

ROMANS 8:1-17

Paul has just presented the hopeless condition of one condemned under the law of God because of sin. Who would deliver him from this body of death in sin? He thanks God through Jesus Christ our Lord, and this chapter explains in beautiful detail what God has done for us in Christ.

Walking According to the Spirit (8:1-11)

- A) There is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus (v. 1)
 - 1) Who walk [as a pattern of life] not according to flesh, but according to the Spirit (v. 2)
 - 2) Law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes us free from the law of sin and death (v. 2)
 - 3) What the law could not do, God did by sending His own Son (v. 3)
 - a) Law was “weak through the flesh” in that it made no provision for the weakness of fleshly, sinful men – demanded perfect law-keeping and no provision for forgiveness
 - b) Jesus sent in the “likeness of sinful flesh” (cf. Phil. 2:7)– condemned sin in the flesh and provided freedom from the condemnation of sin through grace/forgiveness
 - 4) Righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled in us who walk according to the Spirit (v. 4)
 - a) Sinner forgiven by the blood of Christ, justified by a just God, declared righteous by a God of grace (2 Cor. 5:21)
- B) If we live according to the flesh, then will set mind on things of the flesh; if live according to Spirit, the things of the Spirit (v. 5; 1 Cor. 2:7-16)
 - 1) “Mind” (*phroneo*) – to think, set one’s mind and intent on; what we desire and pursue
 - 2) Carnal mindedness is death, but spiritual mindedness is life and peace (v. 6; Gal. 5:16-25)
 - a) Carnal mind is enmity against God; not subject to law of God; cannot please God (vv. 7-8)
 - b) Spiritual mind if Spirit of God indwells; if not have spirit of Christ, then not His (v. 9)
 - 3) Body is dead because of sin, but spirit is life because of righteousness (v. 10)
 - a) If Spirit of God indwells, God, who raised Christ, will give life to our mortal bodies (v. 11)
 - i) Present members [mortal body] alive as instruments of righteousness (cf. 6:12-13)
 - ii) Future hope of eternal life for the created body subjected to bondage of corruption

Paul now begins to explain why there is no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus. It takes the form of a “now-not yet.” Now our spirit is freed from sin, but not yet do we see the redemption of our mortal body. One will lead to the other as all things work together for good in God’s plan.

He first explains that we have been freed from the law of sin and death by the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. God made possible in Christ our forgiveness and justification. Now we must live and set our minds on the things of the Spirit (spiritual mindedness is being influenced by the Spirit of God according to the truth revealed in the Spirit’s revelation of the mind of God – see 1 Cor. 2:7-16; Col. 3:1-4). Carnal mindedness will lead to death – it is against God, not subject to the law of God, and cannot please God. Spiritual mindedness of obedience to God is only possible if we have the Spirit of God/Christ dwelling in us (note that the Holy Spirit was first mentioned in 5:5 as being given and pouring out the love of God in our hearts).

The body continues to be in a corruptible, perishable, dying state because of sin, even as our spirit is alive because of righteousness. If we continue to have the Spirit of God dwelling in us, God will give life to our mortal bodies. The point here may very well be a combination of what Paul has said and what he is about to say. He has noted that the present members (our body) are to be used as instruments of righteousness (6:12-13), but he is about to speak of something even greater – the glory that shall be revealed in us, the redemption of our body, the hope that is yet to be seen, as the “creature” which was subjected to futility is delivered from the bondage of corruption in the revealing of the sons of God (8:18-25).

II) Sons and Heirs of God (8:12-17)

- A) We are debtors not to live according to the flesh, for that is death (v. 12)
 - 1) To live by the spirit will be life, putting to death the deeds of the body (v. 13)
 - 2) *Flesh* = carnal mindedness; *spirit* = Spirit of God; spiritual mindedness
- B) As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God (v. 14)
 - 1) Led by Spirit of God = heed inspired message revealed by the Spirit and follow instructions
 - 2) Not receive the spirit of bondage [sin] again to fear, but the spirit of adoption, by whom we cry out “Abba, Father” – spiritual kinship, family (v. 15; Gal. 4:5-6)
 - a) “Abba” = Aramaic word for “my/our father” (cf. Mk. 14:36; Gal. 4:6; child to father)
- C) Holy Spirit bears witness [testimony] with our spirit that we are children of God (v. 16)
 - 1) Spirit instructs and we heed – appeal to objective truth, not subjective feelings
 - 2) We are also heirs – heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ (of eternal blessings; v. 17; Gal. 3:29; 4:7; 1 Pet. 1:4)
 - a) If we suffer with Christ we will be glorified together with Him (Rom. 2:7; Phil. 2:9; 3:21; Col. 3:3-4)

Paul emphasizes again that we are debtors to live by the Spirit (led by Spirit), and not the flesh (led by sin). Being led by the Spirit of God is the key to spiritual mindedness and being sons of God. The Spirit leads man by the revelation of the mind of God (1 Cor. 2:7-16). We have been adopted in the family of God, to child-father relationship with God (“Abba, Father”), to which the Holy Spirit bears witness (divine revelation) with our spirit (giving heed to truth) (see Gal. 4:4-7).

Based on this spiritual relationship, we are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ of a glorification to come. Those who suffer in this life with Christ have a wondrous hope of being glorified together with Christ (Col. 3:4; Phil. 3:21). This suffering would include persecution, but really encompasses the entirety of life in this corruptible, perishing body of death (2 Cor. 4:16).