

LESSON TEN

THE FREEDOM OF THE SPIRIT IN OUR SPIRIT

Scripture Reading:

CHAPTER 8

D. Freedom in the Spirit by the Indwelling Christ

8:1-13

1. The Law of the Spirit of Life

vv. 1-6

- 8:1 There is now then no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.
- 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death.
- 8:3 For that which the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh,
- 8:4 That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.
- 8:5 For those who are according to the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but those who are according to the spirit, the things of the Spirit.
- 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.

Outline:

- I. The Law of the Spirit of Life—Rom. 8:1-6
- A. The Spirit of Life—8:2
 - B. The Fourfold Life—8:2, 6, 9, 10, 11
 - C. The Law of the Spirit of Life—8:2
 - D. Three Lives with Three Laws
 - E. God in Our Spirit—8:2, 8:16
 - F. The Enjoyment of Christ as the Life-giving Spirit—Luke 14:16, 17, 15:11-32
- II. The Freedom of the Law of the Spirit of Life
- A. Now No Condemnation—Rom. 8:1
 - 1. The Condemnation outside of Christ—7:24
 - 2. Now No Condemnation in Christ—8:1
 - B. The Freedom of the Law of the Spirit of Life—8:2
 - 1. In Christ
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 - C. The Impossibility of the Law—8:3
 - D. Sin Condemned—8:3, Num. 21:9
 - E. The Righteous Requirement of the Law Fulfilled—Rom. 8:4
 - F. The Mind as the Key—8:6

QUESTIONS

SECTION 1

1. Please give three verses from Romans 1 to 6, to reveal that life is the goal of the book of Romans.
2. What is the way to experience the divine, uncreated life?
3. Explain the fourfold life with verse references. How can we be men of life?

SECTION 2

1. Why was the law so demanding? What was God's intention in giving the law to man?
2. What does the spirit of life in Romans 8:2 denote? Use the illustration of the chicken broth to show how it can be applied to us.
3. What makes each of us a miniature of the garden of Eden? Why are we so complicated?

SECTION 3

1. What is the difference between outward condemnation and inward condemnation in Roman 7? How can we be rescued from them?
2. What is the law of the spirit of life? How does the Spirit of life set us free?
3. How can we enjoy the freedom of the law of the Spirit of life daily?

SECTION 4

1. What makes us weak in keeping the law of God and powerful in committing sin?
2. Use the illustration of the mousetrap to explain how God solved the two problems of sin and the flesh.
3. Please compare the "mind" in Romans 7 and 8? What is the result of us setting our mind on the spirit?

[Section 1]

I. THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE

In chapter five of Romans we saw that the gift in Christ surpasses the heritage in Adam, in chapter six we were shown our identification with Christ, and in chapter seven we found the bondage of the law in our flesh. Romans 8 is a contrast to Romans 7. In Romans 7 we have bondage; in Romans 8 we have freedom. In Romans 7 we have the law; in Romans 8 we have the Holy Spirit. In Romans 7 we have our flesh; in Romans 8 we have our spirit. Thus, Romans 7 reveals the bondage of the law in our flesh, while Romans 8 unveils the freedom of the Spirit in our spirit.

We need to read Romans 8:1-6 carefully and attentively. “There is now then no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has freed me from the law of sin and of death” (vv. 1-2). The phrase “the law of the Spirit of life” is very significant. In this phrase we see three elements that compose one entity—the law, the Spirit, and the life. These three items are one.

“For what is impossible to the law, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (v. 3). God is the subject of this sentence. He condemned sin in the flesh of Christ by “sending His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin.”

“That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to flesh, but according to spirit. For those who are according to flesh mind the things of the flesh; but those who are according to spirit, the things of the Spirit” (vv. 4-5). God condemned sin in the flesh that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk according to spirit. Those who are according to spirit mind the things of the Spirit. Please notice that the first mention of spirit in verse 5 refers to our human spirit and that the second mention refers to the Holy Spirit, meaning that those who are according to their human spirit mind the things of the Holy Spirit.

