

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Open up your bibles with me to Romans 8

We are continuing our verse-by-verse study through this amazing letter – that the Apostle Paul wrote to the believers in Rome and to us today about the fundamentals of Christianity.

About The Gospel of Grace.

About the amazing promises for those who are in Christ.

About how Christ is in us and how the Holy Spirit dwells in us.

Empowering us – pointing us to Jesus

Helping us live victorious Christian lives as we allow the Holy Spirit to continue to do the work in us.

That is going to be the focus of our text this morning -

The title for this morning's message is, ""Not perfect, but on the way"

Let's pray...

Read Text -

One of the reasons that we are taking our time going through Romans 8 is because this is a chapter of new things for those who are in Christ and for those who walk in the Spirit.

In verse one – the believer has a new position – in Christ

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus

In verse 4 and 5 Paul spoke to us about our new walk

No longer are we to walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit

Our mindset is set on the things of heaven instead of the temporal things that often preoccupies and distract our walk.

Verse 6 speaks of a new life –

[Rom 8:6 NKJV] 6 For to be carnally minded [is] death, but to be spiritually minded [is] life and peace.

If our mindset is on the things of the flesh – it is going to lead to condemnation. A distancing from God.

But a Spirit filled life – is one that leads to life and peace – no condemnation.

Paul also reminds us that there is a new relationship – the Holy Spirit dwells inside the believer.

He is at home in us.

Remember – the Holy Spirit is not some type of force that strengthens us and convicts us and point us to Jesus.

The Holy Spirit is a Person at home in us.

And because He is at home in us –

As we lean on Him – our lives will be transformed.

Turn with me to 1 Cor 6

One of the reasons that the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write two letters to the church in Corinth was because they were genuine believers – however, they were carnal believers.

They were Roman 7 believers -

They were walking in the flesh.

They were carnally minded.

[1Co 6:15-20 NKJV] 15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?

Shall I then take the members of Christ and make [them] members of a harlot?

Certainly not! 16 Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one

body [with her]? For "the two," He says, "shall become one flesh." 17 But he who

is joined to the Lord is one spirit [with Him]. 18 Flee sexual immorality. Every sin

that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. 19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit [who is] in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

This is what Paul is saying in his letter to the church in Corinth

Guys, after receiving Jesus Christ, as your Lord and Savior

The Holy Spirit dwells within you

He is at home in you.

And you guys are going to go ahead and fornicate –

Stop it.

[Rom 8:12-17 NKJV] 12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors--not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.

Note that Paul writes this to believers and notice – he says that we are debtors.

Now, someone might say – wait a minute, Herb

Didn't Paul tells us back in chapter 6 that Jesus paid our debt?

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

How then are we debtors – in what way?

First of all,

We have to understand that this debt comes as a result of Christ's work.

This debt is our response to what He has already done

This debt is what gratitude & an appreciation for the Cross lays on us.

This isn't an obligation we resist or regret; it's a delight & joy.

We owe God everything for what He has done and debtors for the work that He continues to do.

This is not an obligation to the old way of living, we died to that.

Unfortunately, there are many believers today who still feel that they have an obligation to the flesh.

My dad was an alcoholic, and his dad was an alcoholic – then I have to be an alcoholic

Or they struggled with anger – that means that I struggle with anger.

You can substitute any vice, any addiction, any compulsion.

The bible says that the Child of God is not under obligation to obey those compulsions.

We owe the flesh nothing.

What we **do** have an obligation to, is the Holy Spirit who comes to impart the life of Christ to us.

In the movie Saving Private Ryan –

Matt Damon' character, Ryan – he is visiting a cemetery in France where American soldiers killed during WWII are buried.

And he is standing at the grave of Captain John Miller – who was played by Tom Hanks

And immediately we are transported back to WWII

And we see the story unfold as Captain John Miller and his squad sacrificed their lives to send word to Private Ryan that he was being sent home safely.

And when they find him – Ryan didn't want to go home until he finished his mission.

CPTN John Miller and his squad actually stayed and help Ryan successfully finish his mission – but in the process, most of them died in the final battle.

As Captain John Miller –took his last breath – he looks up at Ryan and challenges him with these words, “Earn this” and he dies.

And then the camera goes back to an elderly Matt Damon in tears at the grave of Capt. John Miller – with his family looking on.

