

## Romans 8:4-5

*1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

*2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.*

*3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:*

*4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

*5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.*

The righteousness of the Law is fulfilled in us today who walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, and we have learned now that this phrase *walking after the Spirit* is a uniquely Pauline phrase, that is, it only occurs in the Pauline epistles, specifically here in Romans, after learning of our new identity in Christ. And that is specifically what this phrase is speaking about.

The doctrine found in Paul's epistles form a unit of doctrine specifically for the Body of Christ, and as we work our way through the doctrine committed to us by Jesus Christ, through the apostle of the gentiles, Paul, starting at the beginning of Romans 1:1, we see that the only things we've learned so far about the Spirit's operation in our lives is our spiritual baptism into Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. We can't go back to Israel's program to get information about how the Spirit is operating, because as we've seen, the Spirit has not always operated in the same manner, but *has* always operated in a manner consistent with God's revealed will at any given time. As we know however, God has been working to accomplish several different purposes in time, and the operation of the Spirit reflects those differences, though of course each distinct purpose ties into the larger narrative of redemption itself.

And so, today, God's revealed will is that all men be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth, as 1 Timothy 2:4 says, and this means He desires for us to have a working knowledge of

our new identity in Christ that we've been given through the operation of the Spirit, and to walk after that new identity, to follow after the things the Spirit has freely provided for us.

He put our *in-Adam* nature that resided in our inner man *to death*, and united us to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. This is how the very righteousness that the Law communicated is to be fulfilled in us—not by our own works, but by the life of God Himself working in us—and all of this is to be accomplished without being under the commandments contained in the Law.

In the last lesson we saw that there was in fact a righteousness according to the Law. Moses says in Deuteronomy 6:25 that if he and the children of Israel kept God's commandments and statutes, that it would be *their righteousness*.

Paul, in Philippians 3, while recounting all of his advantages and accolades in the flesh, says that he was in fact *blameless according to the righteousness which is in the Law*. But he concludes by saying that he doesn't want *his own* righteousness, because *the righteousness of God* is far better:

#### **Philippians 3:4-9**

**4** *Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:*

**5** *Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;*

**6** *Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.*

**7** *But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.*

**8** *Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,*

**9** *And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith...*

And so while there is a righteousness which is of the Law, it is essentially a *man's* righteousness. It was what a man could produce in his flesh, and this is why God necessarily had to include the sacrifices and offerings that were included in the Old Covenant system. Man cannot perfectly keep the righteousness of the Law in their flesh.

What we have available to us today is not simply a man's righteousness, but the righteousness of God Himself that is accessible, not through the works of the flesh, but through the Spirit. Paul knew that what God is offering us today is far superior than what the Law itself had to offer, that it is the righteousness of God by the faithful performance of Jesus Christ *in us*, as we trust *in* and rely *on His* provision, and we place our faith in Him, just as Christ relied on the Father to work *in* and *through* Him in His life here on earth.

And so we've looked at this passage here in Philippians 3; but this is not a one-off statement. Look at what Paul says in Philippians chapters 1 and 2:

### **Philippians 1:6**

*Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ...*

### **Philippians 2:13**

*For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*

This entire edification process that God has designed for us is according to His work in us, which is going to be accomplished by faith in His word, and not according to our own works, therefore, it's not according to the Law of Moses at all, or any works based system.

And so walking after the Spirit produces *freedom*, just as Romans 8:1 says, because you are spiritually *severed* from the power of the flesh. God *circumcised* or *cut off* your inner man from the flesh, and thereby the bondage it was held in by the flesh. And so, if a man be freed from sin itself, what need is there for a Law?

The apostle John explains to the remnant of Israel in 1 John 3:4, *who are instructed to continue in Moses' Law*, that the very definition of sin *is* transgression of the Law:

### **1 John 3:4**

*Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.*

Israel's doctrine is according to their covenant system, and does in fact incorporate the Law, and we see this throughout the gospels and the Hebrew epistles of Hebrews through Revelation. And this concept, that these epistles pertain to God's future time of judgment on the earth, and to the believing remnant of Israel, is not a new concept, but has been realized and understood by

many people in church history. Harry Bultema, Sir Robert Anderson, C. H. Mackintosh, E. W. Bullinger—all these men came to understand from the scriptures this very issue, and in so doing came to understand Paul's unique apostleship for our present time.

Following I've included a brief excerpt from George Williams' *The Students Commentary*, at the opening of his chapter on the book of 1 John:

*Prophetically the Epistle belongs to the to future. Its interpretation concerns Hebrew believers during the period immediately prior to the Coming of the Lord (ii. 18, 28, iii. 2 and iv. 3).*

And so, while this quote doesn't mean anything necessarily in the way of proof, I've included it simply to show that this is not without precedent. The proof is in the doctrine itself, and doctrine itself *is* different.

Let's consider one more passage from the epistle of 1 John:

### **1 John 2:3-10**

**3** *And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.*

**4** *He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*

**5** *But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.*

**6** *He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.*

**7** *Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.*

**8** *Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.*

**9** *He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.*

**10** *He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.*

The *old commandment* that they had from the beginning is *Moses*, it is *the Law*, which Jesus affirmed and instructed for the believing remnant of Israel; but this *new commandment* is to love one another, just as Jesus also commanded.

**Matthew 5:17-19**

*17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.*

*18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.*

*19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*

**John 13:34**

*A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*

And so there at the beginning of Jesus's ministry, the *old commandment*, the Law of Moses, is upheld and affirmed, and near the end of Jesus pre-crucifixion ministry, He adds a *new commandment*—that they love one another, with the selfless, sacrificial kind of love that Jesus had *for them*. And we see this in the context of 1 John 2, as verse 10 says *He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him*. The Old commandment here is not done away with, but rather, love as being the essence of the Law is added. In this way the very heart of the Law is manifest in these saints, so that they are not only keeping the Law in some shallow, external sense, but that they are keeping it from the heart.

Verse 6 says, *He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked*. Well, how did Jesus walk? It was according to the Law of Moses. Galatians 4:4 tells us that *God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law...*

But this walking according to the Law for them is going to be in accordance with the Holy Ghost operation of the New Covenant. It is evident that no man can perform the Law perfectly in their flesh. But God is going to provide a spiritual operation for them and write His Law in their very hearts, and we see this detailed in prophecy:

**Ezekiel 11:16-20**

*16 Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord God; Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come.*

*17 Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord God; I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.*

*18 And they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof and all the abominations thereof from thence.*

*19 And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh:*

*20 That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.*

### **Jeremiah 31:31-33**

*31 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:*

*32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord:*

*33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

In the dispensation of grace in which we currently live however, while Israel's program according to prophecy is temporarily suspended, the righteousness of God *apart from the Law* has been manifested, just as Romans 3:21 says, and that righteousness is fulfilled in us who *walk after the Spirit*, who *walk by faith and not by sight*, who walk by faith in what God has done and who He's made us to be by the Spirit's operation of baptizing us into Christ.

We are *dead to the Law*, we learned from Romans 7, and so our standard of sin *must of necessity be different* than the standard of sin according to the Law found in Israel's doctrine. If John is telling his audience that sin is transgression of the Law, and is *upholding* the Law, yet Paul is telling us that we are *dead to the Law* by the body of Christ, then these two epistles reflect two distinct bodies of doctrine, for two distinct groups, that will exist at two different times dispensationally. They *must* be different.

Sin for us is *anything we do that is not of faith*, and biblical faith is based upon the word of God itself. Sin for us is any time we choose to *not* live out of our doctrine for *godly edification*, any time we default to our natural tendencies, rather than living by the word of God, and the word of

God is telling us not to try in our own effort, but rather, walk after the things the Spirit has already accomplished in us.

The word of God to us that begins in the epistle to the Romans first discloses our status as *condemned*. And so to the natural man, *godliness* is measured by comparing themselves among themselves, but godliness in this dispensation begins with you understanding that God has already declared you a condemned sinner in your flesh. It then discloses to us that Jesus Christ did everything necessary to satisfy God's wrath against you, and not only this, but that God has now imputed His righteousness to you.

The word of God in Romans 6 discloses to us our new spiritual identity in Christ, and the provision God made for us to live out of that identity. And so godliness then must be to believe that and live out of that provision, out of that identity.

It is when we do not walk after the Spiritual operation that God provided and that He continually performs in us, but instead walk according to our natural, default tendencies, that we fail to fulfill the righteousness that the Law communicated. Christ is the righteousness that the Law communicates, and so if we are allowing Him to live in us, and through us, then we will by nature fulfill the righteousness of loving God and loving our fellow man in truth, selflessly, and without partiality, seeking their benefit in the things God has purposed for them, just as He did us.

The love that is formed in our inner man, for God and for our neighbor, can only be produced through the *Spirit of God* taking the *word of God* that enters into our mind, and translating it past mere knowledge, and writing it upon the tables of our very hearts.