“For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace” (v. 6). The mind set on the human spirit is life and peace. Every word in Romans 8:1-6 is precious. We

should not pass over even one word in these verses.

A. The Spirit of Life

Before we deal with Romans 8 itself, we need to consider a glorious and marvelous term found in 8:2—“the Spirit of life.” This term is used only once in the entire Bible. In the book of Romans the term “the Spirit of life” is not revealed until 8:2. However, before chapter eight we do have several references to the divine, eternal, uncreated life. The first occurrence of this word life in the book of Romans is in 1:17 which says that the just shall have life and live by faith. The word life in this verse denotes the divine life. The second occurrence of this word in Romans is in 2:7, where we are told that “those who by endurance in good work seek for glory and honor and incorruptibility, life eternal.” If we continually seek God, He will give us life eternal. Romans 5:10 says that we shall be saved in His life, and 5:17 tells us that, after receiving the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness, we shall reign in life. Romans 5:18 mentions justification of life, and 5:21 says that grace might reign unto eternal life. In 6:4 we are told to walk in newness of life. Romans 6:22-23 says that eternal life is the end of sanctification and that the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Thus, in the first six chapters of Romans there are many references to the divine life. Life is the goal of God’s salvation. God has redeemed us, justified us, and reconciled us that we might share this life. Once we receive it, we should be saved in life, reign in life, walk in newness of life, and be sanctified in life.

Although the foregoing chapters in Romans say that we should be saved, reign, walk, and be sanctified in life, Paul has not yet told us how we can do all these things. How can we be saved in life and reign in life? How can we walk in newness of life? How can we experience the sanctification in life? Paul has not told us. Neither has he told us precisely how the just shall have life. Although he says that this life is out of faith, he has not explained the matter clearly. In Romans 1 through 6 Paul refers to life nine times. Now, in Romans 8:2, he suddenly joins life with the Spirit in the phrase “the Spirit of life.”

The way to have life is the Spirit. The way to be saved in His life is the Spirit. The way to reign in life is the Spirit. The way to walk in newness of life is the Spirit. The way to be sanctified in life is the Spirit. The Spirit is the way. Life belongs

to the Spirit, and the Spirit is of life. These two are actually one. We can never separate life from the Spirit, nor the Spirit from life. The Lord Jesus Himself said, “The words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life” (John 6:63). In this word the Lord Jesus connects the Spirit and life. If we have the Spirit, we have life; if we do not have the Spirit, we do not have life. If we walk in the Spirit, we walk in life, but if we do not walk in the Spirit, we do not walk in the newness of life. Thus, the way to experience the divine, eternal, uncreated life is the Spirit. By this we may see the relationship between Romans 8 and the previous chapters. The seven foregoing chapters lead us to life and consummate in life. Now in 8:2 we are at the point of life. We must give special attention to the word life in Romans 8.

B. The Fourfold Life

The word life is used four times in chapter eight. Romans 8:2 mentions the law of the Spirit of life. Romans 8:6 says that the mind set on the spirit is life. In Romans 8:9, 10 we are told that if Christ is in us our spirit is life because of righteousness. Romans 8:11 says the indwelling Spirit will give life to our mortal bodies. The first time life is mentioned in this chapter it is connected to the Holy Spirit, the second time it is related to our mind, the third time it is associated with our spirit, and the fourth time it is a matter of our body. Romans 8 unveils a fourfold life. Firstly, life is the Spirit. Then the Spirit comes into our spirit to make our spirit life. Then the Spirit spreads from our spirit into our mind to make our mind life. The Spirit even imparts this life into our mortal bodies to make the body of sin a body of life. We have a fourfold life. The focus of it all is the Holy Spirit indwelling our spirit. This life will spread from our spirit into our mind and throughout our whole soul, even reaching all the members of our body. Eventually, our whole being will be filled with life and we will be a man of life. Have you ever seen this? We may call this the fourfold life. The Spirit is life, our spirit is life, our mind is life, and even our body is of life. Thus, the connection between Romans 8 and all the foregoing chapters is life plus the Spirit.

