

Light Brings Salt

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Iron Range Bible Church

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Observations on Romans 8

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This Eighth chapter of Romans, then, brings us as believers to the results of the work of Christ - to after His atoning death has put our sins away;

After we have seen, and come to grips with also, that we have died with Christ, - died to sin, and also to that legal responsibility we had in Adam;

After the words, "*Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under Law, but under Grace*"; and, finally, after the hopeless struggle of the apostle has shown "the flesh, the sin nature" not only to be incurably bad; but the law or law performance living is totally incapable of dealing with its desires and lusts also any human effort is also in capable of dealing with it.

That through Christ there is a blessed deliverance, which, though not canceling the fact that we're still subject to death (8:10) nevertheless gives us freedom from this body of sin, this sin possessed body, the reality of the sin nature "through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Verses 1,2: therefore there is now no condemnation for those that are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

Therefore looks back to the struggle of Chapter Seven, and the thankful shout of verse 25; and not to the atoning work of Christ for us that we noted in Chapters 3.21 to 5.11.

Those that are already in Christ Jesus, and none other, can be in view in all of this section.

It is on account of the Spirit's acting as a law of life; delivering the believer from the contrary law

of sin and death in his yet un-glorified members, that there is no condemnation.

And as a result we are no longer to live in servitude to the sin nature, the provision has been made for each believer.

It is of the utmost importance to see this.

The subject here or the focus is no longer Christ's work for us, but the Spirit's work within us. Based on the work of Christ on the cross, our being not only redeemed and justified but also identified with Him in His death burial and resurrection.

But now daily in our life as believers is to be dominated by the ministry of the Holy Spirit for without the Spirit within as a law of life, there would be nothing but condemnation: for the new creature has no power within himself apart from the indwelling Spirit, --as against a life of perpetual bondage to the flesh, -"the end of which things is death" (6.21).

Now the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer as set forth in Chapter Eight is fundamental, for Romans is the book of foundation truth.

The question or focus in the context is not at all now one of justification, but one of position, in Christ Risen, "where condemnation is not, and cannot be."

There cannot be degrees here: men either are in Christ, or not in Him.

There is no condemnation- Those in Christ Jesus have more than justification from all things by His cross work on our behalf.

We also have "justification of life," [5:18] which means that we share His risen life.

No condemnation-means, no condemnatory judgment. No penal servitude!

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

"The law" in both occurrences here indicates "a given principle acting uniformly." Now, as to "the law of sin and of death," the latter part of Chapter Seven made abundantly clear what that was—the power of sin nature working in our bodies against which even man's renewed will, the new man, was powerless.

But now, another "law" has come in: not only do we have life in the Risen Christ, but we have also been given the Holy Spirit as the power source of our new life:

The result is that the Spirit becomes the Almighty Agent within us as believers, securing us completely, making effectual in experience, in our life, that "deliverance which Paul saw when he cried in Chapter 7.24,25: "Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God [for this deliverance] through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Of course, the deliverance —[is through Christ, for it is Christ's own risen life the believer now shares. But it is the indwelling Holy Spirit as "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," who makes the deliverance a reality.

That is, the constant operation of the Spirit makes effectual in those who have life in Christ Jesus, that deliverance which belongs to us in Christ.

In the newest believer, or the oldest saint, He gives freedom from the law of sin and of death! "Sin in the flesh, which Paul said was my torment, is already judged, and Paul goes on in another passage to say that there is for me no condemnation on account of the flesh. ... Yes We lose communion or fellowship with God, and dishonor the Lord by our behavior, in not walking, according to the Spirit of life, worthy of the Lord.

But we are no longer under the law of sin, but, having died with Christ, and become partakers of a new life in Him and of the Holy Spirit, we are delivered from this law."

Verses 3, 4 read!

Several things appear at once from this passage:

1. God did a thing that the Law could not do.

2. The thing that God did was to make possible a holy life for those walking by His indwelling Spirit.
3. The reason that the Law was unable to bring about this holy life, lay in the flesh (Greek, σάρξ). Thus, though the Law was holy, just, and good, in itself, it only irritated by its command+s a sinful flesh that was not subject to it.
4. God's plan and provision (which, we must remember, is "apart from law," without law's help or "rule," but the very opposite 3.21; 6.14; 7.4,6) was to send His own Son, who had a body "prepared for Him" (Heb. 10.5).
5. God's purpose, as revealed in this passage, was to get at sin as connected with human flesh, and deal with it at the cross in the way of righteous condemnation, so that sin would no longer have rights in human bodies. To no longer have dominion. We're separated from its rulership in our life.

