

I Owe My Life to Christ

(Romans 8:1~14)

¹²Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. ¹³For 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. ¹⁴For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

I want to speak to you this morning, on the subject, of being **debtors**... Paul begins this passage by reminding us, that “we are **debtors**,” ¹²Therefore, brethren, we are debtors... Now everyone knows what a “**debtor**” is, right? It means we are “*Indebted*” to someone, it means we “*Owe*” someone. Each month, Teri and I are reminded that we are debtors... Each month we are graciously reminded, that we are indebted to someone for “*serious rendered*...” I am so thankful to God for all the blessings of everyday life that we enjoy... things like, running water... Electricity... I thank God for lights, water heater and a good hot shower. I thank God for food we have to eat, I thank God for the home we have. I am thankful to God for all these things... BUT... these things do not come *without a price*. And as I said, each month, Teri and I receive a “*Friendly Reminder*” in the mail, *from the source of those blessings*, reminding us what we OWE for those blessings. I am indebted to them for those *services that were rendered* to me by them. I saw a license plate on a vehicle one time that really put it all in perspective, that pretty much describes our day to day life, it said, “*I owe, I owe, so of to work I go*...”

Well here, Paul is declaring the fact, that given what Christ has done for us, that we are greatly indebted to Him! Given how He has taken our sins upon Himself, given how He’s delivered us from bondage to sin, and the Judgment and wrath of God, on our sin... we literally “*Owe are lives to Him!*” That’s what I’ve entitled this series, “*I Owe My Life to Christ*.” Because in the context of the passage, Paul is talking about the fact that given what Christ has done for us, “*we owe it to Him*,” to live our lives to Him. Simply put, “*If Christ died for me, the least I can do is live for Him*.” That’s basically the exact thing Paul says later on here in Romans twelve, when he says, “*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service*.” The call there is to present our bodies a “*living sacrifice*,” which portrays laying “*our life*” on the altar, as act of worship, so that our bodies might be used solely for His will and His purposes. Which Paul says there, is our “*reasonable service*.” That word “*reasonable*” is the Greek word from which we get “*logical*.” In other words, Paul is saying that given Jesus laid down his life for us, to lay our lives down in service to Christ, *is the only logical thing to do. Knowing He laid down His life for us, the least I can do is live for Him!*

¹²Therefore, brethren, **we are debtors**... We literally “*Owe our lives to Christ*”... knowing what He has done for us, we should not live one more day to the self-centered, self-serving desires of this sinful flesh, but rather we are to take up the cross of Christ, and day by day, put those desires to death, that we might live our lives in humble submission to Him, to His will, to His desires...

Now last week, we spent most of our time in chapter seven, where we looked at what Paul was referring to here by “**the flesh**.” And what we found there was, that by “*the flesh*,” Paul was referring to the “*Sinful nature*” that we all received from Adam at the fall. As some of you remember from that study, chapter seven is where Paul gives us “*his personal testimony*” of the encounter he had with God’s law, and how God used it in his life, to open his eyes to the “**Sin**” that was in him, that he would go on to refer to as the “*flesh*.” And as most of you remember, that is the sole purpose of the Law, it was given to reveal the sin in us, to expose the “*sinful nature*” we all acquired through the fall. Once it’s done that, there’s nothing more the Law can do, other than point us to Christ... Look at the last statement Paul makes here, after having his eyes opened to wretched, sinful condition... ²⁴*O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* ²⁵*I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord... So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.* Who will save us from our hopeless condition... Jesus Christ!