[Section 2]

C. The Law of the Spirit of Life

In Romans 8 we not only have the Spirit of life, but the law of the Spirit of life. The word life indicates that Romans 8 is a continuation of Romans 6, because Romans 6 ends with life. The word law indicates that Romans 8 is also a continuation of Romans 7, where the matter of law is discussed. In Romans 8 Paul continues his

talk about the law. In Romans 7 he mentions three laws: the law of God, the law of good, and the law of sin. If we only have these three laws we would all have to declare, “Wretched man that I am!” The law of God is just, holy, good, and spiritual. However, the more just and holy this law is, the more it demands of us. Why is the law of God so demanding? Because it is holy, just, and good. If the law were bad, the demands would be very low. However, the law of God is holy and righteous. This law only makes demands; it does not supply. Galatians 3:21 indicates that the law is unable to give people life. The law was not given by God to be a supply, but to make demands. Because we think that we are good, we need the law to expose us that we are not.

Do you remember the circumstances in which the law was given? By His grace, God had brought His people out of Egypt. The exodus from Egypt was not accomplished because the people kept the law, but because God was gracious to deliver them through His redemption. When God brought the Israelites to Mount Sinai, His intention was to make them a kingdom of priests (Exo. 19:3-6). Although the people agreed with this, God knew that they did not realize how bad they were. Therefore, through Moses God made an appointment to meet with the people for the purpose of giving them the law. Immediately, the atmosphere changed and became exceedingly threatening. The people were frightened. In the midst of this threatening situation God gave the Israelites His law. However, while the law was being given on the mount, the people made an idol, a golden calf. Hence, before the law was given the people had already broken it. Thus, when Moses surveyed the situation he broke the two tablets of stone.

We cannot keep the law. We should never think that the law was given to us to keep. Instead, we must bow down before the merciful and gracious God and say, “Lord, I cannot keep Your law or do anything good to please You.” In order to bring us to this conclusion, Paul wrote Romans 7 explaining the matter of the law.

Paul shows us that outside of us is the law of God with its demands, that in our soul is the law of good responding to God’s law, and that in the members of our body is another law that wars against the good law in our soul. Paul has told us that the law in our mind is weak and impotent, but that the law in our members is potent and full of strength. I believe Paul was a strong person with a strong will. His character was so strong that only the Lord Jesus could subdue him, as He did as Paul was on the way to Damascus.

Regardless of how strong he was before he was saved, he could not overcome the law of sin in his members. He said, “For the good which I will, I do not; but the evil I do not will, this I practice” (7:19). Then Paul continued by saying, “But if what I do not will, this I do, it is no longer I that do it but sin that dwells in me” (7:20). Who is this sin? It is Satan. The law of sin is actually the spontaneous power of Satan himself. Satan is more powerful than any human being. No one, not even Paul, can defeat him. The strength of your will means nothing to the powerful Satan. Thus, if you attempt to keep God’s law, the result will be, “Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death?” Paul used the phrase “this death.” What is death? Death is the result of Satan’s evil power. In Romans 7 we find two terms used synonymously to describe Satan: “the evil” and “the sin that dwells in me.” Satan is sin and evil, and his automatic power is the law of sin. He is so powerful that no human being can defeat him. Even all the human beings added together cannot overpower him. Hallelujah, there is One who is more powerful than this evil giant!

Romans 8:2 reveals that God has become the Spirit of life. We may say that the Spirit of life in this verse denotes the processed God. God in Christ has passed through a long process—the process of incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. The very God of Genesis 1 has undergone such a process. Thus, He is no longer the “raw” God. Although He was the “raw” God in Genesis 1, He is the processed God in Romans 8.

The groceries that you bring home from the store are all raw items. They need to undergo a process of cutting, burning, and cooking in order to be suitable for eating. Without passing through such a process the raw food is not suitable for eating. I do not like to eat anything that has not been processed. All the food in the refrigerator is raw foodstuff, but everything on the dining table is processed food.

