

Chapter 8:1-6

v 1 “[There is] therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

It appears the underlined portion above was introduced by copyist of the Scripture in error. The point of this portion is our new position as being “in Christ Jesus.” This new place before God “in Christ Jesus” is a result of faith, not how we walk. How we walk will be addressed later (see v.4). We are no longer seen by God as belonging to Adam’s fallen race, but now we are in Christ Jesus.

v 2 “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.”

The “law of the Spirit of life” is in contrast to “the law of sin and death.” In the 7th and 8th chapters of Romans we have “law” mentioned some 20 times; 16 times in Rom. 7 alone. It is important to see that the word “law” does not always refer to the ten commandments. Sometimes a principle of some sort is referred to. Expressions such as “law of her husband”, “law in my members”, “law of sin”, “sin’s law”, are examples of law not meaning the ten commandments.

When I speak of “a principle,” I mean like a principle of life, you plant a seed, it dies, and then produces food. This is the principle of life. Life from death.

The Spirit of God, who raised Christ from amongst the dead (see v.11), also quickens us. He is thus “The Spirit of life”, a law or principle of life. Christ died to that sphere where “law” attached itself. He was made a curse for us by dying on the tree.

Law, any law, has no force or application to a dead person. But, because we too are seen as raised with Christ, are free from the law, even law as a principle, that attached to a living man on earth. We are dead and risen too.

v 3 “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:”

The Law could not help us because it had “us” to work with, and “we” were “weak.” Christ undertook for us, by not only bearing our “sins,” but by being made “sin” for us, in our stead. “For he hath made him [to be] sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor. 5:21). But notice carefully it says the “likeness of sinful flesh,” not as sinful flesh itself.

Thus “sin” was condemned, not forgiven. Sins are forgiven, our place in Adam condemned because he fathered a fallen lost race. Thus the believer is now seen as “in” Christ, not “in” flesh or Adam.

Christ is called the last Adam so that Adam designates the head of a race. Christ (the Last Adam) heads a new race. Beyond death and all laws pertaining to the first Adam’s fallen, lost race. “And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam [was made] a quickening spirit” (1 Cor.15:45).

v 4 “That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

The righteous requirements of the law represented God’s standard for man. While the believer has died to the law, in order to be married to Christ, (in the figure given in chapter 7), still, God’s standard for righteousness has not been lowered for the believer. A believer who now walks, “after the Spirit,” that new principle of life, will not break the moral requirements of the law, though now our standard of walk is not the law, but Christ. “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, [so] walk ye in him” (Col.2:6). We do not walk “after the law” for that rule ended in our death.

v 5 “For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.”

The question to be answered here is “Is the Christian “after the flesh” or “after the Spirit”?”

Life “after the flesh” ends in death. Life “after the Spirit” begins with death, in the quickening (the imparting of life to something that has died) power of the Spirit. We now have a life, beyond the power of death. This life is, of course, made possible for us because Christ our Risen Head, has died, and now is alive ever more. “I [am] He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen” (Rev.1:18).

We might add that one of “the things of the flesh,” is law as a governing principle. These laws pertain to the first man as fallen.

v 6 “For to be carnally minded [is] death; but to be spiritually minded [is] life and peace.”

“Carnally minded” refers to our minds as belonging to “the flesh” morally. “Spiritually minded” is our minds as formed by the Spirit of God in connection with our new life as quickened from among the dead.

I use the word “morally” because until the rapture we are in our bodies here on earth. They still bear the image of the first Adam. But our bodies are not a moral entity, they are not “vile” bodies. Rather, they are simply bodies of “humiliation”. “Who shall change our vile body” (Php 3:21) is a body that is dying, and subject to decay and death. This does not make our bodies “vile” in a moral sense, but rather simply subject to humiliation and age.

vv 7,8 “Because the carnal mind [is] enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God”

Here the thought goes back to which man we are identified with, Adam or Christ? If Adam is our head we are “in the flesh” (verse 8). His family has a mind at enmity against God. The carnal mind as here is the mind of man as departed from God and at enmity against God.

