

BOB HALLMAN - THE EPIC LIFE

Life in the Spirit – Part I

Romans 8:1-17

2000

Introduction

Romans chapter 7 was Paul's autobiographical description of what it is like to live the Christian life in the strength of the flesh or self-effort. It is impossible! Paul's agonizing conclusion is that his own strength was insufficient to conquer his fleshly tendency to sin. In exasperation he cried out in verse 24 of Chapter 7, "What a wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" His answer comes immediately; God will deliver him through Jesus Christ!

In chapter 8 we are introduced to the incredible power we have in the Holy Spirit who enables us to live a life that is pleasing and glorifying to God. He is not describing an occasional experience, but what should be the mark of the normal Christian life.

It is worth noting that the Spirit is not mentioned at all in chapter 7 and only once in the opening chapters of Romans. But in chapter eight we discover the Holy Spirit is mentioned 20 times, giving us a very clear indication of the primary emphasis of this text.

I The Impact Of Life In Christ Jesus

A. There is now no **condemnation** [verse 1a]

Condemnation = Katakrima = "The punishment following an adverse verdict"

John 3:18 "Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son."

John 5:24 "[But] whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."

1. For those who are **in** Christ Jesus [verse 1b]

The key to every aspect of the Christian life is wrapped up in this simple but profound phrase, "In Christ."

Illustration:

Noah's ark is a perfect illustration of what it means to be "in" Christ. The ark was God's provision for Noah and his family to escape the impending judgment on the earth. Genesis tells us that when the rain came, God shut Noah and his family in the ark (Gen 7:16). Notice, he didn't say, "I've provided some row boats for you. Hope you're feeling strong!" Or "I'm going to put eight pegs on the outside of

the ark, Noah. You and your family are going to hang on for dear life, and as long as you hang on, you'll make it through.

No! He said, "I'm going to put you in the ark. In the same way that God put Noah in the ark, He has put us *in* Christ. It's not a matter of holding on, hoping that we can keep from sinning. No, our Ark is Jesus Christ and we are in Him.

How is a person put "in Christ?"

Eph 1:13-14 "And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession-- to the praise of his glory."

B. Through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set us free [verse 2]

2 Cor 3:17 "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."

1. From the law of **sin**

Rom 6:18, 22 "You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness .. and to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life."

2. From the law of **death**

1 Cor 15:55-57 "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"
The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Illustration:

I remember, as a boy, running around with a cape made out of a sheet. There were fleeting moments when I thought it might be possible, under the right conditions, for me to actually break free of the earth and experience the freedom of flight. But the law of gravity is a physical law that cannot be overcome by pretending it doesn't exist. No matter how hard I tried to deny its existence I was left earthbound.

But when I was 9 years old, we got in a plane and flew to Hawaii where I grew up. Now the law of gravity hadn't changed. It pulled down on that plane just like it did when I was a young boy attempting to escape the confinement of gravity with my cape. But when the plane's engines kicked in, the law of aerodynamics trumped the law of gravity. That's what Paul is describing for us here. The law of the Spirit of life set us free by trumping the law of sin and death.

II The Means Of Our Freedom

A. The law was **powerless** to free us [verse 3a]

As we've discovered in our study in Romans, the law can expose sin, it can excite sin in us, and it can condemn us for our failure to keep it, but cannot empower us to keep it.

Heb 7:18-20 "The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God."

Rom 7:10 "I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death."

1. It was weakened by the sinful flesh

James 2:10 "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it."

A single sin is all it takes to disqualify someone from entering heaven! Remember, it only took one sin to result in Adam and Eve being ejected from God's presence.

B. God accomplished what the law couldn't do [verse 3b]

1. He **sent** His own Son

a. In the likeness of sinful man

Likeness = Homoioma = "Resemblance or appearance"

The Son of God came not "in sinful flesh" but in the "likeness of sinful flesh"

Heb 2:14-15 "Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death-- that is, the devil-- and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death."

b. To be a sin offering [verse 3c]

Sin offering = Peri hamartia = "A substitutionary sacrifice for sin"

2 Cor 5:21 "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

The significance of Jesus' earthly life, teaching, miracles and ministry are unmatched in human history. But His supreme purpose in coming to earth was to be an offering for sin. Without this sacrifice, we would have remained hopelessly mired in our sins and eternally separated from God.