We praise the Lord that Romans 8 is not a refrigerator; it is our dining table. Whenever you are hungry, come and dine at Romans 8. On the Romans 8 table we have the processed God, for here His title is neither Jehovah nor the Almighty God, but the Spirit of life. Praise the Lord! Quite often my wife makes broth out of beef or chicken. When she sees that I am tired, she frequently serves me a bowl of broth. This broth is sweet, tasteful, and easy to take in. After drinking a cup of broth, my whole being is revived. The Spirit of life is like the broth...In Romans 8 He is no longer like a chicken or a cow; He is the Spirit of

life, so easy to take in. We only need to say, “O Lord Jesus, the Spirit of life, Amen. Christ is in you and the spirit is life. Amen. To set the mind on the spirit is life. Amen. The indwelling Spirit shall give life to your mortal body. Amen.” If we drink the Spirit in Romans 8, we will discover that it is like the broth.

Praise the Lord that with the processed God there is the law of the Spirit of life! This law is the principle, power, and strength of the processed God. We all must shout, “Hallelujah,” because this law which is the spontaneous, divine power is not outside of us, but is in our spirit. The law of the processed God is in our spirit.

D. Three Lives with Three Laws

We are complicated people, for we have four laws related to us. Above us is the law of God with its demands. In our mind is the law of good responding to the law of God. In our body is the law of sin which wars against the law of good. All of this is recorded in Romans 7

Why are we so complicated? We are complicated because we have passed through three stations—the creation, the fall, and God’s salvation. We were created, we were fallen, and we were saved. This is our history, our biography. Our biography is simply that we were created, that we fell, and that we were saved by God. In God’s creation we received a human life, the life that makes us a human being. In the fall another life was injected into us, the evil life of Satan which came into our body. After we were saved, the processed God as the Spirit of life came into our spirit. Hence, three persons are in us: ourselves in our souls, Satan in our body, and the processed God as the Spirit of life in our spirit.

Each of these persons has a life with a law. Satan has his satanic life with its evil law, the law of sin. Our natural man has a created life with a good law. The processed God as the life-giving Spirit has the divine life with the law of the Spirit of life. Therefore, we have an evil law, a good law, and the law of the Spirit of life, in brief, the law of life...The law of life certainly belongs to the tree of life (Gen. 2:9). Within us we have the tree of knowledge and the tree of life. Therefore, each one of us is a miniature garden of Eden. Man is here, Satan as the tree of knowledge is here, and God as the tree of life is also here. These three parties that once were in the garden of Eden are now all in us. The battle that was raging between Satan and God in the garden of Eden now rages within us. This battle involves three persons, three lives, and three laws.

E. God in Our Spirit

In Romans 8 God becomes the God in our spirit. He is not only the God in identification, but the God in our spirit. He has not only made us one with Him, but He has also made Himself one with us. Now our God is in our spirit. What kind of God is He? He is the processed God in our spirit. The God in creation has passed through redemption, justification, reconciliation, identification, and He is now in our spirit. The God in our spirit is not merely God; He has been processed into the Spirit of life, for the Spirit of life is the processed God. According to our experience, nothing is more pleasant than this. We may feast upon such a God.

F. The Enjoyment of Christ as the Life-giving Spirit

Where is Christ today? Where did He go after He was processed after His death and resurrection? Undoubtedly, He went into the heavens. However, if He were only in the heavens, it would be impossible for people to eat Him. The heavens are too far away. But Christ is not only in the heavens (8:34), but also in us (8:9), even in our spirit (2 Tim. 4:22). The dining table is our spirit. After being processed Christ became the life-giving Spirit. The processed Christ is the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17). He has come into our spirit as life and as the life supply for our enjoyment.

This is not my concept. Although Christ is life, it is difficult for Christ to give you life. Who gives life? It is the Spirit that gives life (John 6:63; 2 Cor. 3:6). Christ is life, but it is the Spirit who gives us Christ as life. Without the Spirit Christ may be life, but Christ as life cannot be given to us. By being the Spirit Christ is imparted into us as life. Today, after being processed, the very Christ is the life-giving Spirit. Now in our spirit we may enjoy this wonderful Spirit. Never forget that Christ is the very God, Jehovah the Savior, God with us. Christ is God. This Christ, after being processed, is now the life-giving Spirit. We have to enjoy Him in His fullness as such a Spirit. Our regenerated spirit is the dining table, and the processed Christ is our food. He is not food in a physical form, but in the form of the Spirit. Our food is the Spirit. What a rich Spirit this is! Divinity, humanity, love, light, life, power, righteousness, holiness, grace—everything we need is in the Spirit. Romans 8 certainly is this dining table.

