



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Romans 8:1-4

"Power of the Indwelling Spirit"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We are reading for our Scripture reading Romans chapter 8, verse 1 through verse 17, although the message itself will be based upon the first four verses of this chapter. So if you have your New Testament, turn with me to Romans chapter 8 and verse 1 for the Scripture reading. The apostle writes, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." If you have one of the more modern translations of the New Testament you probably do not have those last words, "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," because they are probably an interpellation derived from the 4th verse. An early scribe copying the New Testament knowing that those words were here inadvertently put them at the end of verse 1 instead of at the end of verse 4 and that was copied in a number of manuscripts down through the years. It's reflected in the text which was translated for the King James Version and that is why they are there.

Incidentally, if these words were genuine, it's likely that they were not; this verse would give us then not so much a definition of a Christian as a description of a Christian. The definition being that is those "who are in Christ Jesus," being Christians, and the descriptions of Christians as being they do not walk after the flesh. They walk after the Spirit. That is their bent of life.

So even though the words are not there or if they are there Christian doctrine is not affected in this instance. The apostle continues in verse 2,

"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath 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 sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; and they that are after 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, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."

In verse 7 we have a very beautiful statement of the inability of the natural man. He cannot be subject to the law of God, and then we have a statement of man's depravity in verse 8,

"They that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh," Paul says to the Romans, "but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. (This is a reference to the bodily resurrection of the future.) Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. (And notice here the apostle states that all sons of God

are led by the Spirit of God. That's characteristic of a son of God.) For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. (Abba being the Aramaic term for father. Father being in this case the Greek word the translation of the other Abba that is father.) The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

May the Lord bless this reading of his word. We're turning this morning in the exposition of the word of God to one of the greatest of the chapters of the word of God. One ancient commentator has said with reference to Romans chapter 8, "If holy Scripture was a ring and the Epistle to the Romans its precious stone, chapter 8 would be the sparkling part of the jewel."

So this morning when we come to the subject of the delivering power of the indwelling Spirit, we turn to this sparkling part of the jewel, Romans chapter 8. It is intimately connected with the preceding two chapters as one might expect. The apostle in the 6th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans has said, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death that liketh Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

So the apostle expresses as one of the aims of the new life, "walking in newness of life." In the 7th chapter, also in the 4th verse he said, "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." Here marriage fruit unto God for he speaks of us has having been married to Christ by virtue of our union with him.

So we should walk in newness of life. We should walk in newness of Spirit not in the oldness of the letter. In the one case, our walk is a newness of spiritual life. In the other, it is a walk in which in which we bring forth marriage fruit unto God.

Now in chapter 8 he introduces us to the Holy Spirit, the power who can meet this aims. We are in the Epistle to the Romans studying an epistle in which the apostle makes it plain that faith in Christ's work is indispensable to salvation. Now he will point out that faith in the Spirit's power is indispensable to sanctification. Having found peace with God by looking to Christ's finished work on the cross we find the peace of God by looking to the work of the Lord Jesus on the throne through the Holy Spirit who is the sign and seal of the continuing work of redemption in the hearts of believers. I think if we were looking for something that might be a clue to the difference between the struggle of chapter 7 which we looked at last week and this wonderful picture of liberation in which we have in chapter 8 it might be found in the use of some of the important terms.

For example, the term "Spirit", the term "law", and then the first person pronoun, "I". Last week we pointed out that the term "I" found in the Greek text specifically, the Greek word "ego" is found sixteen times in the preceding section, thirty times in the Authorized Version of verses 13 through 25. When we turn to chapter 8, it's not so much a stress upon "I" as it is upon the third person of the Trinity. In chapter 7, we have the term "law" twenty times referred to. We have the law referred to five times in chapter 8 and one of these times it's not a reference to the Mosaic law, so there is great stress on the Mosaic law and that suddenly now begins to fade away. We have the term "Spirit" mentioned only five times in the preceding seven chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, and only once if it is once in Romans chapter 7, that verse 6 I think is a reference to the Holy Spirit and not the human spirit. But when we turn to chapter 8, we have the Holy Spirit mentioned about twenty-one times.

