

**Romans 8: 3 and 4; “What the Law Could not Do, God Did”, An Adult
Sunday School Class prepared by Pastor Paul Rendall
on June 24th, 2012.**

We saw last week that it takes the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus to set us free from the law of sin and death. The basis of this mighty new principle or law in the life of the believer is the death of Jesus Christ. His death brings us life. The law cannot bring us life. We cannot be justified by the works of the law. It can only command us to do what is right and not to do what is wrong. The law is given to us to define what sin is and what righteousness is, but it is weak through our flesh. Therefore it could not save us; it could only condemn us. But what the law could not do through the weakness of our flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh. In His holy and spotless nature Christ came to do and to keep all the commandments of God perfectly. In doing this; in fulfilling the law by His righteousness, and then offered Himself up to the punishment of the cross. Thus He freed us from the having to pay the penalty of eternal death. Thus He also has freed our spirit from its bondage to sin. He will, upon our bodily death, free us from all sin in our spirit. And at the resurrection He will give us the resurrection body whereby we will be able to praise and serve God perfectly forever. All this freedom from the law of sin and death is because He willingly suffering in our place, bearing what we so richly deserved. As a righteous sacrifice who did not Himself deserve to suffer, the Lord Jesus suffered in order that the Father would condemn sin in His person, and not in our persons. In His own flesh; that is in His own human nature both body and soul, Jesus bore our sins. (1 Peter 3: 18; 2 Corinthians 5: 20, 21) At the cross God the Father took the part of a righteous judge and looked upon His Son as all the Elect sinners rolled up into one person, and punished Him there in the place of me, the sinner.

This law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus sets the believer free from the law of sin and death; not that he is freed from indwelling sin and corruption; that will not take place until the believer's physical death. But the new principle of life within Him is stronger than the law of sin in his members, and so the believer is able to overcome his fleshly sinful desires if he walks according to the Spirit, and not according to the flesh. (Romans 6: 17-22, and Galatians 5: 13-26) The Holy Spirit implants this new “law of life” in the believer's heart. This is the same as God's giving a sinner a new heart. Ezekiel 36: 26 – “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.” To be given a heart of flesh means that you have been given a tender heart, as a person who has believed in Jesus Christ your Lord. You are now sensitive to what God has commanded in His word; God's law has been placed in your mind and written upon your heart. (Jeremiah 31: 33) The basis of this work is the New Covenant in Christ. (Romans 8: 3 and 4) “For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”

Question – How do we Delight ourselves in the law of God in the inward man?

Answer: By learning to Pray in relation to the word of God which is His law (in its entirety).

Psalms 119: 9-16 – “I will delight myself in your statutes; I will not forget your word.” Will you remember to commit portions of God's word to memory?

Psalms 119: 23 and 24 – “Your testimonies also are my delight and my counselors.” Do you get needed wisdom directly from the Scriptures? Or are you blindly led by the opinions of others?

Psalm 119: 33-40 – “Make me walk in the path of Your commandments, for I delight in it.” Do you see God’s commandments as being the path for you to walk in? Do you delight to walk on the path of righteousness?

Psalm 119: 41-48 – “And I will delight myself in Your commandments, which I love.” “My hands also I will lift up to Your commandments, which I love, and I will meditate on Your statutes.” Even as you praise God for His greatness and goodness, do you praise Him for giving you His commandments?

Other Pertinent Verses –

Psalm 18: 20-27 – Verses 23 and 24 say, “I was also blameless before Him, and I kept myself from my iniquity.” “Therefore the Lord has recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in His sight.” All of David’s being blameless before God and keeping himself from his iniquity; all of his being rewarded and recompensed according to his righteousness and cleanness of hands must definitely have come from His faith in the coming Messiah, Christ Jesus, and not from himself. In himself he was imperfect in many ways. Christ was His righteousness.

Philippians 3: 7-9 – “But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.” “Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if by any means I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.”

We see here that Paul counted every fleshly privilege and attainment as loss in comparison to being “in Christ”. This was something that he strove to “win” or to “gain”. He already had Christ; He was now striving to win Him by running the race of obedience by faith in Jesus Christ. He was jettisoning his own righteousness, which was from the law, from trying to do and keep God’s commandments in his own strength and determination. Rather, he strove to be found “in Christ” while he did all of his good works. All of our best works must be seen by ourselves as being done “in Christ”, and not proceeding from our own wisdom and strength. Good works that last are done by grace. The law is only kept in Christ. We strive to be found in Him.