

# Essential and Spiritual Salvation

Romans 8:1-4

Our message last week entered the rich door of this best chapter in the Bible. We focused on these refreshing words – “No Condemnation!”

The completeness, certainty and comforts of all our sins laid on Jesus open a wonderful beginning for us. But Paul does not stop there.

Those in Christ Jesus not only find freedom from sin’s guilt but sin’s power.

That is what we have in verses 2-4.

Verse 2 is assertion of that freedom; verse 3 is the source of this freedom; and verse 4 the results of this freedom.

This addresses the plight of sinful man, lost man, man as being in the flesh. Man is condemned before God’s justice, with no hope from the law. Nor is man free to help himself but is enslaved to a law or power of sin and death – 8.2. There is no fulfilling of the Law’s requirements in the flesh. Man is hostile to God and his law, and cannot subject himself to the law and cannot please God!

We see then the Lord’s rescue not only of man but of the law. God’s holy and righteous law is exalted in the cross; and the holiness of the law is exalted in the new life in Christ’s Spirit, making us new, living creatures.

So the heart of the passage is not verses 1 or 2, but verse 3. See the train here:

1. Without Christ in 3, there is no *in* Christ in 1-2.
2. Without 1-2, the great change to our sinful condition, there is no new walk in verse 4,.

Verse 3 is the head; verses 1-2 are the neck, shoulders and chest; and verse 4 are the legs and feet.

Let us come to this first point then with joy to see what the Lord has done! God himself comes to the rescue where man in the flesh, condemned before law, and the law incapable of bringing help, rescues and saves you by sending his Son.

Here in our first point are several essentials of salvation!

It is **essential** that we see salvation coming from God and not from ourselves, or the world, or the church. No, it is God's grace, from above, intervening. If we say that we can save ourselves, in part or in whole, we have departed from the Bible.

Verse 8 will say that we cannot please God while in the flesh!

It is **essential** we believe and confess God to be three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. See all three in verse three saving us! The Father sends the Son, the Son sends the Spirit.

It is **essential** we believe that Jesus came from above, that he is the Son of God who is not of this world, he is no mere angel or created being; God the Son became man, in our human nature.

It is **essential** that we believe the nature he took was real. Let us drill down on this phrase, 'in the likeness of sinful flesh'. What does that mean?

Well it doesn't say, 'in the likeness of flesh.' Then it would mean Christ only *seemed* to be a man, but he wasn't really.

Neither does it say, 'in sinful flesh' or as it is literally, 'in flesh of sin'. Then it would mean Jesus was not pure and righteous but stained like us.

So this insists Christ is the God-man, in fleshed for us, to represent the children of Adam who had been given to him, but was without sin.

Then it is **essential** Jesus come in weakness to identify with weak sinners. He was holy and untainted with original sin, actual sin, or pollution of sin. But he came not in the strength of human nature, but in weakness like us.

Then it is **essential** that Christ bears our sins. The wrath of God was truly visited on him. He who knew no sin must become sin for us. Not personally a sinner, but sin imputed as our representative.

The Greek, 'for sin' is the phrase used to translate the word in Leviticus for 'Sin Offering'. Jesus is your sin offering, your sacrifice, your substitute, by his own body.

No cross, no Christianity! Jesus did not die as a martyr or an example; no, he came to give his life a ransom for many!

It is **essential** then that we are justified by faith alone. Essential Christianity is about being born again. Essential Christianity is about living as a new creature, with a new life known by new fruits, fruits from God, Christ's fruit, the fruit of the Spirit. The Gospel does not approve sin. The Gospel condemns sin, rejects sin, saves FROM sin!

We turn then to our second point – **new life in the Spirit**. Really, this is one the two towers of verses 1-2. The first tower was last Sunday, No Condemnation; and the second tower is here, No Death.

This is your Spiritual Jubilee, as one puritan put it.

And front and center is the Spirit.

See what richness of the Spirit is here.

1. His Person – He is the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of life and of peace.
2. His Character; to be confessed, trusted, loved and worshipped with the Father and with the Son. Cannot have the Spirit without Christ; and cannot have Christ without the Spirit!
3. His Relationship with you – you abide in Him and He abides in you, verse 9. You are in the Spirit; the Spirit of God Himself dwells in you; to not have him is to not have God or belong to Christ!

Along with justification then, no condemnation in verse 1, there is sanctification in Christ, in verse 2, by the Spirit of Christ.

This new Spirit then is part of this whole life change by the gospel.

The OT prophets, especially Ezekiel and Jeremiah, foresaw this new Spirit in his sinful people. What does this mean? Four things:

A New Spirit means a New Power, a New Freedom, a New Life, and a New Obedience.

A New Spirit means a New Power – no longer the law or power of sin and death is at work but the Spirit of life; a new dynamic.

That word “law” there, contrary to the “law” of sin and death. Law is not God’s law but rather similar to Romans 7.21, ‘principle’ – the powerful regulating of our life either by grace or sin.

Morris says ‘law’ = controlling power, potency; dominion, grip.

It is the law or power or principle of the Spirit in Christ that has brought us out of the power and world of sin and death; out of the old life in Adam.

See the alone agent in this; the Spirit’s power alone can make a new creature, a saved soul, a child of God. You have been fearfully and wonderfully remade! Sin deformed you from your conception; but here is a powerful rescue, not by the will of man, or by the flesh, but of God!

This is where the verb comes in – ‘has set you free’ – we come to the second truth – a New Spirit means a New Freedom – you are emancipated from the old order of the flesh and now walk according to the Spirit.