That brings us to where I want to pick up this morning, in chapter eight... where Paul makes what has to be what is possibly the greatest statement we could ever hear... *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

Beloved, did you hear that? ...*“There is therefore now **no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus**... Praise the Lord! We are no longer condemned! Prior to our coming to know Christ...we WERE CONDEMNED! We were the objects of God’s wrath! But on that cross, Christ endured the full weight of God’s wrath on sin...our sin! He was condemned, so that I would no longer be condemned...“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus... Praise the Lord! It’s apparent to me, that we don’t truly understand that. I say that, because if we did, we’d never stop praising His name.*

Now, let’s look at this passage... Right off the bat, Paul kind of sets the tone here, for what he’ll be speaking to throughout this chapter, *“the flesh and the Spirit.”* *‘There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

Over these next fourteen verses, Paul’s focus is centered on those two things, *“the flesh and the Spirit”*. The *“flesh,”* a reference to the *“sinful nature”* we all received at the fall, the nature or spirit we were all born with and walked, prior to coming to know Jesus. And then the *“Spirit,”* a reference to *“Christ.”* The simplest and easiest way to understand what Paul is saying here is, that there’s two kinds of people in the world, those who don’t know Christ, who are walking in the flesh...and then there’s those who do know Him, that no longer walk in the flesh, but in the Spirit. Outside of Christ, all men walk in the flesh, the good, the bad, the religious, the indifferent, whatever, they all walk in submission to the *“flesh,”* they all walk in accordance to their *human nature*. That’s why religion can’t help you. Every other religion in the world, calls for its observers to submit their lives to its teachings. That’s not the case with Christianity, we do not follow a creed or a certain set of commandments, but rather, the call of Christ is to turn from yourself, your own wills and desires, (which are of the flesh)...to follow Him, and His desires. Listen, all who do that, are no longer condemned! Whereas on the contrary, all who continue to walk in the flesh, are condemned. Understood, there is only one hope for man, and that is, to believe on the gospel, and repent, and take up his cross, and follow Jesus Christ in this life. Anyone who does not do that, will perish...all who do, are no longer condemned.

Here in these first four verses, Paul explains how it is that we are no longer condemned, by pointing to how Christ set us free, by his death on the cross. *‘There is therefore now no condemnation **to them which are in Christ Jesus, those who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*** *²For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. ³For 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: ⁴That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

Now there’s a couple of things I want us to look at here, first being, the contrasts Paul makes of the *“two laws”* here in verse two. Paul says, *“²For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.”* Now I need you to listen closely here, so you understand what Paul is saying. His reference to *“the law of sin and death,”* is a reference to *“God’s Law.”* He refers to it as *“the law of sin and death”* because, that’s all it can produce in a man’s life. Hear what I’m saying, there’s a sense, that God’s Law, causes men to sin. You say, what, how on earth can that be? Well, it’s like this...the Law of God is holy and righteous...men are not. Man in his natural state, hasn’t the slightest hint of righteousness in him. Therefore, when men submit to God’s righteous Law, trying to *“live righteously,”* they do so in the power of the flesh, and the result is sin. So in a sense, the Law provokes men to sin, because it causes *“the flesh”* to respond. And every time he tries he falls short. That’s what sin translates to, missing the mark, falling short of the mark. What is the end result of sin? Right, death, guilt, condemnation...thus, Paul refers to it as *“the law of sin and death.”* Again, the problem is not with the Law, the Law is holy, just and good, the problem is with man, and his inability to keep the law. Paul makes this clear in his very next statement...

(Vs 3) *³For what the law could not do... What is it that the law could not do? The answer, “**deliver men from sin...and put them in right standing with God.**” (Vs 3) *³For what the law could not do...in that of delivering men from sin...and putting them in right standing with God,” ...in that it was weak through the flesh... God did, through His Son... Paul says. The key statement here is...**in that it was weak through the flesh**... Listen, Paul makes it clear, the law’s inability to deliver men from sin, and put them in right**

standing with God, is no fault of the law itself, the law itself is capable. It is the righteous standard of God, if any man kept the law, he would be deemed righteous. So the problem is not with the law, the problem is with man's inability to keep it.

Paul says... ***“For what the law could not do...make men right with God, (due to man’s inability to keep the law)...God has accomplished through His Son on the cross! God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh...That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.***

Notice, the standard hasn't changed, it is still the righteous standard of the law, the difference is, though unattainable by man's obedience to the law, due to the weakness of his flesh, it is attainable through Christ! All who turn from the law, and turn to Christ, are declared righteous before God.