[Section 3]

II. The Freedom of the Law of the Spirit of Life

Now, we shall continue our consideration of Romans 8:1-6. As we have seen, Romans 8 is a sharp contrast to Romans 7. In Romans 7 we see the bondage of the law in our flesh, and in Romans 8 we see the freedom of the Spirit in our spirit. As we come to chapter eight, we turn from bondage in the flesh to freedom in the Spirit.

A. Now No Condemnation

At the end of Romans 7 Paul cried out, “Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death?” (v. 24). Paul opened chapter eight by saying, “There is now then no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus” (v. 1). In the book of Romans there are two kinds of condemnation: the outward, objective condemnation and the inward, subjective condemnation. The outward condemnation comes from God, and the inward condemnation comes from ourselves. We see the objective condemnation of God in the early chapters of Romans, for example in 3:19 which says “that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may become subject to the judgment of God.” Hence, objective condemnation results from being under the righteous judgment of God. This type of condemnation is completely solved by the redeeming blood of Christ. Christ’s redeeming blood has saved us from the judgment of God.

1. The Condemnation outside of Christ

The inward, subjective condemnation is found in chapter seven. When Paul lamented, “Wretched man that I am,” he was not experiencing the condemnation of God, but the condemnation that came from himself, the self-condemnation of one who tries to keep the law. This condemnation comes from the person himself, not from God. The more you attempt to be good and fulfill the law, the more inward condemnation you will have. If you are a careless person, never trying to be good, you will not experience inward condemnation. However, if you say, “I must be right and perfect,” you will be condemned by yourself. The more you try to improve yourself, the more self-condemnation you will be under...God would say, “Stupid child, I don’t want you to have this kind of condemnation. You have caused this trouble for yourself.” Many Christians, having solved the problem of objective condemnation, have created for themselves the problem of inward condemnation. Some have been so condemned that they could not eat or sleep properly.

2. Now No Condemnation in Christ

Paul, after his cry of wretchedness at the end of chapter seven, declared in a victorious way, “now

then no condemnation in Christ Jesus.” This means that what he experienced in Romans 7 was not an experience in Christ. Without Christ, or outside of Christ, he struggled according to the law in his mind to keep the law of God in order that he might please God, but he was totally defeated by the law of sin. That occurred when he was without Christ. Thus Paul condemned himself. He had a deep conviction of this inward, subjective condemnation. But “now” “in Christ Jesus” there is no longer this kind of condemnation. Paul had “no condemnation” because in Christ he did not need to keep the law of God by himself, an effort which produced self-condemnation; “no condemnation” because in Christ he had the law of the Spirit of life which is more powerful than the law of sin and which set him free from the law of sin; “no condemnation” now, not because of the redeeming blood of Christ which removed the objective condemnation of God, but because of the law of the Spirit of life which brought in the freedom of the Spirit in his spirit and which broke through all his subjective condemnation; and “no condemnation” because he was freed from both the law of God and the law of sin.

B. The Freedom of the Law of the Spirit of Life

In Romans 8 Paul does not say, “There is no condemnation in Christ Jesus because the blood of Jesus has cleansed me.” This kind of condemnation is not dealt with by the blood. We are freed from subjective condemnation, not because of the blood which cleanses us, but because of the law which liberates us. There is a law which sets us free from inward condemnation. This law that releases us has the greatest potential of any law. Although we have the law of God outside of us demanding, the law of good in our mind agreeing with the law of God, and the law of sin in our body warring against and defeating the law of good, we must nevertheless praise the Lord that in our spirit is the law of the Spirit of life. No law can prevail against this law. Who can defeat the Spirit of life? Nobody and nothing can defeat the Spirit of life. This law of the Spirit of life is the spontaneous power of the Spirit of life. It is the most powerful law in the universe; it is in us and it sets us free.

