

Romans 8:12-13

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Preacher: Nathan Raynor

[0 : 00] I'm really fortunate, as I've said before, to have some depth of preaching here at Christ Family Church. It was so nice to take a little break as Sam and I had Judah to get to focus a little bit of energy on that, but also to get to hear some great gifted men come to us and speak about the Spirit of God.

We're bringing that to a close. We're starting to get to the end of that subject matter, although we're not there quite yet. Let's read together verse 12 and verse 13 of chapter 8.

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.

And so we see Paul draw a conclusion in verse 12 that we are no longer indebted to live by the flesh. He's made that argument to us leading up to this point.

Chapter 8, verse 10 and 11. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, 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.

[1 : 20] Previously, in chapter 6, verse 17 and 18, he wrote, But thanks be to God that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and having been set free from sin have become slaves of righteousness.

So the conclusion that he's bringing us to after he's said all this is that the bondage of sin has been ended. We're no longer debtors to the flesh to live according to the flesh.

And the implication, then, is that we're debtors to righteousness, to the Spirit. As he says in verse 18 of chapter 6, we have become slaves of righteousness.

In verse 13, he expands upon that idea a bit. And I want to give to you this morning five observations from verse 13.

We see that a duty is given to a specific person for a certain promise to be fulfilled by certain means, if it is fulfilled at all.

[2 : 32] But I think it's best for us to look at those things, those things we can see in the text, in the order given to us in the inspired text. And so that's what we'll do this morning.

So number one, we see the conditions of the duty, the promise, and the means. You see the little phrase halfway through verse 13, But if.

But if. This phrase can denote one of two things to us. One, the uncertainty of the thing promised. The thing promised in this case being that you will live. It could denote that. But how could that possibly be the case? We've seen in verse 1 of chapter 8, there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ.

The second thing that it could denote, and it does, is the certainty of the thing promised. As we would say to a sick man, if you take this medicine, it will make you well.

[3 : 39] Certainly we don't mean it might make you well. I think possibly this medicine will make you well. But rather we intend to express with certainty the connection between taking the medication and the health, the means and the end.

Now God determines the end. For those who are found in Christ Jesus, we will finish this race. We will be sons and daughters of righteousness.

But that doesn't negate the means by which that happens. Our perfection is obtained by means.

There are many gifted athletes in the world, and we use that term fairly regularly with athletes, that they're gifted. They have some ability that others may not have. I've never really been a gifted athlete.

The few activities that I've had any success in at all, I had to work really hard at being even mediocre at. But there are athletes that are gifted. Take sprinters, for example.

[4 : 48] Those men are amazing at how fast they can run. Did you know that all sprinters have a particular type of foot? Their gait is what you would call a supinating foot.

And simply all it means is that their foot acts more like a springboard than the typical human beings does. That was given to them as a gift. But they have to employ it, don't they?

They have to work at that. You know what? My feet supinate. I'm not all that fast. I think I could be. But I would certainly have to work at that. I would have to work out and have those ginormo quads, you know, to be a sprinter.

It takes effort on our part, even though it was given to us as a gift. And certainly, as we look at this little phrase, but if, no one has ever won a race, ever that they didn't compete in.

If you're going to win the race, you must compete in the race. And we can take rest and have joy in the fact that the race, the end of the race, has been determined already.

[5 : 55] We know we win. We just must run. Get there. So the conditions of the duty, the promise, and the means. Number two.

We see the duty is given to a specific person. And that person is you. You to whom there is therefore now no condemnation.

In verse 1, chapter 8. You who are not in the flesh, but in the spirit. Verse 9, chapter 8. You who have been given life by the spirit of Christ.

In verses 10 and 11. Those of you who have placed your faith in Christ. This is who Paul is talking to. All of us, I hope and pray, is who he's talking to.

If you is not you in this case, if you are not found in Christ, don't have the spirit of God dwelling within you, get that right this morning. Turn from your sin. Turn to God.

[6 : 57] Repent and believe that he is the only way to life. But if you have placed your faith in God, this is who he is talking to. I read a bit this past couple of weeks.