The preposition "for," (Gr. *peri*) in the words and for sin is the common word in the Septuagint for sacrifices for sin.

But it refers here in Romans 8.3 not so much to atonement for sin's guilt before God, that has already been fully set forth in Chapters Three to Five.

The question here (and in Chapters Six to Eight) regards the thing sin itself rather than its guilt.

It is of the very first importance for the believer to recognize the **two great facts** which Paul develops concerning Christ's work on the cross:

First, His work on the cross for us in payment of our guilt. Considering this, one always thinks of the righteous claims of God's throne against us, and of their being satisfied, fully met, by Christ's work on the cross; and of our being brought near to God.

Second, Our death with Christ, who was "made sin for us" - we died with Christ.

When we believed upon Him, - thus our history in Adam was ended before God: so that He plainly

says to us, "You are not in flesh" - where once we were: Chapters 8:9 and 7:5.

Not sinners any longer, your saints in Christ.
Compare Ephesians 2.1-3.

Now, in 8:3, God gives us more detail into having Christ identified with us, made to become sin on our behalf, our old man, all that we were in Adam was crucified with Him.

It was that God might thus condemn sin in the flesh, dealing with it judicially: this is potential for the whole human race, but is an actual reality for you as a believer. What an awesome provision for which we should be forever grateful.

Free Contraceptives for Middle School Children

from the October 16, 2007 eNews issue

Middle school students in Portland, Maine will have access to birth control prescriptions through their school's health center if the Portland School Committee approves a proposal on Wednesday. The health center at King Middle School in Portland, Maine is available to students whose parents have given permission for their children to be treated there. Most children who use the health center seek help for sore throats, coughs, and asthma, and to get routine physical examinations and vaccinations. The health center does more than treat the common cold, though. It also distributes condoms to its few sexually active students and soon may also be able examine and hand out birth control prescriptions to the 11-14 year olds who ask.

Children having children - the problem exploded in the 1970s and 1980s as sexual activity among teens increased. Then, as families, communities, religious organizations and government agencies worked double time to give kids better guidance, the number of sexually active high school students began dropping nationwide. The number of sexually active middle school kids in Maine dropped from 23 percent in 1997 to 13 percent in 2005, according to the Maine Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Of the 134 students who visited King Middle School's health center last year, five reported they had had sexual intercourse. Advocates of the birth control program argue that the few high-risk children need to have

contraceptives available to them. They may not go to their parents for birth control, and may therefore end up pregnant. The school must, they argue, step in and help.

A proposal like this raises huge health and parental rights issues. It also raises the question, "Will the 'cure' do more damage than the problem itself?" Right now very few girls at King Middle School are sexually active. A higher availability of birth control, however, may encourage 12 and 13-year-olds to experiment sexually more than they otherwise would have.

Leaving parents out of the equation is also extremely bad policy. Studies consistently show that parental involvement is one of the foremost factors in preventing high-risk behavior among teens. Allowing children to circumvent their parents does not protect them, but simply allows them to do more behind their parents' backs. In fact, according to a study by Florida State University law professor Jonathan Klick, parental consent and notification laws for abortion correlate with a drop in sexual activity in the states that have those laws. Klick and Thomas Stratmann, professor of economics at George Mason University, found that teens adjusted their behavior to the laws of their state. The states without parental notification laws in effect had significantly higher rates of gonorrhea than states with laws that required kids to let their parents know before they got an abortion, indicating that kids who could go around their parents to get abortions were also more likely to have high-risk sex.

Teaching young people to make wise decisions begins in the home. If young people do not have the support and guidance at home they need to make good decisions, however, the school system should not take charge and grease the way to make bad decisions. The best things we as individuals can do is reach out to the kids we know personally, to help them. We can be involved in our schools, go to school board meetings, and helpfully discuss with teachers and administrators about positive things that can be done to help the at-risk kids in our communities. And, before all these things, we need to continue to pray for our towns and communities, and for our governments.