2. He **condemned** sin in sinful man [verse 3d]

For those who are united with Christ the power of sin has been broken.

Rom 6:6 "For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin ..."

3. He fully met the law's **requirements** in us [verse 4a]

As a result of Christ's perfect life and sacrifice, everything the Law required of us is fulfilled in us who are now controlled and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

- a. Who live not according to the sinful nature [verse 4b]

Live = Peripateo = "To walk habitually as a way of life"

The sinful nature always produces death and is contrary to the new nature in us.

And although no Christian will be perfected in this life, we have no excuse for sinning as a pattern of life because God has given us the power to resist sin.

1 Jn 4:4 "... the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world."

- b. Who live according to the Spirit [verse 4c]

The Christian life is not a matter of painstaking conformity to specific laws and regulations; it is rather a function of the Holy Spirit producing his fruit in a believer's life, reproducing in us the character and nature seen in perfection in the life of Jesus Christ. The law prescribed a life of holiness, but it was powerless to produce such a life, because of the weakness of our flesh. But what the law was powerless to do, God accomplished through His Spirit.

III The Contrast Between The Flesh And The Spirit

- A. Those who live according to the sinful nature: [verse 5-10]

1. Have their **minds** set on what that nature desires

Minds set = Phroneo = "To set one's affections on"

What does the sinful nature set its affections on?

Phil 3:19 "Their mind is on earthly things." Matt 6:31-32

2. Live lives marked by death

How is it a life marked by death?

In the same way that living for the material world led to Adam and Eve's death. They allowed the physical and material temptations of this life to take priority over their spiritual life that led to life-changing, death-producing consequences.

Gal 6:8 "The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life."

3. Are **hostile** to God

Hostile = Echthra = "Enmity or hatred"

Paul describes unbelievers, whether outwardly moral or outwardly wicked, as hostile toward God.

Rom 5:10 "... we were God's enemies."

4. Cannot submit to God's law

1 Cor 2:14 “The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

5. Cannot **please** God

It was for this purpose that we were created

2 Cor 5:9 “So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.”

Eph 5:10 “... find out what pleases the Lord.”

Illustration: Find out what pleases your wife

Listening to Becky and letting her talk to her heart's content

B. Those who live according to the Spirit

1. Have their minds set on what the **Spirit** desires

Col 3:1-3 “Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.”

Jonathan Edwards: “Genuine believers have holy affections, deep longings after God and [desire a life of] sanctification.”

2. Are **controlled** by the Spirit leading to life and peace

Without the Spirit’s supernatural power, we could never succeed in putting to death the sinful impulses in our lives. Without the Holy Spirit, we would have no more power to resist and defeat sin than when we were unbelievers.

Rom 5:1 “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”

Application:

Who is controlling your life? Is it your flesh or is it the Spirit? If it’s the flesh, you will bear the fruit of death. But if you are being ruled by the sin-defying, death defying work of the Spirit, you will know life and peace.

IV The Glorious Freedom Of The Believer

A. The spiritual **condition** of the believer [verse 9a]

1. Not controlled by the sinful nature

Gal 5:24 “Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.”

2. But controlled by the Spirit [verse 9b]

Gal 5:16 “So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.”

a. If the Spirit of God lives in you

Lives in = “Dwell or abide or be at home in”

1 Cor 6:19-20 “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.”

Application:

Is the Holy Spirit at home in you? What kind of an environment are you providing for him? Is He filled with joy or is He filled with grief? Does he feel at home? Or do you expose him regularly to thoughts, actions and words that make him uneasy?

