

Copyright © Two Journeys Ministry

Andrew M. Davis

Class Notes

www.twojourneys.org

Please use in accordance with the copyright policy found at twojourneys.org

The Greatest Chapter in the Bible

Romans 8:12-30

There is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. –

Romans 8:1

Nothing in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. - Romans 8:39

I. Romans 6: United with Christ; Dead to Sin; Alive to God

Romans 6:4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may walk in newness of life.

II. Romans 7: The Bitter Struggle with Sin

Romans 7:21-25 So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. ²² For in my inner being I delight in God's law; ²³ but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. ²⁴ What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

III. Romans 8: The Power of the Indwelling Spirit... and the Final Triumph

A. Romans 8:1-4 The Spirit Fulfills the Law's Righteous Demands

Romans 8:1-4 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. ³ For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin. And so

he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

1. No condemnation! How powerful is that in terms of our battle with sin!!
 - a. Sin will not be our conqueror; actually, we will conquer all our sins!
 - b. No condemnation now... or on Judgment Day
2. Not a universal promise... just for those who are “in Christ Jesus”
3. Proof: an entirely new way of life
4. What is the “law of the Spirit of life”?

The “Spirit-filled life” is the answer given in Romans 8... people who walk by the power of the Spirit fulfill the Law’s righteous demands

B. Two Ways to Live: Sinfully-Minded vs. Spiritually Minded

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.

1. Two basic spiritual conditions: “in the flesh” vs. “in the Spirit”
2. Manifestations of those two conditions: the state of the MIND; the mind set on the things of the flesh vs. the mind set on the things of the Spirit
3. Basic principle: how you think is how you’ll live
4. Verse 6: Two ultimate destinations: death vs. life... hell vs. heaven
5. Two experiences here on earth... a death-like experience vs. an experience of life and peace
6. Central to these opposing mindsets is the relationship with GOD... the mind of the flesh is HOSTILE to God... in rebellion against God, fighting against God
7. It is impossible for the mind of the flesh to submit to God’s law... it CANNOT do so
8. Therefore those in the flesh cannot please God

C. Domain and Dominion: “In the Spirit” = A Subject of Christ’s Kingdom

Romans 8:9-11 You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹ If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

1. What domain are you in? Are you “in Adam” or “in Christ”? Are you “in the flesh” or “in the Spirit”
2. NIV has “controlled by the sinful nature” vs. “controlled by the Spirit”... but that is inaccurate; the Greek just says “in the flesh” or “in the Spirit”
3. In the flesh = unconverted; still under the Law; still in Adam; under the tyrannical reign of Satan and sin and death; still dead in transgressions and sins even while you live (Eph. 2:1-3)
4. “In the Spirit” = converted; not under Law but under grace; now in Christ’s Kingdom, under his kingly reign; made alive in Christ, with a new heart and a new nature
5. Paul makes clear assertion: “You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit”
 - a. You have been decisively rescued from Satan’s dark kingdom and brought into the kingdom of the beloved Son (Colossians 1:13)
 - b. Essential to that rescue is the transformation of the heart and mind by the Holy Spirit

Ezekiel 36:25-27 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. ²⁶ I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

- c. This last promise is the same issue Paul is asserting here... when you are saved, you are given a new heart and a new spirit (lower-case “spirit”... meaning your heart attitude, way of thinking; how you think, what you love/hate, how you choose); God promises to put his Spirit IN YOU and MOVE YOU to obey his laws!
- d. This is the very thing that Romans 8:4 says:

Romans 8:4 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.

6. The key here: the gift of the INDWELLING HOLY SPIRIT

- a. Paul says fundamentally, if you are a Christian, you are INDWELT with the Holy Spirit; if you are not indwelt, you are not a Christian

Romans 8:9 You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

- b. The gift of the Holy Spirit comes on anyone who genuinely repents and believes in Christ at the moment of conversion
- c. This is the promise of the New Covenant... God's Law written on our minds and hearts and God's Spirit within us moving us to fulfill it
- d. This is the superior baptism John the Baptist promised

Mark 1:8 I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.

- e. This promise Jesus made... the indwelling Trinity!!

i) The Spirit

John 14:16-17 I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever-- ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

ii) The Son

John 14:20 On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.

iii) The Father

John 14:23 Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

7. What of the BODY??

Romans 8:10-11 But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹ If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

- a. physical body under a death sentence; cells constantly dying, only imperfectly replaced... death is at work in us constantly
- b. if we are not of the final generation, it is appointed to us to die... this is the death penalty for Adam's sin
- c. So the body of sin, the mortal body, will continue to be a problem... you'll have to keep fighting its wicked tendencies

- d. BUT God's grace extends to the body; he has plans to raise it up and transform it like Christ's resurrection body

Philippians 3:21 Christ, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body

8. Obligation... DEBT... to Jesus

Romans 8:12 So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.

"Jesus paid it all... all to him I owe; sin had left a crimson stain, he washed it white as snow."

We owe it to Christ to live a holy life. We don't owe the sinful body ANYTHING! As Peter said, you already DID all that!

1 Peter 4:3 For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do-- living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry.