How does the law of the Spirit of life set us free? It frees us in a “super” way. If, according to the ancient method of warfare, some soldiers were surrounded by enemy troops, they would have had to fight their way through. However, in modern warfare there is no such need. If we are surrounded by the enemy, we need not fight through—we have a way up. We have an upward

way. Thus, we may say to Satan, “Satan, compared to me you are powerful. But don’t you know that I have a wonderful God who is both in my spirit and in the heavens? It may be difficult for me to go to the heavens, but it is easy for Him. He is both in me and in the heavens. Satan, I don’t need to fight through. I just say, ‘Praise the Lord’ and I am in the third heaven. Satan, you and your attacking army are under my feet, and I am free.”

In case you think this is little more than a good theory, let me apply it and make it very practical. Suppose we have a sister who wants to submit to her husband according to Ephesians 5. She says, “I love this word. It is so sweet and holy. I want to submit myself to my husband.” This is simply the exercise of her mind as it attempts to fulfill the commandment given in Ephesians 5. However, when she determines to practice this, something strange happens. It seems that her surroundings change and the very opposite of submission occurs. Her husband, who is always nice and gentle with her, on the very morning that she determines to submit to him, is quite mean. Much to her disappointment, she fails to fulfill the commandment. Satan comes up against her, surrounds her, and attacks her. The more she tries to suppress her irritation with her husband’s behavior, the more angry she becomes, until she finally loses control of her temper. Her struggle, her attempt, was vain. The sister was defeated because she used the wrong strategy. Whenever we are surrounded by the enemy we should forget about every attempt of fighting through and say, “Praise the Lord! Amen!” Immediately we will be transcendent. Every enemy, including the people who aggravate us, will be under our feet. If you do not believe this, I ask you to try it. This strategy works; it is the most “modern,” most prevailing weapon against the enemy. Instead of condemnation there is praise. Why is there praise and release instead of condemnation? Because the law of the Spirit of life frees us from the law of sin and death.

1. In Christ

This is not an experience outside of Christ, but an experience absolutely in Christ. In Christ, not in Adam nor in ourselves, but in Christ, we have the Spirit of life, who is Christ Himself as the life-giving Spirit, in our spirit. In Christ our spirit has been made alive with Christ as life. Because we are in Christ the Spirit of life, who is Christ Himself, dwells in our spirit and mingles Himself with our spirit as one spirit. In Christ we have our quickened spirit, the divine life, and the Spirit of life. In Christ these three—our spirit, the divine life, and the Spirit of life—are all mingled as one

unit. In Christ, with this unit, there is the spontaneous power, which is the law of the Spirit of life, that continually sets us free from the law of sin and death as we walk according to the mingled spirit.

2. Daily

This experience is not once for all; it must be a continuous daily experience. Day after day, moment after moment, we need to live in the mingled spirit, walk according to this spirit, and have our minds set on this wonderful spirit, forgetting our attempts of keeping the law of God and of doing good in order to please God. For once we drift back to our old, habitual way of trying to do good, we are insulated immediately from the powerful law of the Spirit of life. We must look to the Lord that we may abide in our spirit always so that we may enjoy the freedom of the law of the Spirit of life.

[Section 4]

C. The Impossibility of the Law

Romans 8:3 says, "For what is impossible to the law, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh." This verse says that there is an impossibility related to the law, referring not to the law of the Spirit of life, with which there is no impossibility, but to the law of God outside of us. There is an impossibility associated with the law of God because that law is weak through the flesh. The flesh is the factor of weakness, producing the impossibility mentioned in 8:3.

The subject of 8:3 is God. God sent His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin, and condemned sin in the flesh. This verse, the deepest verse in Romans 8, is very difficult to understand.

