

Lesson 21 -- Romans a Study of Life, Hope, and Grace.

Paul’s Letter to the Roman Church
Week 21 Freedom from Defeat

Romans 8:5-17

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NOTES:

Memory Verse: Romans 8:13 ***“For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.”***

The eighth chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans

Romans 8 is a chapter of the New Testament that deals with the Christian's spiritual life, the security of those who are in Christ, the privilege of adoption, the hope of glory, and the love of God. It was written by Paul the Apostle in the mid-50s AD, with the help of a secretary named Tertius.

Because of the complexity, controversy, and content of this chapter, it necessarily breaks down into four Sections:

1. **Last week :Freedom from judgment** (Romans 8:1-4): Those who are in Christ Jesus are not condemned by God, because they have been set free from the law of sin and death by the Spirit of life. God sent his Son as a sin offering to fulfill the righteous requirement of the law in us, who walk according to the Spirit.
2. **Freedom from defeat** (Romans 8:5-17): Those who live according to the Spirit have their minds set on the things of the Spirit, which bring life and peace. The Spirit dwells in us and gives us the power to put to death the deeds of the body. The Spirit also testifies that we are children of God and heirs with Christ, who share in his sufferings and glory.
3. **Freedom from discouragement** (Romans 8:18-30): Those who suffer for Christ have a hope that surpasses the present troubles. The whole creation groans and waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. We also groan inwardly as we wait for our adoption as sons and the redemption of our bodies. The Spirit helps us in our weakness and intercedes for us according to God's will. God works all things together for good for those who love him and are called according to his purpose. God foreknew us, predestined us, called us, justified us, and glorified us.
4. **Freedom from fear** (Romans 8:31-39): Those who are loved by God have nothing to fear, because God is for us and not against us. He did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all. He will also graciously give us all things. No one can bring any charge or condemnation against us, because Christ died for us, rose for us, intercedes for us, and loves us. Nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord².

Freedom from Defeat Romans 8:5-17

Tonight and the next two nights we will examine ROMANS the eighth chapter.

Perspicuity

I was sent an email this week providing me a reminder of my student days. The email was about the meaning of one English word. The word is Perspicuity. In theology, it is the tenant that everything a man needs to know is in the Bible. No matter the problem, the highest scholar or the naïve can find the answer in its pages. It has little to do with intelligence or spirituality. It is no minder of men. It is a simple statement of faith that God has an answer to every situation and is revealed in the Bible.

Perspicuity says the written word, (BIBLE) is enough for anyone to find God's will for them. That brings us to another branching of Christianity.

Lutheran

Lutherans hold that the Bible presents all doctrines and commands of the Christian faith clearly. God's Word is freely accessible to every reader or hearer of ordinary intelligence, without requiring any special education. As a result of this, no one needs to wait for any clergy, and pope, scholar, or ecumenical council to explain the real meaning of any part of the Bible. Martin Luther a rebel against the Roman Catholic Church. **We all can find God's will in the Bible.** We can find salvation for ourselves without unction or gravity pulling us toward it. **The means to Salvation is a personal understanding of the Bible.**

Reformed Churches in the Presbyterian

Presbyterian, Calvinist, Baptist, Reformed churches teach the perspicuity of Scripture by stating: All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all. Yet, those things that are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation are so clearly propounded, and opened in some place of Scripture or another, that not only the learned but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them. **The Bible's clarity is primarily about spiritual things the remainder needs either interpretation and mindful understanding.** But the mind of man is not enlightened enough to realize it. **The means to salvation is God revealing His favor to man and providing a pull or unction toward Spiritual things.**

Anglicanism and Methodism

1. These groups take the word Perspicuity is a quality agreeing with the Bible as a sign or picture of God. This image or as John would say the WORD was God, is a quality of God contained in the scriptures.
2. That perspicuity is a quality that agrees with the Scriptures. Perspicuity is a characteristic of man and is proved from its cause and its end.
 - a. *In cause:* God's wisdom and goodness actively willed the clarity and thoroughness of the scripture. The cause of man to know God is through his Word.
 - b. *In the end* is the duty of man learn of God through the Scriptures. The scriptures are the method of the attainment of salvation and justification. Man cannot attain to salvation without this knowledge.
3. This perspicuity comes distinctly to be considered both with regard to its object and its subject.
 - a. For all things [in the Scriptures] are not equally perspicuous or understandable.
 - b. Not all men are alike in perspicuity. To Paul, some things occur which "are hard to be understood;" and "the gospel is hid, or concealed, to them who are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them who believe not"
4. But those senses or meanings, the knowledge and belief of which are simply necessary to salvation, are revealed in the Scriptures with such plainness, that they can be perceived even by the most simple of mankind, provided they be able duly to exercise their reason.
5. But they are perspicuous to those alone who, being illuminated by the light of the Holy Spirit, have eyes to see, and a mind to understand and discern
6. Those things which are necessary to be known and believed for salvation, the law must be distinguished from the gospel, especially in that part which relates to Jesus Christ crucified and raised up again.