So what the apostle is trying to tell us put in very simple words is this, a believer in Christ, one who has been born again and who has a new nature, but who still has the

sin principle dwelling within him cannot expect to have any victory in the Christian life of himself even of his new nature. With his new nature he still is a defeated person. Paul says, "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." Even though we may wish to please God as believers, we cannot please him out of the strength that we have found in our new nature. What Romans chapter 8 tells us is simply that the power for deliverance must come from outside of our redeemed spirits. As he said in Romans 7:25, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Here we have the answer to his question, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" And chapter 8 answers the question, this who is the Holy Spirit who acting at the behest of the Lord Jesus Christ takes up and continues the work of sanctification in a believer's life.

Now in chapter 8, verse 1 the apostle begins with, "There is now therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." We always ask ourselves the question when we read Paul's therefores, well what are they there for? And in this case we have a double one. It is they are inferential in force. That is what he is saying now is something that is related to something that he has said previously. It's something to be inferred from previous revelation. So we ask ourselves what in the previous revelation is it from which Paul is inferring "no condemnation?" Some interpreters have suggested that when Paul says "therefore now" that he is looking back over the whole Christian landscape from chapter 3, verse 21 on through chapter 7, and that this is nothing more than a simple summary of everything. "There is now therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus," that is the way he sums up chapters 1 through 7 so to speak.

It's possible that's what Paul means but he uses the expression, "in Christ," and since he didn't really begin to speak about union with Christ very definitely until chapter 5, verse 12 and following, I'm inclined to think that he must be referring to something in a more immediate context. Others have said the word condemnation here really means something like penal servitude. That is a reference to the punishment that might follow a

sentence of conviction, and thus, the apostle would be saying, "There is now therefore no penal servitude." That is, we are not responsible any longer. We do not have to yield bondage to the sin principle which dwells within us.

Now that would be true to the context of this passage. It is questionable, however, whether that term, condemnation, means anything like penal servitude. One of the outstanding philologists of New Testament Greek, Adolf Deissmann, contended that it meant something like legal burden. But there are very few instances in Greek where the word translated condemnation here has that meaning, and furthermore, in verse 3 here, he uses the verb, "condemn sin in the flesh," in a judicial sense.

So I'm inclined to think that is probably not what Paul has in mind. I would suggest to you that the apostle's thought goes back to verse 6 of chapter 7. The intervening verses answer some questions. They are excurses on two questions. Verse 7, "Is the law sin?" No, Paul says, the law is not sin. The law is holy, just, and good. "Well then," verse 13, "well then was that which is good made death unto me?" Paul said no, the law was not made death unto me. The reason that there is death in my life is indwelling sin. And with that he resumes his positive argument which concluded with verse 6 and the words that we should "serve in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter," having been released from the law.

Now then we would follow naturally here with, "There is now therefore no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." So now he comes back to the idea of liberation from the Law of Moses now relating it to the ministry of the Holy Spirit. It's in my mind that's what the apostle is really speaking about here.

Now what he is then essentially saying is that we have freedom from sin, and we have freedom from death, and it is found in a new law, the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. The Mosaic law pointed out our sin, and in pointing out our sin pointed out, of course, the fact that we were liable to death. So the law came that men might see that they

were sinners, and thus see that they truly were dead before God; condemned. Now there is a new law, the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. It has made me free from the law of sin and death.

Let's look now at some of the words of this passage. "There is now therefore no condemnation." Reading this in the original text the emphasis rests upon the word "no". "There is now therefore *no* condemnation," that's the emphatic word in the Greek text. Now the apostle is not stressing the "now". There was a woman who stood up in a testimony meeting one time who was of Arminian bent theologically, and she said, "I would just like to give thanks to God I'm saved up to the present date." And she was laying stress on, "There is therefore *now* no condemnation." But tomorrow that's another matter. We may lose it then. Well, at least it's nice to be thankful that you're saved up to the present date, but the Bible gives us encouragement for believing that once we have come to know Jesus Christ as our Savior, "There is therefore now no condemnation" for true believers forever. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." When he uses the term, condemnation, he's not suggesting that there's not judgment for believers, but he is saying there is no condemnation.

