

Romans 8:5-13

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[0:00] Well, good morning. Let me invite you to take your Bibles out and join me in Romans chapter 8.! It's good to be here with you this morning. I am excited once again to have the opportunity to open this book and this particular chapter for our study today.

Our text is Romans chapter 8, verses 5 through 13. And while you're getting there and settling in, say, over the past two weeks, we have largely focused our attention on the reality that for those who are in Christ Jesus, there is therefore no longer any condemnation.

Hope your soul has been helped by that as much as mine. The penalty due our sin, if we are in Christ, has been expunged. It's been removed completely from us.

People who have placed saving faith in Jesus Christ have been justified. And Paul has taught us repeatedly in this letter that we are justified by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. Justification is a judicial declaration that our sinful record has been wiped clean. It's as if our sin never existed.

[1:14] But also that the righteousness of Christ has been granted to us. Christ's perfect life has been given to us. If you are in Christ Jesus this morning, you are no longer condemned.

And when God sees you, he sees the perfect law-keeping of Jesus. The work of justification is entirely a work of our loving kind God.

He does it on our behalf. We contribute nothing to the equation of our justification except our need of that justification.

And this is good news. If you are in Christ Jesus, God has saved you and God will keep you to the end.

Last week we saw in brief that if we have been justified, then we will be sanctified. Sanctification is the continual growth in holiness that will be experienced by all who have been justified.

[2:24] We are not saved by our working, but our faith that we're saved through, it works. We find ourselves growing in holiness as a result of our justification.

Justification. Justification necessarily leads to sanctification. Justification guarantees our sanctification. Let me remind you that Jesus says in Matthew chapter 7 and verse 18, A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit.

The point there being that the type produces the fruit. And in Luke chapter 6 and verse 45, he says, The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good.

And the evil person out of the evil treasure produces evil. So today we will see Paul make this argument. Justification guarantees sanctification.

Before I read today's text, I will also read the first four verses of chapter 8 and remind you, beloved, that this is God's word to us, written for his glory and our good.

[3:36] And so we would all do well to listen to it in order to believe its promises and obey its commands. All beginning in verse 1 of chapter 8. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do.

By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh. For those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.

For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law. Indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

[4:48] You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, then the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. So then, brothers, we are debtors not to the flesh to live according to the flesh.

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. Now there is much to consider here.

There's lots of nuance in Paul's language. So to help us in the time that we do have together for this text, and I've mentally at least committed myself not to make this into a part one and a part two, so we'll see, I've broken it into a simple two-point outline.

Number one, the Spirit of life gives us life. And number two, the Spirit of Christ exalts Christ by empowering us to live like Christ.

[6:05] And I'll repeat those soon. So firstly, the Spirit of life gives us life. We see this in verses 5-11.

Now I am reaching back to verse 2 and referring to the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of life, and forward to verse 6 as we see there, Paul says, the Spirit is life.

Paul makes little explicit mention of the Spirit until chapter 8, and we may be tempted to think that he is mitigating the importance of this third person of our triune God.

But this is not at all the case. I think that our careful verse-by-verse study of books of the Bible is a very important part of what the church does together.

I think it's vital to its very existence. It's good for us to get down into the nitty-gritty of these texts together, to break it up and to consider it over long expanses of time.

[7:08] However, sometimes breaking a book down over time like this can cause us to miss some of the overarching points the author is trying to make. Were we to take up this letter in one sitting, we might be more readily able to remember what he said back at the beginning of the book.

So turn with me, if you will, to the beginning, Romans chapter 1 and verse 4. There he says of Jesus Christ that he was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead.

Jesus Christ, our Lord. So very early he's mentioned the Spirit. We see in this verse that God declared Jesus is God by the power of the Spirit bringing about Jesus Christ's resurrection.

So Paul's communicating there. Paul, by the inspiration of the Spirit, is laying groundwork for today's text in calling the Spirit the Spirit of holiness.

I'm tempted to call it clever, but I don't think Paul was trying to be clever. I think he was inspired to write the book in this way. Later on in Romans chapter 6, if you flip a few pages there, and verse 5.

[8:37] There he writes, verse 4, if we have been united with Christ in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His.

So if we sat down and read it all in one sitting, we may remember, I hope that we would, back to chapter 1 and verse 4. Well, what kind of resurrection did Christ have?

Well, He had a resurrection that was empowered by the Spirit of holiness. If we are in Christ, we have been united with Him in His death and also in His resurrection.

So, who empowers our resurrection? The Spirit. The Spirit of holiness. The Spirit of life. The Spirit of Christ.

I think this is very cool. You can kind of see that. Him leading us up to chapter 8. So He's not been minimizing the Spirit in this at all, but He's been leading us here.

