

Parson to Person

ROMANS 8 PART 1

“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:1–18 NKJV).

Jesus told Nicodemus, *“He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God”* (John 3:18 NKJV). So, *“there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus!”* The believer in Christ has *“passed from death unto life”* (John 5:24) and has been given the blessing of *“eternal life”* (John 10:28). Jesus Himself gave these promises and with them included the promise that the believer will not *“come into judgment”* (John 5:24)—and that they *“shall never perish”* (John 10:28). Therefore, we know that those who have been born again are eternally secure in Christ and need never worry about being *“cast out”* (John 6:36) of His presence.

With this in mind, let us accept that Paul was not suggesting a forfeiture or loss of salvation in the second half of verse 1, where we have the additional and contested phrase, *“who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit”* (Romans 8:1 NKJV).

In the footnote of your NKJV, you may see that the NU-Text does not include the last phrase of this verse where we read, *“who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”* However, we should have no problem with the inclusion based upon a solid hermeneutical understanding of the Gospel.

I suspect that the two manuscripts (the NU-Text) omit the latter part of this verse as a result of earlier copyists struggling with the phraseology—and thus, leaving it out. But a careful reading of the chapter will allow for broad understanding—and allow all to see the appropriateness of the passage. (Please note that it is also repeated in verse 4.)

Paul has been telling us that we are justified by faith alone, in Christ alone, apart from any “work” of the flesh. Therefore, the “walking” he is referring to cannot relate to the behavior of the believer. Were that the case, Paul would be suggesting that those (including himself) named in chapter 7 would be disqualified from eternal life or would be under condemnation by virtue of a failure to “perform” at some given level of righteousness. However, this is not what he is driving at.

Paul shows that those who have been born again are not “walking” in the flesh but do indeed “walk” in the Spirit—and thus, are not under any form of condemnation. This is clarified in verse 9 where we read, *“But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of*

Christ, he is not His.” Therefore, those who are Christ’s have no need to fear any future condemnation or judgment. We who believe, do indeed, have the person of the Spirit dwelling within and—by virtue of the regeneration promised all believers—are made the righteousness of God in Jesus! “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.”

Here are a couple points to remember:

- 1) Chapter breaks in the Scriptures are placed by men and are often problematic in reading portions of the Bible. We need to read by theme and thought rather than being focused upon human engineered breaks and subheadings.
- 2) All Scripture must be understood in the light of all Scripture. Context is critical.
- 3) Principles communicated in Scripture are often misread by or miscommunicated by personal application. We must carefully discern between those things of general application verses those of personal application.
- 4) Those who are born again are not to reckon themselves to be *“in the flesh”* or as judged by the nature of the old man. We are a *“new creation”* in Christ Jesus and are accounted as righteous by being *“in the Spirit.”*
- 5) There is no future condemnatory/evaluatory judgment for the believer.
- 6) Chapters 6-8 here in Romans must be understood as a continuous thought pointing out the process of the three-fold salvific process: We have been saved (by eternal redemption in the spirit), are being saved (from our old ways by God’s maturation of us—the saints), and shall be saved (physically by the resurrection of the body from the dead).

I love you all, Pastor Paul