

# Romans 8:1-17

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[ 0 : 00 ] Do open your Bibles to Romans chapter 8. And we're going to go back this evening to the book of Job.

! So pre-COVID, I was struggling with the book of Job. I wasn't grateful that the pandemic came, but it gave us a break from the book of Job. No one, apart from my wife, has said, ah, we haven't finished Job.

And so I thought I'd got away with it. I was sharing this with Brian Maiden last week, and he said, you cannot leave Job and end it. You've got to finish it off. And so that's what we're going to start tonight.

I hope it'll be better than it was pre-COVID. So Job 28, it's really tonight, what do we do when God doesn't seem to answer our prayers? Which is a great topic, isn't it?

How do you live the Christian life? Romans chapter 6, do you remember that? For the person who's believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, sin is dead to them. You're dead to sin. Then you go into Romans chapter 7, and sin seems to be alive and kicking, doesn't it?

[ 1 : 08 ] There's a battle. There's the struggle. The good I want to do, I don't do. The thing I hate to do, I end up doing. I'm a wretched person when I understand what I'm really like, Paul says.

And so how do you live the Christian life? We begin a couple of weeks in Romans chapter 8, which is arguably the most helpful chapter in the Bible on this.

Up until now, in the letter to the Romans, Paul has mentioned the Holy Spirit, I think, three times. And in each case, really briefly, but in Romans chapter 8, he mentions the Holy Spirit 19 or 20 times.

There's a debate on one occasion whether it's a small s or a capital S. Whether it's the human spirit or the Spirit of God. But 19 or 20 times in Romans chapter 8, the Holy Spirit is mentioned.

More than any other chapter in the whole of the Bible. And so the subject is pretty obvious of Romans chapter 8. It's what does life in the Spirit look like?

[ 2 : 17 ] What does this Christian life look like? What is this new life of the man or the woman or the boy or the girl who is in Christ? And the chapter is kind of condensed.

It's rich teaching. It's impossible for us to cover everything that's in here. But I want to kind of flesh out the first 17 verses with you this morning. First thing I want you to see is this.

The freedom which the Holy Spirit brings. The freedom which the Holy Spirit brings. Look at verse 2. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

And so what have we seen in Romans so far? We've seen that the person who is outside of the Lord Jesus Christ is without God and without hope. They are doomed.

The person who is not a Christian this morning is held in chains. They are under the sentence of death even though they don't realize it. He or she has sinned against God and they are guilty before him.

[ 3 : 26 ] And here's the really alarming truth that we've seen. There's absolutely nothing you can do about it. And you can't undo your sin and you can't pretend that it hasn't happened.

And you cannot make up for it. And we've seen in Romans chapter 7 that the law of God tells us what to do. But we've also seen that we can't do it.

And I can't obey that law. Because my own heart and my own nature is too sinful. The Bible's picture is the word iniquity.

You know the bowling ball? The bowling ball that's got a weight in it. So you throw the ball. And in the end as it slows down it always curves. It always curves. It always curves.

There's a bias in your heart and in mine. It's a hopeless situation. And if you're willing to admit it this morning you've done wrong.

[ 4 : 22 ] And you can't stop doing wrong like me. And so when we begin to understand God and who he is and his law. We see that we have accumulated and continue to accumulate guilt.

But the great news of the epistle of the Romans. Is what God has done. Look at verse 3. That what the law weakened by the flesh could not do.

Can you see the first four words? For God has done. It is all about what God has done. That is what Christianity is about. That's what baptism is about.

What the law weakened by the flesh could not do. God has done. And how has God done it? Well he has done it by sending his own son. In the likeness of sinful flesh.

And for sin he condemned sin in the flesh. Verse 4. In order that the righteous requirement of the law. The law that you couldn't keep. Might be required in us. God has done what you could not do.

[ 5 : 30 ] He has kept the law. He has sent his only son. And Paul has explained that at great length. Hasn't he? That Jesus Christ has taken the place of his people. There's been a substitution. Jesus Christ has suffered what we should have suffered.

He's borne the condemnation that was rightfully mine. At the cross of Calvary. He has been punished for us. And more than that. In his earthly life he perfectly kept the law.

And he kept it on our behalf. And he's kept it perfectly. And so what happens is the Holy Spirit joins us to Jesus Christ.