### **2 Corinthians 3:3**

*Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.*

In the context of 2 Corinthians 3, Paul is saying he doesn't need a letter of commendation *for* the Corinthians or *from* the Corinthians, in order to validate his ministry, because the ministry that *God* was doing *in them* spoke for itself. What is manifest in our lives through the doctrine is to declare that *we are* the epistle of Christ, the doctrine which is according to godliness.

Our doctrine for godly edifying is to cultivate and culminate in *charity*, which is *godly love in action*—it is when the doctrine that is able to produce *Christ in us* teaches us to lay our lives down for one another, to love one another in word *and* deed, to seek *their* edification and benefit, to the exclusion of our own liberties. *This fulfills the Law.*

If the Law is to love God and love your neighbor, then to properly esteem the mercies God has given us will produce a genuine love for Him that is not just emotion, but submission. That is why Paul will beseech us *by the mercies of God* in Romans 12:1 to present our bodies as living sacrifices unto Him. We must first esteem *His mercies* and allow them to cultivate a love for Him in our hearts before we can truly begin to serve Him out of love, and to love our neighbors the way He intends us to. And the progression of doctrine from Romans 12:1 onward reflects this. The mercies of God come first to produce that love for God, and then comes our service to others.

But we must first be *practically* set free from the bondage of sin in our lives to see *this service, this ministry*, realized. And *that* is what we have been learning in Romans chapters 6 through 8:13.

The Law communicated proper relations with God and with our fellow man. By our union with Christ spiritually, and by the renewing of our mind to align with God's truth, we are able to be free from sin, and we are then free to engage in healthy relationships with God and our fellow man *without the Law*. We are under a law—remember, we are *under* the Spiritual operation of God's grace (Rom. 6:14), and because of that power, *sin shall not have dominion over us* (Rom. 6:14). This grace we are under is our identification and spiritual union with the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Thus, it is His power and His life in us.

All that God has accomplished in us through the gospel is not only by *lawful means* but *operates according to laws God has set forth*. We have seen these as we have tracked through the doctrine: the law of faith, substitution, propitiation, imputation, atonement, even death itself. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ is the law of the Spirit that has eternally bound us to Jesus Christ and *His* eternal life and resurrection power.

Being therefore freed from sin, as I mentioned, we are then free to engage in a healthy relationship with God and our fellow man. This frees us to actually perform the work of the ministry.

Consider 1 Corinthians 9:

### **1 Corinthians 9:20-21**

**20** *And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law;*

**21** *To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law.*

We see here how being delivered from the Law actually allows us to use our liberty to do the work of the ministry. Paul, while not under the Law itself, used his liberty to be “as under the law,” so that he could minister to those who were under the Law. *This* is the proper use of Christian liberty.

We see also that to those who were *without* law, he used his liberty to become “as without law,” so that he could do ministry in that context as well. But notice he says parenthetically that he was still under the law to Christ. We know he’s not speaking of the Old Testament Law here, because that would contradict the very doctrine he’s already given us in Romans, and even in this very passage. What he is saying here is that while he made himself as without any law for the sake of ministry, he was still operating out of the law of the Spirit of life that is *in* Christ, he was still under that law *to* Christ. Paul was walking after the Spirit and engaging in the work of the ministry from a place of *identity* and *grace*.

Let’s also consider Galatians 6:

### **Galatians 6:1-3**

*1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*

*2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*

*3 For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.*

We see here that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ is able to work in us to free us from sin and allow “those who are spiritual” to do ministry with other believers who are still dealing with sin. That law allows for the selfless character of Christ to be perfected in us, that we learn to bear one another’s burdens, just as Christ did for us, and this in itself *is the intended end of the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ*, and thus fulfills the Law. It is to love your neighbor as yourself—and so it fulfills the righteousness of the Law, without us actually being *under* the Law.

Paul reminds the Galatians here in verse 3 that we ourselves are *nothing*; what he is saying is that all our victory, all our sufficiency, comes from and through Jesus Christ and Him alone.

### **Romans 8:1-5**

*1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

*2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.*

**3** For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

**4** That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

**5** For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

And so, what the Law could not do, Christ Himself made a way to accomplish, and that is by the Spiritual operation that He performed in us when we believed, that makes us free from the law of sin and of the resulting functional death in our daily walk; what we must do then is *walk after the Spirit*, in order to experience that life and freedom that God has provided for us, for that righteousness to be fulfilled. And so this brings us to verse 5.