[9:38] The Spirit, the Spirit of holiness, the Spirit of life, the Spirit of Christ, right? It is the Spirit that makes God's saving work,

accomplished by Jesus Christ, effectual in the lives of His people.

It's the way it's applied to us by the power of the Spirit. We begin by the Spirit and we are kept by the Spirit. Now, let's back up to the 4 at the very beginning of verse 5 of Romans chapter 8.

Again, Paul is using this conjunction and means by it because. Because what? Well, in verse 4, he said, those who are in Christ are those who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

4, beginning of verse 5, those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.

In verse 4, Paul uses the verb walk, which refers to the habitual pattern of our life. In verse 5, he tells us that those who are in Christ Jesus walk according to the Spirit because they set their minds on the things of the Spirit.

[11:01] You may note that in the ESV we see the verb live, right? Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh. Those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.

Now, I don't disagree with the translation. I find this to be a very good translation of the Bible and I'm not really qualified to disagree with translations to be clear. But it could be more simply rendered and has been in other faithful translations simply those who are according to the flesh.

Those who are or those who are according to the Spirit. I prefer this because Paul is speaking categorically here.

He is stating that if you do not belong to Christ then you do not have a Spirit and your derivation is from sinful flesh. It's your very being.

It's where it comes from which I believe is why some translators use that term live according. If you do belong to Christ then you do have a Spirit and your derivation your very being is from the Spirit.

[12:18] And this is the very point being made. The Spirit of life gives us life. If you have believed in Jesus been justified you have done so by the power of the Spirit and now you are new in Him and He will continue to empower your sanctification.

Paul is stating that we have been fundamentally changed and our overarching bent as new creations will now be towards holiness and away from wickedness.

If you are justified by the power of the Spirit He is now moving you away from the things of this world and toward the things of God.

So when thinking of the most important thing about you this morning the vitally important question is to which category do you belong? We divide up along a lot of different lines.

This is the most important one. Categorically are you one of those who live according to the flesh? You are not in Christ. You are not a Christian or one of those who live according to the Spirit are in Christ are a Christian.

[13:36] look at why this is so vitally important. Paul says in verse 6 for to set the mind on the flesh is death but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.

Now there is a single Greek word here translated to set the mind it's a verb and it refers to the thought patterns of the mind. Not so much the mental faculty of it but the way in which you normatively think.

If you're bent as toward the flesh sinful appetites the lust of this world idolatrous comfort false philosophies and religions etc.

etc. Then this is death. He doesn't say that it leads to death he says that it is death.

Paul is speaking of spiritual death. The person not in Christ is spiritually dead now and will be forever more unless they repent and believe in Jesus.

[14:45] Adversely if you're bent is toward the spirit then you have spiritual life and you have peace with God.

Categorically two things going on here. Verse 7 he elaborates on this for the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile toward God does not have peace with God as an enemy to God for it does not submit to God's law indeed it cannot we need to be made new by the power of the spirit we need to be made alive that we might be able to see God's law and given the capacity to obey it those who are in the flesh cannot please God and this morning if you are not in Christ if you have never placed

believing faith in him you must must hear this there is no measure of your good doing that is going to please God outside of Christ everything that you do categorically the things that we call good are an offense to

God they're not empowered by his spirit they're not for his glory and he is not pleased with those works you must be found in Christ you must have your sin wiped away you must have the righteousness of Christ imputed to you you must be empowered by the spirit to live in obedience to the law hear that cry this morning on the day of judgment you cannot and will not be able to appeal to any working of your own our cry on that day will be the righteousness of Christ it's in him that I find myself before you justified but Paul says speaking to Christians you however are not in the flesh but in the spirit if in fact the spirit of God dwells in you raises some question there does he not right the assumption is

Christian church in Rome Christ family church today you are in the spirit if the spirit of God dwells in you because anyone who does not have the spirit of Christ does not belong to him so how can we know that we have the spirit of Christ we don't pin this to an event the bible never gives us this kind of language walk the aisle sign a card raise a hand some of us came to faith through those kinds of things but it was God who saved us in the midst of them it wasn't the event that saved us we are told in the bible that we are to examine our lives and see if we have the spirit by the fruit that we are producing again the works do not save us but the evidence that we have been saved verse 10 says but if Christ is in you although the body is dead because of sin the spirit is life because of righteousness righteousness that it produces!

if the spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his spirit who dwells in you and here Paul ties the bow on that overarching point that began in chapter 1 and verse 4 carried through chapter 6 verse 5 and find its further explanation here in chapter 8 begun by the spirit kept by the!

[18:43] empowered for righteous living the spirit of life gives us life the alternative is death secondly the spirit of Christ exalts!