Sometimes as in 1 Cor. carnal is used to relate to earthly things, not in themselves bad, but not related to heaven either. (Not something spiritual.)

Paul there writes to the Corinthians regarding his needs in this life “If we have sown to you spiritual things, [is it a] great [thing] if we shall reap your carnal things?” (1 Cor. 9:11, JND tr.). “Spiritual things” which Paul and others had sown, should have wrought a care of them by means of reaping necessities of this life on earth, from those who had reaped spiritual things from the sowers.

Also, in speaking to the Corinthians themselves he writes, “For ye are yet carnal. For whereas [there are] among you emulation and strife, are ye not carnal, and walk according to man?” (1 Cor. 3:3, JND tr.). Their practical life bore the image of Adam’s fallen race. This is rebuked by Paul. The Corinthians were told “For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor.2:16). Man’s carnal mind would not do the things of God.

v 9 “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his”.

Paul had just told the Roman saints, “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death” (vs.2). All spiritual life from God comes by the work of the Holy Spirit, through Christ and because of Christ’s work of redemption.

Our life “in the flesh” comes to us by means of our parents. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (Jn.3:6). As Christians, we are no longer seen by God as being born of the flesh belonging to fallen Adam’s race. “The Spirit of Christ” here brings forth the thought of Christ in resurrection, as raised by the Spirit. It is Christ as raised Who now dwells in us.

Sometimes people speak of receiving the Spirit as a second blessing. Here He is presented as the source of life, not as a gift after life has been given.

v 10 “And if Christ [be] in you, the body [is] dead because of sin; but the Spirit [is] life because of righteousness”.

We know our body is not dead, but it is as to its use for sin. Sin had formerly had dominion over us, so much so our bodies were at that time called a body of sin. (that is under the control of sin. “Knowing this, that our old man has been crucified with [him], that the body of sin might be

annulled, that we should no longer serve sin” (Rom.6:6). That character of our body is no longer seen, but rather as having Christ in us. The “old man” has been crucified.

v 11 “But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you”.

Even though we have spiritual life in Christ, and that too, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, our bodies at present remain mortal, (capable of dying). But even in that aspect of our bodies, as the Spirit raised Christ’s mortal body from among the dead, He will also raise us, should we die before the rapture. “Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep (die) but we shall all be changed” (1 Cor.15:51). “The dead in Christ shall rise first” (1 Thess.4:16). Resurrection pertains only to the body that has died though it refers to the same kind of body that those who do not die, are changed into at the rapture.

“Then we which are alive [and] remain shall be caught (raptured) up together” (1Thess.4:17) “Caught up” means to “snatch out” or “away from” something. Strictly speaking, I suppose “caught up” (raptured) would be for the living saints, while the rising “first” would refer to the sleeping (dead) saints bodies. However, it is all in a “twinkling” (atom) of time. “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (1 Cor.15:52).

vv 12,13 “Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live”.

Having been born of the Spirit, we are no longer seen by God, as being in the “flesh.” (That is as belonging to Adam’s fallen race.) When it speaks of mortifying the deeds of the body, it is a reference to our condition when we had not the Spirit (vs. 9). The “deeds” we are to mortify, or put to death, are evil deeds. “Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds” (Col.3:9). The believer now is exhorted “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, [do] all in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Col.3:17).

The true believer is not seen as living after the “flesh”. That is “flesh” is no longer the origin of our life, nor in control of our bodies. The body now belongs to the Spirit. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (Jn.3:6.). However, as to our practical lives if we live according to the flesh we shall reap its consequences in this life. This will be death in some form. Christianity is real as Christ is real. If our lives do not demonstrate fruits of the Spirit, we might well question ourselves as having life by the Spirit.

vv 14,15 “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father”.