The Bible distinguishes between judgment and condemnation. Condemnation in this passage and usually this root means this is the ultimate condemnation. It's the ultimate condemnation of eternal punishment. Put in the biblical terms, it is the ultimate punishment of the Lake of Fire. The Lord Jesus says that when we have believed in God the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall not come into condemnation. That is, we shall not enter into a judgment that means that we are eternally lost. Having believed in Christ we are delivered. But even as believers we ultimately face a judgment. This judgment, however, does not affect our eternal destiny. It affects our rewards. There is the judgment seat of Jesus Christ, and we must stand all of us believers before the judgment seat of Christ to receive the things that have been done in the body.

So this is condemnation. This is ultimate judgment, and when a man has believed in Jesus Christ, now we are living in days, I have to change that. When a man or a woman believes in the Lord Jesus Christ there is no condemnation for them. They are placed in Christ. That is their position. And being in him, they now are free of eternal judgment. The reason? Why the penalty has been paid by a substitute. The Lord Jesus came and has bore that judgment, and because our penalty has been paid it is impossible for us to have that penalty laid upon us. That is why we believe Jesus Christ came and died for his people. That judgment for them has been bore in their substitute. And of course, they are free.

Now "there is now therefore no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."

Incidentally, that is the lone condition if we may speak of it in that way; to be in Christ. And this idea of our union with him who is our representative is really the heart of the Pauline theology. In the Old Testament in the Book of Genesis, you I know remember that in the days of Noah and the days of the flood when God told him he was going to destroy the earth, he told Noah to build an ark. That ark is an illustration of the Lord Jesus Christ for just as Noah and those in the ark were saved from the waters of judgment which were to come, so we who are in Christ are safe from the waters of divine judgment which shall come. The Lord invited Noah into the ark. He said, "Come thou and all thy house into the ark for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation."

Incidentally, Noah was not righteous, but he was seen righteous by virtue of his faith.

Then in verse 16 after they had come in, this is Genesis chapter 7, we read, "And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and the Lord shut him in."

Now in some of the Dutch Bibles at this point they render it, "and the Lord locked him in;" evidence of the security that Noah and his family had from the judgment because he was locked in the ark. So likewise, we who are in Christ are secure from the judgment which is to come because it has already fallen upon him as our substitute.

So there is now therefore no ultimate, eternal punishment to them who are in union with Christ. The following words I suggest to you if they are genuine are a description of a Christian. A Christian is a person who walks not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. The bent of his life is to walk after the Spirit. If a Christian or a professing Christian is an individual who does not walk after the Spirit but walks after the flesh, he has no encouragement from the word of God that he is a Christian even though he might make a profession of faith. In other words, when a man believes in Christ there is a definitive change that takes place. It may not be observable by us, but it will be observable by the Lord God.

Now if the other kind of life is observable, that is a man walks after the flesh, we do not have any right to encourage them in the possession of salvation for the Scriptures do not encourage those who walk after the flesh. They do not say to you who walk after the flesh you are a Christian.

Now it is true, of course, they are carnal believers but that is a temporary condition not a permanent condition non-descriptive of a man's whole bent of life. The bent of life of a Christian is a life in righteousness. Now that takes a long time, of course, for it to develop because we are saved in a moment but the rest of our life is sanctification. So obviously, it takes a long time for God to sanctify believers. He's had a very hard time with me.

He's been working now for almost forty years with me, and he's not done too well. Forty years of divine activity and I'm still not sanctified. I affirm that before you affirm it. I know that. So sanctification takes a lengthy period of time, but there must be a definitive change when a person believes in Jesus Christ.

Now one might ask, well what's the ground of this freedom? "There is now therefore no condemnation." We have freedom if we are in Christ. What's the ground of it? Well the apostle explains in verse 2. He says, "For," so he's going to give the reason. This is the reason why there is no condemnation. It lies in the gift of the Holy Spirit who operates in the believer's life with a fixedness of a law. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus

hath made me free from the law of sin and death." This is one of the most magnificent statements in all of the Epistle to the Romans. The reason that there is freedom for the believer lies in the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the gift of the Holy Spirit who indwells permanently all believers, that Spirit within us works in our lives with the fixedness of a law.

Now the Bible says here in verse 14, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Every believer is led by the Holy Spirit of God. We may not always follow his guidance but he is always leading us. That is characteristic of a believer. The apostle says in other places such as Philippians 2:13, he says "it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

So in the life of a believe God through the Holy Spirit is always working in us to will and to do of his good pleasure. In Colossians chapter 1 and verse 29 there are many of these texts, I only select some at random. In Colossians 1:29, the apostle again writes of the constant working of God in the believers. "For this I also labor," Paul says, "striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily." Present tense, "which works in me mightily."