Christ by empowering us to live like Christ and once again I'm reaching back to pick up a title given to the spirit this time to verse 9 the spirit of Christ and Paul does this often refers to the spirit as the spirit of Christ and as a brief aside I just want to say to you again I said this last week whatever gifts of the spirit you may think have ceased or continue on we should be sure that anything that the spirit empowers has the exaltation of Christ as its aim this is what the spirit of Christ works to bring about!

this is a person supposedly in the name of Christ I think it is so helpful I want to read to you again a quotation from a contemporary pastor by the name of Dan Phillips and then we'll get to verses 12 and 13 he said this show me a person obsessed with the Holy Spirit and his gifts real or imagined and I will show you a person not filled with the Holy Spirit!

Show me a person focused on the personal work of Jesus Christ never tiring of learning about him thinking about him boasting of him speaking about and for and to him thrilled and entranced with his perfections and beauty finding ways to serve and exalt him tirelessly exploring ways to spend and be spent for him growing in character to be more and more like him and I will show you a person who is filled with the Holy Spirit this is the work of the spirit of Christ and the life of believers that's never lose sight of the fact that the spirit giving us life making dead people alive and working in us to bring about obedience is the greatest of his miracles all of the other miracles that you can observe in the scripture are simply pointing!

us to that greater miracle regeneration justification sanctification this is the most wonderful thing that the spirit does in our midst so Paul says so we're debtors not to the flesh to live according to the flesh having been delivered from the bondage to sin having been made new we're no longer to live for the flesh but rather!

[21:32] 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 so remember that we already have life it's already been given to us so Paul's using this idea of sanctification both in the what is and what is coming to be the already and the not yet Paul has said that justification necessarily leads to sanctification while our justification is entirely a work of God it is monergistic God is the one who justifies our sanctification is synergistic we play a part in this notice verse 13 it says if by the

spirit you put to death the deeds of the flesh there's a both and at work here it is empowered by the spirit but having had our natures changed we also play a role in the process on the back of your bulletin today there's a quotation from

J.C. Ryle that I have appreciated from his book holiness he said in justification the word to be addressed to man is believe only believe in sanctification the word must be watch pray and fight so you see the monergistic justification and the synergistic sanctification there in J.C.

Ryle's quotation on this side of glory we will maintain the corrupted nature of our flesh we have been set free from the power of sin but yet sin still walks closely with us if we have believed in Christ if we have been granted his spirit then our natures have fundamentally changed but we have yet to experience our full and final liberation I hope that you with me this morning long for that day when we'll be glorified and this body of death will be no more I can tell you younger people in the room as you get older you're going to get more tired and you're going to long for that day to come oh the day oh the day when no longer I carry about this corrupted nature of my flesh recall Paul's words at the end of chapter 7 beginning in verse 21 he said

I find it to be a law that when I want to do right evil lies close at hand for I delight in the law of God in my inner being see there his changed nature he delights in God's law in his inner being he says but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members right I want to do what's right but it just seems so hard sometimes what does he say in verse 24 wretched man that I am who will deliver me from this body of death and I'm glad he knows the answer to that which he'll tell us in verse 25 but before we read verse 25 I want to read a quotation to you from John MacArthur's commentary on verse 24 he writes it is reported that near Tarsus where Paul was born a certain ancient tribe sentenced convicted murderers to an especially gruesome execution the corpse of the slain person was lashed tightly to the body of the murderer and remained there until the murderer himself died you can imagine you were convicted of murder the dead person's body was tied onto you so that it couldn't be taken off in a few days which doubtless seemed an eternity to the convicted man the decay of the person he had slain infected and killed him so perhaps we can't say with massive certainty perhaps this is what

Paul has in mind and perhaps this was a known thing that happened when he says who will deliver me from this body of death maybe he's thinking about this type of sentence right I can feel it on me and it still is infecting me who will deliver me and in verse 25 he says thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord right and then chapter 8 and verse 1 there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus this this side of glory we will not live perfectly like Christ nevertheless we are to be growing in holiness across the span of our lives it's not going to look great moment to moment and day to day but through careful attention through the application of the ordinary means of grace through the work of the church together helping us press on we can start to see yes like year to year that's often how

[26:50] I give some assessment in my life I think about last year because if I think about yesterday that could be miserable am I growing in holiness is the spirit of Christ active in my life bending me towards the things of God the desire in me to put off the things of this world and to put on the things of Christ listen to what Peter says about this the apostle Peter in 2nd Peter chapter 1 you may appreciate going here with me I'm actually going to read some from this chapter in a little while so maybe a bookmark I hope you have a ribbon in your Bible not maybe a finger 2nd Peter chapter 1 I'll begin reading in verse 5 he says here make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue and virtue with knowledge and knowledge with self control and self control with steadfastness and steadfastness with godliness and godliness with brotherly affection and brotherly affection with love for if these qualities are yours and are increasing they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our