And so we've talked about being placed in Christ. So that when God looks at you. Christ's atonement is reckoned. As yours. And Christ's obedience is reckoned as yours.

And we are in Christ. That's Romans chapter 6 isn't it? We're in a completely different relationship with God. A covenant relationship.

[ 6 : 34 ] And the practical result of that is he set us free from the control of sin. And the control of death. And so sin has no longer got any claim on us. That claim has been exhausted in Jesus Christ.

Death can no longer claim the victory over us. We enter into eternal life. As soon as we trust in the Lord Jesus. So Jesus said didn't he.

In John 5 24. He who hears my word. And believes in him who sent me. It's the father. Has everlasting life. And shall not come under condemnation. But has passed from death. To life.

So death as horrific. As horrific as it is. Is not the final answer for the Christian. It's not the final full stop.

You can even say it's a blip. It's a blip on the screen. Eternal life continues right through death. And the result. Paul states it in verse 1.

[ 7 : 34 ] Can you see it of chapter 8? There is therefore now. No condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. It's very very difficult to translate this.

The word no. Is actually at the head of the sentence. At the start. And it's separated. It's noun. So you could paraphrase it.

Paraphrase it as. There is no condemnation. Not a single one. No condemnation of any kind. For those who are in Christ Jesus. English doesn't probably ring as well.

But our guilt has been taken away. If you are in Christ. This morning. You are forgiven. And more than that. You've been declared righteous.

And you are clothed in the righteousness of Christ himself. So that the Holy Spirit. Brings us out of the courtroom. With no stain on our character. But commended.

[ 8 : 35 ] With the righteousness of Christ. Himself. There is no condemnation. And so if you're a Christian this morning. How should you respond?

Well the response must be to rejoice in that. I don't know what your day has been like. I don't know what your week has been like. But this is great great news isn't it?

And you need to keep saying to yourself. Over and over and over again. There is no condemnation. For those who are in Christ Jesus.

And you need to believe it with all your heart. And with all your soul. And sometimes the very best of Christians. The devil comes and he robs them of assurance. And acceptance.

And he shows them their sin. And they become really cast down. And discouraged. And they forget the greatness of what God has done in us.

[ 9 : 32 ] That in Christ. If we are in Christ. There is no condemnation. Not now. Not ever. That is past. And so we're delivered from that.

To never think about it again. It frees us from our guilt. And it frees us from fear. It frees us to forgive other people. Because God has forgiven us. It frees us to love other people. Because God has unconditionally. Set his love upon us. And it frees us to worship God. And to trust. The freedom. Which the spirit brings.

Then secondly we see. The control that the spirit exercises. That's verses 5 to 11. The control. Which the spirit exercises. And it's highlighted in verse 9.

You however. Are not in the flesh. But in the spirit. If in fact the spirit of God. Dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the spirit of Christ.

[10:36] Does not belong to him. So. Every Christian. Every believer. Every person who is in Christ.

Has a new resident living in them. The third person of the Godhead. One God. Three persons. Father. Son. And Holy Spirit. There is no such thing.

As a Christian. Who does not have the Holy Spirit. As a constant presence. So the teaching. That you can believe. In Jesus Christ.

As your savior. And then later on. Receive the Holy Spirit. Is not right. That is an error. It's a serious mistake.

Anyone says Paul. Who does not have the spirit of Christ. Simply isn't a Christian. Can you see that? They don't belong to Christ. So a new resident.

[11:35] Has taken up. Dwelling in your heart. When you became a Christian. So let's think about this. All right. Let's illustrate it a little bit. And let's think of somebody.

Who buys a dilapidated house. And they've bought that. This house. And they come to live in it. And it's going to take. Considerable time. For them to get that home. To be like they want it to be.

The previous owners. Have left it in a really bad state. There's loads of damp. There's loads of mold. And rust in the guttering. There's problems inside the house.

With the plumbing. The electrics. It's a bit of a mess. And yet. If you live on that street. When the new family move in. You can tell that somebody's come to live in that house.

Can't you? Suddenly. The windows will be cleaned. Suddenly. There'll be a difference. It will be lived in.

[12:32] Maybe there's curtains. Maybe. The grass is cut. It's not what it's going to be. It's not what it's going to be at all. It's not what the owner wants it to be. It's not what it one day will be.

But the transformation has begun. Hasn't it? And so within a few days. The neighbours as they walk past. Say. Do you know what? There's someone new in that house. There's a new person in that house.

It looks different. And that is what happens. When the Holy Spirit. Comes into the heart of a person. So. This morning. Isn't it? There's a long way to go. In all of us. The Holy Spirit has got a lot to do.

In my life. In the home of our lives. In the house of your life. There are still many many problems. And it will take time. And it is a gradual process. But from the beginning.

There's a difference. There is a difference. And you can see that there's a new person. Living in that house. And Paul amplifies that in verse 5. For those who live according to the flesh.

[13:34] Set their minds on the things of the flesh. But those who live according to the spirit. Set their minds on the things of the spirit. And so when somebody. Is converted. When somebody becomes a Christian. There's an enormous change. There's a whole orientation change.

They begin to think in a different way. Their perspectives. Become different. Their values. Are different. They've suddenly got new interests. They give themselves to thinking about things.

Which they never really used to think about before. And prayer becomes important to them. It didn't used to be important to them at all. But now they want to worship God.

And they delight in it. And they look forward to it. That didn't used to be the case. And the Bible.

There's lots of you don't understand in the Bible. But the Bible is a new book to them. And they read it.

And they're interested in it. And they find truth that applies to their life. And they're interested. In the progress of the kingdom. And they set their mind on the things of the Holy Spirit.

[14:38] And he says in verse 6. Set the mind. The mind on the spirit is what? It is life and peace. And so the result of this new owner.

What comes? Peace. And order. And growth and energy. A life which is pleasing to God. A life which extends past the boundaries of life on this earth.

Into the life that is to come. And so that is how you can tell. That the Holy Spirit is in someone's life. That there's a new controlling force.

That there's a new influence. That there's a new authority. And that they are different. And they're becoming more and more different. All the time. The house is being renovated.

And it is being repaired. And it is being renewed. And there's still lots of mess in the house. But it is changing. And Paul says in verse 11.

[ 15 : 39 ] 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. Through his spirit who dwells in you.

And so I suppose the question for me and you is. If anyone could look at our lives. Would they recognize the owner? Would they say is God the owner of that person's life?

Or is self the owner? Because the Holy Spirit. If he is there. Will exercise control. And the freedom which the spirit brings. The control which the spirit exercised.

Now point three. Is verses 12 to 14. The obligation which the spirit imposes. The obligation which the spirit imposes. And it comes right at the beginning.

Look at verse 12. So then brothers. Brothers and sisters. We are debtors. That is we've got an obligation. We owe something. Not to the flesh. To live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh.

[ 16 : 41 ] You will die. But if you by the spirit. You put to death. The deeds of the body. You will live. So can you just see that? Verse 12. We are debtors.

It's not all passive. If somebody says. Actually the Christian life is. You let go. And you let God. That person doesn't understand. The Christian life. So this is where my illustration.

Which is very good isn't it? Of the house falls down. Alright. Because the house doesn't play. Any part at all. In its own renovation. Does it? Not at all. And the house is totally passive.

And the new owner has to do it all. But that isn't. An adequate picture. Of the Christian life. And so God does the work. God does it all. But how does God work?

He works through means. And the means he uses. Are our efforts. So it doesn't mean. We're doing it. We're not doing it.

[ 17 : 38 ] God is doing it. But he does it through us. God chooses to work through prayer. And our efforts. Paul spells this out.

So he says. We have an obligation. Don't we? Not to the sinful nature. We owe our old selves. Absolutely nothing. We owe the flesh nothing. In fact.

We know that if we carry on living in that way. All it will bring us is sorrow and sin. And all it will bring us is sin and death. And the devil.

We owe him nothing. We owe temptation nothing. We owe this world nothing. We owe its pleasures nothing. We owe ourselves nothing. For Paul says.

If you live according to the flesh. You will die. That's the negative. That's what you don't owe. That's what you're not indebted to. But we say.

[ 18 : 35 ] Well what am I to do? Well look at verse 13 in the second half. But if by the spirit you put to death. The deeds of the body. You will live. That text.

Romans 8.13. It's one of. Kind of the themes. Of one of the kind of greatest Christian books ever. It's by John Owen. He was a Puritan. He died in healing. It's volume six.