We might ask, why does the Word here speak so often of the Spirit of God? He is mentioned some 14 times in this chapter alone. The Lord Jesus Who made all blessing from God possible, lived His life down here as a man, under the direction of the Spirit. While Christ and His Work makes our blessing from God, it is the Workings of the Spirit in us, and for us, that brings the reality of life, eternal life, to us. We are born of the Spirit, through the Word. If Christ is our Life, our life will be under the same direction as His was as a Man on earth. Truly “led by the Spirit”. “And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness” (Luke 4:1).

vv 16-17 “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with [him], that we may be also glorified together”.

The Spirit of God delights in witnessing to our spirits that we are now the children of God. So much is ours, if born of the Spirit, we now are heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ. He has done this. “Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will” (Eph.1:5). Much to cause us great joy!

Why then speak of suffering “with Him”? Note here it is not suffering for Him, but with Him. I believe it is connected with what follows. The whole creation groaning and travailing in pain, creatures as well. All of these sufferings experienced by others caused Christ to suffer here as a man, led by the Spirit. He felt deeply what was lost through the sin of man. He wept at graves, groaning in Spirit, He sighed, a true Man of Sorrows, acquainted with grief. The believer suffers with Christ in these sorrows, of this present fallen sorrowing creation. This is what our new nature does here while waiting for the glory which shall be revealed. Paul’s sufferings for the sake of the gospel is not what is brought before us here.

v 18 “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time [are] not worthy [to be compared] with the glory which shall be revealed in (or to) us.”

“This present time,” is filled with suffering. A sphere of glory awaits the believer. The unbeliever by contrast, seeks to make “this time” a time of “glory,” and free from “suffering.” We groan in spirit, over “this time” the world “glories” in its accomplishments in “this time.” We have both the Mind and Heart of Christ, as having Him as our life, we suffer with Him.

v 19 “For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.”

When we are manifested to be the sons of God, having our new bodies, suitable to the scene of glory which also will be revealed, even the creatures, (lower creation) will be set free from their sufferings.

vv 20,21 “For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected [the same] in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.”

The animal kingdom did not sin, but rather Adam, their responsible head did. Death, and suffering were the results to them. Not as caused by their own will, as Adam exercised his will in disobedience. Yet it is from Adam’s race, (mankind) God has chosen to make some of them children of God”.

When we, as children of God experience the glory which shall be revealed to us, the lower creation will also be set free from their condition of “vanity.”

What a kind Saviour we have! When Noah came forth on a cleansed earth, it says “God remembered Noah, and all the animals,” (Gen. 8:1). Even the creatures will share in our “hope” of glorious liberty.

v 22 “For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.”

It is well if we do not add to the suffering of creatures more than that which man has already subjected them by his sin, to suffer.

v 23 “And not only [they], but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, [to wit], the redemption of our body.” (23)

While here present in the body, we are as to our body, identified with the groaning creation. Groaning as a result of sin having entered it. The Lord has not yet changed our bodies (see Php. 3:21). “Who (Christ) shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body” (Php. 3:21). We learn also that healing of our body should not be demanded of God now, for that is reserved for a coming day.

This is not to say we should not desire or pray for healing, but we are not promised the healing of our body now. “Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth” (3 John 1:2). Apparently Gaius was a sick man.

vv 24-26 “For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, [then] do we with patience wait for [it]. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we

ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”

“Saved by hope” has a special reference to our bodies. The body is the only thing men can see with their eyes. “Hope” seen, is not “hope.” This shows the redemption of our bodies is not yet completed. Our bodies die. Until death, or the rapture for the believer, we find in this life that our bodies are marked by infirmities, sometimes causing us to groan, and even the Spirit is spoken of as “making intercession for us with groanings.” Notice it does not say “with healing.” We are saved in hope, and that hope, (the redemption of our bodies) has not yet happened.

v 27 “And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what [is] the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to [the will of] God.”

The Spirit knows the purposes of God in allowing His dear people to suffer afflictions. We might pray for healing, which is not a wrong thing to do, but the Spirit knows what God is seeking to accomplish in the believer’s life, and in the life of others also. He intercedes for us according to the will of God, whatever that will might be. We do not always know the will of God, the Spirit does.

v 28 “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to [his] purpose.”

