

The 2nd Sunday after Pentecost~ Sunday, June 11, 2023

“Life In the Spirit: The Law of the Spirit of Life”

Romans 8:2

“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.” (Romans 8:2)

We are no longer thinking about a _____ sentence pronounced over us, like we looked at last week, but about _____ from the bondage and shackles that have enslaved us, which can change the entire trajectory of our lives.

If verse 1 is about _____, verse 2 is about _____. Verse 1 is about God’s gracious verdict with regard to our _____ standing before Him: Not condemned. Verse 2 is about God’s gracious work within us with regard to the way we _____ before Him. Verse 1 happens in the courtroom of heaven. Verse 2 happens, as it were, in the _____ of our own hearts. Verse 1 is about removing sin’s damnable _____. Verse 2 is about destroying sin’s debasing _____.

Part of what makes Romans 8:1-2 so helpful is the way that it holds together the _____ and the _____ realities of the Christian life, and insists that what God has joined we may never _____. What I mean by that is, we can’t have the legal status “no condemnation” before God in verse 1 without also having the lived experience of being “set free from the law of sin” by the Holy Spirit in verse 2. Right standing before God and right living under God always go _____.

#1. The Two _____.

According to Paul, there’s the law of the _____ on the one hand, and the law of _____ on the other.

The most straightforward way to understand this text, especially given the various uses of the term “the law” in Romans 7, is to say that Paul is referring to two ruling _____, two controlling _____, two regulating powers that are absolutely, diametrically _____ to one another.

These two principles are set in absolute _____ to one another. They’re opposites—the principle and regulating authority of sin that leads to death and the principle and regulating authority of the Holy Spirit that gives life. When sin rules, the outcome is _____. When the Holy Spirit breaks in and gives life,

He sets us free from sin’s _____ forever.

When the Holy Spirit does His work in our hearts, when we’re born again, and come to trust in Jesus, the regime of sin is overthrown; and the total mastery—or _____—of sin is broken. It’s important to note that Paul isn’t saying that sin _____ to exist in the heart of a Christian when we come to Christ. He doesn’t mean that people who’ve been born again by the life-giving Spirit are all of a sudden _____. What he’s saying is those who used to live as complete slaves to sin, are now _____—sin’s power over us has been broken.

The power of our occupying enemy—the power of sin—is overthrown once and for all and _____. However, the dying remnants of the enemy remain and continue to fight a _____ war in our hearts and minds.

On the one hand, we should be incredibly _____. Sin has already lost the war in our hearts and minds! It’s beaten! That’s the good news—that in Christ, the rule of the Spirit of life has overthrown sin’s mastery forever in our hearts. As a result, we’re no longer a slave to our _____ and desires, but children of God. And so, we shouldn’t listen to the _____ of the evil one in our heart that tell us otherwise.

“So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.” (John 8:36)

Sin no longer _____ us. Change is possible! _____ is possible! We can become like _____.

On the other hand, we need to remember that the defeated _____ of sin fight on, conducting a guerilla war in our hearts and minds, and they can do a lot of harm, as you’ve no doubt discovered in your own life. And so, despite the profound _____ and hope we have in knowing that the Spirit has set us free, we can’t become _____ or apathetic, but need to remain _____ against the enemy. Remembering that we are in a constant _____.

This is the difference between _____ and authentic Christianity. By moralism I mean being a _____ person and living a moral life outside of _____. Moralism can effect change in our lives by the careful application of _____ and discipline. Moralism is particularly skilled in the use of guilt to manipulate behaviour _____. However, all that moralism can really do in the end is deal with _____ level sin, while actually driving our deepest festering sins deeper and deeper into our hearts.

“Why are you so concerned with washing the outside of the cup, when the inside is still so very filthy? Why are you so concerned with the surface when

the heart of the matter is the matter of the heart?” (Matthew 23:25)

The life-giving Spirit has broken in and has begun a transformation in us that’s more than _____. It’s _____ in every faculty of our life. The Spirit has begun to kill sin and weed it out; to strengthen our hatred of it and to empower our _____ to it—sometimes slowly and even painfully. That’s the difference between self-reliant, moralistic external behaviour modification and true sanctification. The former has simply exchanged superficial, surface sin for deeper, even more deadly _____. However, true sanctification, is _____ and governed by the power of the life-giving Spirit who has _____ us to Christ.

#2. The Assuring _____.

Gar (Greek) = *for or because* = tells us that Paul is supplying the _____, evidence, or _____ for the assertion he’s just made in verse 1.

One would be to see the ‘for’ at the beginning of verse 2 as _____. Paul would be saying there’s no condemnation for us for **–that is, on the basis of the fact that–** the law of the Spirit of life has _____ in this way.

In other words, no condemnation is declared by God on the basis of the fact that we’ve been spiritually _____. Although this approach may sound great, it’s a _____ position to adopt.

The other approach would be to see the ‘for’ at the beginning of verse 2 not as causal but as _____.

There’s no condemnation for us ‘for’—**that is, here is the supporting evidence for the fact that there’s no condemnation; here’s how you know there’s no condemnation**—“for the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus.”

Paul isn’t saying that God justifies us and proclaims a verdict of “no condemnation” over us on the basis of our _____ from sin’s mastery. He doesn’t look at us and sees that sin is not in control, that righteousness reigns in our hearts, and therefore concluding that we finally made the grade, he pronounces his verdict. That’s not it at all. That would be _____ to the entire argument of Romans up till that point,

That would make it all about _____ and our strength and accomplishment and not God’s grace.

“But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it, the righteousness of God

through faith in Jesus Christ, for all who believe. For there is no distinction. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God and are justified.” (Rom 3:21) How are we justified? By God’s _____, as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus whom God put forth as a _____ for us. It’s by _____ in the justice-satisfying, wrath-quenching blood of Christ that secures our justification, not as a _____ of anything we do or don’t do. It’s the finished work of Jesus Christ on our behalf that settles the question of our _____ before God.

In verse 2, Paul isn’t saying that the grounds for our not being condemned in verse 1 is our _____ from sin, but rather that our liberation from sin is the _____ that we’re not condemned.

The Holy Spirit makes us want to be _____. The Holy Spirit makes us _____ our sin and love our Saviour.

God never leaves those He acquits in _____. He always sets them _____.

If in the courtroom of His righteousness He has said, “No condemnation” over us, and the prison doors of our incarceration to sin are immediately flung wide _____, we are now free to live for Him, _____ and upheld by the Holy Spirit.

Yes, we’ll _____ with sin and sometimes fall. There are guerilla fighters lurking in our hearts waiting to do what they can to bring us down. However, the promise of God is that sin’s _____ is overthrown, its power over us has been broken, and now He’s at _____ in us, by His Spirit, to will and to work for His good pleasure. And that work in our lives is an incredible _____ to us of our justification, of God’s verdict.

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