What is the "flesh of sin"? The flesh of sin is our body. The "flesh of sin" in 8:3 corresponds to the term "the body of sin" in 6:6, where we are told that our old man has been crucified with Christ that "the body of sin" might be made of none effect. Why is our body called "the body of sin" and the "flesh of sin"? Because, as we have seen from Romans 7, sin dwells in our body. Since our body is the dwelling place of sin, it is called "the body of sin." Since our body has become a fallen body, it is also called the "flesh," that is, the "flesh of sin."

Our weakness in keeping the law of God is with our body of sin. Our body is weak to the uttermost in keeping the law of God. Although our mind wants to keep the law of God, our body does not have the strength to do it. It is weakened

and paralyzed by sin. Sin is like the polio that paralyzes and cripples children's bodies. Likewise, our human bodies have been paralyzed by sin. This body of sin is the basic factor of weakness in keeping the law of God. Romans 8:3 says that the law of God was weak through the flesh. Why has the law of God become weak? Because of the flesh. The law of God makes its demands, but the bodies of sinners cannot fulfill them because within the body is sin as the weakening factor.

Although the body of sin or the flesh of sin is exceedingly weak in keeping the law of God, it is powerful in committing sin. Unless you have the Lord's mercy and grace, it is difficult for you to sit through the church meetings. As you consider attending a prayer meeting you may say, "I didn't sleep well last night and I have a headache. I'm too tired to go to the meeting." However, if someone invites you to go to the movie theater, the body of sin is energetic and powerful. Therefore, our body is weak toward the law of God, but very strong toward committing sin. Hence, through our body of sin the law of God is weak.

D. Sin Condemned

Since the law is weak through the body of sin, what did God do about it? What has God done with this situation? The law of God makes its demands, but it has been weakened through the flesh. The problem is not with the law itself; the difficulty is with sin and the flesh of sin. Sin is the transgressor and the flesh of sin is the helper. The two of them work together. If God was to solve the problem, He would have had to deal with both sin and the flesh. Although sin, not the flesh, is the foremost problem, God must deal with them both.

How did He do it? God did it in a marvelous way, in a way that is beyond human words to explain adequately. God solved the problem by sending His own Son "in the likeness of the flesh of sin." God was wise. He knew that He should not send His Son to be the flesh of sin, for, if He did that, His Son would have been involved with sin. Therefore, He sent His Son "in the likeness of the flesh of sin," as typified by the brass serpent lifted up by Moses in the wilderness (Num. 21:9) and mentioned by the Lord Jesus Himself. In John 3:14 Jesus said, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up," indicating that the brass serpent was a type of Himself on the cross in our stead. When He was on the cross, Jesus was in the form of the serpent in the eyes of God. When God looked upon Jesus as He was nailed to the cross, He saw Him in the form of the serpent.

Who is the serpent? Satan. What is the sin that was injected into man's body, transmuting it into the flesh of sin? The nature of Satan. Hence, the flesh of sin actually means the flesh with the nature of Satan. The Bible says that Jesus, the Son of God, became flesh (John 1:14). However, this absolutely does not mean that Jesus became the flesh with the nature of Satan, because 8:3 says that He was sent in "the likeness of the flesh of sin," thereby indicating that Jesus assumed only "the likeness of the flesh," not the sinful nature of the flesh. Furthermore, 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, "For he hath made him [Christ] to be sin for us...." Although this verse says clearly that Christ was made sin, it does not mean that He was sinful in nature. He was made only "in the likeness of the flesh of sin." The brass serpent had the serpentine form of the serpent, but it did not have the poison of the serpent. It had the serpentine form without the serpentine nature. Christ was made sin in form. Within Him there was "no sin"; (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15); He had nothing to do with the nature of sin. He was only made in the form of the serpent, "in the likeness of the flesh of sin" for us.

John 12:31 says, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out." When the Lord Jesus uttered these words He was speaking about His coming death on the cross. The Lord was saying that the time of His crucifixion would be the time of Satan's judgment, for Satan is the prince of this world whose judgment was announced in John 12:31. It was Jesus who hung on the cross, but, in the eyes of God, Satan was judged there. Therefore, Hebrews 2:14 says that through death Christ destroyed him that had the power of death, the devil, Satan. Christ destroyed Satan by His death in the flesh on the cross. On the cross Christ "in the likeness of the flesh of sin" was not only a substitute for sinners, taking away all their sin; He was also crucified in the form of the serpent, completely destroying Satan, the devil.

