

Romans 8:1

This morning we find ourselves at the *transitional point* in Paul's letter... Everything Paul has said up to this point, he has been expounding on his opening statement in chapter 1...

¹⁶For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. ¹⁷For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. ¹⁸For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

The first 7 chapters of Romans Paul dedicates to explaining how Christ saves us from sin... Chapter 8 on, Paul speaks to what it means to “*live by faith...*”

Paul now moves away from his discussion on the **Law**, and moves into a new discussion, that of the **flesh** and the **spirit**... from the **Law of Moses**, to the **LIFE we now have in Christ Jesus**...

The Flesh... Paul describes those “*In Christ*” as those who “*walk not after the flesh...*” Which becomes what I think, possibly THE greatest definition of Christianity.

T: To “*walk in the flesh*” means to serve God in one's own strength and power.

A reference to the “*Righteousness*” that is produced by one's submission to the Law!

Through our identification with Christ death on the Cross... we are “*no longer under the Law*”... Which simply means, that we no longer seek to please God by “*our keeping*” the commandments prescribed in the Law.

T: The ministry of the Law was to “*Manifest*” the **SIN** within us!
Now listen very closely... it is extremely important that we understand this...

In 6:13~25... Paul explains how the Law “*opened his eyes*” to the SIN that was in him... He found that as he submitted himself in trying to obey the Law, he found a tremendous struggle. He “*longed*” to fulfill the Law with all his heart, he longed to fulfill the righteousness in the Law, but only to find that the harder he tried the more he failed. By “*Stirring up*” the **evil desires** within his heart, the Law fulfilled its work in Paul's life! To the end, that *his eyes were opened* to the SIN in his heart...

So much so... that out of this struggle with the Law, Paul saw as it were, two different people living inside him!

*¹⁵For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. ¹⁶If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. ¹⁷Now then it is no more I that do it, **but sin that dwells in me.***

There was the “*Real Paul*”... What Paul refers to as “*I*”, the “*Real Me*”... And then there was this “*other life*” that he saw within himself, one that opposed him... One speaks of “*Paul's Soul*” and the other is “**SIN**”. Long story short, through submitting himself to the Law, Paul's eyes were opened to the reality that “*His Soul*” was in bondage to “*SIN!*”

¹⁷Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me.

In verse 18, he assigns a name to this “*other life*” that he now sees in himself...

In verse 18, Paul says... ¹⁸*For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwells no good thing:*

This “*other life*”...this “*Sin*” that he sees within himself...he refers to as the “*FLESH...*”
A term that is very important to understand, for Paul uses it over and over in his writings... Its not a reference to the “body” itself, for the body is not evil, *the body is neutral*. Our bodies are neither good nor bad, for the body is simply the dwelling place, the abode of the soul.

Philippians 2, scriptures teach that Jesus...who was God...
...made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: ⁸And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

The “*Body*” is not the problem... Jesus came to earth and dwelled in one of these for a time...

It is extremely important to understand that Paul is not making reference to this shell, this skin. Because when we hear the word “*flesh*”, we often think of our bodies, our skin...“*Flesh & bones.*” The *Flesh* that Paul is speaking of here is that of our “*Fallen Nature*” that lives with in us... Far from being righteous, far from being Holy, far from being good...Paul says it is “*Pure Evil!*” Utterly opposed to the spiritual laws of God! Paul goes as far as to say that it is “*totally depraved*”, that there’s NOTHING GOOD in it!

¹⁸*For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwells no good thing:*

I cannot stress the importance of understanding that...

The “*Perception*” that most have of “*SIN*” is that of occasionally doing something wrong! We often classify *SIN* as drinking, cussing, etc... But

I’m convinced that herein lies the answer as to why we do not see the moving of the “*Holy Ghost*” as recorded in the days of the early church... I believe that out of “*ignorance*” to the scripture, that much of what we see as far as service to God is done so in our own strength and power!

I’m afraid that what many churches are preaching today is little more than a “*Morality Gospel...*” Exhorting people to “*Straighten up their lives...*” Exhorting them to “*do what is right...*” When the true gospel message is the “*exact opposite!*” It teaches that every individual is in bondage to *SIN*, a fleshly nature that hasn’t the slightest possibility of producing the first fiber of righteous, that can’t produce “*any good thing!*” The gospel declares this truth, and then calls for the individual to *TURN* from it, to completely abandon the *Flesh*, and yield ourselves to the “*POWER of God*”, to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit!

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