

Amen. Amen. Amen. I love that song. Old one.

I must tell Jesus all of my troubles. I cannot bear my burdens alone. If you're here this morning and you're trying to bear your burdens alone, no, there's someone who will help you carry them. Jesus.

Welcome, everyone. Be careful. Be careful.

Now, listen, I just want to tell you, Brad, there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. You set the sermon up so well. We're in the book of Romans for those of you who have been following around with us for a while now. And we're going to stay here for as long as it takes. We're looking at about nine weeks total in the chapter eight of Romans.

Right smack dab in the book of Romans, the heart of what many people call the Heart of Romans. And last week. Well, the last couple of weeks. Last week was a weird week. How many of you guys actually showed up here in this building?

Good job. Good job. How many of you guys made me happy, blessed my heart by showing up down at Spring Mill? Look at that. Listen, there's a bunch of you that didn't go up either place.

I don't know where you went to, but tell Jason Filler at First Baptist I said hi. We're glad you went someplace. No, we're glad you're here. This morning. We are in a series on Romans, and we've been sort of tracking along last week.

We've been focusing on. On chapter 8, verse 1. Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Just say that with me. Turn the screen off.

We're gonna. We're gonna see if we can remember this. Therefore, there is now. No.

Okay, I'm gonna give you. I'm gonna give you a B on that because you started strong, you tapered off a little bit, but you came in really, really good on Christ Jesus. That's the point, really, isn't it? You did good. You did good.

Because through Christ Jesus, the scripture goes on to say, the law of the Spirit, who gives life, has set you free from the law of sin and death. Jesus. Death on the cross has set us free from the condemnation that comes from our sin. So we've been looking at that instead on the cross. Jesus condemned sin, not us.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. That's great. So we are now free to live a new way of life through the spirit of life. So today we're going to be looking on down in chapter eight, and we're going to look at how Paul

reminds us that we focus on matters.

If we focus on Jesus, we become like Jesus. If we focus on the flesh, we become. So today we're going to keep going. If you've got your Bibles, open up to chapter eight of Romans. We'll be following scripture on the screen as well.

But we encourage you, just open your Bibles. There may be things that draw your eye that the Holy Spirit wants you to focus on rather than me. And that is perfectly fine this morning. Let's pray and we'll get started. Lord, again, as we open your word, it never returns void.

And so I pray that as we open it up, as we read your word, that that the Holy Spirit uses the language of scripture, the heart of scripture, the heart of Romans, to speak to our lives and encourage us, to challenge us and to focus us where we need to focus. In Jesus name, Amen. Now, I do not think I am given to extreme bouts of jealousy. I know some of you have these beautiful, beautiful homes, but I rarely envy someone else a bigger house or a nicer house. Bigger houses just require a lot of energy to keep up.

Can I get an amen from someone who has a big house? Amen. Nicer houses are just magnets for break ins and theft. Yeah, I mean, this is what I tell myself late at night when I'm looking around my house going, well, if I had a bigger and nicer house, my life would just be miserable. So I'm just happy for what I've got so I don't get jealous about that.

However, just around the corner from me on the corner of n and 14th, there's a house there. The yard, the grass is beautiful. It's just beautiful. It's just beautiful. And if I suffer jealousy, that is it, I'm jealous of their lawns.

Here's this beautiful picture. Now this is not the neighbor's yard. If it were, I would be camped out there right now. That's not their yard. But I can just picture myself there in that yard.

Isn't that beautiful? Yeah. Okay. All around me are neighbors who have just beautiful lush and green lawns. My yard, on the other hand, is just a mixture of every weed that ever blew down 15th Street.

I mean, it is all over the place and I would show you a picture of that. But there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. So I'm not going to give the opportunity to prove the scriptures wrong. Many of you hire professionals and that is great. And I've thought about that too.

But I'm tight. And I remember a story I heard years ago about a pastor in Minneapolis, his name is Leith Anderson, and he called Kim Lawn or True Green or one of those people to come to look at his lawn, only to

have them say, sorry, we can't help you. It's too bad. So one member of his church volunteered to just rip the whole thing out and just start fresh. But then an old farmer don't we love old farmers.

Old farmers will save you a lot of money. And the old farmer said this. Don't worry so much about getting rid of the weeds. Just grow the grass and the weeds will be taken care of. I love that one, because it saves me a lot of money.

But two, because I think it's backed up by Scripture. So let me just show you what I mean. So today we're in Romans, chapter 8, and we're going to start in verse 4, 5. So Paul writes this. He says, those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires.

But those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. Now this next verse is our memory verse for the day. So let's just. Let's just read that together. The mind governed by the flesh is death.

But the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. Let's say it again so we can lock it in. The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. Now, Paul sort of unpacks what this means. The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God.

