

Morning Sermon October 4, 2015

“The Law of the Spirit of Life” Romans 8:2

² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. (Romans 8:2 NKJ)

What is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus?

It is an opposite / opposition law, it is opposite of the law of sin and death –

The very way Paul phrases this verse, shows he is placing this new and I would argue GLORIOUS LAW – the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus – AGAINST that old and nasty law of sin and death!

² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. (Romans 8:2 NKJ)

We see the same thing in Galatians 5:17

¹⁷ For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. (Galatians 5:17 NKJ)

I. *The Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus is opposed to the Law of sin, inside us, our flesh -*

Remember:

1. *We read of the law of sin in chapter 7 –*

²¹ I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. (Romans 7:21 NKJ)

²³ But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. ²⁴ O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? (Romans 7:23-24 NKJ)

A. *This law of sin is an internal law, note:*

“evil is present with me” Romans 7:21

“I see another law in my members” Romans 7:23

“the law of sin which is in my members” Romans 7:23

B. *This is one of the things that makes our struggle with sin so difficult, it is battle with an enemy WITHIN –*

¹⁹ "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. (Matthew 15:19 NKJ)

2. *We see this opposition clearly expressed in Galatians 5 –*

¹⁶ I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, ²¹ envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. (Galatians 5:16-23 NKJ)

What we see here:

A. *What is natural to us, the works of the flesh - :19-21*

B. *What is supernatural, and requires cultivation, the fruit of the Spirit - :22-23*

Weeds do not require cultivation, but fruit and flowers do -

¹² Sow for yourselves righteousness; Reap in mercy; Break up your fallow ground, For *it is* time to seek the LORD, Till He comes and rains righteousness on you. (Hosea 10:12 NKJ)

We need to sow the Seed of God’s Word –Matthew 13:3-23; 1 Peter 1:23-25 / We need to pray for the pouring of God’s Spirit – Isaiah 44:3-4; Zechariah 12:10; Luke 11:9-13 in Revival, God is sovereign!

We need what is external to us, God’s Word and Law, to work powerfully, internally in us –

Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You!
(Psalm 119:11 NKJ)

II. *Because the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus is against the Law of Sin and Death, it is freeing us to follow and keep God’s Law – (It doesn’t free us from God’s law)*

Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. (1 John 3:4 NKJ)

^{KJV} 1 John 3:4 **Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. (1John 3:4 KJV)**

⁷ What shall we say then? *Is the law sin? Certainly not!* On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, "You shall not covet." ⁸ But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all *manner of evil* desire. For apart from the law sin was dead. ⁹ I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. ¹⁰ And the commandment, which was to *bring* life, I found to *bring* death. (Romans 7:7-10 NKJ)

1. *The law of sin and death raises rambunctiously against God's Law, for example the Ten Commandments –*

For instance, the 7th Commandment says –

¹⁴ **"You shall not commit adultery. (Exodus 20:14 NKJ)**

The law of sin and death battles against such commands, and we see such warfare EVERYWHERE: The Bridges of Madison County is a movie which romanticizes adultery, many movies do. The Ashley Madison website sets up adultery!

Additionally, since this law, along with other commands of Scripture, limits sex to married men and women:

¹³ **“If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them. (Leviticus 20:13 NKJ)**

¹⁵ **“If a man mates with an animal, he shall surely be put to death, and you shall kill the animal. ¹⁶ “If a woman approaches any animal and mates with it, you shall kill the woman and the animal. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood is upon them. (Leviticus 20:15-16 NKJ)**

When an ungodly world embraces and endorses sin, they do so because of this Law of Sin and Death working in them and this LAW SEEKS to distort God's Law! Because of SIN WITHIN these distortions seem to people EXCITING, breaking the law is called exciting and adultery and / or sexual perversity is eventually even termed “LOVE.”