There is a wonderful book that I would suggest to you by John Owen called *Of the Mortification of Sin in Believers*. I really appreciate old books because the title is always so descriptive as to what he's talking about.

They don't give some kind of cryptic title. *Of the Mortification of Sin in Believers*. And from this, he took his thesis statement for the entire book.

He said, The choicest believers who are assuredly freed from the condemning power of sin ought yet to make it their business all their days to mortify or put to death the indwelling power of sin.

So, sinners who are assuredly free have definitely been freed from the power of sin ought yet to make it, even though they should make it their very business to put to death the sin in their life.

[8 : 04] So, he is talking to you. Number three. The means by which the duty is fulfilled. So, how is it that we fulfill this duty which we have not yet talked about at length?

But how is it that we do this? And that is by the Spirit. That is by the Spirit. The very Spirit of God that dwells within us. We have no capability of our own to do this task.

To kill the sin in us is impossible on our own because we are sin. Our flesh thrives off that. It is our nature. We inherit it from Adam at the fall.

We were born in sin. And therefore, we cannot accomplish this task apart from the indwelling work of the Spirit of God.

John Owen said in the same book, *Mortification from a self-strength carried on by ways of self-invention unto the end of a self-righteousness is the soul and substance of all false religion in the world.*

[9 : 16] And I fear that we often find ourselves in that place. I know I do. I forget how desperately I need the power of God to work in me to put to death the sin in my life.

And I trick myself. I become disillusioned to think that somehow I can do it on my own. I believe that's the shared Christian experience.

I think we all go through that. And we all fail miserably time and time again. And you know why? Because we try to do it and we can't.

For the Spirit of God dwelling within us gives us the power to live this way. So He is the means.

Galatians 5.17 Paul writes, For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh.

For these are opposed to each other to keep you from doing the things you want to do. or the things you are inclined to do. The things you do by your nature.

[10 : 24] It's why we have the Spirit because the Spirit opposes our flesh. To fulfill a duty. Number four. A duty is given to us which is to put to death the deeds of the body.

To put to death the deeds of the body. And what is He talking about when He says that? body. He means our flesh which doesn't mean the physical body.

There are righteous deeds of the flesh preaching to you with my hands for example. My flesh is carrying out. That's not what He means.

He means the sin nature part of us. We're to put that to death. Galatians 5 19-21 Paul says now the works of the flesh are evident.

Sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these.

[11 : 34] Those are the deeds of the flesh. The things that are set against God. The unrighteousness that we commit apart from the work of the Spirit within us.

And so we're called to put it to death, to mortify it. Phenetau is the Greek word. And it means to render lifeless.

To take away the very life force of something or the power of something. is what that means. To find our sin nature powerless is what it means to put to death the deeds of the body.

How do we do that? Nathan, how is that practical? What must I do to use the Spirit to put to death the deeds of the flesh?

I think we, in a lot of ways, over-mysticize Christianity. We're looking for the special key to tap into the power of the Spirit of God in our lives.

[12 : 42] He is ours and He dwells within us. Turn with me to Colossians chapter 3. chapter 3.

1. If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

Put to death, therefore, what is earthly in you, sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these things, the wrath of God is coming.

In these you too once walked when you were living in them, but now you must put them all away. Anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.

[14 : 09] Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free, but Christ is all and in all. Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another, and if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

And above all these, put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body, and be thankful.

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. And whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Now let me draw your attention to a phrase. Phrases. Firstly, in verse 10, Paul instructs us to put on the new self.

[15 : 35] He's speaking of our identity. We have, in fact, been, our old self has died. Verse 3, for you have died and your life is hidden with Christ and God. So we have to put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

It's being renewed in knowledge. The way to our hearts is through our minds. So we must know how it is that a Christian should live.

And what is his instruction then in that? To put on those things. Notice that he gives us a list of things to put on then as God's chosen ones in verse 12.

These things. And then in verse 14 he says, and above all these put on love. So what does it mean to put on the new self? It means to put on these activities in our life.

As we're putting off the old self, putting it away, putting it to death in verse 5. We're to be putting on the new self.