It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God. You, however, he writes to this church in Rome. You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh. You are in the realm of the spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you.

Now there's a couple of terms he uses here. He uses this idea of realm. You may remember Jesus talks about a realm and he talks about it as a kingdom. It says the kingdom of God is here. So.

So this idea of realms is something that we've seen Jesus talk about as well. Paul talks about the realm of the flesh, and that's the kingdom that is governed by human nature. Sinful inclination, selfish desires. It's hostile towards God. It's unwilling and unable to submit to his laws.

The things of the flesh do not please God. And, and Romans chapter six says that, that the things of the flesh, sin leads only to death. The wages of sin, point, Paul reminds the Romans, is death. Now, in the Realm of the flesh, there are a lot of weeds. But he contrasts that with the realm of the Spirit.

And he says this. The realm of the Spirit, the kingdom of God, you may see that terminology as well, is under the dominion and the control of

the Holy Spirit. And life here is good. It's like that picture that I just showed you of the fountain. It's good loving, it's positive, it's beneficial to all.

It is not like the backseat of the minivan on the way to church this morning. It's. It's a lovely place, a place to where you want to be and you want to stay. Those who live here are seeking God. They're submitting to his law.

They're experiencing life and peace. And noxious weeds have no place in the realm of the Spirit. Now, if you're here this morning, you're like, okay, what is this spirit? We're about talking. Talking about that is a great question.

I will tell you that Christians who have been Christians for years still have. Have a time, have a hard time processing what we mean by the Spirit. We call it the Holy Spirit because it is the quality of the Spirit. It's holy. It is God's Spirit.

And it's made up. It's part of what we call the Trinity. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This is God. So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God.

And Jesus told his followers, his disciples, and said, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you. And you shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth. And this is right before he ascends into heaven and goes away. And he promises disciples, I'm going, but the Holy Spirit is coming. Seven weeks later, during a Jewish feast called Pentecost, the disciples are gathered in this upper room, and the Holy Spirit descends.

You may have seen pictures of this, you may heard all sorts of stories about this, but. But the Holy Spirit descends. Peter begins to preach boldly. And he says in Acts, chapter 2, verse 38, says, Repent and be baptized. Everyone within sound of my voice, repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins.

And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. There it is again. So what is this gift of the Holy Spirit look like? Well, as we saw with Peter, it looks like boldness and courage to share our faith, to share the truth of the gospel. It looks like spiritual transformation.

It's the power to Say no to sin, and bring our thoughts and actions into alignment with Jesus. It's the power to cultivate what we call the fruit of the Spirit. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control. It's the power to face crises and challenges in life, strength and peace. It provides guidance and wisdom.

I say it, but it's God. So he, the Holy Spirit provides guidance and wisdom. And as we will look at in other places, the Holy Spirit actually gives gifts to those people who are part of the body of Christ, and those are be used to encourage and build up the church. So this is the. That's what the Holy Spirit does.

That's who the Holy Spirit is now. Living in the realm of. Of the Spirit means that I'm surrendering my personal will and my desires to God and trusting God's wisdom rather than trying to force peace in life through other means. In other words, it's taking care of the grass and letting Jesus, the Holy Spirit, sort out the weeds.

There's a lot of thoughts, but I want to take you to a parable Jesus tells in Matthew, chapter 13. Here's how Matthew tells it. Jesus told them another parable. And he says, the kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came in and sowed weeds among the wheat.

Dandelions. I'm sure they were dandelions. If you've ever tried to dig a dandelion out, those roots go down to hell. That's where they go. That's where they go.

The enemy came in and sowed dandelions among the wheat and went away. And when the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. And the servants came to him and said, sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where did all these weeds come from? He says, an enemy did this.

The servants ask him, do you want us to go and pull up those dandelions? It's like, I mean, do your best, but I'm telling you no. He says, no, because while you're pulling up the weeds, you may uproot the wheat. So let both grow together until the harvest. And at that time, I will tell the harvesters, first collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned.

Then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn. Now, I know when we hear stories like this and when we hear accounts like this, especially when this story and this parable is sort of connected to the topic we're talking about today, the thought may be, okay hold on. Does this mean I just get to live however I want until the end, and then Jesus is all going to sort it out?

No, it doesn't mean that. Now, next week, we're going to look at chapter verse 12, and Paul will talk about our obligations to live differently in Romans 8:2. You remember from a couple weeks ago, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set us free from the law of sin and death. And so next week, we're going to look about this obligation we have not to the flesh, not to live the old way, but because we're no longer compelled by the law of sin, and we're no

longer under the weight and the judgment of the consequences of that sin, death, we now have the ability to choose the path of life instead of the path of sin. Now, I'm looking at y' all out there, and I know you're looking at me, and you're going to really?

