

GOD'S EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION
Romans 8:1-17

BIG IDEA: JESUS PAID IT ALL—ALL TO HIM I OWE

INTRODUCTION:

1. Not a single imperative in chapter 8. *Paul is talking about life in the Spirit, life in which the Spirit guides so constantly that there is no need for a string of commandments. (Leon Morris)*
2. **Griffith Thomas:** *as Godet says, the chapter begins with “no condemnation,” and ends with “no separation,” while in between, as C. A. Fox remarks, there is “no defeat.”¹*

I. FREED FROM CONDEMNATION (Verses 1-4)

*Therefore, there is now **no condemnation** for those who are in Christ Jesus,² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life **set me free** from the law of sin and death.³ For what **the law was powerless** to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, **God did** by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man,⁴ in order that the righteous **requirements of the law might be fully met in us**, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.*

NOTE: **Therefore** refers to the past several chapters of argument about the condemnation of law.

This word **condemnation** [*katakrino*], occurs only here and in **5:16, 18**,

Romans 5:16 & 18 *Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought **condemnation**, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification.*

¹⁸ *Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was **condemnation** for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men.*

1. I am freed from eternal condemnation by my grace/faith standing **in Christ Jesus**. (Verse 1)
 - **Verse 2 because** is important—our freedom is because of what **Christ** did for us.
 - **Romans 6:11** *In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God **in Christ Jesus**.*
 - **Romans 6:23** *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life **in Christ Jesus our Lord**.*
 - **Expression “in Christ” used 11X in Romans.**
 - 21X in I, II Corinthians
 - 53X in other Pauline Epistles

NOTE also the expression **Through Christ** in **Romans 8:2** because **through Christ** Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.

2. I am freed by a new “life” principle (law). (Verse 2)—as opposed to the old sin/death principle (law)

*“To run and work the law commands,
Yet gives me neither feet nor hands;
But better news the gospel brings:
It bids me fly, and gives me wings.”*

Also **Manson:**

*Moses' law has right but not might;
Sin's law has might but not right;
The law of the Spirit has both right and might.*

3. The impotence of the Law had nothing to do with intrinsic defectiveness—it had everything to do with human weakness (“sinful nature”=“flesh” (*sarx*))

¹ Quoted in Leon Morris, 299.

4. God solved our spiritual impasse by sending *his own Son*⁵
- a. *in the likeness of sinful man*—lit., “sinful flesh” (*sarkos*).
 - Jesus was not sinful, but his humanity was as **real** as ours. He was everything we are, yet without sin. He was subject to injury, fatigue, sorrow, and death.
 - **Hebrews 4:15** *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are-- yet was without sin.*
 - b. *to be a sin offering—lit., for sin*—the word “offering” is supplied.
 - KJV, *and for sin*
 - NAS, *and as an offering for sin*
 - NRS, *and to deal with sin,*
 - WHO, *ai. peri. a`marti,aj*
 - **2 Corinthians 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.*
 - c. *And so he condemned sin in sinful man*—instead of me being condemned, the instrument of condemnation is condemned.
 - d. Let’s think about that perennial speed trap on Highway 2 between Bickford Ave. and the Trestle. You come wheeling around that broad curve and there he is...an officer pointing a radar gun at you and he waves you over on the shoulder. He got you at 75 MPH in a 60 zone. He writes out the ticket to you while you’re kicking yourself at this stupid waste of your hard-earned money. But then wonder of wonders, the officer whites out your name on the ticket and writes in the name of his son. He says to you, “*You did break the law and there must be a fine. But you’re free to go. My son will pay your fine and nothing will go on your driving record.*” Maybe you’re thinking, “That’s a dumb story! Nobody would do that for me!” Oh yes, somebody did. God did. That’s exactly what God did.
5. **Romans 8:4** *in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.*
- a. Note the **passivity** of me. I didn’t meet the demands of the law. They were met in me.
 - b. Who accomplished that? God did. It **started** with my **grace-based/faith-triggered justification**.
 - *Sinful nature=flesh (sarx).*
 - c. The statement about life-style is a clarification of who the “us” is. It is redeemed people who are being **practically sanctified**, i.e., *living according to the Spirit*.
 - Notice that what God did for us in Christ not only meets the demands of the punishment, but meets the demands of daily living too “**according to the Spirit**” (**verse 4**)
 - God has not only done something about getting us **out of Hell** and **into Heaven**, He has done something about getting us **out of sinfulness** and **into holiness** right now. That’s what these verses are about.
 - In other words, *When we came to know him and to receive the indwelling Holy Spirit we were able to attain a standard we could never reach in our own strength.—Leon Morris.*

