

Title: Sin Shall Not Have Dominion

Text: Romans 7: 6-8: 4

Date: April 27, 2023

Place: SGBC, NJ

The Spirit of God moved Paul to write five chapters declaring that all are sinners. He declared God's elect are made the righteousness of God by the obedience of Christ. The righteousness of our Redeemer is imputed to us through God-given faith. All of this is apart from the works of the law. As Adam's sin reigned unto death in us, even so shall grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Then Paul presented a question. This was a question he knew would be raised by those who hate the gospel that God's people are made righteous entirely by the obedience of Christ, apart from our works. He asked, "*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?*"

Then Paul declared it is an impossibility. It is an impossibility because God's people died under the justice of God on the cross and we arose from the dead in Christ. Death has no more dominion over Christ. He died unto sin once. Now he lives unto God. God imputes what is fact. He imputes his people to be dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God. So God says to those born of the Spirit, "*Likewise, reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*"

Romans 6: 12: Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. 13: Neither yield ye your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness unto God. 14: For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

The Spirit of God declares the promise to those born of the Spirit: "*sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law but under grace.*" It is the promise that because Christ justified his people and Christ reigns in the new man, we shall never be condemned by sin nor shall sin be permitted to dominate us so as to make us fall away in apostacy. God will keep us yielded to Christ.

Christ in you makes our new man holy. He made us obey the doctrine delivered unto us. We were the slaves of sin. But the grace of God makes God's saints willing bond servants to Christ. He made us willing to yield our members to Christ. "*Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.*" "*But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life*" (Rom 6: 17-23). No, rather than making us sin that grace may abound, the power and grace of God makes us live unto God, yielding our members to Christ.

Having declared this, one might think the next word would be concerning good works or a word to teach us to avoid the greatest lust a believer wars against. And that is exactly what the Spirit of God begins with. But it is not what most would think. It is the good news that Christ has delivered us from the law. He declared the promise that "*sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.*" Then he declares,

Romans 7: 1: Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?...4: Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. 5: For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. 6: But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not *in* the oldness of the letter. 7: What shall we say then? *Is* the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. 8: But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.

Some think Paul was the rich, young ruler. While spiritually dead, Paul's sin made him use the law to do everything the law forbids. It was not all manner of lewd sin; it was worse than that. By his outward conformity to the law, sin made Paul think he had kept the law and made himself holy and righteous like the rich young ruler thought. This was not the law's fault but the sinfulness of Paul's natural heart.

Romans 7: 9: For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. 10: And the commandment, which was *ordained* to life, I found *to be* unto death. 11: For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.

Remember how the rich, young ruler thought he had eternal life by keeping the law? That is what Paul thought. Paul said I had not known sin except the law said, "*Thou shalt not covet.*" Christ told the rich, young ruler to sell all that he had, give it to the poor and follow Christ. He went away sorrowful for he had many riches. Paul said when the commandment came, sin became alive to me, and I died. Paul thought the law was ordained to give him life. But when given spiritual discernment, he found the law was given to be a ministration of death—"the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death." He told the Galatians, "for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should

have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe" (Gal 3: 21-22).

Sin deceived Paul. Sin had dominion over him. Therefore sin deceived Paul into thinking that he was righteous and holy by his doing. But Christ made him know it was all fruit unto death. When the Lord Jesus gave Paul spiritual discernment, he saw that all his righteousnesses were filthy rags and all his holiness was ungodliness.

Romans 7: 12: Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. 13: Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

By this, Paul began to delight in the law of God for the first time. He honored the law by agreeing with it that he was not holy, just or good as the law. The purpose of the law is not to make men holy or righteous but to make us see how unholy and unrighteous we are. The law is not the cause of the disease. The law is not the cure of the disease. The law is the revealer of the disease. The Lord freed Paul from sin's dominion within him so that Paul repented from imagining that he was justified by the deeds of the law and he believed on Christ who made his people the righteousness of God by his obedience. That was the first great sin, Christ delivered Paul from.

FREE FROM SIN TO HONOR THE LAW

Romans 7: 14: For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

Before, Paul declared how God freed him from the sin of attempting to justify himself by the deeds of the law. Here, he declares how the Lord freed him from the sin of attempting to sanctify himself by the deeds of the law.