His book is called. The mortification of sin. It's pretty hard work reading. But it's brilliant. And he says. That the Christian's obligation. Is to put sin to death. And to put sin to death.

In ourselves. In our hearts. In our appetites. In our desires. To starve it. To smother it. To strangle it. To kill it. And I think it's really helpful.

So if I was to ask you. This morning. Which sin. Are you at present attacking. I think that's a really helpful question. To think about. Would we say.

[ 19 : 33 ] Well actually. I'm against all sin. That's the pious answer. Isn't it? I'm trying to kill all sin. I don't think it works like that. Does it? The Bible is far more specific.

Do you remember. The Lord Jesus talked about. Plucking out the eye. Didn't he? And he talked about. Cutting off. The hand. Something. Which is dead. To us.

Something. That we've got used to. And we've kind of made peace with. But we realize. Actually. It's not helping us. As a Christian. It's not helping us. Live faithfully.

As Christians. And so we declare war on it. That's the picture. And Paul says. When we see sin. As our enemy. We're to deal with it ruthlessly. Without mercy.

Without pity. That is the mark. Of the spiritual person. And so. Can I. Can I just. Kind of go off. On one here for a minute. The spirit. Filled person.

[ 20 : 30 ] And the spirit. Led person. Can you see. What. What do they do. In Romans 8. They go after. Killing sin. Holiness.

Is really important. To them. And the person. Who is spirit. Led. What do they do. They pluck out their eye. And they cut off their arm. And we live in a day.

Don't we. Where. The spirit. Filled person. Is often thought of. Well. They. They. They are really. Super positive. And they have. Maybe visions. They have. Odd experiences.

They talk about. Being led. By the spirit. But actually. Being led. By the spirit. Means what. In this passage. It means. Killing sin. And so.

The mark. Of the presence. Of the Holy Spirit. Will be a desire. For holiness. And the pursuit. Of holiness. So look how. Paul puts it. In verse 14. For all. Who are led. By the spirit. Of God. Are sons.

[ 21 : 26 ] Of God. Do you see. He links it. To the previous. Verse. In putting sin. To death. People often.

Talk to me. About being led. By the Holy Spirit. And give the most. Bizarre. Kind of. Talk about. The bizarrest. Guidance. Isn't it strange. How the spirit. Leads.

They talk about. Spirit does guide. But the leading of the spirit. That the New Testament. Talks about. Is your warfare. Against sin. And so.

That is primarily. How the Holy Spirit. Leads you. Not by dreams. Or visions. Or feelings. Or voices. But by enabling you. To put to death.

The deeds of the body. By a daily. Earnest. Unending. Battle against sin. And so.

[ 22 : 20 ] If you're feeling. And some of you. Are new Christians. Here this morning. And you're feeling. The battle. And you're feeling. The struggle. And the temptation. Let me really.

Encourage you. And say. Romans 8 says. That is the spirit filled. Christian life. And if you're not. Feeling the battle. I think that is. A really worrying sign.

And so. Paul is saying. Isn't it. That we are to make this. A prime importance. In our life. To do battle. With sin. To kill it. And that's to be.

The ordinary experience. Of the Christian believer. We are debtors. We have an obligation. So John Owen. Puts it like this. He says. You are either killing sin. Or sin is killing you. You are either killing sin.

Or sin is killing you. And there are some. Believers out there. And sin is running riot. In their lives. But if you put to death.

[ 23 : 24 ] By the spirit. The misleads of the body. You will live. The control. The obligation. Which the spirit imposes. And then lastly. The assurance. Which the spirit confers. Can you see it. In verses 15 to 17.

The assurance. Which the spirit confers. Verse 16. It's stated really clearly. The spirit himself. Bears witness. With our spirit. That we are children of God. So follow the logic.

As we are seeking. To put to death sin. As we are engaged. In the struggle. Trying to kill sin off. As we.

Seek to do battle with sin. And seek to glorify Christ. God. The Holy Spirit. Gives an. Indefinable. Mysterious. And yet. Powerful.

And precious. And inner confidence. That the God. Who is in heaven. Is your heavenly father. And that his promises.

[ 24 : 24 ] Are meant for you. What happens when we grieve. The Holy Spirit. When we grieve. The Holy Spirit. We lose that assurance.

We find that we can't. Go to God. And call him father. But when we repent. And when we recognize that. And when we return. And we follow him. It returns.