[16:46] So for those of you who are visual learners, we don't often do visuals, I'm going to do a visual for you this morning. We're to put off the old self. Note that I'm taking my shirt off.

I have a shirt on underneath. We're to put it off. We're to take it off. That phrasing there, put off the old self on verse 9, is much stronger than the language we see in English.

The Greek term is, I don't know, I forgot it actually. Where's it at? Oh, I didn't write it down. It doesn't matter. It's a stronger Greek word. And it doesn't just mean to take off the old self and lay it over the back of your chair as I come and do in my room, throw it in the hamper.

It means literally to wholly put it away, to cast it away. Putting off the old self doesn't look like this. Putting off the old self looks like this. Throw it away.

Get it away from you. These things are not proper for one who is found in Christ. Now, all of my analogies fall short. I think all analogies do, and I always love to point out to you how they do.

[17:54] One way this analogy falls short is I don't think there is any such thing as bad plaid. That's a pretty great shirt I just throw away. The other way it falls short is it is perfectly acceptable for me to stand here in my t-shirt.

There is no problem there. But, that's not how we function as humans. Because what is it that we're putting off? The old self, the deeds of the flesh, so that we can put on the deeds of the spirit.

We always do deeds. We're never neutral in this. I'm neutral now in not wearing the shirt I'm saying I should cast away and the shirt that I should put on.

I haven't put it on yet, but that can't exist in our lives. We will always be doing things. So as you put off, you must necessarily put on the deeds of the spirit.

And that is the work that we are to be about. Not living by the flesh, but living by the spirit. It. I see a lot of Christians who are working, they're straining to put off, trying not to do particular sins in their life, but I don't see them putting on, replacing those things with activity that is of God.

[19:15] If you are obedient to Christ's calling your life, you will be so busy doing the work of the spirit, you won't have time to fulfill the desire for the flesh.

If you set yourself to all these things, you won't be able to sin. You will be so occupied and caught up with God and his work.

Now, again, my analogy falls short. Could I wear two shirts? Sure. Would I ever? No. Does I put off the old self and put on the new self?

The old self stays where it belongs, not on me. Right? That's your visual this morning. So we have been given a duty to squelch the power of the flesh in our life by the Spirit.

If you have a hard time doing this, pray that God will work in you and then get busy. We're running the race. God make me fast and then run.

[20:24] I see so many of us pray that God will work in us and then we sit and we wait. God is never going to pick your hands up and carry you over to the Bible and have you open it up and read.

God, I want to live for you. Start doing it. And that's what Paul's saying in Colossians. Cast off the old you. Put on the new you. Run the race.

Fifthly, a promise is given if the duty is fulfilled. A promise is given if the duty is fulfilled. This phrase stands in opposition to the beginning of verse 13.

Paul says if you live according to the flesh, you will die. That is certain. If your life is characterized by the flesh, then you are not found in Christ.

You do not have his imputed righteousness and you will die. But if you're found in Christ and you have now no condemnation and you are about this work which is the evidence of the spirit of God living within you, then you will live.

[21:41] Now, I think he means this in two ways. That will have eternal life. It certainly means that. Galatians 6, 8, Paul says for the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption.

For the one who sows to the spirit will from the spirit reap eternal life. The spirit is the seal of God's covenant love with us.

When we stand before the judgment throne, the spirit of God will be the seal that we have been found in Christ. So, it means eternal life. But I also think that it means life now.

The Greek word is *zao*, I believe, which means to have full vigor. The word you will live is this phrase and it means to have full vigor.

So, the joy and the comfort, the vigor of life is ours in the here and now because our relationship has been restored with God. That very thing we have been created for, which is to live in abject worship of Him.

[22 : 48] If we were incapable of doing apart from Christ, we can now do. So, we reap the benefit and the reward now. The race isn't always easy, is it?

Struggling against sins, not always easy, but in it, we live. 1 Thessalonians 3.8 says, for now we live if you are standing fast in the Lord.

So, now we live. we're going to eat in the world. We have a time to!

See you