When the Spirit of God has sanctified his child by creating in us a new inner man, freeing us from the sin of imagining we are justified by the deeds of the law, God also frees us from sin's dominion which made us imagine we can be sanctified by the deeds of the law.

Paul says, "*For we know.*" Only "we" who are born of God, given the unction from the Holy One, and sanctified by the impartation of a new holy spirit, "know" this. Before, Paul talked in the past tense of himself before he was regenerated. Here, he speaks in the present tense as a sanctified believer born-again of God.

"*We know that the law is spiritual.*" The law comes from the Spirit of God and the law reaches to our spirit. The law reveals the thoughts and intents of the heart. The law requires the heart be holy and without sin for it exposes the very sin of the heart. It requires holiness in nature, with no sin, only perfection.

When the law says "*thou shalt have no other God's before me*" it means not only are we to have no graven images but in the heart we can put nothing before God. When the law says, "*honor thy father and thy mother*" it means not only never dishonor them outwardly but never have a dishonoring thought. When the law says "*Thou shalt not commit adultery*" it means not only the act but never one lustful thought in heart. The law requires we worship God in spirit and truth from a new holy heart. It requires we love God with all our hearts, all our souls, all our mind and love our neighbor as ourselves, with not one sinful thought.

But in our flesh, "*I am carnal, sold under sin.*" This is the confession of a sanctified believer in whom a holy heart has been created. We did not know this about ourselves until God gave us a pure heart with no guile and no sin. Then we understood the law is spiritual but in my sin-nature, "*I am carnal, sold under sin.*" In the new man, the new holy heart, the law makes us behold that the nature we received by our first birth is sin. For the first time, we understand in the new man what the law says of our old man. The law declares "*every imagination of the thoughts of our [natural] hearts are only evil continually.*" (Gen 6: 5). It is from our sin-nature that we vainly imagined the evil thoughts that we could justify and sanctify ourselves. Now, in the new holy heart is no guile so that we are honest with God and confess, "*I am carnal, sold under sin.*"

Paul discovered that not only could he not be justified by the works of the law, he also could not be holy by the works of the law. The law cannot make a fallen sinner holy nor can it make a regenerated man holy. We need Christ's righteousness and Christ's Holiness! Christ is formed within us and a new holy man is born. Then we worship God in the new spirit which is holy. We worship God in newness of spirit. From the new holy man which the Spirit created in us in regeneration, we behold our sinful nature is vile. We confess to God from a true heart that due to our sin-nature, "*I am carnal, sold under sin.*" This is when we honor God's law. When we agree with the law that we are the sinner.

FREE FROM SIN TO CONFESS WE CANNOT DO THE THINGS WE WOULD

Romans 7: 15: For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. 16: If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

God frees us from sin's dominion so that we can confess to God that we cannot keep the law or do anything we would.

The Lord puts a new will in our inner man. But the Spirit of God teaches us in our inner man that our sin-nature prevents us from doing what our new man wills to do. This is how the Lord keeps sin from having dominion over us so that we do not imagine we are sanctified by the works of the law.

In the new man, Christ has given us a will to obey God. Our new will is to keep the law of God and never sin. Our new will is to do all that God commands us. But when we are freed from sin's dominion the law teaches us that our sin-nature prevents us from obeying the law in the righteousness God requires.

It is not that Paul never did anything he willed to do in the new man. By the grace of God he did many things. But he gave God all the glory. He said, "yet not I but the grace of God which was with me" (1 Cor 15: 10). The same as his justification was by Christ, likewise Paul declared the life he now lived as a sanctified child of God was not of himself, but also by Christ living in him--"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal 2: 20).

But when taught of the Spirit of God in the inner man, the law makes the sanctified child of God behold the sin of our sin-nature and confess, "*what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.*" In the new man we hate vain thoughts, unclean desires, and revengeful lusts. We would have our affection set on Christ continually. Our new will is to entertain the best thoughts of one another. Yet, the law makes us behold the sin of our sin-nature so that we confess to God, "*what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.*" In the new man, we hate sin. Our new will is to obey God in all inward and outward acts of obedience and never sin. Yet, the law makes us behold the sin of our sin-nature and confess, "*what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.*"

This is how God brings his child to submit to the law of God which those that walk after the flesh cannot do. Paul said, "*If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.*" This is how the sanctified child of God honors the law. The sanctified believer take sides with God and his law against our own sin-nature, our own selves, confessing the law is good for teaching me I cannot do the things I would.