There are many things ,(especially so in afflictions) that we do not know why they happen. But, blessed thought, one thing we always do know is that God works all things for our good. Oh loved ones we can say with David of old times, “I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth [all things] for me” (Ps.57:2).

v 29 “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate [to be] conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.”

Verse 28 ended with “according to his purpose. Here in verse 29 we find His ultimate purpose for us. Conformed to the image of His Son. And that for the purpose of Christ being the Firstborn among many brethren. We are, by God, brought into Christ’s family, as His brethren.

This is speaking of Christ as a Man in resurrection, the Head of a new creation, beyond the power of death, and all of the effects of sin. This wonderful work of God, our Father, conforming us to the image of His Son, begins now in this life, and trials of various sorts may be used in this work. But it is for our good, because it works towards our conformity to Christ.

Ultimately this work will be finished when we are with him having a glorious body like unto Christ’s own, in resurrection. Loved ones, consider the sufferings of Christ in His own body in order to make this possible for us. “Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate” (Heb.13:12). “Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh” (1 Peter 4:1).

v 30 “Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”

This verse takes us from God’s own plan for us before we ever existed, until completed. From our predestination to our glorification. “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will” (Eph.1:4,5).

But may we ever remember it is for the glory of Christ. May His glory, even now be our earnest pursuit. “When He shall come to be glorified in (not by) His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day” (2 Thess.1:10).

vv 31,32 “What shall we then say to these things? If God [be] for us, who [can be] against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”

A believer’s portion is so blessed. Here we may not, and most likely will not think it so well for us. True faith in Christ sets the whole world against us, but the apostle simply puts all in comparison with God, and states, if He is for us, who can be against us. The proof of God being for

us is in the fact that He spared not His own Son to bring us into this blessed relationship with Himself. We tend too often to judge God's goodness to us by how things are going for us in this life, not thinking about the eternal consequences of things.

"All things" of verse 28, some of which are adversity are included in the "all things" of our verse which are "freely" given. "Freely" carries the thought of kindness towards us. Oh how kind He is, especially in view of how man rebelled against Him, and His Son. With the gift of His Son, He has also included all things.

vv 33,34 "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? [It is] God that justifieth. Who [is] he that condemneth? [It is] Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

We are eternally identified with Christ, and His value to God. We are justified by God because of Him. Christ's death is the measure of God's love.

Christ is not dead now, and in His resurrection we are identified with Him. "And hath raised [us] up together, and made [us] sit together in heavenly [places] in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6). For someone to lay something to our charge now, they must fault Christ and His work, for that is what enables us to be called "God's elect." We had nothing to do with that., our acceptance is in His Beloved. "He hath made us accepted in the Beloved" (Eph.1:6). God is truly for us, and it all ends there.

vv 35,36 "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? [shall] tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."

All of the things mentioned here would cause us to judge that we have been separated from the love of God. But Paul is looking at all of these things as being that which Christ in His love for us went through. He said, in truth, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? [why art thou so] far from helping me, [and from] the words of my roaring?" (Psa.22). In those extreme conditions, our Saviour could say; "And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost" (Luke 23:46).

If we are to be conformed to His image in glory down here, it is possible we might be called upon to share in His sufferings also. But those sufferings cannot separate us from His love. "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (1 Pet.2:21).

I write these comments in fear, knowing how little I know about this subject in the experiences of my own life. Others of you do know however from your experiences and if possible it would be much preferred by me, were you able to speak to us of them.

vv 37-39 "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

But then it is well to know the one whom God chose to pen these holy words of God, did experience what he wrote. It was part of Paul's calling. "For I will shew him (Paul) how great things he must suffer for My name's sake" (Acts 9:16) and it was this same one who wrote verse 18, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time [are] not worthy [to be compared] with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

May the Example for all sufferings the saints may be called to endure sustain our hearts this little while we are called to be here for Him. "ye endured a great fight of afflictions...ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions" (Heb.10:32,33). "For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb.10:37).

This concludes what we might call the doctrinal part of Romans, the rest of the epistle gives more of the effects that gospel produces in lives. How precious is the "Gospel of God" (Rom.1:1).