**EX:** Ultimately, we all owe something to someone. It’s a question of whether we are in debt to the flesh or to the Spirit. But the difference in terms…it’s like the difference between money owed to your parents and money owed to a loan shark!

And in truth, we all owe something! For our sins create a debt. Even Jesus’ example prayer speaks to that debt: *Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.* ***10****Your kingdom come, your will be done,\ on earth as it is in heaven.* ***11****Give us this day our daily bread,* ***12****and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.* ***13****And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.* **(MT 6.9-13)**

**AP:** We owe so much to Christ—for His forgiveness, for His life and for His death. And that should change our lives! For we cannot claim to understand the debt we owe Christ and still live in debt to our flesh.

**RM 6.15-23** ~ *What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!****16****Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?****17****But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed,****18****and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.****19****I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.* ***20****For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.****21****But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.****22****But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.****23****For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

**CONCLUSION – Two Destinies! (vs. 6, 11, 13)**

**RM 8.6,11,13** ~ *For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.* ***11****If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesusfrom the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.* ***13****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.*

The world likes to believe that you can live however you like—go in whichever **direction** you like, have whatever spirit you’d like **dwelling** within you, and be sold to whichever **debt** you prefer. And in a way, they’re right! You can! For just as there are **two directions**, **two dwellers**, and **two debts**, there are also **two destinies**—life and death, Heaven and Hell!

**INVITATION – One Decision!**

This leaves us, then, with **one decision!**

**JO 24.14-15** ~ *“Now therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord.****15****And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”*

#493 [Exp-NTPE) **My Way or the Highway** RM 8.1-13

03/06/2023 PC \_\_ Pchd

**QUESTION:** What is the difference between living by the flesh and by the spirit?

**TRN TO RM 8**

**INTRODUCTION**

**ILL—Kara and Seth** (can’t ever get them to agree; one says up, the other says down; trying to get a restaurant chosen is nearly impossible!) I feel like they have to do it at least someone intentionally! As it is, everything is **my way, or the highway**!

**BACKGROUND**

**ILL—ESAT Scores** (trying to collect the pulse of the employee base; want to keep them happy; it’s tough finding new employees—and expensive!) As a result, it’s really an employee’s market right now. That’s why many offices are still remote whether the employer likes it or not. Now that everyone got used to it, it’s hard to go back, and employees are so expensive now that the last thing you want to do is have to find a new employee and likely end up having to raise everyone’s pay!

As we find ourselves in **RM**, we see that Paul is turning to speak to the Roman church about what it means to be a Christian. And as he does so. he’s less concerned about telling them what they want to hear than he is telling them what they need to hear. He begins in **RM 1** telling them how bad the Gentiles are (and the Jews all nodded), then he turns in **RM 2** to start telling them how bad the Jews are (and the Gentiles shouted **“AMEN!”**) But it's in **RM 3** that he gets to the point—we’re all of us messed up, every one of us. We all need Christ! Jew or Greek, male or female, slave or free! It’s for that reason, that the rest of the book turns to teach just what that means, with one of the culminations coming in **RM 8!**

**RM 8.1-13** ~ *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.****2****For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.****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, 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.* ***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.****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 Jesusfrom the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.* ***12****So then, brothers,we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.****13****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.*

Here, Paul isn’t about to take notes from the people. He’s not concerned with their **“CSAT”** scores. Rather, he’s determined to show that they have a choice to make! And ultimately, as diverse as our options may appear, in reality, there are only two! And it’s to us to chose—one or the other. His way, or the highway!

**BD1: Two Directions! (vs. 4)**

**ILL—Going on my walk** (taking Daisy; going to the left or going to the right; doesn’t really care, both ways end up passing by her friend) In truth, that’s how most people seem to think about Christianity. You can believe in Christ or not, you can live according to the Bible or not, your choice! Ultimately, people like to believe that there’s no difference in the **two directions**.

**RM 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.*

**EX:** Paul, here, points out how wrong that is! Ultimately, we have two ways of living: **by the flesh** or **by the Spirit**. Ultimately, we have to choose—**do we live the way we want, or do we live the way God wants?**

**MT 25.31-40** ~ *“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne.****32****Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.****33****And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left.****34****Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.****35****For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,****36****I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’****37****Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink?****38****And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you?****39****And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’****40****And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers,you did it to me.’*

**AP:** This is one of the hardest parts of maturation—learning that you can’t just do what you want all the time. We learn it when it comes to going to work, not eating nothing but candy, and controlling our temper. But we often fail when it comes to the big questions of whether we’ll ultimately follow the **flesh** or the **spirit**.

**MT 7.13-14** ~*“Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. 14For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.*

**BD2: Two Dwellers! (vs. 2, 9, 11)**

**ILL—The Difference In Drivers** (I’m a decent driver, Erin is better; you can tell the difference between if you’re following me or her; she hasn’t had so much as a fender-bender since I met her) Honestly, given a choice, you always want to have her driving the car.

**RM 8.2,9,11** ~ *For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.****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.* ***11****If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesusfrom the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.*

**EX:** All of us have something piloting ourselves. It’s either our internal earthly desires, or it’s those of the Spirit of God as expressed in His Word. If we don’t have Him living within us, then naturally, what’s going to happen? We’re going to head down that **bad direction**. Even with the Spirit, though, we often find ourselves struggling. Paul described it well in the previous chapter:

**RM 7.13-25** ~ *Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure.****14****For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin.****15****For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.****16****Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good.****17****So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.****18****For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.****19****For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.****20****Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.* ***21****So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand.****22****For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being,****23****but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.****24****Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?****25****Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.*

**AP:** As Christians, we need to understand that our living is not ourselves. We have a choice to make between who’s driving the car—who’s making the decisions. And it’s a choice we have to make every day.

**GL 2.18-20** ~ *For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor.****19****For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God.****20****I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

**BD3: Two Debts! (vs. 12, 13)**

**ILL—Taking out a loan** (I’ve taken out a lot of loans over the years; various amounts, various interest rates; when we got married, we reviewed them and figured out the balance and started paying down the worst deals first) When it comes to our spiritual debts, though, Paul makes it clear that we all owe something to someone!

**RM 8.12-13** ~ *So then, brothers,we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.****13****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.*