FREE FROM SIN TO CONFESS OUR OLD NATURE IS ONLY SIN

Romans 7: 17: Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 18: For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

God keeps sin from having dominion over us by keeping us knowing that in our flesh dwells no good thing. This is how we are kept from the sin of imagining we can sanctify ourselves by the works of the flesh. We only know this in the new man by the Spirit teaching us. Through the gospel, the Spirit of God creates a new holy man within which does not sin. It is then that every born-again, sanctified child of God beholds we have an old man of Adam that is only sin and only sins.

Paul is not denying that it is him that sinned. The old man and the new man in every believer is us. We get all the credit for our sin. God gets all the credit for our new will and any good we do. But Paul declares he could never put confidence in his works. If he did it would be that same sin of coveting the glory that belongs to Christ that once dominated him.

But when Paul says, "*It is no longer I*" he means it is not the new man created of God but it is sin that dwells in the old man of Adam. The new man is holy and without sin and cannot sin. But our sin-nature is sin and can only sin. It has not been refined, purified, or made better.

God has created a new will to obey God in the new man--"*for to will is present with me*". This is not the natural will of our flesh but the new will in the new man by the power and grace of our Lord Jesus. But in the new man, Christ keeps us knowing that without the Holy Spirit, without Christ, we cannot do the good we will--"*but how to perform that which is good I find not.*"

Christ said, "Without me ye can do nothing" (Jn 15: 5). We see an example in the apostles. He took a few of them with him to the Garden of Gethsemane. He commanded them, "Watch and pray." He had put a new will in their new man to do so. But he came back and they were asleep. Our Lord said, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Mt 26: 41). This is how God keeps sin from having dominion over us so that we do not look to ourselves for strength but only to Christ.

Also, Paul declares that due to his sin-nature, without Christ not only could he not do the good he willed to do, even worse, he did the evil he had no will to do.

Romans 7: 19: For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

God keeps sin from having dominion over us--keeping us from vainly imagining that we justify or sanctify ourselves by our own strength--by keeping his child knowing that we have no strength of ourselves to will or to do.

Paul wrote in Philippians 2: 13: "*it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure?*" God works the willingness in us and, if we are enabled to do, it is God who worked it, according to his good pleasure. God sometimes gives the willingness but not the ability to do. By that he keeps us knowing that we can do nothing without Christ. Our flesh profits nothing. It is only Christ, the Power and Wisdom of God, who is the strength of our inner man, who works in you both to will and do of his good pleasure.

FREE FROM SIN TO BELIEVE THE GOOD NEWS

Yet, to keep us from running back to the law or looking to our flesh or falling away in apostasy, God also keeps us knowing that when we sin, it is not the new man but the old nature.

Romans 7: 20: Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

This is the good news of the gospel. In every believer born of God is a new man created holy after God's image and robed in Christ's righteousness through faith. The new man is "after God, created in righteousness and true holiness." (Eph 4: 24). The new man is "renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Col 3: 10). The new man is born of incorruptible seed and cannot sin. We can practice sin; Paul declares that in our text plainly. But he also declares our new man does not and cannot sin. It is what John said, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 Jn 3: 9).

The good news of the gospel is that before the law of God, our old man of sin was crucified in Christ on the cross. That does not mean that our sin-nature was eradicated. It means God's elect were justified by Christ. We were made the righteousness of God in Christ by his obedience unto the death of the cross. It means our sins are put away before God. The law of God declares we are righteous in Christ.

The good news of the gospel is that God knows us as the inward man that he has created. Christ is the Holiness of the new man by Christ dwelling in us. Christ is the Righteousness of the believer through faith. We have a sin-nature that is sin the same as it has always been and will always be until it goes back to the dust. But it is this new man, this new heart, which believes and depends upon Christ alone for Righteousness and Holiness, that God looks upon.

