

“In The Flesh”
Romans 8:5-8

Introduction:

1. Let's Open Our Bibles:
 - Tonight - To Romans 8:
 - As We Continue Looking At:
 - The Enemy Of Our Flesh!
 - The Flesh:
 - Is The Second Spiritual Enemy:
 - That We Need To Fight Against:
 - Even As The Old English Puritan Prayer Reminds Us:
 - “From All Deceits Of The World, The Flesh, And The Devil, Good Lord, Deliver Us!”
 - And - We Need To Keep Praying This Way:
 - Because Of What:
 - Our “Flesh” Has Become!
2. Of Course - At First:
 - “The Flesh” Was Nothing But:
 - A Positive Thing To Us!
 - Because - It Was Designed For Our Good:
 - So That We Might Experience The Spiritual Goodness Of God:
 - In Physical Ways!
 - And - There Are Many Times:
 - In Both The Old & New Testaments:
 - That “Flesh” Is Used In This:
 - Normal & Natural Sense!
 - And Refers To Just Our Basic Human Nature:
 - The Way God Designed Us To Be!
4. But - When Adam & Eve Rebelled Against:
 - The Authority Of God - In The Garden Of Eden:
 - And Sinned Against Him:
 - That Was The Demise & Death Of:
 - The Goodness Of Our Flesh!
 - And - From Then Until Now:
 - “The Flesh” Has Taken On:
 - A Negative Meaning!
 - Because It Goes Far Deeper Than:
 - The Skin - And Is Totally Depraved!
 - Which Means That:
 - Every Person Is Born:
 - Totally Corrupt:
 - From Head To Toe - And:
 - From The Inside Out!
 - So - Sin Infects:
 - Every Part Of Our Human Nature!
 - Sin Infects:
 - Our Minds!
 - Our Hearts!
 - Our Wills!
 - And Even - Our Consciences!
 - And This Fallen Nature:
 - Which Is In Each One Of Us:
 - Is “The Flesh” - That Has Now Become:
 - One Of Our Greatest Spiritual Enemies!
 - Because - It Is The:
 - Enemy Within Us!
 - The Enemies Of:

- The World & The Devil:
 - May Try To Defeat Us:
 - From The Outside!
- But - They Have An Ally:
 - On The Inside:
 - Which Is Our Own Flesh!
- One Description Of “The Flesh” That:
 - I Came Across This Week:
 - May Help Us Understand More:
 - About What It Is & What It Does!
 - John Piper:
 - Former Pastor Of Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota:
 - “The Flesh Is The ‘I’ Who Tries To Satisfy ‘Me’ With Anything But God & His Mercy!”

5.

- And - We Can See This In:
 - What The Apostle Paul Writes:
 - In Romans 8:5-8:
 - “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. / For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. / Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. / So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God!”
 - So - The Phrases That Paul Uses:
 - In These Verses - Like:
 - “After The Flesh!” (8:5)
 - “Carnally Minded!” (8:6)
 - And - “In The Flesh!” (8:8)
 - Are Equivalent To A Person:
 - Being Without Christ!
 - Even Unbelievers:
 - Who “Cannot Please God!”
 - And So - From 8:5 - We Can See:

1.

The Disposition Of The Flesh!

- A Disposition Is What A Person Is Inclined To Do:
 - Based On Who They Are!
 - **IE:** A Good Example Of This Is The “Tastes” Different People Have In Food! You May Like Something That Somebody Else Does Not Like!
 - And Yet - Neither Of You Can Understand How The Other Person Could Possibly Like It! Like Tomato Soup!
 - For One Reason Or Another:
 - People Have Different Dispositions & Inclinations Based On:
 - Who They Are! Their Past / Their Tastes / Their Experiences!
 - And - In This Verse:
 - We Find Mentioned First:
- The Disposition Of Unbelievers!
 - As Paul Writes:
 - 8:5a - “For They That Are After The Flesh Do Mind The Things Of The Flesh!”
 - Again - When Paul Talks About The “Flesh” Here - He Is Not Just Talking About The Physical You!
 - He’s Referring To The Fallen You! The Sinful You!
 - And - As We Saw Last Sunday - This Fallen Nature:
 - Has Infected Every Part Of You!
 - Your Human Nature:
 - Is Depraved - And Has Been:
 - Completely Stained By The Principle Of Sin!
 - And So - Without Christ:
 - You Will Be Constantly Swayed By Sin:
 - Because You Are Still In The Service Of Sin!