D. Mortification of the Misdeeds of the Body by the Spirit

Romans 8:13-14 For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

1. This is essential to our "Slaying Temptation" class... this is one of the two vital passages in the Bible on sanctification as a JOINT EFFORT between the Christian and God, the Holy Spirit
2. The other is this:

Philippians 2:12-13 continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

3. The topic: MORTIFICATION OF THE DEEDS OF THE BODY (implied... "misdeeds"... bad works, works of the "flesh")
 - a. To mortify = to kill, to put to death those deeds
 - b. Individual moments of temptation can and must be killed; categorical sins cannot finally be killed while we continue to live in this body
 - c. We have a duty, an obligation (vs. 12) to do this... we OWE it to Jesus to kill sin!
4. The Stakes are Infinitely High

- a. If we live continually “according to the flesh” (i.e. controlled, dominated, habitually sinning) we will “die” (eternally... be condemned to hell)
- b. BUT (by contrast) if by the Spirit we mortify, kill, the deeds of the body we will LIVE... eternally, in heaven
- c. These are the two ways to live... one leads to hell, the other leads to heaven

5. The Indwelling Spirit Inevitably Leads God’s Children to this Warfare

- a. NOTE: The logical connection between verse 13 and verse 14

Romans 8:13-14 For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ FOR all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

- b. I read it this way... “Only those led by the Spirit of God into killing the deeds of the body really are sons of God.”
- c. This is not an option!! Mortification of the deeds of the flesh is essential to the Christian life... if you’re not mortifying sin by the Spirit, you are not a Christian

6. Led by the Spirit into battle

- a. It is related to this:

Isaiah 35:8 And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness. The unclean will not journey on it; it will be for those who walk in that Way; wicked fools will not go about on it.

Isaiah 30:21-22 Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it." ²² Then you will defile your idols overlaid with silver and your images covered with gold; you will throw them away like a menstrual cloth and say to them, "Away with you!"

- b. The Spirit leads into battle by identifying sin patterns and the appropriate scriptures relevant to them
- c. The Spirit leads into battle by giving Christians zeal for holiness and an earnestness to make things right

2 Corinthians 7:10-11 Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. ¹¹ See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done.

Next time: insights from John Owen’s classic, *On the Mortification of Sin*

E. The Rest of Romans 8: Confidence of Final Glory

God wants Christians to have full confidence of final success in our battle with sin... full confidence of final glory

Soldiers fight better when they *know* they are going to win

1. Present sufferings are temporary, the coming glory is eternal:

Romans 8:15-18 For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." ¹⁶ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. ¹⁷ Now if we are children, then we are heirs-- heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. ¹⁸ I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

NOTE: Some of our present sufferings are directly tied to our temptations

Hebrews 2:18 Because [Christ] himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

2. The glory of the resurrection body

Romans 8:19-25 The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. ²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. ²³ Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

Paul expands his vision to encompass all of physical creation. The entire universe is held in a form of bondage until God's plan for the redemption of his elect is complete. He speaks about the "sons of God" being "revealed." This is glorification... the glorious resurrection of the body.

He says the creation is enslaved to a principle of futility... corruption. This is tied to the curse on Adam:

Genesis 3:17-18 "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. ¹⁸ It will produce thorns and thistles for you

Paul says all of creation is held in a form of slavery until the end of the age. But it is held "in hope"... because God's plan includes the redemption of the universe. Both the universe and the children of God will be brought into full, radiant glory.

In the meanwhile, creation is groaning under the bondage of decay. He calls it “childbirth”... pains leading to something glorious that will drive away all sorrow at the process.

So also we Christians are groaning. Our mortal bodies are what’s causing us all the trouble; but someday we will receive glorious resurrection bodies... the redemption of the body is the consummation of our adoption as sons of God.

In this hope we were saved... and being filled with hope of final glory helps us slay temptations now

3. The Spirit intercedes for us

Romans 8:26-27 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. ²⁷ And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.

This is powerful, especially in our battle with sin! God searches our hearts and knows the Spirit’s intentions for us, and the Spirit prays for our final glory, because that is the will of God (as he is about to make plain)

4. God’s sovereignty in grace guarantees final glory

Romans 8:28-30 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰ And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

This is EVERYTHING!! God is constantly at work in us and around us to finalize his purpose for us.

And what is that purpose? Our total conformity to Christ! Our perfection in glory.

And we are predestined for that! We are guaranteed to be finally glorious in conformity to Christ!

All our efforts in mortifying sin should be done in light of that final glory!

These verses are infinitely deep and will require much careful study at the right time!

But there is absolute certainty about our final glorification... everyone that God foreknows, he predestines to final conformity to Christ. Everyone that God predestines, he calls by the gospel to faith in Christ. Everyone he calls to faith is thereby justified. And everyone who is justified will finally be glorified.

He uses the prophetic past tense to give a sense of absolute certainty to all this... as if it's all a "done deal"

5. Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ

- a. Our sins can't separate us from God... because Christ is pleading the merits of his justifying blood

Romans 8:31-34 What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all-- how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³ Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died-- more than that, who was raised to life-- is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

Marks of assurance:

- God is for us... the omnipotent ruler of the universe is exerting his power on our behalf! Who cares who's against us?!!
- God has given Christ for us... and having given us his very best already will not withhold anything else needed for our salvation.
- God has justified us... and no one should dare to accuse us of sin!
- Christ has died for us... and is at the right hand of God interceding for us... like the Holy Spirit (asserted earlier)

- b. Nothing in all creation can separate us from God

Romans 8:35-39 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶ As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." ³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord

This is the level of total confidence we can and should have as we battle sin every day!