

The 3rd Sunday after Pentecost~ Sunday, June 18, 2023

“Life in the Spirit: Walking According to the Spirit”

Romans 8:3-4

“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 to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”

(Romans 8:3-4)

Paul wants us to understand how God has done and is doing this great work in us. He wants us to understand the _____ and _____ for our sanctification.

The first thing to note about these two verses is how Paul structures his teaching around the doctrine of the _____, with each of the three persons of the Godhead at work for our _____.

God the Father sends His Son and _____ sin in the flesh. The Son comes in the likeness of sinful flesh to _____ with sin. And finally, as we walk according to the Spirit, the _____ requirements of the law are met in us. Each person of the triune God is involved in saving and _____. This shows us how profoundly invested God is in the welfare of our souls.

Thankfully when it comes to understanding our salvation, Paul doesn't leave us guessing, but provides us a picture of what it looks like to help us not only understand with our _____, but grasp hold of it with our _____.

THE TRINITY AND OUR SANCTIFICATION

#1. The Work of God the _____.

Paul doesn't leave us to piece together the picture of God's intention for us without any sense of His final _____. In fact, if we look at the beginning of verse 4, we get to see the the end point, the _____, the final design toward which all the other pieces contribute.

That's what God is working towards in our lives—to make us _____. This means that holiness and _____ to the law of God isn't an additional extra tacked onto the Christian life. It's not an _____—nice if you can manage it, but not really essential. Nor is it some rare attainment for the super spiritual. Holiness is the _____ of God in the life of every believer.

“Instead, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; for it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’” (1 Peter 1:15-16)

Paul tells us that God's work is set in direct _____ to the work of the law.

The law can't accomplish _____ in us. It can tell us what holiness is, it can show us what obedience ought to look like, but it's _____ by the flesh.

The expression “the flesh” is Paul's shorthand for the reality of our human _____. It's the pervasive bondage of sin _____ us in every faculty of our humanity rendering us by nature wholly averse to God and His commandments.

Although the law always aims at holiness, showing us what holiness is and what godliness requires, it's _____ in its promotion of holiness at every turn by the spiritual inability of our sinful _____ to live God's way. We are by nature _____ to the rule of God, the law of God, and the will of God, and so the law cannot fulfill its design.

The law of God alone can neither _____ us, nor _____ us. However, what the law could not do, weakened by the flesh, _____!

God did it by _____ His own Son. It was the Father's design and _____ to send His Son for us.

This is a wonderful testimony to the _____ of God! Instead of _____ His own Son, the Father sent Him to the cross for us.

#2. The Work of God the _____.

The divine Son, the second person of the Trinity, the infinite, eternal, unchangeable God, by whom all things were made, without whom nothing was made that has been made, was sent from eternity by the Father into the world—“in the _____ of sinful flesh.”

Jesus didn't come “in sinful flesh.” If that's what Paul had said, then the divine person of the Son would have been a guilty _____, which is not only unthinkable, but would have made Him _____ to be our substitute.

Neither did Jesus come “in the likeness of flesh.” If that's what Paul had said, then the divine person of the Son would only have _____ to be human and therefore unable to act as one of us, on our _____ and in our place.

Jesus came “in the likeness of sinful flesh”— fully _____ yet without sin,

without the _____ for sin, without any inner inclination to sin. He came holy, harmless, _____, and separate from sinners. He came as one who knew no sin. He came to be _____ in all ways as we are, yet without sin.

And this holy One, this sinless human being, Paul says, came—notice this expression— _____ sin.” (P) This is the _____ at which the Father was taking aim when He sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.

By using the expression “sin offering,” Paul’s making it very clear why Jesus came: To give His life as an _____ to God in payment for our sin.

The Father condemned sin in the flesh of His Son, and the totalitarian regime of sin was _____. In the condemnation of Christ, sin was condemned, and was stripped of its _____ and authority in the lives of all who believe in Jesus, and now remains in us like a _____ on death row awaiting final execution. It may be eloquent and _____ to anyone who listens to it through the prison bars. It may make great claims for itself and sound enticing even, but it’s no longer _____.

#3. The Work of God the _____.

In verse 3 Paul says that the law couldn’t make us holy because it was _____ through the flesh. And now in verse 4 he’s telling us that what the law requires _____ be fulfilled in us after all. Not perfectly, but slowly and surely, progressively, one step at a time. The key to doing this, according to Paul, is walking according to the _____ and not according to the _____.

Sometimes, those who are in Christ can still try to keep the law according to the flesh. However, it’s a bare and formal _____. It’s superficial and _____. It focuses on external religious performance, and confuses growing in holiness with _____ t life.

External duties like prayer, reading the Bible, and going to church are vital aides, and a _____ for our growth in holiness to be sure, but simply performing them to tick off a box isn’t the same thing as holiness from the _____. It’s walking according to the flesh, not according to the Spirit.

Instead of fleshly _____, Paul says we need the _____ of the Holy Spirit to enable us to walk in _____ of life and fulfilment of the righteous requirements of the law.

A walk is all about _____ and moving forward; it’s a journey, a trajectory, an arc from point A to point B.

When we become a Christian, God puts the Spirit of Christ within us to empower the _____ of our lives.

“I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to talk in My statutes and be careful to obey My rules.” (Ezekiel 36:27)

With the Spirit’s help in and through us, we have the power to not only _____ the road of holiness, but also to _____ in the holiness, to which the law points us. And by the Spirit’s help, we will reach our _____.

By His _____ and power and not according to the flesh, we can walk now in new obedience. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit each have been in pursuit of sin’s _____ and of the emerging image of Jesus Christ in our hearts, _____, and lives.

THREE IMPLICATIONS

- This is a mighty _____ to any professing Christian who is casual and _____ to sin. There’s no justification without _____, and so we need to _____ of our sin or moral indifference.
- There is warm _____ for anyone who longs to be godly, but feels so _____ at times. God has fully invested Himself in your holiness and He’s not about to _____ on that investment.

“He who began a good work in you will carry it on till completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 1:6)

- There an open _____ to a new life for anyone who knows they need to make a _____. The Gospel offers more than just forgiveness for the guilt of sin. It also offers _____ power to change.

We might be able to make some minor _____ changes on our own, that will improve our lives. However, any change we make is ultimately _____ until God has broken into our heart by the Holy Spirit, _____ us to Christ, forgiving our sin, and beginning the great _____ project of sanctification within us.

NOTES: