

Victory and Life in the Spirit

Romans 8:1-11

¹ There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ² For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. ³ 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, ⁴ 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. ⁵ For 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. ⁶ For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷ 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. ⁸ Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

⁹ 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. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹ 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.

I. Declaration on Victory

Bringing to conclusion what he had already discussed in 5:12-21 and chapter 7, Paul now makes his confident and powerful declaration that “there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” (vv.1-4). In vv.2-4, Paul communicates his confidence to the original audience and to us that this declaration rings true. He tells us that the “grounds” of his declaration is our liberation from this “present evil age” by the Spirit (v.2). This liberation is made possible because of Christ and the Father condemning sin in Him on the cross (v.3). The overall purpose of God condemning sin in the flesh is so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled (v.4). When we come into relationship with Jesus by faith, His righteousness is imputed onto us. Therefore, the laws demand is fulfilled in us, not through our acts of obedience but because of Christ in us!

II. Two types of people (Identification of those who do not partake in the Victory)

In vv.5-8, Paul distinguishes between the two people groups that make up this new era of salvation history inaugurated by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ: Those who live according to the flesh and those who live according to the Spirit. Paul describes both groups as having set their “minds” on either the flesh or the Spirit. What Paul is basically describing is their orientation. Are they oriented (driven by and/or captured by) those things of the flesh or the things of the Spirit. Paul makes it clear there is no middle ground here. For those that are oriented towards the flesh is death and those that are oriented towards the Spirit is Life.

III. The Clarification of those who do partake in the Victory

After Paul finishes describing the differences and fate of those two people groups in vv.5-8, in vv. 9-11 he redirects his attention back to the Roman Christians (and us) and gives all the clarification and assurance they (and us) need. He says, “You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, since in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you.” (The original language and context allows us to translate “if” as “since”). If you have put your faith in Christ Jesus as your Lord and Savior, Paul says that you indeed have the Spirit of Life dwelling within you! As Christians, those who have the Spirit of Life indwelling us, we have been liberated from the kingdom of darkness, have been broken free from the power of sin and death, and have been given life that we not only enjoy now but also will enjoy fully in the age to come!

Discussion Questions

1. What all does Paul attribute to the Spirit's working in this text?

2. Why do we have such a hard time believing the v.1 "declaration" as Christians? What is it about us and our culture that keeps us from believing it fully?

3. What is the difference between a unbeliever and a Christian sinning?

4. If we fully believed the declaration of v.1 and allowed the implications of it to manifest in all the facets of our life, what would be different about the way we think/act/live? Think of practical ways your life would be different than it is right now.

5. What are some less obvious ways we are tempted to be oriented towards the flesh?

6. What are some practical ways or things you can do to be re-oriented back to things of the Spirit (cf. Col. 3:1-3). (Don't forget prayer!)