We can do this. And I'm like, we absolutely can. Will we? Every time. Rod, do we always choose the path of life?

Rod is saying no. Brenda is saying no. He does not always choose the path of life. I don't always choose the path of life. I don't always do it.

Maybe. I suspect you don't always choose the path of life also. But we. We may not always choose a way of life, but it means we always can choose the path of life. We have the Holy Spirit.

We can choose the path of life. Some of you may be here this morning. You're like, oh, man, I'm pretty far down the path. I'm pretty far into that realm of the flesh. And I don't really know how to get out of the realm of the flesh and into the realm of the spirit.

My friend Claudia Mitchell says this. That's such good advice. She just says, do the next right thing. Do the next right thing. Now, this is not just good advice.

This is how we slowly but surely move from the realm of the flesh to the realm of the spirit. This is feeding the grass. This is heeding what God is telling you to do and nourishing the good things God is doing by obedience and turning your back on the things that lead to death. That first step, that first right thing that the Holy Spirit prompts you to do may not feel like a big thing at all, but those little small steps feed and fertilize the good work that God has started and wants to complete in your life.

It's counterintuitive. So just yesterday, I'm out trying to make the yard look as good as I possibly can. Weeding and trimming and, oh, and there's a giant. This big broadleaf thing. And again, you see it and you go, and it's in the flower bed.

And if you drive by my house, you'll see that my flower beds are far from pristine. But I delude myself into thinking that some of them are good weeds that pollinate. I read that somewhere. I thought, okay, we're going to go with that. They're pollinators.

We're going to keep them. But some of them, like the devil's weed, dandelions, you just have to. You just have to get in there. And so every time I dig in and think, I'm going to pull that dandelion up because it's happened once in my life. You know how one thing happens in your life and forever after you think, oh, that's how it's going to be the next time I do it.

It never is. So I get down there and I get a little place where I can grab hold of that dandelion root. Are you with me on this? Have you done this? And you pull it and you wiggle it so gently, you think, I'm going to get it.

I'm just going to get it. I'm going to get it. I'm going to get it. And you pull it out and go, oh, oh, there's another 40 miles of dandelion root down there. I'm not going to get it out.

What happens is we feel good about the moment. If we don't know dandelions, we think, oh, look. Look at that. Now. It looks good.

It looks good. But there's 40 miles of devilweed down there underneath the dirt. So this is the challenge. It can be really tempting. And it feels good to start working on ourselves and trying to get ahead of God and say, you know what?

I'm gonna. I'm gonna stop this. I'm gonna stop this. I'm not gonna do that anymore. I'm not gonna do that anymore.

Look at me. I am. Look, I'm not cussing. I'm not smoking. I'm not chewing.

I'm not dating those girls who do all that stuff anymore. My life is pretty good. I'm pretty good. I think I can go to church now. I think I can show up at church and I won't be embarrassed.

This is not the way to enter the realm of the spirit. It looks good, but this is not the way to do it. The parable of the wheat reminds us, no no, no, no, no. You may be doing more damage than you're doing good. You may look good for a season, but the roots are still there.

That parable that Jesus tells us reminds us that obsessing over the weeds is not the way to make the wheat grow. Instead, Paul tells us we got to change our focus.

So several weeks ago we talked about the Therefore of Romans 8, chapter 1. And in chapter 7 we listened as Paul made the case for how many miserable his life was. Romans 7:15. He says, I do not understand what I do, for what I want to do, I do not do. But what I hate, I do.

And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree. The law is good as it is. It's no longer I myself who do it, but it's sin living in me. For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.

For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do. This I keep on doing. Now, if I do what I do not want to do, well,

it's no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. If you followed that, you're pretty messed up. You're pretty messed up.

Here's. Here's what this tells me is that Paul is describing a life that has a lot of weeds and wheat all mixed up together. He hates those weeds. He hates them, but he can't seem to get control of them. But then notice what happens in chapter eight.

There's a shift. There's a focus change now in. In chapter seven. If, if you want to stop listening to me right now and start and do what I'm going to tell you, you can. I'm not encouraging you to, but I get it.

The number of me, I, my. In chapter seven, 43 times you hear references to me, my I. How many in chapter eight you want? If you got your Bibles open, you want someone to look through there? Zippo.

Zero. You see, Paul changes his focus from himself and how wretched he is with all those weeds, the flesh, to the good work that the Holy Spirit is doing in him. And that makes all the difference.

Romans 8, 6. This is our memory verse. The mind governed. And what does that word govern mean? It means the mind that's just focused and controlled.

Did you all grow up with siblings? Anyone have a little sibling when they were a kid? Were they the worst? I mean, so I say, there's always. There's always two types of kids.