You might want to think about this the next time you are making a decision to turn on the TV, or to listen to someone’s gossip, or as you go to the movies. Wherever you go, whatever you expose yourself to, you are involving the Holy Spirit of God who is living in you.

b. If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ

1. He does not belong to Christ

B. The spiritual **effect** on a believer [verse 10-11]

1. Your body is dead because of sin

Rom 7:25 “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.”

2. Your spirit is alive because of righteousness

3. God will give life to your mortal bodies thru His **Spirit**

Our mortal bodies are the weak link in the chain

a. Life in the here and now

Jn 10:10 “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

b. Life in the future

1 Cor 6:14 “By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also.”

V Our Obligation And Privilege

A. We are not obligated to live according to the sinful nature [verse 12-13a]

1. If we live according to the sinful nature we will **die**

Rom 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

B. We are obligated to live according to the Spirit [verse 13b-14]

1. We can put to **death** the misdeeds of the body
Rom 6:11-12 “In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.”
 - a. Resulting in life
 - b. Proving that we are sons of God
Putting to death the misdeeds of the body is an evidence of true sonship
2. We do not have a spirit not of fear, but **sonship** [verse 15]
Eph 1:5 “... he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will.”

Illustration: Adoption

For some, the idea of adoption carries with it the idea of second-class status in the family. In the Roman culture of Paul’s day, however, an adopted child, especially an adopted son, sometimes had greater privileges than the natural children. According to Roman law, if a father was disappointed in his natural son's skill, character, or any other attribute, he would search diligently for a boy available for adoption who demonstrated the qualities he desired. If the boy proved himself worthy, the father would take the necessary legal steps for adoption:

1. Severing any legal and social relationship to his natural family
2. Placing him permanently in his new family
3. Paying off all preexisting debts or other obligations

At the death of the father, this adopted son would inherit the father’s title, the major part of the estate, and would be the primary progenitor of the family name.

- a. We can call God, “Abba, Father”

Abba = “Papa, or daddy”

This term for God was never used by the Jews of Jesus’ day and was considered blasphemous – a capital offense.

This phrase occurs in at least two other places in the NT

1. In Mark 14:36 where Jesus prays in the Garden of Gethsemane
2. In Gal 4:6 where Paul states that, “Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, 'Abba, Father.'”
3. And many believe that Jesus instruction to the disciples using the Lord’s Prayer may have utilized this very term of endearment.

But the pervasive use of this term in the early church is no doubt the result of Jesus’ frequent use of it in his own prayer life.

Application:

There are many of you who have never had a close, intimate relationship with your earthly father. For all of us who long for and desire to be completely loved and accepted, God offers Himself as our “Abba, Father.”

3. We have the Spirit’s testimony that: [verse 16-17]

a. We are heirs of God

1 Pet 1:3-5 “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade-- kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.”

b. We are co-heirs with Christ

Eph 1:3 “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

Illustration: Human inheritance

Many of us are heirs of parents who will have very little in terms of earthly possessions and our human inheritance will amount to little or nothing at all. But God’s resources are limitless, so our spiritual inheritance will be limitless and we will share in everything that Jesus Christ inherits.

1. If we share in His sufferings

In the Christian life, suffering is the indispensable prelude to the glory.

2 Cor 4:16-17 “Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.”

c. We will share in His glory

Before we came to Christ, most of us were driven by a desire for self-glory. But only in Christ can this God-given, God-implanted desire be fulfilled.

1. Present glory

2 Cor 3:18 “And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”

2. Future glory

1 Pet 1:6-7 “In this [salvation] you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith-- of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire-- may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.”

Conclusion

Through the power of God and His indwelling Holy Spirit:

1. He has freed us from sin and death (Rom 8:2-3)
2. He has enabled us to fulfill God's law (v. 4)
3. He has given us a new nature (vv. 5-11)
4. He has empowered us for victory over sin (vv. 12-13)
5. He has adopted us as His sons and daughters (vv. 14-16)
5. He has made us co-heirs with Christ (v. 17)
7. He has promised that we will share in His glory (vv. 17).