He kneels down and says, “I hope that at least in your eyes, I have earned what all of you have done for me”

Miller’s challenge had been Ryan’s obligation to live a life worthy of the sacrifice so many had made so he could go home safely.

And that is exactly what Paul is saying here in verse 12

In light of what Jesus Christ has done to free us from bondage to sin, how can we live our lives as if we are debtors to the flesh.

The only thing that the flesh has given us is pain and death.

False promises after false promises.

Again, we don’t earn our salvation – the price has already been paid.

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 literal translation is this –

If we live according to the flesh – that means everything that we are apart from Christ, we are about to die.

Remember – last week, I said that death in the scriptures is separation from God.

When we are living according to the flesh – we are cutting ourselves from the source of life, we are separating ourselves from God.

[Isa 59:1-2 NKJV] 1 Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. 2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden [His] face from you, So that He will not hear.

Sin hinders prayer

Sin hinders our fellowship with God

So how do we stop walking according to the flesh –

Paul tells us – we live our lives according to the Spirit.

Remember, we can't be walking according to the flesh one minute and in the Spirit the next – we are either walking in one or the other.

The nonbeliever – those apart from Christ - they have one choice to make, they can either do right or wrong. Obey the law or die.

The believer – they have a choice to make. Our choice is not between right and wrong, but between walking in the Spirit or walking in the flesh.

The Holy Spirit is the “instrument” that is used to help us learn to “put to death” the deeds of the body.

Turn with me to 1 Sam 5

I love Old Testament biblical illustrations –

Especially humorous ones.

And I am going to show you one that relates to what Paul is telling us.

And this one will give us a visual of what Paul is saying here in our text.

[1Sa 5:1-6 NKJV] 1 Then the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod. 2 When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon and set it by Dagon. 3 And when the people of Ashdod arose early in the morning, there was Dagon, fallen on its face to the earth before the ark of the LORD. So they took Dagon and set it in its place again. 4 And when they arose early the next morning, there was Dagon, fallen on its face to the ground before the ark of the LORD. The head of Dagon and both the palms of its hands [were] broken off on the threshold; only Dagon's [torso] was left of it. 5 Therefore neither the priests of Dagon nor any who come into Dagon's house tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod to this day. 6 But the hand of the LORD was heavy on the people of Ashdod, and He ravaged them and struck them with tumors, [both] Ashdod and its territory.

The Philistines – they capture the Ark of the Covenant. (ch 4)

Remember the significance of the Ark of the Covenant – that is where the mercy seat was – that is the place where God was going to meet His people. The presence of God. His throne

The Philistines take the Ark of the Covenant and they put it inside their pagan temple – next to the statue of their pagan god. Dagon

The pagan priests go to the temple in the morning – their statue is fallen over – face on the ground, bowing before the Ark.

They prop it back up – falls again - statue breaks in pieces.

BTW - God also inflicts the Philistines with painful hemorrhoids – that is the translation

The Philistines decide they don't like this "Ark" thing and end up shipping it back to the Israelites.

You might be saying – what's the point?????

The point is that far too many times, we try and try and try to topple the "Dagons" in our lives with the flesh.

Anger, addictions, compulsions, legalism, sin

And we fail miserably – which leads to condemnation, guilt, etc.

That's the Romans 7 Christian – that was Paul

What toppled Dagon? God's presence

In the same way, allowing God's presence to rule in our lives

Learning to let Him rule in our lives

Yielding to Him

Paul says that this is the only thing that will give us victory over the flesh.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

We are led by the Spirit.

That means He is showing us the way.

That means He is the One who is guiding us.

And if He is leading – then we must be in the position of following.

He is going to lead us to be more Christlike – this is the direction He is taking us.

again, this is our sanctification process.

This is the work that He is doing in us as we lean on Him – as we allow Him to lead.

And so, as we are led by the Spirit – we begin to walk away from the things of the flesh.

It's an undeniable, indisputable truth that the closer we are to God, the farther we'll be from sin.

His goal is to make us more like Jesus so our intimacy with God can be greater & more rewarding.

Because we're the children of God, the Spirit's desire is to lead us home and home is where the Father is.

So – how does the Holy Spirit lead us.

- One of the ways He directs us is through the desires of a Spirit-filled heart.

[Psa 37:4 NKJV] 4 Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.