So here is the secret of the spontaneous Christian life that lifts the Christian above the bitter exhausting life of the Christian herd. This is something that is taught throughout all of the Bible. You go back to the prophets of the Old Testament and they teach there that sanctification is something that continues in the life of individual believers as long as they are here. Listen to Isaiah. He says even "the youths shall faint and be weary and the young men shall ultimately fall, but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint." And it is clear from the context that the reason for this is the work of God within them.

So the gift of the Holy Spirit, the fruit of justification confirms the liberation of verse 1. Sanctification is the necessary fruit of justification. When a man becomes just

before God, the necessary fruit of that is that sanctification proceeding from the same basis begins to work in every believer's life.

Now you'll notice too, here that the apostle puts this in the past tense. He says, "For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has freed me from the law of sin and death." It is something that has taken place. We're not to struggle to obtain this freedom, but we are to rest in this freedom that has been given to us. When you get on a jet plane to travel anywhere these days, you don't buckle up and then grasp that seat when the pilot says for the stewardess to take their seats. He's getting ready to takeoff. You don't sit there in that seat and try to pull those engines as it makes its takeoff. That would be foolish. What do you do? You rely upon the tremendous power that lies in those engines. You sit back and rest and relax. The apostle says, "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has freed me from the law of sin and death." This is a natural law. It is not a statutory law. It's not a law made by legislature or Congress. It's a natural law. It's like the beating of your heart. You didn't get up this morning and say well now I'm conscience. Today is the day. Today's the day the Eagles and the Cowboys play. Oh, I've got to go hear Dr. Johnson preach first. [Laughter] I wonder if he'll finish on time. And then you think, well, suppose my heart stopped beating. So you say a word to your heart. Heart, beat now, beat through the rest of this day. Be sure and beat, beat, keep beating, keeping beating.

Well, now of course, when you get as old as some people you might say something like that. [Laughter] But if someone heard you saying that they'd say going around the bend. Got a loose shingle on his roof, or something like that, you know. You see it's the natural law of the heart to beat. If you were to see Woodstock and you were to say to Woodstock, "Now, Woodstock, when you get ready to fly do you say to your wings now fly? Aren't you worried about the law of gravity, Woodstock? Have you ever heard of the law of gravity?" And Woodstock would say, "Wait a minute. I've never heard of Newton, but I have power within my wings so that I just naturally fly."

So when Paul says here, "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has freed me from the law of sin and death," he's speaking about a natural law that is operative in the heart of every believer. The Holy Spirit is there to continue his work of liberation not only from the ultimate penalty of eternal punishment, but from bondage to sin.

Now he's not suggesting here that we have total freedom immediately. He's just simply saying that from the bondage of sin we have been delivered by virtue of what Christ has done on the cross. He also is saying it is not necessary for us to sin. We are freed from the necessity to sin. As John says, "These things I write unto you my little children that you sin not and we are freed from the bondage of sin." That's the apostle's great thought through this section. And the freedom lies in the power of the Holy Spirit who works in us and who will successfully bring us into conformity to the Lord Jesus Christ. The power of the Holy Spirit within us can only be measured by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Remember the apostle in the letter to the Ephesians prays that we might come to "understand the greatness of his power to us who would believe according to his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead." The very power that raised up Jesus Christ from the dead works in the life of every believer. In the Old Testament speaking to the nation Israel God said, "According to the power that I manifested when I brought you out of Egypt through the Red Sea into the land I will work in your behalf." That was the measure of power in Old Testament days; his power in the parting of the Red Sea. But in the New Testament times the measure of divine power working in a believer's life is the power wrought in Jesus Christ's resurrection that works in every believer's life. God is not a retailer dispensing grace in packets. We often pray, "Oh God, give me patience. Oh God, give me love. Oh God, give me consideration. Give me long suffering with my brethren." But he doesn't dispense little things like that. He doesn't say now I'll give you fifty cents worth of patience, so you can handle that particular situation. And as far as your mother-in-law is concerned, I'll give

you five or ten dollars worth of patience and long suffering there because you need a little more in that case. He doesn't dispense his grace in packets. What he is interested in is relationship to him personally because you see, when we have Christ we have all of our need, and he wants to maintain this personal relationship.

