

072119 chapter 5 when I am completely incapable of helping myself because I am a sinner...Christ helped me... I am now a friend of God... we now start the part of his letter where he starts to move from doctrine to how we are to apply it...How are we to live now... so lets start where we ended last week...

Romans 5:6 *When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. ⁷ Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. ⁸ But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.*

- **most people would not be willing to die for an upright person:** God's love is a love beyond even the best love among humans. A good man might die a noble martyrdom for the "right kind" of person – a **good man**. But Jesus died for those who were neither righteous nor good.
- **Who are these people? Who are the ungodly and wicked people Jesus died for? Paul spent the first two-and-a-half chapters of the Book of Romans telling us that we *all* are those people.**
- **If God showed such dramatic love to us when we were enemies in sin, If God does this much for His enemies, how much more will He do for His friends!**

*Romans 5: ⁹ And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation. **When we are in Christ and fully understand the price to which God paid to save us...there is a Divine knowledge that is put in our spirit that if God paid that much for me there is NO WAY He's going to let me sink. That's called HOPE!***

*¹⁰ For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. ¹¹ So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because **our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.***

- **So if you are friends with God...then you can rejoice because you will certainly be saved...saved from what? His wrath and eternal judgment. Saved to a family relationship with God, a new family a new life and an eternal life...**

And this is the history of man's fall and restoration in a nutshell

¹² When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned. ¹³ Yes, people sinned even before the law was given. But it was not counted as sin because there was not yet any law to break. ¹⁴ Still, everyone died—from the time of Adam to the time of Moses—even those

who did not disobey an explicit commandment of God, as Adam did. Now Adam is a symbol, a representation of Christ, who was yet to come. ¹⁵ But there is a great difference between Adam's sin and God's gracious gift. For the sin of this one man, Adam, brought death to many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of forgiveness to many through this other man, Jesus Christ. ¹⁶ **And the result of God's gracious gift is very different from the result of that one man's sin. For Adam's sin led to condemnation, but God's free gift leads to our being made right with God, even though we are guilty of many sins.** ¹⁷ For the sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of righteousness, for all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ **Yes, Adam's one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and new life for everyone.** ¹⁹ Because one person disobeyed God, many became sinners. But because one other person obeyed God, many will be made righteous.

²⁰ God's law was given so that all people could see how sinful they were. But as people sinned more and more, God's wonderful grace became more abundant.

- **And here Paul restates the Gospel message in a wonderful and powerful nutshell:**

Romans 5:21 So just as sin ruled over all people and brought them to death, now God's wonderful grace rules instead, giving us right standing with God and resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

- **So one then should we keep doing wrong, so his grace can be show more?**
- **and two what does this new life look like? in the practical...he goes on to explain in chapter 6.....So believer...this chapter is especially for you:**

Romans 6:1-7 (NLT) ¹ Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? ² Of course not! **Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it?** ³ Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? ⁴ **For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism.** And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, **now we also may live new lives.** ⁵ **Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised to life as he was.** ⁶ **We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin.** ⁷ For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin.

- This is the greatest message to the believer that we need to remind ourselves of daily. *We are dead to the old life. we have a new life and the power to make new choices...one of the choices is to say no to sin..*

What does this look like? well it really is a comparison of Identities...the former and the now..

Ephesians 4:17-24 (ESV) ¹⁷ Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that **you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds.** ¹⁸ *They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.* ¹⁹ **They** have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.

Three points :

1. Life without God is an exercise in futility of our thinking,
2. They are hard hearted so as to not be sensitive to God...and live by their own thinking...
3. Which leads them to live sensually by their five senses...always looking for that which maximizes pleasure and minimizes pain...to live lives full of sin...falling short of what God would have for them...indulgent but unprofitable lives..

For “As a man thinketh...is true” **Our actions expresses loud and clear the result of our dominant thoughts.**

Listen....You win the mind game you win the life game!!

- You have to have a shift in your way of thinking and your thought patterns if you are going to change your behavior.
- **Your thought life is the place where the everyday battle of life rages...and it can be won!!**

Phil 4:8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

- The Human mind must be re-educated into it's new identity...
- So Thinking on these things influences action... .. our thinking will begin reflecting hope...we will think about others differently, we will begin to love people... we will grow up into the way Jesus thinks...

*Romans 12:*² Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

- Understand you have been formed by the behaviors and customs **of your world...** and **"YOUR WORLD HAS FORMED YOUR OUTLOOK ON THE WORLD!"**
- We must be reformed by the patterns and customs of our new world! Transformed to a new way of thinking...which results in a new way of living
- changing has the idea to restart...to recharge...to repair and restore...
- and in this change to the way we interpret life...we begin to learn that God's ways are:
 - **Good!** it is good for us! it does us well..in the big picture
 - **pleasing...**I will find it pleasing.... **SATISFYING!**
 - **Perfect...**holistic in it's out working...it is overall **GREAT**
 - **Our actions will only go as far as our thinking is transformed...it is a process...**

*LK 6:46 "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? 47 I will show you what he is like **who comes to me and hears my words (mind) and puts them into practice.**(heart) 48 He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. 49 But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete.*

- The key of life according to Jesus is not hearing his word only but putting his word into practice...**it is hearing his teaching and obeying where to build the house of his life.....on the rock and holding on to his teaching staying on the rock in the flood...because the house has been built to withstand the flood.**
- And the truth is that we all weigh the words of Jesus. We give them value or not...and the ones we value more we give more weight or influence in our lives... **living on the SAND...which appears solid enough until shaken...** appears to be true but in practice is not...

- **Think of a combination lock...there are thousands of combination which you can try to use to open the lock...but there is only one true combination. And in life Jesus has it...although we may have many combinations in our mind...**
- **And the true combination is only worthwhile if you hold on...(remember it).**
- **To use it only for three months or a year... and forget it avails you little usefulness.**

(NLT) Eph 4: 20 But that isn't what you learned about Christ.²¹ Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him,²² throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception.²³ Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes.²⁴ Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.

- **Now because you are spiritually alive...you gain a new way to think..which enables you to put on a new way of life**
- **And what is the promise that is surely ours now that we are alive in Christ?**

Romans 6:8 And since we died with Christ, we know we will also live with him.⁹ We are sure of this because Christ was raised from the dead, and he will never die again. Death no longer has any power over him.¹⁰ When he died, he died once to break the power of sin. But now that he lives, he lives for the glory of God.¹¹ So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus.

The Paul closes it all off with one last appeal and encouragement to the believer on how we should live our lives...

Romans 6:12 Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to sinful desires.¹³ Do not let any part of your body become an instrument of evil to serve sin. Instead, give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life. So use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God.¹⁴ Sin is no longer your master, for you no longer live under the requirements of the law. Instead, you live under the freedom of God's grace.

- **Grace gives us the power to choose good! And if you don't think living a life of holiness is not important to God as well as Paul, he restates something that he said earlier...**

God gives us a new way to think....think of yourselves as slaves....

¹⁷ Thank God! Once you were slaves of sin, but now you wholeheartedly obey this teaching we have given you.¹⁸ Now you are free from your slavery to sin, and you

have become slaves to righteous living. ¹⁹ *Because of the weakness of your human nature, I am using the illustration of slavery to help you understand all this.*

Previously, you let yourselves be slaves to impurity and lawlessness, which led ever deeper into sin. Now you must give yourselves to be slaves to righteous living so that you will become holy.

- **When you are a slave you have no power...to change your circumstances...**
- **sin takes you farther than you want to go.. Keeps you longer than you want to stay.. promises more than you will ever receive**

²⁰ *When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the obligation to do right. ²¹ And what was the result? You are now ashamed of the things you used to do, things that end in eternal doom. ²² But now you are free from the power of sin and have become slaves of God. Now you do those things that lead to holiness and result in eternal life. ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.*

- the payment for sin is separation...figuratively and literallybut the free gift God gives is life eternal
- and you now are learning to live this new life ...which becomes life giving the more we do right!

From Jesus perspective... two things are required to live a free life...

JN 8:31 ³¹ Jesus said to the people who believed in him, "You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. ³² And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

One...One must believe him... Two.. one must hold to what he teaches as truth..

- **Faith is holding on when confused...Faith is holding on until the end is revealed**
- **Then we will Free from what? Believing in and living according to lies...**
- **Free to what?...live life to the full!! overcome that which entraps us...sin**
- **Freedom will be experienced...it will become visible...**
- **Just as living by lies becomes ...visible..**
- **You live transformed it is visible...**

end

- **Something in human nature wants us to go to extremes...something we as Christians struggle with even when we are walking with Christ.**

*One side says this: ***“Since we are saved by Grace, we are free to live as we please.” We call that the Extreme of License.*** (Explain)

*The other side says this: ***“But we cannot ignore God’s law. We are saved by Grace for sure, but we must live Under the Law if we are to please God.” We call that the Extreme Expression of Legalism.***

Paul answered that first group (The “We are free to live as we want because of God’s grace”) with Romans 6...the second group (“We are saved by Grace but we are still under the Law in order to please God”) he answers here in Romans 7.

We could say it this way: ***In Romans 6, Paul told us how to stop doing bad things***

end

1. **The family** we were raised in...nuclear-single mom or dad, foster...safe-scary, abusive-nurturing, loving-neglectful...godly-godless..functional-dysfunctional...
2. **Neighborhood**...upper-middle-lower...
3. **School life**...involved-disengaged... excel-fail... accepted-outcast... completed-dropout...
4. **Social life**... isolation- friends...conforming -rebellious... directional-directionless... boyfriend's-girlfriend's how did that turn out....the old saying show me your friends...
5. **Traumatic events**...abuse, death, divorce, accidents, **great failures**

6. **Religion...**some-none...good experience, hypocritical...loving accepting...or condemning...

Paul then tells us what sowing into the Spirit looks like...Doing Good!

Gal 6:⁹ Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

- **and at the proper time we will reap a harvest from it...but there is a contingency...if we don't get weary and give up doing good**
- **Why would we give up? basically three reasons...**
 - 1) we get tired of doing Good because we don't see any results
 - 2) we get tired because it does not please our flesh...what we perceive should happen..
 - 3)we get tired because we don't like the results were getting ...
 1. Therefore we quit surrendering our bodies and transforming our thinking to His will and revert to our own thinking again...re-sowing into our flesh...reaping loss or destruction
 2. or two we keep sowing into the Spirit by doing good knowing that at some point in some way at some time we will receive a harvest from the Spirit...

Why would we choose to give up on God's ways and choose our own means to deal with stuff?

- **Because we don't truly don't believe in our heart of hearts that his ways are better...or even sometimes we don't believe they will work...**
- **So how does our thinking change?**

*2CO 10: 3 For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. 4 The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish **strongholds**. 5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

- **there are two ways we wage war in the world ...**
 - we war as the world has conformed us..
 - or we wage war as the Spirit directs us...
- **What are the weapons of the world...Hate, unforgiveness, Jealousy, envy, Pride, rage, violence, lust, power, position, controlling others, selfishness, stealing, cheating, lying, manipulation, fear, unforgiveness ...**

- What are the weapons of the Spirit... Divine Power, Patience, love, Peace, Joy, long suffering, self control, generosity, wisdom, forgiveness, faith , hope, encouragement...

******Where does the war take place?...in the strongholds of our mind... Strongholds that have been formed during out life's journey...**

2 Cor 10: ⁴ The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.

what is a stronghold? A stronghold refers to a fortified city... These strong cities had wall erected around them..

- These walls were the city's assurance of protection. They kept unwelcomed inhabitants and invaders out. All entrants were screened. Those who owed taxes were not allowed in until they paid.
- Those considered a threat to the city's safety or health were kept out. When attacked the walls provided a safeguard for the people.

Paul tells us the same type of strong hold/walls are erected in our thinking to protect us from hurts and harm.

- We construct walls when we are hurt to safeguard our hearts and prevent any future wounds
- We become selective, denying entry to all we fear will hurt us. and we bar entry to those who have hurt us in the past.
- we filter out any one owes us something, and we withhold access until these people have paid their debts in full...as we judge appropriate
- And we open the stronghold only to those we believe are on our side. Yet often those people who are on our side, have been offended by us also ...resulting in the stacking of additional stones on our existing walls...furthering the ability to reconcile
- **And without knowing exactly when it happens, these walls of protection built over the years become a prison ...holding us strongly inside.**
- **At that point we are not only extremely cautious about who come in...but in terror we cannot venture outside our fortress.**

Listen to this proverb:

Proverbs 18:19 A brother wronged is more unyielding than a fortified city; disputes are like the barred gates of a citadel.

- The walls built through woundedness are more unyielding..then a real fortified city! Incredible...but we can all attest to that.
- and unforgiven disputes are like the gates of a castle...unable to be entered... though you can see in!

The result:

- The focus of a wounded person..is inward and introspective! we guard our rights! and scrutinize every personal relationship carefully..
- a Huge amount of energy is expended in making sure no future injuries will occur.
- so we take in life, tiny bits at a time filling holes...but the atfer gets stagnant.. ...and we give it out sparingly... five marriages could not fix her ... she must have been a real treat to live with...

What Paul is saying is this:

Substitution On Christ's Part Demands Identification On Our Part

Substitution: He died for me Identification: I died with Him

- There is only one remedy for sin: Honest, humble and complete repentance at the feet of an all-knowing God that hates sin but has more Grace than you'll ever need.

* **True Repentance does not understand half-measures.** It is not a small adjustment of this failing or that mistake. It is not patch-work. *It is a complete renovation of the whole state, and the whole nature, and the whole personality. It is a complete DEATH of the Old Man.*

Galatians 2:20a (NLT)

²⁰ My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.

and in Romans 7 Paul tells us how Not to do good things.

Romans 7:1-6 (NLT)

¹ Now, dear brothers and sisters—you who are familiar with the law—don't you know that the law applies only while a person is living? ² For example, when a woman marries, the law binds her to her husband as long as he is alive. But if he dies, the laws of marriage no longer apply to her. ³ So while her husband is alive, she would be committing adultery if she married another man. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law and does not commit adultery when she remarries. ⁴ So, my dear brothers and sisters, *this is the point: You died to the power of the law when you died with Christ. And now you are united with the one who was raised from the dead. As a result, we can produce a harvest of good deeds for God.* ⁵ When we were controlled by our old nature, sinful desires were at work within us, and the law aroused these evil desires that produced a harvest of sinful deeds, resulting in death. ⁶ But now we have

been released from the law, for we died to it and are no longer captive to its power. ***Now we can serve God, not in the old way of obeying the letter of the law, but in the new way of living in the Spirit.***

Every growing Christian understands the experience of Romans 6 and 7. ***Once we learn how to truly Submit and Yield our lives to Christ, we start getting victory over the old habits of the flesh. (Explain)***

So we start feeling a little more “spiritual” and ***we begin to set high standards and ideals for ourselves and for a bit we seem to attain many of them.***

Then Everything Collapses!

We start to see deeper into our own hearts, and we discover sins that we didn't even know were there. God's holy law takes on a new power and we begin to wonder if we can ever do anything good. (Explain)

Without realizing it...we've moved into Legalism and even worse subconsciously we know that we are failing at it but we start holding everyone else accountable to the Law too.

What is Legalism? It is the belief that I can become holy and please God by obeying laws. It is measuring spirituality by a list of do's and don'ts.