- Now - How Can You Tell:
 - If This Is Still Your Life?
 - Because - You Still:
 - “Mind The Things Of The Flesh!”
 - To “Mind” Here:
 - Means - Your Disposition:
 - Is Toward The “Things Of The Flesh!”
 - It Means That:
 - There Is A Special Focus:
 - On Those Things:
 - With Your Mind!
 - It Means That:
 - There Is A Certain Fondness:
 - On Those Things:
 - In Your Heart!
 - And - It Also Means That:
 - There Is A Deep Favor:
 - On Those Things:
 - In Your Will!
 - **IE:** Those Who “Walk After The Flesh” Will Always Gravitare Toward “The Things Of The Flesh!”
- And - What Are Those “Things Of The Flesh?”
 - In Galatians 5 - They Are Defined For Us:
 - 5:19-21 - “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, / Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, / Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God!”
 - Now - This Does Not Mean That:
 - If You Walk “After The Flesh” That:
 - You Will Pursue Every Single One Of These Sins!
 - Nor Does It Mean That:
 - You Will Go To The Extreme Depths Of A Sin Either!
 - But - It Does Mean That:
 - You Have An Affinity:
 - Toward Sin!
 - You Are Bent Toward:
 - Pleasing Yourself:
 - In Some Or In All Of The Ways Mentioned Here!
 - Your Desire Is To Fulfill Your Own Lusts:
 - For Personal Pleasure, Or Prominence, Or Power, Or Passion:
 - Outside Of God’s Will And Contrary To God’s Word!
- And - This Would Still Be Our Life:
 - If We Were Still Walking “After The Flesh!”
 - But Then - From 8:6 - We Can See:

2. ***The Direction Of The Flesh!***

- “For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace!”
 - There Are Two Different Destinations:
 - Referred To In This Verse!
 - **IE:** And - This Is A Good Reminder That The Way Of The World & The Way Of The Lord Are Not Parallel Tracks That Lead To The Same Destination! No - They Are Opposite! And So - Paul First Points Out:
 - The Direction Of The Flesh:
 - In 8:6a - “For to be carnally minded is death!”
 - “Carnally Minded” Can Also Be Translated:
 - The “Mind Of The Flesh!”
 - It Refers To That Disposition:
 - And That “State Of Mind And Heart” That Gravitates Toward:

- “The Things Of The Flesh!”
- This Is Your Main Outlook On Life!
- And - Where Does This Kind Of Mind:
 - Lead? Where Does It Always End Up?
 - What Is Its Direction?
 - “Death!” - And Death Is - At Its Core:
 - Separation!
 - When You Talk About:
 - Physical Death:
 - It Is Because A Person Has Been Separated From Their Body!
 - But - When You Talk About:
 - Spiritual Death:
 - It Is Because A Person Is Separated From God Forever!
- We Need To Realize:
 - That The Mind Of The Flesh - As Well As:
 - The Works Of The Flesh:
 - Are Dangerous And Deadly!
 - And Yet - How Often:
 - Do People Still Run After Sin:
 - With All Of Their Heart!
- And - This Would Still Be Our Life:
 - If We Were Still Walking “After The Flesh!”
 - But - What A Terrible Way To Live:
 - Knowing That All You Have To Look Forward To:
 - Is Death!
 - But Then - From 8:7 - We Can See:

3. ***The Determination Of The Flesh!***

- 8:7 - “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be!”
 - Those Who Possess The “Mind Of The Flesh” Rarely Think:
 - That *Who* They Are - Or - *What* They Are Doing:
 - Are Dangerous And Deadly!
 - And So - We Need To See Our Fallen Nature:
 - For What It Really Is!
 - Sinners Are Determined:
 - In Their Rebellion Against God:
 - And His Law!
 - In This Verse We See That:
- The Flesh Is Hostile:
 - Toward God!
 - 8:7a - “Because The Carnal Mind - The Mind Of The Flesh - Is Enmity Against God!”
 - Note The Word Here Is:
 - “Enmity” - Not Just - “Enemy!”
 - **IE:** Probably Heard The Names - “The Hatfields & The McCoys” - Notorious For A Family Feud That Went On In The South For Generations - Lives Were Lost In That Feud - After A While - Forgot Why They Were Fighting! They Remained Enemies - And The Enmity Was In Who They Were - Even In Their Names!
 - So It Is With Our Sin And Flesh!
 - Its Not Just What The Flesh Does:
 - That Makes It God’s Enemy!
 - Its What It Is!
 - Its Not Just What Takes Place On The Outside:
 - Its What Goes On On The Inside!
 - The Flesh Is Actively Hostile:
 - Toward God! But Also:
- The Flesh Is Hateful:
 - Toward God And His Law!