7. In the Scriptures, some things may be found so difficult to be understood, that men of the quickest and most perspicacious genius and duly gifted may, in attaining an understanding of those things, preach and teach during the whole course of their lives.
8. But God has so finely created the Scripture, that they can never be read without profit. To the whole man is increased.

Let us consider it together.

You are a spiritual being living in an earthly world.

You are a spirit that is characterized by your soul living in a body.

So what is judged:

Anthropos.. All three.....

1. The body dies in the judgment brought upon you by Adam's curse. The body (FLESH) can lead to temptation and excess.
2. Spirit communicates. If you are not justified the Spirit no longer has any connection with God at death. The second death. The spirit of the unrepentant man may be honest, caring, philanthropic, and peaceful, but it does not have the capacity to understand God, His will, His plan, His design, His purpose.
3. The soul lives in the Eternal, not mortal but at the end of this life the quality and the end result is determined by decisions, attitudes, and actions according to your relationship with Christ. The final end of the first death is determined by the decisions made.

So where in Paul's theology does the mind dwell?

Our section tonight deals with the most problematic part of us.

The decision-making process.

I am a Christian; I have been made righteous by God's mercy. I study to show my self-approved, rightly dividing the words of truth. I make my decisions according to the will of God as I understand it. So what is wrong drinking alcohol at Bible Study? Some of you drink coffee and there are some Christians who would tell you it is a sin. Catholics drink wine. Jesus made wine. What is wrong with a little wine for my stomach's sake? If I decide to drink a glass of wine in Men's bible study what are the things that may well change?

There are hundreds of factors that could be assessed as we make our daily decisions. From what color of socks we put on in the morning, to what would be the best tire to buy for a 2006 Jeep Liberty Renegade.

The world is very concerned with the law. If it doesn't suit us then change the law.

For everyone, there is a need for balance. We cry out "That is not fair." We see the insanity of this world and shrug our shoulders. And the Law is not the answer to the needs of stability and equality.

Every decision changes things, people around us, our circumstances, and our lives. Each of us has ideas and concepts of what is right and wrong. Most of these value judgments have been nurtured throughout our lifetimes. We have allowed peer pressure and societal norms to mold us into making

decisions that may or may not be the best. Society has, by its jurisdiction made laws for us to live by. But our decisions, made by our understanding, life experiences, and in consultation with the body affect everyone around us.

This decision-making process is the same for the justified with one new player. Now that still small voice dwelling in our spirit is vastly amplified by the very Spirit of God. I now have a new standard of life and in the teaching of Jesus. Word becomes flesh. The law is fulfilled in Jesus. God's Spirit now talking very loudly to my human spirit. Every decision I make according to my understanding, my perspicuity of God can well be taken by those I teach and live with an example of God's will. My decisions, right or wrong, ultimately influence people.

Christians we must place something at the end of our self-constructed teeter-totter. We want balance, we want stability. Before Jesus, this balance was all relative to the society we lived. This voice is our own human mind or spirit. It speaks in low hushed tones.

After justification, it is a still small voice in a windstorm. It is part of us. It speaks to our souls as we make our daily decisions which in turn are worked out through our bodies. We still want balance. For Paul speaking to the Romans, this is the still small voice that still has sway over the decision maker. It is ruled by the flesh. It is ruled by the Law of the day. But the law seems always to be too much and weighs down the teeter-totter. Life seems to be all about the law. Life seems to be all about doing. We become controlled by a mindset that just follows the rules. It is a mindset on the law

Paul states, "They that are after the flesh are constantly mindful of the things of the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit, then, are mindful of the things of the Spirit."

[Romans 8:5-17 NASB](#)

[Freedom from defeat \(Romans 8:5-17\)](#)

5 For those who are in accord with the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are in accord with the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For the mind [a]set on the flesh is death, but the mind [b]set on the Spirit is life and peace, 7 because the mind [c]set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, 8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. 10 If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. 11 But 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 [e]through His Spirit who dwells in you.