*The problem with this is: ***We fail to understand the real purpose of God's law and the relationship between law and grace. We have created another Gospel.***

What Paul is saying here verses 1-6 is this: ***We have died to the law and have been delivered from the law.***

But this death to the law does not mean we live lives of unrighteousness or willy-nilly lifestyles.

In fact, if you are dead...then you are dead. However, ***we have been raised to new life in Christ. So we died and were delivered from the law SO THAT we could be MARRIED to Christ!***

Which mean this: *We now are born again to SERVE Christ and be joined to Him. It is not a life of independence and rebellion but to walk in newness of life where the Holy Spirit energizes us as we seek to obey and serve the Lord.*

His law, His way of doing things, is now written on our hearts and we are enabled to live out this new covenant law by the power of the Spirit.

*So if that is now the case, then the natural objectors would say this: *“What good is the law if we don’t need it anymore?”*

So Paul was ready for those objections and explains the purposes of the Law:

⁷ Well then, am I suggesting that the law of God is sinful? Of course not! In fact, it was the law that showed me my sin. I would never have known that coveting is wrong if the law had not said, “You must not covet.” ⁸ But sin used this command to arouse all kinds of covetous desires within me! If there were no law, sin would not have that power. ⁹ At one time I lived without understanding the law. But when I learned the command not to covet, for instance, the power of sin came to life, ¹⁰ and I died. So I discovered that the law’s commands, which were supposed to bring life, brought spiritual death instead. ¹¹ Sin took advantage of those commands and deceived me; it used the commands to kill me. ¹² But still, the law itself is holy, and its commands are holy and right and good. ¹³ But how can that be? Did the law, which is good, cause my death? Of course not! Sin used what was good to bring about my condemnation to death. So we can see how terrible sin really is. It uses God’s good commands for its own evil purposes.

The Law Reveals Sin

*(Example of Rich Young Ruler in Mark 10) *Covetousness leads to the breaking of the others...and this command differs from all the rest in that it is an inward attitude)*

The Law Arouses Sin

Since we have a sinful nature, the law is bound to arouse that nature the way a magnet attracts steel. Something in human nature wants to rebel whenever a law is given.

The Law Kills

The Law Shows the Sinfulness of Sin

We excuse our sins many times with words like “Mistakes” or “Weaknesses”. But God condemns such things and is trying to get us to see that they are Exceedingly Sinful.

Sin takes something that is good (The Law) and slays you with it. Something is radically wrong and this setup leaves you and I in a very big predicament:

¹⁴ So the trouble is not with the law, for it is spiritual and good. *The trouble is with me, for I am all too human, a slave to sin.* ¹⁵ *I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate.* ¹⁶ But if I know that what I am doing is wrong, this shows that I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷ So I am not the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it.

¹⁸ *And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't.* ¹⁹ *I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway.* ²⁰ But if I do what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it.

²¹ I have discovered this principle of life—that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. ²² *I love God's law with all my heart.* ²³ *But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me.* ²⁴ Oh, what a miserable person I am! *Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death?*

Paul says here's that even though the Law is inherently good because it was from God...here's what it cannot do:

The Law Cannot Change You

The Law was given to reveal God's holiness to us and help us see our need for a Savior.

The old nature knows no law, the new nature needs no law!

The law cannot transform the old nature...it can only reveal it.

The Law Cannot Enable You To Do Good

Paul is setting up chapter 8 here where he will show how the Holy Spirit who now dwells in us enables us to live in victory....but the Law cannot do that.

Paul is saying that of himself he could not fully obey God's Law! And even when he did, evil was still present with him.

The Law Cannot Set You Free

*Here's how this works...tell me is this sounds familiar: "I'm going to get free from these sins."... "I determine here and now that I will not do this any longer!"

We exert all the willpower and energy we can, and for a period of time we do well, but then when we least expect it...we fall again.

Why does that happen? Because we try to overcome our old nature with the Law and the Law cannot deliver us. We get tired and discouraged and eventually give up.