1 Samuel 16:7...For the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

Psalms 51:6: Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

The way Paul was able to confess to God that he was carnal sold under sin--that in his flesh dwelt no good thing--that he did not do what he would but what he hated--is because God created a new, holy spirit in him in which was no guile. He confessed to God that he was the sinner and Christ was all his Salvation. In the new man, God keeps us from going back under the dominion of sin, imagining we make ourselves righteous or holy by our works, by teaching us our utter dependence upon Christ for all.

THE GREAT PARADOX

The great paradox is that God keeps sin from having dominion over his saints by making us know sin is mixed with all that we do.

Romans 7: 21: I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

Even when God works in us both to will and do of his good pleasure, we can put no confidence in our flesh because God has made us know evil is present. The sin of our sin-nature is mixed with the good. That means there will never be a day in our life when we will personally fulfill the righteousness the law demands by our doing. Nor can we look to any good we do in service to Christ. If God marked iniquity, none of us could stand. Our very best holy deeds have evil present. We cannot justify nor sanctify ourselves by the works of the law because "*we are carnal, sold under sin; when we would do good, evil is present with us.*"

Yet, in the new man, God has made us delight in the law.

Romans 7: 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

True holiness, true godliness, is a heart created holy by God in which we delight in the law of God.

One, we delight in the law and consent it is good because it shows me, "*I am carnal, sold under sin. In my flesh, dwells no good thing. Evil is present. I must have Christ.*"

Two, we delight in the law because by God giving us faith, we behold Christ has made us the Righteousness of God by his obedience to the law on our behalf. He has perfected forever each sanctified child of God by his one offering. Christ has made us holy in the new man by the new birth so that we look away from ourselves to Christ alone. We walk by faith in Christ constrained by his love because Christ is our Wisdom, Righteousness, Holiness and Redemption and we are complete in him. This is how we serve him acceptably. By faith in Christ, with a new heart motivated by the love of Christ for us, God accepts us and our feeble service because we are perfect in Christ his Son.

So to keep sin from having dominion over us, God will at times permit our sin-nature to bring our new man into captivity. The sin is of us. God does not make us sin. It is our sin-nature.

Romans 7: 23: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

What a paradox! Paul declared God's promise in Romans 6 that "*sin shall not have dominion over you for you are not under the law but under grace.*" So would it not have been better to prove that promise by saying, "The law of my mind enables me to free myself from the law of sin which is in my members?" or "my new man, has power to keep the law of God, to sanctify myself, and no more come into captivity to my sin-nature?" No, that is the sin that dominated Paul when he was a dead, self-righteous, self-sanctifying Pharisee. To have such vain, prideful thoughts of ourselves is to be doing exactly what Paul was doing by his works when he was dead in sin. It is not believing on and depending on Christ. That very sin of our sin-nature sometimes does bring our new man into captivity. We become proud and puffed up.

The promise that sin shall not have dominion over us does not mean that we will ever be without sin. Evil shall always be present with us. Nor does it mean there will never be times when our sin-nature brings our new man into captivity so that we sin in thought or in act.

But it means, by the finished work of Christ, sin shall never condemn us. And it means by the grace of God, God shall not permit sin to dominate us so as to make us fall away in apostasy. God shall keep us knowing in our inner man that we are sinners so that from the new man we entirely yield our members to Christ to deliver us. He shall keep us crying out,

Romans 7: 24: O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25: I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Christ has delivered us and he shall deliver and shall make us know Christ did the delivering. This keeps us humbled in the inner man, teaching us, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Yet, "Without him I can do nothing." And it keeps us thankful to God, giving God our Father and his Son all the glory through the Spirit of God.

That is how God will not permit the sin of our old nature to have dominion over us. By Christ we shall not depart for this world by the lusts of our flesh and fall away. Nor will God allow us to vainly imagine we are justified or sanctified by our strength or our works. That is what Paul thought when he was dead in sins. That is what those do who mind the things of the flesh.

Instead, God will keep us submitting to the gospel of God, worshipping and serving God in spirit, rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and having no confidence in our flesh. This is serving in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. By this warfare, God will keep this good news in our new heart. Disregard the chapter division. Notice, how the "therefore" refers to God revealing in the inner man what we are in our old man and what we are in Christ Jesus.

Romans 7: 25...So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. 8: 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.

Amen!