So "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has freed me from the law of sin and death." I'm now related to a person through the Holy Spirit who is the agency of his work in me. One might say well how is this possible? How is it possible for the third person of the Trinity to take up his residence in an unholy person such as I am? Well, the apostle explains in verse 3. Here he explains how and speaks of judicial judgment on sin. "For what the Law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh," this is the judicial basis of liberty and it does not come from the Law of Moses. He says the law was weak because of the flesh. There was nothing wrong with the law. As one of the commentators says, "The anchor of the law was strong in itself but it wouldn't hold in the mud bottom of the human heart." Even a Rembrandt cannot create a masterpiece on tissue paper.

So what "the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son," those words, incidentally, "his own Son" mark out the Son and distinguish the Son, the unique Son from the other sons. We are sons, but we are sons the product of redemption. He is the redeeming Son. He's God's own Son, is unique Son. He's different. He's different in kind from us being a divine person essentially. Not a human person who has now a divine nature, but a divine person who has taken an additional nature to himself. The divine Son, "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh." What a magnificently accurate statement. Paul, what a theologian you were. He does not say in sinful flesh. There are some modern students who like to say Jesus Christ came in sinful flesh though he did not yield and commit sin himself. No, he says in the likeness of sinful flesh. He doesn't say he came in the likeness of flesh. That's what some of the early Docetics use to say essentially, that he was a divine being who looked like he

had human nature but really did not have our human nature. He doesn't even say he came in flesh though that would be possible because he does not want to in this instance say that he came having that which Adam had before the Fall, he says that while that's true he came in the likeness of flesh of sin. Not sinful flesh, not the likeness of flesh, but in the likeness of sinful flesh. Why so accurate in his theology one might think that he had gone to Dallas Theological Seminary [Laughter] or Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

We read, "Now he condemned sin in the flesh." This is a breathtaking statement that the apostle makes. Yet here it is in black and white. He does not say that we are immune from sin, but he says we are free from the necessity and the bondage of sin. Sin has been condemned in the flesh. The Son of God has borne that penalty as our substitute.

Now one might think, Paul you must be a raving fanatic. Don't you know that men are sinners and don't you know that saints continue to sin constantly after they are saved? You're a pious babbler. You're a superficial moralizer. You don't really understand the depth of human sin. Well some might say he's just rattling on like a harmless Philistine, but this is the man who seen the abyss of sin. He's the one who's just written that magnificent statement in chapter 7, verse 13 through verse 25 about the struggle that goes on in the believer's life. He's a man who seen the abyss of sin and the abyss of believer's sin, and yet he says he has condemned sin in the flesh. What a magnificent thing the apostle has said for us here.

One of the commentators speaking of the work of Jesus Christ says, "This is a matchless miracle and remember God is that holy God who is so holy, so righteous that he will not put aside his law of holiness and righteousness in order to save one individual. Instead of forgiving our sins without a penalty, he makes an anointed substitute smart for us." Therefore, we reverence the law giver who is so consistent with his own principles of holiness and righteousness that before he can bless he must have his own law satisfied. And yet at the same time in the desire to see his people saved, he

himself comes as the second person of the Trinity to bear that judgment so that our great triune God is holy and righteous, and he must punish sin.

But at the same time he punishes sin in a substitute who is the second person of that blessed Trinity. The only one who could possibly bear our sin and at the same time deliver us from the penalty of sin and the bondage of sin. And so he comes, his holiness is magnified. His love and grace is also magnified so that as we look and see at what has happened, it does create within us gratitude to realize that it is the Son of God who has come and made it possible for us to lift our voices to God in heaven and say our Father and know that he hears us. "Oh blessed God," we might say, "I tremble at your justice, but I come to admire it nevertheless. But oh as for your love what shall I say to it? It wins my love. I must love the Lord, the gracious God."