12 So then, brothers and sisters, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— 13 for if you are living in accord with the flesh, you are going to die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons and daughters of God. 15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery [f]leading to fear again, but you have received [g]a spirit of adoption as sons and daughters by which we cry out, "Abba! [h]Father!" 16 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children,

heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

Paul and his war with the flesh was told with emotion and confession. He was in a war with the Flesh (SARX). There was little in his life that would steer him toward the life set apart for divine purpose, (Sanctification). Now in the Eighth chapter he talks about a solution to the decision being made mostly by the body and the law.

To understand this passage we must acknowledge:

1. Paul in Romans 7th chapter was saved
2. Paul in Romans 8th chapter was saved
3. Paul in Romans 7th chapter was grieving of the bad decisions he had made. "The things I should do, I do not do." And conversely "The things I should not do, I do."
4. We find a hint of what was to come, V25 "Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord."
5. There must be something more to the spiritual life than a constant adherence to the law.
6. There must be something more to the spiritual life than a mindset on earthly things.

From the reports from Rome, there were divisions in the church. We have talked about the cultural divisions: 1. The faithful, 2. Intellectual Greeks, 3. The Romans Woke, 4. The enlightened merchant Jews, and 5. The skeptical covenantal Jews. Paul has used his ink for six chapters trying to unify the Church into one cohesive body. They were all saved by grace and not by works.

But now Paul was classifying the church (the saved ones) into two groups. He saw this division as a greater threat to the church than the cultural division. His logic and persuasion brought them across the finish line of justification. They were one great church, saved by grace. But Paul was saying that even though you could be saved you can still be living according to the flesh. That the Spirit of God has little effect on the decision-making process. We must be careful to understand that the mind is part of the soul's "Psyche". Paul characterized them into two groups:

1. Those who have a life that is controlled by the body (SARX), which in turn controls the mind, he called them: living in accord with the flesh setting their minds on the things of the flesh. [The mind of the flesh, or] the carnal mind is death (Romans 8:6)
2. The group who have a life controlled by the spirit. Whereas the mind of the spirit is life and peace (Romans 8:6).

Our decision-making can be made in consultation with the Spirit or the Flesh. Both have input but there seems to be a change in focus from flesh to spirit. It seems as if my actions are determined by who I am listening to, either my flesh or my spirit

Now I want to be perfectly clear. Paul is not talking about some decision made to do something occasionally.

"For those who are habitually dominated by the mind of the flesh are the ones who continually entertain thoughts of the flesh.

IT is the SARX that is communicating to the Soul

And it is the soul who listens, considers, weighs the options, and then expresses the decision either through a flesh-centered attitude as stated in Galatians 5:19–21, speaking of the works of the flesh, saying they are "evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these."

Every decision we make, has an eternal effect.

The biggest problem is that every decision we make has an eternal effect.

This portion is about the FLESH. Paul was obsessed with this idea, Paul used this word 27 times in Romans.

For those who are according to the flesh. SARX. It was the SARX that divided the church.

- The faithful ones were simply not listening to the flesh anymore. Their lives were controlled by the Spirit of God.
- It was the sarx that divided the Romans because the culture of the day dictated their actions there was little to stop them from seeing Rome as being the controller of their lives..
- It was the sarx that divided the Greek intellectuals from the faithful. They lived their lives always thinking and never listening to the Spirit of God. To them, it was all about action driven by logic and not the heart.
- It was the sarx that divided the enlightened merchant-class Jews. They had made a choice to keep the law and that was good enough.
- It was the sarx that divided the covenant Jew. They could never make a decision because of the skepticism of the worth of change.
- It was the sarx that struggled with control.
- It was the sarx that caused most if not all the bad decisions.

To understand the Flesh (SARX) it is the part of the whole that was the loudest cry in the wilderness of life. It was the thing you place most interest in. The SARX is the part of the body that can influence the decision-making of the soul.

We already understand that Flesh is part of the Body, and the body is Neutral. It is neither good or bad. It just is. But as a resident within the body is an idea, a concept, a willfulness that communicates to the soul. It tells the soul, and the mind of the **need** for food, air, water, and companionship.

But it often goes further from need, to a craving. A craving for food that can be good for us and not so good for us. It calls for companionship that goes beyond the consent of the other. It craves for things that would deaden the pain in air that must be laced with something to deaden the senses. It craves for liquid that destroys the ability to think to consider. The sarx keeps the Christian from doing the things we should do and encourages us to do the things we should not.

But praise to God there is a solution. You see the sarx only provides input to the decision maker: the Mind, the Soul, the judge of what it hears from the two sources of Body and Spirit. The decision maker CONSIDERS the request. It thinks. It assesses. It evaluates. It appraises. It compares.

