

Romans – Justified through faith

Week 14 – Romans 8:1 - 17 (The ministry of God’s Spirit)

Introduction

The great theme of the whole of Romans 8 is the security of the Christian. Possession of the Spirit is the hallmark of those who truly belong to Christ. The chapter is in three sections, this first section (v1 – 17) concerns the varied ministry of God’s Spirit in liberating, indwelling, sanctifying, leading, witnessing to and finally resurrecting the Children of God.

1. **Salvation (v1)**

The ‘now’ in verse 1 emphasises that this salvation is *already* ours if we are in Christ – and the result of our salvation is that we are no longer condemned. This is the equivalent to the ‘justification’ we talked about in Romans 5 (Week 10).

2. **The freedom of the Spirit (v2 – 4)**

Certain liberation and ‘no condemnation’ are the two great blessings which are ours if we are ‘in Christ’. We are freed from living under the law – that is being reliant on the law for either justification or sanctification. We are not freed to enable us to disobey the law; obedience to the law is the ‘fruit’ of our new life in the Spirit. We are justified (legally declared righteous) through God’s son and sanctified (made Holy) through his Spirit. God’s aim was not to simply justify us but to then make us like his Son through the continuing work of the Holy Spirit within us.

“...for those who are in Christ Jesus... there is no divine condemnation, since the condemnation they deserve has already been fully borne for them by Him.”

- Charles Cranfield

3. **The mind of the Spirit (v5 – 8)**

The sinful nature (or flesh) Paul refers to is not our physical flesh but the whole of our in-Adam humanness, our un-redeemed un-saved self. The ‘Spirit’ Paul refers to is specifically the indwelling Holy Spirit, not our own spirits. The two categories of people, the lost who are ‘in the flesh’ and the saved who are ‘in the spirit’, have two perspectives or mindsets (‘the mind of the flesh’ and the ‘mind of the Spirit’) and this leads to two patterns of conduct (living according to the ‘flesh’ or the ‘Spirit’) and this results in two spiritual states – death or life. Our mind and where we set it and how we occupy it plays a key role in both our present conduct and our final destiny.

4. **The indwelling of the Spirit (v9 – 13)**

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is *the* mark of the believer. Indwelling sin is the lot of all the children of Adam; but the privilege of the children of God is to have the indwelling Holy Spirit to fight and subdue indwelling sin. Paul outlines two consequences to this indwelling...

i. Life – (v10 & 11)

Our body is dead in the sense that it is mortal and will one day die. However the ultimate destiny of our body is *not* death but life! The same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead will also give us resurrection bodies – exempt from sickness, pain and death.

ii. Debt – (v12 & 13)

We are now obliged to live according to the Spirit not according to the flesh; to allow the Holy Spirit within us to be in charge. The responsibility is ours to take action to put to death the evil impulses of the flesh – but not through our own power but by the Spirit within us. As Jesus commanded us ‘to gouge out the

offending eye' or 'cut off the offending hand or foot'! We need to be ruthless with sin and set our minds on the things the Spirit desires (v5).

5. The witness of the Spirit (v14 – 17)

Paul shows four pieces of evidence of the witness of the Spirit.

i. The spirit leads us into holiness.

The Holy Spirit doesn't force us – He leads and we must choose to follow.

ii. He replaces fear with sonship in our relationship to God.

In the Roman world of the 1st Century AD an adopted son was deliberately chosen by his adoptive father to perpetuate his name and inherit his estate – he was in *no sense* inferior to a son born naturally.

iii. He prompts us to call God 'Father' when we pray.

The word Abba was an everyday word – not a religious one. No Jew would have dared address God in that way, yet every single prayer of Jesus used this word for Father except his cry from the cross. Jesus commands and authorises us in the Lord's Prayer to use this form of address.

iv. We are heirs of God.

Paul may not simply be referring to the idea of an inheritance in heaven (see 1 Peter 1:4) but that God himself is our inheritance. The Levites would have been familiar with the idea that the Lord himself was their inheritance as they were given no physical inheritance (See Deut 18:2 and Lam 3:24). If we are prepared to share in his suffering – take up our cross and follow him. See 1 Peter 4:13

"There is no violence in Christianity... What the Spirit does is to enlighten and persuade."

"The Holy Spirit never browbeats us... The impulse can be very strong, but there is no 'driving', there is no compulsion."

- Dr. Lloyd-Jones

Q1. Do you think you have a harder time forgiving yourself for your sins than God does? How easy do you find it to believe that there's "no condemnation"?

Q2. What does sharing in Christ's sufferings mean to you? Do you think we in the Western Church really understand and/or embrace this concept?

Memory Verse:

"For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship." – Romans 8:15