It's. Paul puts it this way. In verse. 15. For you did not receive. The spirit of slavery. To fall back in fear. But you've received.

The spirit of adoption. As sons. By whom we cry. Abba father. Abba. Is. Is really. A children's word. It's a children's word.

It's like. We would use. Mummy and daddy. It's the first word. A little baby can say. We need to be careful. Don't we. In kind of.

[ 25 : 20 ] Thought of those days. That the father was an awesome. Highly respected. Figure in Roman law. The father had the power of life and death. Of his children. The father was a very very impressive figure.

But we're not to forget that. He's not just our dad. He is our father in heaven. And there is to be a reverence and a respect.

And yet this text speaks of intimacy. Doesn't it? Of nearness. And that's never to be lost. He is not just father. He is Abba. He is not remote.

He is not far away. He is not cold. He is not disinterested. He is very close. He is very close to us. He is very loving.

The whole gospel is in the beginning of the Lord's Prayer. Isn't it? We say it every week. I hope we say it every day. Our father in heaven. Once you can say that. All is well. It's our immense privilege.

[ 26 : 25 ] I love listening to new Christians pray. When somebody who is a new Christian speaks about God. They've not learnt the language. They don't know how to express themselves. In a kind of churchy way.

It's often isn't it? Very simple. Very natural. It's really really refreshing to listen to them. Because speaking to God. Which is what prayer is.

Is natural. And new. And fresh. And so when we speak to God. We're not to be stilted. Or to be pompous. Especially in our private prayers. In our personal prayers. When we speak to God on our own.

We're encouraged to speak to him. In the most trusting. And natural. And unfettered way. No distant formality. Abba father. Abba father is a trusting word.

A child doesn't ask for anything in the world. And yet. This one word. It says everything. Doesn't it? So when a. Father hears.

[ 27 : 40 ] A young child say daddy. Daddy. Or a grandfather. He hears a child say granddad. The child doesn't need to say anything else. Because the father instinctively knows.

The father or grandfather has their. Is at their mercy. They will give to them whatever they need. Whatever is good for them.

Everything is said. In that cry. Father. And often. I don't know about you. But often. I don't know what to pray for.

Some of the situations in this room. I'm not sure what to pray for. Neither are you. And there's times of great stress. Aren't there? And times of great tension. In the Christian life. And there's times of sorrow. And times of grief.

And times of utter despair. And we don't know what to pray for. And we don't want to encourage. Kind of just a vain repetition. Going through the motions. But actually to say.

[ 28 : 38 ] Father. Is a very very powerful prayer. Just to come to the Lord. And say. Father. And to mean it. Because he knows.

How to answer that. It's an unselfconscious word. And so the plague. Of modern Christianity. Is that we are far too.

Wrapped up in ourselves. And everything is geared. To our needs. And to our wants. And to our problems. And God exists. As a means to an end. To provide for me.

And what I want. But Abba. Focuses on him. For his own sake. Think about that for a minute. The spirit.

Does not lead you to cry. I'm a child of God. I'm a child of God. That's not where the emphasis is put. The spirit leads us to cry.

[ 29 : 36 ] Father. And it puts the emphasis. On him. So that we forget about ourselves. And we put the focus on him. And we delight in him. And if you can reach.

That in your prayers. Your prayers will be answered. So if in prayer. We can come and see who God is.

And delight in who he is. And how wonderful he is. And if you never asked for anything. You would obtain a great great deal. Wouldn't you? To be able to say.

Loving him. Wrapped up in him. Just as a child. Is glad to see her father. To be with him. To know that he's there. That's okay. That's enough.

You ask the children after the service. What do you want your father to do? I don't want him to do anything. I want him just to be my daddy. I like being with him.

[ 30 : 36 ] And the whole. The Holy Spirit. Leads us to cry. Abba Father. That is the true orientation of Christian life. In daily living.

In trouble. In evangelism. Who God is. And what he's done. And how much. He loves us. And how much he delights in us. That is enough.

The psalmist can say. We sang it isn't it. Whom am I in heaven but you. And the earth has nothing. I desire beside you. The apostle John tells us.

This is eternal life. To know the eternal God. Jesus Christ who we've sent. The assurance. That the spirit confers.

That's the mark of his presence. In a life. Let's pray together. Amen. Amen.