If our heart is simply delighting in God – meaning that we want what God wants, we trust Him in everything - we will find God planting new desires in our heart.

His ways will become our ways.

But here is the key – in order for us to delight in the Lord, we must know Him and in order to know Him, we must want to spend time with Him.

- Another way that the Holy Spirit will lead us is through God's Word.

(Psa 119:105 NKJV) Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

For those of us that were here when we did our study through the Gospel of John – one of the things I reminded you over and over again is that the main role of the Holy Spirit is to teach – to point us to Christ.

A fellowship that is led by the Spirit is manifested on whether or not the sheep are talking about Jesus.

(John 14:26 NKJV) "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you."

How do I know if I am being led by the Spirit and not my flesh or someone else's flesh?

- The Holy Spirit will never lead us to do something that will grieve the Spirit
- The Holy Spirit will never get tired of pointing us to Jesus and will never get tired of pointing us away from sin.

So whatever may be leading me or guiding me away from Jesus and toward sin – not of the Spirit.

- The Holy Spirit leads us to repentance (Romans 2:4)
- The Holy Spirit leads us to the truth (John 16:13)

15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."

Salvation makes a fundamental & dramatic change in our identity.

We go from being the objects of God's wrath to His beloved children.

The Holy Spirit who comes to indwell & empower us, He liberates us from the fear that haunts those that are apart from Christ.

We don't have to be afraid.

We don't have to fear death

We don't have to fear judgment

We don't have to fear that God will reject us

We need never cry out in fear, but instead are blessed to be able to cry something else.

"Abba, Father"

Abba – an Aramaic word

Jesus uses it when He is praying in the Garden of Gethsemane.

It is a word that expresses a deep loving affection towards a father.

"Daddy"

Prior to Jesus – no man would dare to call God their "daddy"

Church, do you see what Paul is saying?

God is not some terrifying judge before whom we cower in terror.

He's our Daddy who calls us into His lap.

Write these verse down -

[2Ti 1:7 NKJV] 7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

[1Jo 4:18a NKJV] 18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear,

Can you think of any place safer than God's lap?

And notice Paul at the end of the verse.

Paul uses adoption as a picture of our new relationship with God, not because we were doing well & God decided we ought to be on His team.

God didn't adopt us because we were worthy.

He uses adoption because of the incredible favor & blessing it speaks of.

During the time that Paul writes this letter –

Adoption was much more different than it is today.

Adoption provided a legal and irrevocable inheritance.

Here is what Paul is saying –

The true believer – the one who has the Holy Spirit living inside of him.

They have become full-fledged sons and daughters with all of the rights that go with being sons and daughters.

16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

There are two things that should be telling us that we are God's children.

1. The Holy Spirit.
2. Our spirit.

Under Jewish law, truth was established by the testimony of 2 or 3 witnesses.

Both God's Spirit & our spirit unite to confirm that we truly are born again & have become the sons & daughters of God.

And He does this through the work that He is doing in our life

Everything we have been looking in our text this morning.

Victory over the flesh

The Leading of the Spirit

Intimacy with our Daddy

17 and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with [Him], that we may also be glorified together.

I want you to look at the order here that Paul lays out for us.

First comes suffering with Him – then, we will be glorified with Him

Suffering comes from following Jesus.

What will you do with those difficulties?

Will you run from them?

Will you stop following Jesus?

Jesus is looking for people who will follow Him, even when it causes tough times in their own lives.

"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. {24} "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.

And the thing regarding suffering is that sometimes it is those things that are harming us on the outside – the things that God sometimes uses to change us on the inside.

And the glory that belongs to Jesus will be yours and mine – by grace.

Turn to Hebrews 11

We are going to end with this -

[Heb 11:24-26 NKJV] 24 By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25 choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, 26 esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.

Moses had it made in Egypt

He gave it all up

choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God

“Moses, was it worth it?”

Not only did Moses experience God's presence and power

He experienced His deliverance

Was it worth it? Absolutely

And loved ones – this is why Paul invites us to walk in the Spirit.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

An Old Dead guy – CS Lewis

All that we call human history--money, poverty, ambition, war, prostitution, classes, empires, slavery--[is] the long terrible story of man trying to find something other than God which will make him happy.

The bible says that peace and joy and hope is found in Christ

And an absence of peace and joy and hope is found apart from Christ.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