II. FREED FROM MIND-CONTROL (Verses 5-8)

⁵ *Those who live according to the sinful nature have their **minds set** on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their **minds set** on what the Spirit desires.* ⁶ *The mind of sinful man is **death**, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is **life and peace**;* ⁷ *the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.* ⁸ *Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.*

1. Vocabulary:

- *Sinful nature=sarx*
 - *That nature=sarx*
2. *Those who live according to=*my behavior steers my mind. What I do with my body dictates what I do with my mind.
 - a. Now Jesus said that the converse is also true: **Luke 6:45** *The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks.*
 - b. Ditto the psalmist: **Psalm 119:11** *I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.*
 3. *Sinful man/Sinful/Sinful nature=*all of these are *Sarkos*
 4. Verse 6, *Mind=* **fro, nhsij**, e w j , h ` as relating to the action of thinking; (1) *way of thinking, wisdom, outlook* (LU 1.17); (2) *intelligence, understanding* (EP 1.8)
 5. Verse 7 and 8: Note the attributes of flesh:
 - a. Hostile to God: **evcqro, j**, a , , o , n used of personal enemies, national foes, enemies of God; (1) active *hostile, hating* (MT 13.28); substantively *enemy, adversary* (LU 19.27); (2) passive *hated, regarded as an enemy* (RO 11.28)
 - b. Non-submissive to God: [NOT] **u`pota, ssw** 1aor. **u`pe, taxa**; pf. pass. **u`pote, tagmai**; 2aor. pass. **u`peta, ghn**; 2fut. pass. **u`potagh, somai**; (1) active *subject, bring under firm control, subordinate* (RO 8.20b); (2) passive with a middle sense; (a) with a component of compulsion *have to submit* (LU 10.17, 20); (b) with a component of voluntary submission *be submissive, obey, subject oneself* (LU 2.51; EP 5.21) **[Here it is indicative, present, passive]**
 - c. Powerless to submit to God: [NOT] **du, namai** impf. **hvduna, mhn** and **evduna, mhn**; fut. **dunh, somai**; 1aor. **hvdunh, qhn** and **hvduna, sqhn**; of capacity or ability *be able, be capable of, can, have power to*; with an infinitive supplied or implied of what one is able to do (MT 3.9; 16.3)
 - d. Incapable of pleasing God.
 6. Who are these people? Clearly they are unregenerate people.

III. FREED FROM PHYSICAL DEATH (Verses 9-11)

⁹ You, [emphatic] however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. [and he does] And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, **your body is dead [physical death] because of sin**, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness [justification and the life that follows]. ¹¹ And if [and he does] the Spirit of him who **raised Jesus from the dead** is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will **also give life to your mortal bodies** through his Spirit, who lives in you.

- Earlier this fall a young Christian woman called radio talk host Dr. Laura Schlessinger about how her fiancé had begun attending a church that did not affirm Christian orthodoxy. J. B. Cheaney reports that “When pressed for an example she answered that her fiancé’s church did not affirm the Resurrection. ‘Tell me something,’ Dr. Laura replied, ‘I’m a nice Jewish girl and I don’t understand all these ins and outs. What difference does the Resurrection make?’ It was a fair question from an unbeliever - but the caller couldn’t answer it.
 “Dr. Laura went on to explain that the particulars of any faith are not so important as the kind of behavior it inspires.” (“But Can It Save?” by J. B. Cheaney in World magazine, September 20, 1997, p. 34)
- **Romans 1:4**, “declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.”
I Corinthians 15:17, “And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.”
Philippians 3:10, “I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection...”