- 8:7b - "For It Is Not Subject To The Law Of God!"
 - Back In Romans 7:12 - We Are Told That:
 - "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good!"
- But - The "Mind Of The Flesh" Is:
 - Neither Holy, Nor Just, Nor Good!
 - And The Way Someone Reacts To:
 - God's Law & His Word:
 - Reveals What They Think About God Himself!
- Does The Law Of God:
 - Stir You Up? Does The Word Of God:
 - Move You And Soften You?
 - Or - Does It Lead To Even More:
 - Resistance To God's Commands, God's Control, And God's Constraints Over You?
 - The Flesh Is Actively Hateful:
 - Toward God And His Law! But Even More:
- The Flesh Is Headstrong:
 - Against God!
 - 8:7c - "Neither indeed can be!"
 - This Describes How:
 - Completely Corrupt And Depraved The Flesh Is!
 - It Is Like The Tongue Described In James:
 - James 3:7-8 - "For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: But the tongue can no man tame!"
 - Some Things Just Can't Be Tamed!
 - This Is What The Flesh:
 - Our Fallen Human Nature:
 - Is Like!
 - I Can't Tame Or Control:
 - My Flesh! And:
 - Neither Can You!
 - Only God Can!
- And - This Is Why:
 - Our Flesh Is Destined For Death!
 - It Is Because - Apart From God's Intervention:
 - Our Flesh Is Determined To Persist:
 - In Our Hostility And Hatred Against God!
 - And There's Nothing You Nor I Can Do About It - In Or By Ourselves!
 - And - Sadly - This Would Still Be Our Life:
 - Apart From God's Mercy!
 - But Then - From 8:8 - We Can See:

4. ***The Dwelling Of The Flesh:***

- 8:8 - "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God!"
 - To Be "In The Flesh" Here:
 - Means That:
 - You Are Living Your Life:
 - "Under The Government" Of Something Or Someone!
 - And So - To Be "In The Flesh" Means:
 - That You Are Living Under:
 - The Government Of Sin!
- And So - Your Basic Instincts & Inclinations:
 - As A Sinner:
 - Are To Sin!
 - And Sin Never Pleases God!
 - And - Apart From The Intervention Of God:

- This Will Always Be The Case!
 - In Jeremiah 13:23 - The Lord Asks This Penetrating Question - “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil!”

Conclusion:

1. So - What Can Be Done:
 - With Our Flesh?
 - Here - In Romans 8 - The Apostle Paul:
 - Was “Persuaded Of Better Things” - For:
 - The Christians He Was Writing To:
 - There In The City Of Rome!
2. And - We Can Be “Persuaded Of Better Things” As Well:
 - Because - If There Is Within You:
 - A Desire To:
 - “Please God” - It Means Something!
 - After All - This Is:
 - “The True Goal Of The Believer’s Life!” (Hendrickson)
 - Do You Have This Desire?
 - To Please God Means:
 - “To Fill God’s Heart With Delight!” (Hendrickson)
 - Is This How You Want To Live Your Life?
3. If So - Then It Means That You Are Now:
 - In The Spirit!
 - 8:9a - “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you!”
 - You Are Living Under The Government:
 - Of A New Master - Jesus Christ - And:
 - Under The Guidance:
 - Of The Holy Spirit - Whom He Sent!
 - 4. What Encouraging Words:
 - These Must Have Been:
 - To That Roman Church:
 - Who Were Living In Such:
 - A Culture Of The Flesh!
 - Weak!
 - Worldly!
 - Wicked!
 - 5. Because Now - They - And We - If We Are Believers In Christ:
 - Have Such A Connection With:
 - The Holy Spirit That:
 - He Changes Us!
 - But - What Makes This Change Possible?
 - If I Can’t Change My Own Flesh:
 - How Can It Be Changed?
 - 6. Because - 8:9 - “If So Be That The Spirit Of God Dwell In You!”
 - This Is The Key!
 - In John 14:16-17 - Jesus Said - “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; / Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you!”
 - When You Believe On The Lord Jesus Christ:
 - He Sends The Holy Spirit:
 - To Make Your Heart:
 - His Home - And Will:
 - Renew It And Sanctify It So That:
 - You Will No Longer Be “In The Flesh!”
 - Even Though Your Flesh May Still Be In You!
 - 7. And Now - The Spirit Of God:
 - Will Change You & Give You:

- A New Disposition!
 - 8:5 - So That - "They that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit!"
 - He Will Change You & Give You:
 - A New Direction!
 - Because - "'To be spiritually minded is life and peace!'"
 - And - He Will Change You & Give You:
 - A New Desire!
 - To Please God!
 - And - He Has Changed:
 - Our Destiny! (8:6)
8. Because - When You Turn To & Trust In Jesus Alone:
- For Salvation From Your Sin:
 - Then There Is A Great Change That Takes Place:
 - Through The Work Of The Holy Spirit Of God!
 - He Changes You & Gives You:
 - A New Disposition:
 - Toward "The Things Of The Spirit!"
 - He Changes You & Gives You:
 - A New Direction & Destination:
 - Of Life & Peace Through Jesus Christ!
 - He Changes You & Gives You:
 - A New Desire:
 - To Please God!
9. It Is Only Through The Spirit Of God:
- That We Can Have Ongoing Victory:
 - Over The Enemy Of:
 - The Flesh!

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