

HIGHER GROUND

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Romans 8:1-8

1. The Christian life should be a journey of discovery.
2. We are to journey with our focus on Jesus, with our guidebook the Bible in hand, with our Helper the Holy Spirit within, and in the company of a group of fellow Christians, who we love and are in fellowship with, who we can rely on, who we can confide in, who we can learn from, and who we can be accountable to.
3. As we journey we depend upon God's presence, power, provision and protection, and promises.
4. For some weeks we have been on a journey through the book of Romans, and as we have journeyed together we have been exposed to precious truths that should better equip us to live life as God intended the Christian life to be lived.
 - a. We discussed man's predicament because of sin-guilty before God and subject to His wrath.
 - b. We focused on God's provision through Jesus Christ.
 - c. We talked about man's position in Christ Jesus-possessing righteousness, being dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.
 - d. We examined Paul's testimony related to the impossibility of living the Christian life in the flesh or in our own strength.
5. In this message we will begin to focus on how we can move from frustration to fruitful living, from failure to sanctification or growth in Christlikeness.
6. In his introduction to Romans 8, William Newell wrote, "Jesus Christ (Savior and Lord) and Him crucified is the message that concerns salvation. Christ Jesus (Lord and Savior) and Him glorified is that which concerns our perfecting as believers."
7. I would add that through the Crucified Christ God dealt with sins (plural) judicially, and through the Glorified Christ God deals with sin (the law of sin at work in our flesh) actually.
8. With these thoughts in mind let's look at the passage before us.

I. A liberating truth. 1

- A. Last week we dealt with the period in Paul's life when he, as a converted Jew, tried to live the Christian life the same way he had lived his life in relationship to the Law.
- B. The problem was that as a Spirit-filled Christian he was convicted of the intent of the Law and not just the letter of the Law.
- C. The harder he tried the more frustrated he became until he cried out, "Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?" 7:24
- D. Finally, by the grace of God, he came to understand that through Jesus Christ his Lord God had provided what Paul so desperately needed.

E. Suddenly, Paul came to understand that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

1. In chapter 7 Paul stood self-condemned by his inability to live the life his heart was telling him he should be living.

2. The realization that he possessed judicial righteousness before God was life-changing.

NOTE: The Holy Spirit convicts, He does not condemn.

II. A liberating reality. 2-4

A. Paul fully understood the power of the law of sin that was at work in his flesh.

B. But he also came to understand that there was a greater law at work in his life; the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

NOTE: The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus comprises all that is ours in Christ Jesus.

NOTE: As an example think about how the law of aerodynamics trumps the law of gravity.

C. First of all Paul pointed out that through Jesus Christ God did what the Law could not do, He condemned sin in the flesh.

NOTE: This means that God subdued sin, overcame sin, deprived sin of its power over all who accept Christ's sacrifice on their behalf.

D. What God did He did so that the requirement of the Law (righteousness) might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

NOTE: The Amplified Bible expands this verse by adding, "Who live and move not in the ways of the flesh but in the ways of the Spirit (our lives governed not by the standard and according to the dictates of the flesh, but controlled by the Holy Spirit)."

E. What God did makes possible a holy life for those walking by His indwelling Spirit.

III. A logical conclusion. 4-8

A. In these verses Paul set forth a principle that is universal in its application, and that principle is that your mindset matters and your mindset defines who and what you are.

B. Note how this principle operates.

1. Those who are controlled by the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit focus their minds on the things of the Spirit.

2. The mind set on the flesh leads to death because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God because it does not subject itself to the (inward) law of God, for it is not even able to do so, while the mind set on the Spirit leads to life and peace.

3. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God, but those who walk according to the Spirit will be enabled to please God.

APPLICATION

1. All that God expects of us is predicated on His promises, provision, and power, and not on our ability apart from Him.
2. If you are a genuine follower of Jesus Christ He (God) who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ. Philippians 1:6
3. We are to cooperate with God and take our salvation seriously because “it is God who is at work in (us), both to will and to work for His good pleasure.” Philippians 2:13
4. In closing ask yourself:
 1. What occupies my mind?
 2. What am I occupied with?
 3. Who do I love supremely-self, some other person, or Jesus Christ?
 4. Why am I living my life the way I am living it; for myself or for the glory of God and the good of others?
 5. Do I feel connected to and have a love for other believers?