Now the apostle speaks in verse 4, the final verse of the purpose of this freedom and notice it is holiness. Holiness consisting in righteousness, the righteousness of the law through the Spirit is the goal of the incarnation and death of the Lord Jesus Christ. "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us." In other words, what is done in the believer's life is fully consonant with the demands of the Mosaic law. If we could think of the Mosaic law as a person, a righteous person examining the life of a man walking after the Spirit, looking at that man he would have to say I find nothing in life by the Spirit that I can condemn. The righteousness of the law is produced by the Holy Spirit in the believer's life. We do not believe in antinomianism when we believe that our standard is walk by the Spirit. We say that the standard of walking by the Spirit is at least as high as the standard of walking according to the Law of Moses. It is the Spirit who gave us the Law of Moses. And so the apostle says, "The Son of God has come that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us" through justification, through sanctification. Notice it is passive, "might be fulfilled in us," because it is someone else who does it through us; us who walked not after the flesh but after the Spirit.

Now I don't have time to talk about the grammar of that last clause, but let me suggest to you this, the grammar of this last clause is such. It's a rather fine point of Greek grammar, but nevertheless, it is such that the apostle does not mean that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us if we walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit but rather the apostle is not speaking of a condition but he again is describing a believer that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. In other words, this is the bent of the believing man. He walks after the Spirit and not after the flesh.

There's an old story I like of a man who was really just a kind of bum in Britain. They called him Bulldog Tom because his life was a kind of common life. He really was just a street bum. The one thing that was characteristic of him was that he loves dogs and dog fights, and he use to be seen wandering around the streets of London with the dog following him, a bulldog. So they called him Bulldog Tom. He was interested in dog fighting, the only thing that he did. One day he was walking down the streets. There was a street meeting. Somebody was preaching, and he stopped and heard the gospel and he was converted.

And almost immediately he began to live a remarkable Christian life, and finally someone came to him so the story goes and asked him something like this, "Look here Tom, you've been a Christian for a much shorter time than we have and yet your life seems to be more God honoring than ours. What's your secret?" He said, "Well, I don't know that I have any secret but I do know this," he said, "Back in the old days when I was unconverted," he said, "I loved dogs and I usually had my dogs that I used in my dog fighting traveling with me." He said, "If we were walking down the street and there was a bone over in the gutter," he said, "bones are not good for dogs in training," and he said, "my dog would start for that bone and I would say no and the dog would look up at me and then his eyes would go back to that bone and I said no!" And the dog would look up to him and he said as long as we could keep that dog looking at me we got past all

the bones and safety. And he said, "It's kind of like that in my Christian life." He said, "When I walk down the streets now my old companions are there and they say come on Tom have a drink with us or come on Tom do this with us. Come on Tom let's do this like we use to." He said, "The Holy Spirit now dwells within me and he keeps saying no Tom, no Tom, no Tom!" And he said, "As long as I can keep my eyes by the grace of God on the Holy Spirit I get past all of those bones and safety."

Well, that's very close to what the apostle means here when he says walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit with this one exception; that it is the Holy Spirit who works within us that keeps saying no and who does keep delivering us. It's not because any free will on our part by which we respond "for it is God who worketh in us both to will and do of his good pleasure."

Well, the provision of God is completely sufficient in that which is done for us and in us. He has died for us on the cross. The Holy Spirit lives within us to continue that work of redemption. So it is no longer trying, it's trusting. It's no longer struggling, it's resting. It's just like those words that God spoke to Moses, "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord which he will work for you." This is not passivity. This is the most active life that you can possibly have; the life of constantly relying upon the Holy Spirit who continues his work in us.

Now there is progress in our experience of deliverance. The Canaanites are still in the land but now there is in our body to wrestle with the Canaanite, the Holy Spirit. And that wrestling continues until our inmost being is ultimately brought into conformity to the law of God and to the Lord Jesus Christ. We're like escaping slaves still in the wilderness. The enemies' dogs are being at our feet, but we're going to come to the land of complete freedom. The first stage, the gift of the Holy Spirit in power has been given to us; the work of appropriation is a work of a life time. What a magnificent God we have; a God who has redeemed us in the shedding of blood and who now continues his work of redemption through the Holy Spirit who indwells us.

May God help us to trust. Let's stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we are so grateful to Thee for this magnificent expression from the Apostle Paul, and oh God, if there are some here who have never believed in the Lord Jesus Christ give them no rest or peace until they rest in Christ and what he has done. For those of us Lord who know Thee teach us to walk in trust, counting upon the Holy Spirit within to continue the work of liberation that we may glorify Thee and accomplish the purpose that Thou hast for us. May grace, mercy, and peace go with us. For Jesus' sake. Amen.