2. *Yet, opposite of this lawlessness, the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus AGREES with the 10 Commandments –*

⁸ Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹ For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if *there is* any other commandment, are *all* summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁰ Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love *is* the fulfillment of the law. (Romans 13:8-10 NKJ)

The Word of God defines Love, 1 Corinthians 13, 1st John 4:8, etc... and this definition includes –

Love ⁶ does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; (1Corinthians 13:6 NKJ)

A. *The world says love equals adultery, homosexuality, idolatry; according to an ungodly world love breaks rules & hatred makes rules...*

B. *God's Word says love is the fulfillment of the law, obviously referring to the Ten Commandments, even in a later, application portion of Romans. God's Spirit the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, will lead us, and empower us, to be keepers of God's Law! Matthew 22:36-40; John 14:15*

3. *The Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus stands against the Law and Sin and Death when the Law of Sin and Death stands against any of God's Commands, the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus helps us to KEEP God's commands, even in difficult circumstances –*

¹⁷ **Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls-- ¹⁸ Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. ¹⁹ The LORD God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer's feet, And He will make me walk on my high hills. (Habakkuk 3:17-19 NKJ)**

III. *It (the law of sin) brings DEATH. He (the Holy Spirit) brings LIFE –*

⁶³ **"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life. (John 6:63 NKJ)**

Even natural life is from God's Spirit –

²⁹ **You hide Your face, they are troubled; You take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. ³⁰ You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; And You renew the face of the earth. (Psalm 104:29-30 NKJ)**

God has the power of life in His hand -

^{NKJ} Ezekiel 37:1 The hand of the LORD came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones. ² Then He caused me to pass by them all around, and behold, there were very many in the open valley; and indeed they were very dry. ³ And He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" So I answered, "O Lord GOD, You know." ⁴ Again He said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD!' ⁵ Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: "Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. (Ezekiel 37:1-5 NKJ)

1. Both the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus and the Law of sin and DEATH are operational, observable, working Laws, we have seen and can see the Law of Sin and DEATH WORKING - -

Adam and Eve fall, the curse goes into effect:

- A. Snakes crawl on their bellies - On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life. (Genesis 3:14 NKJ)
- B. Women have pain in child-bearing - In pain you shall bring forth children (Genesis 3:16 NKJ)
- C. Men struggle with thorns and thistles – **Genesis 3:17-18**
- D. All die and return to the dust – **Genesis 3:19**
- E. Cain murdered Abel and Cain's grandson bragged about murder **Genesis 4** and in **Genesis 5** we have the record; everyone in the world, except for Enoch and Elijah started dying, and people are still dying today –

²³ For the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23 NKJ)

The law of sin and death is so powerful it seems right to people –

¹² There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death. (Proverbs 14:12 NKJ)

The law of sin and death is certainly operational in 21st Century America – 55 million abortions!

Yet, the Law of the Spirit of Life is even MORE powerful! We see a great example of this in the life of the Apostle Paul himself.

What was he doing when Christ first confronted him?

See Acts 7:57-8:3; 9:1-5 ...

^{NKJ} Acts 9:1 Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord... (Acts 9:1 NKJ)

But later he writes what was truly true about himself -

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17 NKJ)

1. There are so many dynamic examples of people being FREED from the power of sin and death by the power of the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus that I cannot name them all, but some -
 - My fellow teacher and her family in Okinawa
 - Josh McDowell's father * England in the 1700s

2. This operational power of the Spirit, this law, works both immediately and dynamically and also intermittently, constantly and regularly –

A. We see the dynamic - ²⁰ And suddenly, a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years came from behind and touched the hem of His garment. ²¹ For she said to herself, "If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well." ²² But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, "Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well." And the woman was made well from that hour. (Matthew 9:20-22 NKJ)

B. Yet, there is also a continual struggle and dependence upon Christ – Galatians 5:16-18 / John 15:5

⁵ "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. (John 15:5 NKJ)

C. As we grow in Christ, God expects more connection, closeness, dependence ... We are in Christ like a branch in the vine and the result is LIFE & FRUIT!

