

From Woe and Suffering to Joy and Gladness
Romans 6-8

How does one go from bearing the just declaration of God's universal wrath (1:18) to exulting in God's gracious love (8:38-39)? Paul has demonstrated that (1) Every man without distinction is condemned in sin and under God's wrath (1:18-3:20), and (2) Justification is by faith alone in Christ alone (3:21-5:21).

1. The Christian's Responsibility with Regard to Sin, 6

➔ Each section teaches a fact with corresponding command

1) Christians are dead to sin and alive to Christ, and so must live that way, 6:1-14.

- The possible charge: "Since the gospel teaches believers' every sin is covered by grace, this promotes the idea that they will sin with gusto so there's more grace!"
- FACT: Believers are united with Christ so that sin's power is broken and they will live for righteousness, 6:1-10.
- COMMAND: Therefore, Christians must live out this truth! Don't be controlled by sin, serve God and righteousness, 6:11-14.

2) Christians are freed from sin and enslaved to Christ, and so must serve righteousness, 6:15-23.

- The possible charge: "Since the gospel teaches that believers aren't under the Law (v. 14) this promotes the idea that they can sin all they want."
- FACT: Being in Christ doesn't give believers the freedom to sin, it frees them from sin and enslaves them to righteousness! 6:15-18
- COMMAND: Believers must zealously serve the Lord, their new master, 6:19-23

➔ The Christian's responsibility with regard to sin is to stop sinning and serve the Lord.

2. The Christian's Relationship to the Law, 7

➔ This section is about the Mosaic Law. Paul said that Christians are "not under law but under grace" (6:14). How is this? What does that mean? Does this mean the Law is sinful?

1) One must die to the Law to be joined to Christ to bear fruit for God, 7:1-6.

- This is illustrated by marriage: A woman who's married can't marry another man unless her husband dies, 7:1-3.
- One must die to the law to be joined to Christ, 7:4-6.
- Unbelievers' life in the Law bears the fruit of death; believers' life in the Spirit bears fruit for God.

2) Though the Law declares God's holiness, justice, and goodness, it is the unwitting tool of sin, 7:7-12.

- The Law declares what is right and therefore identifies and condemns transgression.
- Sinners must be delivered from the Law, not because it is evil, but because it can't justify or sanctify them.
- The only thing the Law can do for sinners is point out their sin and condemn them.

3) The Law is not to blame for sin, sinners are to blame for sin, 7:13-25.

- The struggle and failure to do good *isn't the fault of the Law* but the *sin nature*. The problem isn't the *Law*, it's the *sin nature*.
- Sinners who depend on the Law for deliverance will always be *frustrated* and *fail*.
- Whoever *relies on himself* is *without hope*; whoever relies on *Christ* has *victory*.

➔ Despite the Law's perfections it is powerless to justify and sanctify sinners. It always successfully discovers and prosecutes sin. The more one sins, the more the Law "works." The problem isn't the Law, it's the sin nature.

➔ Jesus, however, died on the cross for your sin, fully satisfying the Law's judgment against it. The Law's righteous demands have been fully satisfied by Jesus, not you. Because you died with Christ and rose with him and your sin has been forgiven, you are "dead" to the Law—it has no power or jurisdiction over you, you are free from the Law (Acts 13:39; Rom 7:3; 8:2; cf. also "under the Law," Rom 2:12; 3:19; 6:14; Gal 3:10; 3:23; 4:21; 5:18).

➔ The Christian's relationship to the Law is therefore "dead" because his sin is forgiven and Christ's righteousness is imputed. He is not justified or sanctified by the Law but by Christ.

3. The Christian's Rest in Jesus Christ, 8

➔ Every transgression the Law identified and condemned is "paid in full" by Jesus Christ, so that "there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus."

1) Through the Spirit believers enjoy justification, 8:1-11

- Believers in Christ through the Spirit are freed from the Law's condemnation of sin, being justified on the basis of Christ's sacrifice, 8:1-4
- Unbelievers cannot please God because the sin nature controls them and they are enemies of God, 8:5-8.
- Through the Spirit Christians are alive in Christ because of His righteousness, 8:9-11

2) Believers must participate in the Spirit's sanctifying work, as He confirms they are God's children, 8:12-17

3) The Spirit guarantees believers' glorification in fulfillment of God's gracious purpose, 8:18-30

- No matter what trouble believers experience now, through the Spirit their hope/yearning expectation is not for this world/life/now, but for eternity, 8:28-27
- Believers' confidence in eternal glory despite present troubles lies with God's sovereign, gracious purpose to save them, 8:28-30

4) Believers have absolute confidence in God through Jesus Christ, 8:31-39

- No charge can be made to "stick" against believers, 8:31-34
- Nothing can separate believers from the love of God in the Lord Jesus Christ, 8:35-39