The word Paul uses here for "wretched" is the Greek word that is used to indicate a person who is exhausted after a battle.

What can be more "wretched" or "Exhausting" than exerting all your energy to try and live a good life only to discover that the best you do is still not good enough!

So what then is the answer to this dreadful situation?

²⁵ Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.

This right here is so powerful:

If I truly die to myself and unite myself to Christ (Alive only to Christ) then I am no longer under it's authority and am now alive to Christ and able to draw on the power of the Holy Spirit!

Then Paul takes a whole chapter to explain this victory that is given to us in Christ:

Romans 8:1-4 (NLT)

¹ So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. ² And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death. ³ The law of Moses was unable to save us because of the weakness of our sinful nature. So God did what the law could not do. He sent his own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body God declared an end to sin's control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins. ⁴ He did this so that the just requirement of the law would be fully satisfied for us, who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit.

This is so good! What is Paul saying? ***You Have Freedom From Judgment!***

The Law Cannot Claim You

You now have Life in the Spirit! You are under new ownership and are claimed by Christ!

The Law Cannot Condemn You

Why? Because Christ has already suffered the condemnation for you on the cross!

Key: Since Jesus Christ paid the penalty for your sins, and since you are IN Christ, God will not condemn you. (This is the Gospel)

The Law Cannot Control You

As a dead man, you have been raised to something different: You are now controlled by the Spirit!

And that Holy Spirit enables you to walk in obedience to God's will.

Not only do we have Freedom From Judgment but through Christ we also have...

Freedom From Defeat

⁵ Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but *those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit.* ⁶ So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But *letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace.* ⁷ For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God's laws, and it never will. ⁸ That's why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God.

And here is another great BUT in the Gospel message:

⁹ *But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you.* (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them do not belong to him at all.) ¹⁰ *And Christ lives within you, so even though your body will die because of sin, the Spirit gives you life because you have been made right with God.* ¹¹ *The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.*

In Christ, you cannot lose...the wages of sin (Death) no longer have power! Praise God!

1 Corinthians 15:54-57 (NLT)

⁵⁴ Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled:

“Death is swallowed up in victory.

⁵⁵ O death, where is your victory?

O death, where is your sting?”

⁵⁶ *For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power.* ⁵⁷ *But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Doesn't that all make even more sense now that you understand the Gospel??

¹² Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, you have no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do. ¹³ *For if you live by its dictates, you will die. **But if through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature, you will live.*** ¹⁴ *For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.* ¹⁵ *So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father."* ¹⁶ For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children. ¹⁷ *And since we are his children, we are his heirs.* In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering.

What powerful news today!

And Paul ends this triumphant portion of Romans with this...not only are you Free From Judgment and Free From Defeat...But in the here and now you can be

Free From Discouragement and Fear

Romans 8:18-39 (NLT)

¹⁸ Yet *what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later.* ¹⁹ For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are. ²⁰ Against its will, all creation was subjected to God's curse. But with eager hope, ²¹ *the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay.* ²² For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. ²³ *And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us.* ²⁴ We were given this hope when we were saved. (If we already have something, we don't need to hope for it. ²⁵ But if we look forward to something we don't yet have, we must wait patiently and confidently.)

So what do we do when we are starting to get weak and the journey of life is getting too laborious and we don't know if we are going to make it?

²⁶ And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But *the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words.* ²⁷ *And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will.* ²⁸ *And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.* ²⁹ For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. ³⁰ And having chosen them, he called them to come to him. And having called them, *he gave them right standing with himself. And having given them right standing, he gave them his glory.*

And the triumphant declaration that we can all say as children of the Most-High God:

³¹ *What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us?* ³² *Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else?*

³³ *Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? No one—for God himself has given us right standing with himself.* ³⁴ *Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honor at God's right hand, pleading for us.*

³⁵ *Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death?* ³⁶ (As the Scriptures say, "For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.") ³⁷ *No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.*

³⁸ *And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love.* ³⁹ No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Close with Altar