This verb has the idea of a once for all action; a completed event. Not a gradual putting off and putting on here, but you are translated from the kingdom of darkness and brought into the kingdom of Christ.

The strong man of sin and death is bound in you.

We cannot be both under the law of sin and death, and under the law of the Spirit of life.

Man in the flesh, man in Adam, man in sin, cannot change his spots. But Christ can and does. He gives new lives for old; life for death!

What a full change has taken place toward sin! It is a change of mind, in 5-8; a change in destiny, 9-11; a change in obligations, 12-13; a change of families, 14-17.

It is the Spirit who does all of these; where the Spirit is, there is liberty! There is no substitute here, no second way; what he does he alone can do and not any others.

You cannot take step one in a journey of life and pleasing God unless you are rescued from the prison of sin and death, and brought out into the freed palace of grace and salvation by the Spirit in Jesus.

This brings us then to the 3<sup>rd</sup> fruit of the Spirit here: a New Spirit means a New Life, in direct opposition to sin and death; a new life of fellowship with the living God and living Savior.

Paul declares our new life as being according to the Spirit, not according to the flesh. The flesh dictates one kind of existence; the Spirit directs another.

You, by the power and liberation of the gospel and the Spirit, are made alive in a new fellowship with the Father and the Son. Without the Holy Spirit, we are not only sinful men, carnal and enslaved, but dead men!

A resurrected life is ours; it is the Spirit who quickens, the flesh profits nothing.

The Spirit is powerful unto life; life stronger than strong death! The Spirit is stronger than flesh! A new power greater than old King Sin, King Wrath!

And how is this powerful, liberated life given? Freely! Graciously! God's Spirit *gives* life, *gives* peace, *gives* power, WITHOUT reference to the Law, or our worthiness; but WITH reference to Christ, grace! The Spirit flows into your heart with God's unconditional love – Rom. 5.5.

Two quite opposite “horizons” are in verse 4 then.

This brings us then to the 4<sup>th</sup> quality – the New Obedience in the New Spirit; that is a New Walk, not according to the flesh but according to peace and life in the Spirit of Christ.

True godliness is marked by the Spirit: ‘in order that’ = a divine purpose or result comes forth. Now there is a fulfilling of the law greater than fulfilling of sin.

Since Christ has fulfilled the law, and brings “no condemnation”, we have the working by the Holy Spirit in His people. This is evangelical or gospel obedience, done entirely by the Spirit in sanctification.

Notice the passive voice – *is done* in those who walk. It is not them but the work of the Spirit in them. And it doesn't say ‘we fulfill’ the law, but that the law ‘is fulfilled’ in us by the Spirit, not by the flesh.

The completeness of the standard should also be underlined. Paul says the “requirement” – not the requirements. God's righteous demand, his law, is just, is right and is good. The Law is spiritual; so to fulfill that law in our lives means we have one, perfect standard.

Here is the positive, singular, unified way of the Christian life, which the Spirit leads us into and performs in us.

God promised through Ezekiel: "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. (Eze 36:27)

This is your gospel obedience. What is that? Let me give you quickly ten qualities of the believer's gospel obedience from Pastor Plumer:

1. Spirit obedience is personal obedience, not Christ's obedience for us, but Christ's Spirit in us.
2. Spirit obedience is focused on God's express will, on pleasing God and not just avoiding what displeases him.
3. Spirit obedience is hearty – from the heart; sincerely. It is not just for show.
4. Spirit obedience is arises from loving God himself.
5. Spirit obedience involves godly fear – honoring the Lord
6. And Spirit obedience involves godly faith – trusting the Lord.
7. Spirit obedience is humble, and holds a deep sense of sin, of our failures.
8. Spirit obedience is universal; it doesn't pick and choose which commands he obeys but aims at all of them.
9. Spirit obedience is habitual; it is not just Sunday godliness; the whole tenor of life is renewed.
10. And Spirit obedience is Evangelical/Gospel obedience. When we have done all, we see that we are still unprofitable servants, and unworthy of God's great mercy and grace.

We are going to see the importance of the mind then in the next three verses.



But here I would have us close with the context for all of this being in Christ, in His Spirit, in the Father's favor.

We have seen the essential salvation that is all by God in Christ in verse 3. And we have reviewed the New Spirit in us, which means New Power, New Freedom, New Life, and New Obedience.

But you and I are to live in this new wonderful liberty! Consider the bondage you have been freed from! What prison out of which you have come when you embrace Jesus as your Savior!

1. No condemnation - 8.1
2. No death - 8.2
3. No helplessness - 8.3
4. No flesh walk, flesh mind or flesh end - 8.4-6
5. No rebellion, hostility or depraved in ability toward God - 7
6. No longer displeasing to God - 8
7. No longer in the flesh but in the Spirit - 9
8. No longer spiritually dead - 10
9. And no hopelessness regarding the coming resurrection - 11
10. Thus, you have no obligation to live after the flesh - 12

A new fight with sin, being led by the Spirit of God, as sons of God, not slaves but adopted heirs of the Father and joint-heirs with Jesus, who will reward all your sufferings and trials as well as your faith and obedience!

Can you see why this is thought to be the best chapter in the Bible? And we haven't even touched how the whole world will be released in the future, how all things in the present now work together for good, nor how God has so loved and elected us from eternity past!

Indeed – if God is for us, who can be against us? How will God withhold anything from us? And who or what can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, who are guarded by the Holy Spirit himself!