1. “**Apart from** the anticipatory mention of the Spirit in **Romans 5:5...[and 1:4 and 7:6,** the new way of the Spirit,] this is the **first mention** in the Epistle where the Spirit of God enters the argument. It is **no accident** that with His entry there is **no further talk of defeat**. The warfare between the two natures still goes on, but where the Holy Spirit is in control the old nature is compelled to give way.” (FF Bruce, p. 160)
 - The Spirit appears **21X** here in **Romans 8—only 2 of those do not refer to the Holy Spirit**. [only **6X** more in the rest of Romans].
2. The truth about the Holy Spirit in our lives:
 - a. **If you’re saved, you have the presence Holy Spirit**, 8:9B, “And if anyone does not **have the Spirit** of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.”
 - b. **If you’re saved, you have the power of the Holy Spirit working in you**, 8:9A, “You, however, are **controlled** not by the sinful nature but **by the Spirit**,”
 - c. **If you’re saved, you have the passion of the Holy Spirit in you**, 8:5, “but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their **minds set** on what the Spirit **desires**.”
 - d. **If you’re saved, you have the posture of the Holy Spirit in you**, 8:6-7, “6 The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; 7 the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not **submit to God’s law**, nor can it do so.”
 - e. **If you’re saved, you have the promise (of resurrection) of the Holy Spirit in you**, 8:11 he who raised Christ from the dead will also **give life to your mortal bodies** through his Spirit, who lives in you.
 - f. **If you’re saved, you have the pathfinding of the Holy Spirit in you**, 8:14 those who are **led** by the Spirit of God are **sons of God**.
 - g. **If you’re saved, you have the profession of the Holy Spirit in you**, 8:16 The Spirit himself **testifies** with our spirit that we are God’s children.

IV. FREED FROM OBLIGATION TO THE SINFUL NATURE (Verses 12-17)

¹² Therefore, brothers, we have an **obligation**-- but it is **not** to the sinful nature, to live according to it. ¹³ For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you **put to death** [present tense=continuing activity] the misdeeds of the body, you will live, ¹⁴ because those who are led by the Spirit of God are **sons of God**. ¹⁵ For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of **sonship**. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” ¹⁶ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s **children**. ¹⁷ Now if we are children, then we are **heirs**-- **heirs** of God and **co-heirs** with Christ, if indeed we share in his **sufferings** in order that we may also share in his **glory**.

1. We Must Remember Our **Privilege**
 - a. We are in the family of God
 - That means that we have the honor of being called by our Heavenly Father’s name. We are known as His **children** (v. 16).
 - **Verse 16**, *The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children*—Probably “to” rather than “with.” *There is a direct operation of the Holy Spirit on our spirit.* —**Leon Morris**.
 - We have the privilege of **intimacy in prayer**, Abba = “daddy” in Aramaic. (v. 15)
 - We have the **status of adopted sons**. In **8:15**, it actually says, “*the Spirit of adoption.*”
 - In Greek and Romans law, adoption meant that a child was “granted the full rights and privileges of sonship in a family to which one does not belong by nature.” (**Leon Morris**)
 - *The Spirit does not cause us to cry “I am God’s son”, but “God is my Father.” The believer looks at God rather than contemplating himself.*—**Leon Morris**.
 - We are **heirs** (v. 17, “*heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ.*”)

- *Not so much ownership as relationship that he has in mind.*—**Leon Morris**

b. These aren't just empty words. God has unbelievably enriched us. And now we are to live up to the privileges and advantages he has given to us. We must not be so foolish as the Israelites who squandered their privilege, **Jeremiah 2:13**, "13 *My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.*"

2. **We Must Discharge Our Obligation**

Well, have I given you and me any hope? Here we are ending up with obligation, and it's one that includes suffering.

"If you think of this world as a place intended simply for our happiness, you find it quite intolerable: think of it as a place of training and correction and it's not so bad.

"Imagine a set of people all living in the same building. Half of them think it is a hotel, the other half think it is a prison. Those who think it a hotel might regard it as quite intolerable, and those who thought it was a prison might be deceived that it was really surprisingly comfortable. So that what seems the ugly doctrine is one that comforts and strengthens you in the end. The people who try to hold an optimistic view of this world would become pessimists: the people who hold a pretty stern view of it become optimistic."²

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² C. S. Lewis, *God in the Dock* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), p. 52.