3. As we grow in Christ, and the law of the Spirit of Life is working in us, so that we more and more, refuse to sin... It is quite likely we will find ourselves OPPOSED to the Laws of SIN and Death operating in the world –

We see a dynamic example of this in Daniel 3. Nebuchadnezzar, impacted by God's gracious revelation to him in chapter 2, thanks to Daniel's miraculous interpretation of his dream regarding a statue. Eventually, leaks the grace and gives into ungodly pride and builds a great statue:

A. Based on the dream

B. A distortion of the dream -

In his sinful pride he turns God's gracious revelation into a monstrous idol and giving into his own law of sin and death, makes a law which requires everyone to join in his idolatry, or die! The music plays, beautiful music, and when it plays, everyone MUST BOW to Nebuchadnezzar's idol or be thrown into the deadly burning fiery furnace –

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego (Daniel 3:12 NKJ) *did not bow to the king's idol, but the angry king gave them another chance, they could think about it ... Matthew Henry tells us -*

(1.) They were not required to abjure their own God, or to renounce his worship, no, nor by any verbal profession or declaration to own this golden image to be a god, but only to bow down before it, which they might do with a secret reserve of their hearts for the God of Israel, inwardly detesting this idolatry, as Naaman bowed in the house of Rimmon.

(2.) They were not to fall into a course of idolatry; it was but one single act that was required of them, which would be done in a minute, and the danger was over, and they might afterwards declare their sorrow for it.

(3.) The king that commanded it had an absolute power; they were under it, not only as subjects, but as captives; and, if they did it, it was purely by coercion and duress, which would serve to excuse them.

(4.) He had been their benefactor, had educated and preferred them, and in gratitude to him they ought to go as far as they could, though it were to strain a point, a point of conscience.

(5.) They were now driven into a strange country, and to those that were so driven out it was, in effect, said, *Go, and serve other gods*, 1 Sa. 26:19. It was taken for granted that in their disposition they would *serve other gods*, and it was made a part of the judgment, Deu. 4:27-28. They might be excused if they should go down the stream, when it is so strong.

(6.) Did not their kings, and their princes, and their fathers, yea, and their priests too, set up idols even in God's temple, and worship them there, and not only bow down to them, but erect altars, burn incense, and offer sacrifices, even their own children, to them? Did not all the ten tribes, for many ages, worship gods of gold at Dan and Bethel? And shall they be more precise than

their fathers? *Communis error facit jus—What all do must be right.* (Peer Pressure)

(7.) If they should comply, they would save their lives and keep their places, and so be in a capacity to do a great deal of service to their brethren in Babylon, and to do it long; for they were young men, and rising men. But there is enough in that one word of God wherewith to answer and silence these and many more such like carnal reasonings: *Thou shalt not bow down thyself to any images, nor worship them.* They know they must obey God rather than man; they must rather suffer than sin, and must not do evil that good may come. And therefore none of these things move them; they are resolved rather to die in their integrity than live in their iniquity. While their brethren, who yet remained in their own land, were worshipping images by choice, they in Babylon would not be brought to it by constraint, but, as if they were good by *antiperistasis*, were most zealous against idolatry in an idolatrous country. And truly, all things considered, the saving of them from this sinful compliance was as great a miracle in the kingdom of grace as the saving of them out of the fiery furnace was in the kingdom of nature. These were those who formerly resolved not to defile themselves with the *king's meat*, and now they as bravely resolve not to defile themselves with his gods. Note, A stedfast self-denying adherence to God and duty in less instances will qualify and prepare us for the like in greater. And in this we must be resolute, never, under any pretence whatsoever, to worship images, or to say "A confederacy" with those that do so. *Matthew Henry's Commentary*

The Law of Depravity is a lot like gravity, it always pulls us down, down, down! But the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ lifts us up, calls and enables us to shine –

¹³ **for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. (Philippians 2:13 NKJ)**

¹⁴ **Do everything without grumbling or talking back, ¹⁵ so you might be blameless and innocent, God's faultless children within a dishonest, depraved generation—among whom you shine as stars in the universe. (Philippians 2:14-15 MIT)**

To shine and live (with Christ) –

²⁴ **Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste and spoke, saying to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" They answered and said to the king, "True, O king." ²⁵ "Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." (Daniel 3:24-25 NKJ) *Whenever we make a stand against the laws of sin and death we can count on Christ being with us in the fire!***

Arnold A. Brevick