Now the most important statement Paul makes in this passage, is the last part of verse three...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.*** It's crucial that we understand what Paul is saying here.

Beloved, when you understand it, there's a two-fold message being displayed in the cross... On one hand, it is a beautiful display of God's love for sinners, through the offering up of His Son. But at the same time, there's another message that rings from the cross, and that is, *“the Judgment and Wrath of God on Sin in the flesh!”* On the cross, we see Christ, who had come in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin...being crushed under the full weight of God's wrath! Beloved, that is to serve as a warning, that all who walk in the flesh, will suffer the wrath of God! The cross reveals that God will judge sin, no matter where he finds it. Even in His own Son. Listen, if God would crush His own Son...He will have no problem of crushing us sinners! Man better heed the gospel, which is a call for men to “REPENT,” to turn from the flesh, and come to Christ! All who heed the call, turning from the flesh and submit themselves to Christ, are no longer condemned, all who do not heed, and continue to walk in the flesh, are condemned, because God has condemned sin in the flesh.

In verses 5~8, Paul explains how ***the flesh is enmity with God...***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.* ⁶*For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.* ⁷*Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.* ⁸*So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.*

Simply put, these are two completely different worlds, two completely different lifestyles.

The man who walks in the flesh, is a carnally minded man, he thinks in terms of the physical, he lives for the here and now, he seeks the things of this world, and so on... Whereas, the man who walks in the spirit, is a spiritually minded man, his thoughts and sights are on things above, he lives for the eternal, he seeks the kingdom of God and His righteousness...

Paul's point is clear...everything about the flesh is contrary to God and His ways... A man may straighten up his life, conform to God's Law, try to live right...but as long as he's in the flesh, he's still condemned. *“They that are **in the flesh** ...cannot please God...”*

⁹*But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit...Paul says...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.**¹⁰*And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.* 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 dwells in you.**

Beloved, understood...there is only one hope for man... And that is, to heed the call of the gospel, and to turn from a life lived to the flesh, to live our lives to Jesus Christ as Lord. Those who walk in the flesh, those who live to the flesh, will die in the flesh. But all those who turn from the flesh, to walk in the Spirit, to live to the Spirit...not only are they NO LONGER CONDEMNED...but have the BLESSED HOPE of the resurrection! We are a blessed people, beloved!

(Vs 12)... *Therefore, we are **debtors**...not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. ¹³For 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. ¹⁴For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*

Beloved...we are “**debtors**”... “*I owe my life to Christ*”...

In closing, I just want to say...Salvation is NOT FREE... Occasionally, I see church signs that speak to the fact, that “*Salvation is Free.*” Beloved, it’s not free. First of all, it cost Christ His life...and then secondly, it costs us, our life! It is anything but free. What’s happened in our day is, people have been delivered a cheap imitation of the gospel...

Our salvation could not have cost more, for the cost was the precious life of Jesus Christ! Someone asked one time, how can you suggest, that the death of one man, can atone for the sins the entire world? The answer is, you could take all the wealth of this world, everything it has to offer, all the gold, all the silver, all the precious metals and minerals, and anything else that’s considered of value, and place along with that, all the people who are considered prominent, and of importance... Put all that on one side of the scale, and Christ Himself would outweigh all of it! Our salvation could not have cost more!

As I’ve said before, there’s not likely a better explanation of what true, biblical Christianity is, than how Paul defines it here. It is not about keeping a certain set of commandments, or keeping a creed, but rather, it’s about “*Taking up the Cross of Christ*”... Listen very closely...and I going to close. The cross is so much more, than just the place where Jesus was crucified. The cross lies at the heart of the Christian faith, the cross is a way of life! The Christian life is *a life of taking up the cross, and dying to self, a life of putting the desires of the flesh to death...so that we may live our lives to Christ.* That’s what Paul is saying here...¹³*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.* That reference to “*mortifying the deeds of the body*” is a reference to taking up the cross of Christ, and putting the desires of the flesh to death, so that we may live our lives unto Christ. Jesus put it this way, “*If any man come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.*” According to Paul, it is those, and only those who do this...that are the true children of God.