical or professional sense, but a theologian, nevertheless. The issue for Christians is not whether we are going to be theologians, but whether we are going to be good theologians or bad ones.

J.C. Ryle (1816-1900)

Doctrine is useless if it is not accompanied by a **holy life**. It is worse than useless; it does positive harm.

Something of 'the image of Christ' must be **seen** and **observed** by others in our private life, and habits, and character, and doings.

Docetism

An early Christian heresy that claimed that Jesus only seemed to have a real human body and did not truly suffer or die physically. Jesus' body was a phantom or spiritual substance, not truly flesh.

Ignatius of Antioch



Trajan's Column (113 A.D.), Rome, Italy



R.C. Sproul (1939-2017)

What our mortality can never achieve, **God can achieve**. What our behavior and performance are incapable of attaining, **God can attain** for us. *That is the gospel*. We **cannot**; He **can**. It's that simple.

Psalm 51:5 (NASB)

Behold, I was brought forth
in **iniquity**, and in **sin** did my
mother **conceive** me.

“*extra nos*” = outside us

“When God declares a person to be just in His sight, it is **not because of what He finds in that person** under His analysis. Rather, it is on the basis of something that is **added to** the person [the righteousness of Christ].” — **R.C. Sproul**,
The Very Heart of the Reformation

William Bridge (1600-1670)

If we be saved by free grace, if free grace and love be the foundation of our salvation, why should we not then **stand clear from all our own works**, as to the meritorious ends of them; for **grace and works are opposed** [with regard to salvation], and therefore **faith as a work** can neither **justify** nor **save**.

‘Walking’ (Living)

Metaphorically, “walking” denotes a **studied observance** of the **new** rule of life, and it is this sense which dominates the usage of all the forms in the Epistles, where there is a **frequent contrasting** of the walk [**life**] which was characteristic of believers in their **unregenerate** days, and that to which they are [now] called **through faith in Christ**.

Dr. Sinclair B. Ferguson *Union with Christ*

I am *in Christ*, and therefore:

- In His *death* to sin, I also *died to its dominion*.
- In His *burial*, my old life was *placed in the grave*.
- In His *resurrection*, I have come to *share in a new life*.
- In His *ascension*, the door of access into *heaven has been opened to me*.
- In His *heavenly session*, my life with God *has been secured*.
- In His *coming again* in glory, He intends for *me to accompany Him*.

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Discussion Questions

1. If believers in Christ have been freed from the law of sin and death ([Romans 8:2](#)), why do Christians sometimes live *as though they are not free*?
2. Paul says in [Romans 8:3b](#) that God did what the law could not do by sending His Son “in the likeness of sinful flesh.” How does this shape our understanding of Christ’s mission—not just as teacher or example, but as the One who deals decisively with sin?
3. [Romans 8:3b](#) says God, “condemned sin in the flesh.” What does it mean for sin—not the sinner—to be condemned, and how might that impact the way we think about guilt, shame, and grace?
4. Paul concludes, in [Romans 8:4b](#), that the righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled in those who “walk according to the Spirit.” In practical terms, what distinguishes a Spirit-led way of life from one motivated simply by obedience to the Law?