There's the. There's the pesterer. How many of you guys were pesterers when you. Yes, yes. You were a pesterer.

John. No.

Pesterers. And there's the pestee. How many of you guys were pestees? Oh, my word. It's like you could not wait for that child to get a job and move out of the house.

Your life just got better. There's always a pester and a pestee. But here's the secret that no child learns until they're too old for it to even matter anymore. The pestee has power over the pesterer. You don't think that.

You think. Mom, make him stop. The pestee gives his power to the pastor every time he responds the way the pastor wants him to respond. Can I get a nod, like I get that? I know exactly what you're talking about here.

I know what you're talking about here. This is how our minds are

governed by the flesh. We give focus, we give energy. We respond to this and we go. Every time something.

The devil does something, we freak out. And the devil's like, that worked. That's great. So when Paul says, listen, the mind governed by the flesh, he's saying, listen what you think on matters, what you give attention to matters. And if you're giving all your attention and all your thoughts, all your energy to the flesh, well, yes, of course you're going to end up dead.

Physically, spiritually, emotionally, it's going to destroy you. But if your mind, if you can turn and shift your focus and quit being controlled and governed by that and be controlled and governed by the spirit. Oh, my word. Well, let's just read it. The mind governed by the flesh is death.

But the mind governed by the spirit is what? Life and peace, what we focus on, shapes who we become. And that shift in focus is part of what Paul described as a renewal of our mind. And though we're still a long way from Romans 12, this is a good place to remind us of how powerful a renewed mind is. Romans 12:2 says this.

A renewed mind is able to test and approve what God's will is. His good, pleasing, and perfect will. How do we experience a renewed mind? Well, we feed on the good stuff. We feed on the good stuff.

We worry less about poisoning the devil weed over there, and we focus on feeding the Holy Spirit grass. Immerse yourself in God's word. Commit to live. What you learn there, the next right thing. Small, faithful steps.

One At a time. And I've seen this time and time again. And some of you are in this room right now where you show up here and your life is all over the place. You identify with Paul. I mean, there's weeds and wheat all trying to get to the sun, trying to get nourishment.

But you start listening and you start obeying the still, small voice of the Spirit. You start going, okay, I'm going to do that. And bit by bit and little by little, all of a sudden, you're living more and more completely in the realm of the Spirit, where there is life and there is peace.

Are there still weeds popping up every once in a while? Yeah, yeah, there are. There are. But remember, here's our two memory verses so far. Man, Brad, I'm so happy that you've tripped over that, because this is going to help me remember.

Romans, chapter 8, verse 1. Therefore there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Did we put that word up? Take it down. Take it down.

Let's try it. Let's try it without it. Therefore, there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. And then the second one is all about focus. Romans, chapter 8, verse 6.

The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. That's your challenge this week. Remember that Paul ends this part of Romans this way. He says, if anyone does not have the spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ.

But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, even though you got some weeds. Listen. The Spirit gives life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will. Will also give life to your mortal little weeds bodies because of His Spirit who lives in you.

There is therefore no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. So this demands a few questions. However, ask yourself this. Am I living in the realm of the Spirit of life? Or am I living in the realm of sin and death?

Am I experiencing the power of the Holy Spirit to lead me and transform my thinking? Have I repented of my sin? Have I been baptized? Have I recognized the gift of the Holy Spirit in my life? Do I acknowledge his presence and authority?

And if you can honestly answer yes to all of that, then it's just a matter of praying and asking God to empower you by the Holy Spirit to live courageously, boldly, like Paul said, courageously, persistently towards the realm of the Spirit for Jesus and his kingdom. But if those questions can't be answered with a yes, then I go right back to Peter there in that upper room. And he put the call out to anyone within sound of his voice. He said, listen, repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

And if that is you this morning, I don't want you leaving this morning without making a decision to follow Jesus. Okay? Okay. Okay. Jesus this morning.

As we begin this time of communion, it is always so tempting in these moments to have our minds governed by the thoughts of all the weeds, all the parts of our life that are not yet in submission to you. And there's helpfulness in that. To assess our lives, we ask you to search our hearts and see if there's anything in us that isn't in alignment with you. Bring those to our attention so that we're aware of them. So that we can begin the daily steps of obedience to saying yes to your spirit, no to the things that are not.

But in this moment, we want to thank you that through the cross you made it possible for those of us who still struggle with weeds to come to your table and to remind ourselves that for those of us who are in Christ Jesus, there's no condemnation. You invite us to the table. You say, take and eat. Spend time with me and be encouraged and well fed, fortified with the obedience that you're going to live out this week. Jesus, we thank you for the cross.

We thank you for this time. Speak to us and meet us here in Jesus name. Amen.

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