We see here the very process by which we are to walk after the Spirit described for us. We've gone over all of the things that walking after the Spirit *is not*, and some of the ways that this phrase is divorced from its scriptural context and used for unscriptural practices. It is clear from the context that walking after the Spirit specifically relates to our ability to walk in freedom from sin and condemnation.

I have told you plainly what walking after the Spirit *is*, and how this phrase is specifically found only here in our doctrine, in Romans 8, and how it is actually when we call *our thinking* back to those things that the Spirit of God Himself has done in our inner man when we trusted the gospel. But as of yet I have offered no scriptural proof for this interpretation. But here in Romans 8:5, we get that proof.

For they that are after the flesh do *mind* the things of the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit do *mind* the things of the Spirit.

What does it mean to mind something?

To mind something essentially means to hold it in memory, to think upon it, to dwell upon it, to have it in view of your mind's eye.

And so the way we naturally walk after the flesh is we esteem fleshly things in our mind and memory, we think on them, and they then illicit emotions and a response from our will—we desire and crave those things we think upon, and the more we entertain them, the stronger the impulse to seek them out. Well, we are told now to mind something *that cannot be seen*, to mind something we cannot feel or sense or obtain in any tangible way up front, but which is real none the less.

So we are told to mind some things. What is the mind? *The mind* is a faculty of man's soul, and is where memory and reasoning takes place. It is not necessarily synonymous with a man's will, nor is it necessarily synonymous with a man's emotions, both of which are also aspects of the soul. The soul is often defined as a composite of mind, will and emotions, and I believe that to be as accurate as one can get in defining it. Emotions and will can sometimes be at odds with what is in a man's mind, what he knows rationally, and what he can deduce from his past experiences.

He may desire something and exercise his will to get it, despite knowing intellectually that the results will not be good. He may have strong feelings and emotions about something which his intellect cannot seem to control, which occur in spite of his intellect *knowing* that perhaps everything will actually be ok. Thus, emotions are not always rational, cannot always be predicted, and cannot always be appeased by rational discourse. Emotions and will and mind then have been historically understood to be somehow distinct, though all three comprise what is essential for a free-will moral agent such as man to exist and exercise that free will in light of his circumstances.

Interesting to note here that the Scripture does not tell us to *will* or *feel* the things of the Spirit, but to *mind*. And if the mind, will and emotions can be at odds with each other within a man, then they must somehow be distinct. And thus we are told specifically to *mind* something. It cannot be something we *will* or contrive on our own, according to our willpower or self effort, as we have seen it is a work God Himself already performed in us. Thus, neither is it something subject to our emotions, but rather, the emotional aspect of our being should be subject to it.

Both our will and emotions, and eventually our entire being, are to be brought into subjection to the Spirit. But how is this accomplished? It is accomplished *through the mind*. The mind is where the strongholds that prevent us from walking in freedom exist, and that is where the word of God must take up residence and *dwell*, if we are to align our being with God's truth. We have to identify the lies we've been indoctrinated with in life by comparing them with the truths found in scripture, and then replace those lies with the truth. That is how the strongholds that keep us in bondage get torn down. Because, as we've learned, God already did all the work in our inner man that needed to be done—we *have* been set free, but our minds are not immediately aware of that truth, and we often remain ignorant of those truths, and because of this continue on in the patterns of our old Adamic nature, and we continue therefore to reap the consequences of "the works of the devil," which Jesus came to destroy.

We must *mind* the things that the Spirit has done in us if we are to *walk after the Spirit*, if we want the Spirit to be at work in our lives the way God intended. Remember from Romans 1:28, that humanity did not like to retain God *in their knowledge*, and thus God gave them over to a *reprobate mind*. If Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil, then He came to also restore the knowledge of God in mankind and renew their minds.

We see here in verse 5 again the juxtaposition between the flesh and the Spirit, and how the believer, though fully justified and sanctified in Christ, is still able to walk after the law of sin which is in the members, in the bodies we've inherited from Adam. Not only this, but we are able to walk after the ghosts of our previous lives outside of Christ, after the lusts of our minds that exist in the form of memory. And so, those who mind these things will naturally be those who end up walking after the flesh. The mind is a gateway, whether to the world and the things of the world, or to God. One cannot see God. One can see the world. To mind the things of the world is so painfully easy as almost inevitable at times. But how does one mind the things of God whom he cannot see? It must be by the things God has revealed to us, namely in His word.