Satan was eager and happy to enter into man's body, which became the flesh after he entered it, being glad to have a lodging place. Regardless of how wise Satan is, he can never surpass God. God is much wiser. God sent His Son in the likeness of this flesh in which Satan was and condemned it on the cross. It was as if Satan had thought, "Now I can get into man's body." However, Satan did not realize that this was a trap. When Satan took the bait, he was trapped. We may use the illustration of a mousetrap. It is difficult to catch a mouse because the mouse always runs away. However, we may use a mousetrap with some bait. The mouse comes into the trap, intrigued with the prospect of having the

bait in his possession. Then he gets trapped and a man can easily crush him. Likewise, Satan has been trapped and bruised in the flesh of Christ on the cross. In doing this God solved two problems at once: He solved the problem of sin and of the flesh of sin. God has solved the problem of sin, the nature and source of which is Satan, and the problem of the flesh. Praise the Lord!

E. The Righteous Requirement of the Law Fulfilled

Romans 8:4 says, "That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to flesh, but according to spirit." The fact that 8:3 ends with a comma indicates that what was accomplished in that verse is for the following verse. God condemned sin in the flesh in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us. There was an impossibility related to the law of God due to the flesh. Therefore, God sent His Son "in the likeness of the flesh of sin" and condemned sin, solving the dual problem of sin and the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us...In 8:2 he mentions the Holy Spirit and in 8:4 he refers not only to the Holy Spirit, but even the more to the human spirit. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of life, and the human spirit indwelt by and mingled with the Holy Spirit is the very spirit according to which we walk. The Holy Spirit of life is in our human spirit. If we walk according to this mingled spirit, all the righteous requirements of the law will be fulfilled spontaneously.

F. The Mind as the Key

The next verse offers some further explanation. "For those who are according to flesh mind the things of the flesh; but those who are according to spirit, the things of the Spirit." After mentioning the Spirit of life and the human spirit mingled with the Holy Spirit, Paul comes to the mind. Paul has mentioned the mind previously in 7:25, which says, "With the mind I myself serve as a slave the law of God...." The phrase "with the mind I myself" indicates that the mind in 7:25 was independent. The mind in chapter eight is different; it is a mind set upon the things of the Spirit. In Romans 7 the mind goes out to act independently; in Romans 8 the mind returns to rely upon the spirit, no longer acting on its own.

The mind has the position of a wife. The wisest way for a wife to live is not to act independently, but to come to her husband. If the wife has a difficulty, she should not deal with it on her own. She should refer it to her husband. In Romans 7 the mind was independent, a wife behaving as a

husband. In Romans 8 the mind maintains her position as the wife, no longer going out on her own, but always returning to the husband. The mind in chapter eight says, “Dear husband spirit, what should I do?” The husband spirit responds, “Dear wife, you don’t need to do anything. I will take care of the situation.” Romans 7 and 8 show us that the same mind may have two different actions. In chapter seven the mind acts independently in a wrong, self-assuming position as the husband. In chapter eight the mind becomes the proper wife, maintaining her rightful position and returning to rely upon her husband, the spirit.

We conclude with 8:6. “For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.” From this verse we can see that even the mind can be life. The independent mind cannot keep the law of God, but the mind set upon the spirit is life and peace. Such a mind is full of enjoyment and rest. Peace is for rest and life is for enjoyment. When the mind is set on the spirit, there is no defeat, condemnation, or negative feelings—only life and peace, enjoyment and rest. The very mind that, in itself, is unable to keep the law of God can be a mind of life and peace by being set on the spirit.

We must keep our mind one with our spirit and act, walk and have our being according to the spirit that we might be freed from the law of sin and from the flesh and that we might spontaneously fulfill the righteous requirement of the law of God. This is to be set free from the law of sin and death by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ. This is also to enjoy the indwelling Christ as our life and life-supply.