Lord Jesus Christ for whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins therefore brothers be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election for if you practice these qualities you will never fall for in this way

there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ what is he saying you have to be able to examine your life you have to be able to work at these things and if Christ is in you by his spirit you will find effect as you're working verse 12 therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities though you know them and are established in the truth that you have I think it right as long as I am in this body to stir you up by way of reminder we need to be pressed on we need to be reminded the way in which we're meant to live our lives for the glory of

Christ Romans 8 13 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 now there's a lot that can be said about the Christian life we can't explore everything that it takes this morning to grow in Christian maturity!

but I do want to hone in a little bit this morning and consider one application so Romans chapter 12 and verse 2 there Paul writes do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind this is just before he gets into the very practical okay so what does the Christian life look like now that we've gone through the doctrinal section of my level and he just starts to give off commands this is what you will look like if you are in Christ this and growing in this do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind I want to make the case to you that the way we do this is by taking up God's word learning it and applying it and we do this over and over and over again that's why when we come together as a church we place at the center of our gathering together the preaching of

God's word we want to open it up we peer into it we hear it I also why we read it in other settings and we sing it and we pray it God's word is the way in which we renew our minds by the power of the spirit so I want to make that case to you from a couple of other texts so first Ephesians chapter 5 and Colossians chapter 3 these are parallel texts There Paul writes in Ephesians 5 verse 17 therefore do not be foolish but understand what the will of the Lord is and in verse 16 he said because the days are evil so because the days are evil do not be foolish understand what the will of the Lord is he says and do not get drunk with wine for that is debauchery but be filled with the spirit addressing!

[31:28] one another in psalms and hymns! Paul writes let the word of Christ dwell in you richly teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God so notice the connection there right this singing of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs in both places in Ephesians he says be filled with the spirit in Colossians he says let the word of Christ another right he's saying that is the that is the act of being filled with the spirit is having the word of Christ dwell richly in you it's going to overflow out of us into holy living another text that may help us with this as we think about what it means to be transformed by the renewing of our mind and what the activity of setting our minds on the things of the spirit this raises a big question

I think for a lot of people what are the things of the spirit there's a lot of Christian traditions that would tell you a lot of things that are the things of the spirit but I want to draw you to a central thing which is the scripture itself so I mentioned that I would take you back to 2 Peter chapter 1 so if you happen to follow my bookmark instructions 2 Peter chapter 1 and I'll begin reading in verse 16 I love this passage anytime I get a chance to work it into a sermon I do there Peter says for we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty now he's going to explain that further but what he's talking about Peter James and John got to see Christ transfigured this is a big deal he says for verse 17 when he received honor and glory from

God the father and the voice was born to him by the majestic glory this is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased we ourselves heard this very voice born from heaven for we were with him on the holy mountain they heard God the father speak from heaven this is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased and then Peter says this in verse 19 and I just think if you haven't read this before this should make your head explode he says and we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed the Bible more fully confirmed how is it how is it that we have it more fully confirmed but the work of the spirit in our lives those who are in Christ can take up and read and we can see and understand with some hard work in some places and give application in our lives and this is the

work that we are to be doing again and again and again he says in verse 19 to which you will do well to pay attention as to a of

Christ glorification there knowing this first of all that no prophecy of scripture comes from someone's own interpretation for no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit what are the things of the spirit it's the truth of God right do we have the truth of God yes we do in a!

! primarily this is the work that we do in a lot of different ways when we take up this word we read it ask that we believe it we give it application in our lives and this produces holiness how we can see that the spirit of Christ is at work in us you will not you will not have the confidence that you're justified if you can't see sanctification active in your life and you will not do that if you don't take up and read work to apply see the power of the spirit work in you to change you from one degree of glory to another the spirit of Christ exalts Christ by empowering us to live like Christ we are meant to be little imperfect reflections of him in the world in which we live and so I want to read to you

[36:26] I hope when we give you these congregational recitations you're paying some attention to them I know that they get read fast and we're moving on to another thing perhaps maybe you take that bulletin home and give it some study later on we throw an awful lot of them away each Sunday this came from our confession of faith which came originally from the New Hampshire confession which was written in 1833 and the question what do we believe about sanctification here this summary again we believe that sanctification is the process by which according to the will of God we are made partakers of his holiness that it is a progressive work that it has begun in regeneration and that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit the sealer and comforter in the continual use of the appointed means especially the word of

God self examination self denial watchfulness which all are informed by the word of God and prayer let's pray together