It is the soul that makes the decision and therefore **EVERY DECISION WE MAKE HAS AN ETERNAL RESULT.**

When you think of something exclusively associated to the needs of the SARX. You know that that inner desire which demands to be satiated and If we dwell on them, you have what Paul calls your mind in the flesh. It is that inner craving that will not be satisfied but by giving in, you have what Paul calls your mind set on the flesh.

Please note here:

If the flesh is ruling your world, – YOU HAVE A MIND SET ON THE FLESH.

If the flesh is the driving force of the majority of your decisions YOU HAVE A MIND SET ON THE FLESH. If you habitually give in to your appetites. YOU HAVE A MIND SET ON THE FLESH. And the result THIS MIND SET ON THE FLESH (sarx) IS DEATH. And alternatively, the MIND SET ON THE SPIRIT IS life AND peace.

AGAIN I have to repeat this Mind as part of the soul makes the decision. The Soul is the mixing pot which takes input from the SARX and from the Spirit and makes a decision. The result of each decision is on a scale between terrible consequences (bad, evil) and the best leading to life and peace. And these consequences are what you are accountable for. If the Christian sins it is still sin. If the Christian's life is led by the flesh the outcome is hostile toward God. If the Christians life is led by the Spirit it leads to life and peace.

The flesh mindset sees only the law and rejects it.
The flesh mindset can never please God.
The contrast is simple

Our decisions are made with input from the SARX and considered and yielded to sets you on the path to spiritual death. The more we give in to the SARX the less we listen to the Spirit. Every decision is on a path. Wide is the path that leads to destruction, narrow the one that leads to God. Our decision makes the difference between heaven and the other place.

Good news: FREEDOM in LIFE

9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. 10 If Christ is in you, though the body (SOMA) is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. 11 But 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 (SOMA) through His Spirit who dwells in you.

The reason believers can have Freedom through Christ is that the power of the indwelling Spirit of Christ is greater than the power of the old sinful nature. The downward pull of the sinful nature may be likened to the downward pull of the earth's gravity. A stone thrown into the air will fall to the ground because it has no life or power to overcome the force of gravity. A bird thrown into the air will fly away. It has a living power that enables it to overcome the downward pull of the earth. The bird has a new 'law', of life, which is greater than the 'law' of gravity. Likewise in Christ believers have a new upward force of the Spirit that is greater than the downward pull of the old sinful nature.

The spirit of man is created at the first moment of conception. It learns, it adapts, it listens to teaching, it reports to the soul, of things that make yourself and others around you compatible. This spirit of man learns what is acceptable to others around it. I can know love, it can know right from wrong, it is the moral center of life. But it is not balanced. It knows there is something more. It reaches out for that balance and finds something else. It finds God. Our spirit realizes there is another Spirit actively trying to make a difference in you.

What Paul was simply or not so simply saying is there are two voices in the Christian. One voice of learned and accepted understanding of good and bad. And another that is awakened and now takes an active role in reporting to the soul. It is the Spirit of Christ.

Through the Spirit, Christ dwells within them, giving them spiritual life, victory over their sinful nature, and in the end freedom from even the last physical effects of sin, death (9-11).

FREEDOM from defeat 8:12-17

Since the flesh is no longer their master, Christians should not obey it. Rather they should kill off its sinful actions (12-13). They are now children of God, free from the fear of bondage and led by the Spirit. Their union with Christ means that one day they will share in the Father's inheritance, but it also means that in the present life they must share in Christ's suffering (14-17).

So when the primeval sentence still holds sway THERE; the body is deathful still; it is the body of the Fall; but the Spirit is life. He is in that body, your secret power and peace eternal. "Because of righteousness" (means) because of the merit of your Lord, in which you are accepted, and which has won for you this wonderful Spirit life

Ultimately all Christians die. Our SOMA will stop. Some sooner than others. Those in the SARX think they are alive. What a cool trip, satisfying urges, wants, and desires but we are all heading for the same dead end. Men never think you are really living when you give away to the flesh. There is a reality that those with the Mind of the flesh are heading straight for eternal death.

Believing and obeying the gospel, receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, and thereby rejoicing in the grace of God, do not for a moment cause sin to be any less sin for the Christian. Mortification of the deeds of the body is the daily task of the soul in Christ. But again as Paul shouts to the world to hear. "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Adapted or consulted from Albert Barnes, F.F. Bruce, William Baxter Godbey, Barton Johnson, Joseph Benson, Adam Clarke, James Burton Coffman, John Wesley, Windell Gann, James Arminius, Martin Luther, Chuck Smith, L. M. Grant, John Gill.