

Grace Bible Church
Robert R. McLaughlin Bible Ministries

The Tree of Life is a weekly teaching summary.
The Tree of Life from the week ending 10/26/08
It has always taken resurrection life for God to express Himself in human beings.

For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of [or belonging to the realm of] flesh [sin nature], sold into bondage to sin (Rom 7:14). The next verse was written by Paul at least 20 years after becoming a Christian, **For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate (Rom 7:15).**

We all have a legitimate desire to please the Lord, it is a desire that increases as we increase our intake of doctrine, and try to have spiritual mechanics parlayed into spiritual dynamics through the use of the spiritual skills. Paul is saying that he really wants to advance spiritually, and please God by reaching maturity, however, there's a problem, these good intentions are hindered by the work of the O.S.N. with it's trends toward sin, good and evil. **But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good (Rom 7:16).**

Doctrine helps you recognize your flaws and the control that the O.S.N. has over you. Paul is saying if I keep on doing what I do not want to do, then I realize that the law is good, and the word of God is good because it reveals my helplessness. That of course was the purpose of the law and the commandments, to reveal our helplessness.

So now no longer am I the one doing it, but the sin nature which is indwelling me. For I know that nothing good of intrinsic value dwells in me, that is in my flesh [sin nature], for the desire is present in me but the doing of the good is not or I cannot do it. For the good of intrinsic value that I desire to do, I do not do but I practice the very evil which I do not desire to do. But if I am doing the very thing I do not wish to do [and I am], I am no longer the one doing it, but the sin nature which dwells in me. I find then the principle, that evil is present with me, the one who desires to do the good [virtuous, noble]. For I joyfully concur with the Law of God with reference to my inner man [doctrine in his mentality]. (Rom 7:17-22)

This is a positive believer who now sees that doctrine has provided him with standards which now reveal to him, the truth that sets us free.

But I see a different Law [principle] in the members of my body [bondage to the OSN], waging war against the law of my mind or trying to put him in bondage, and making me a prisoner to the law of the sin nature which is in the members [cell structure] of my body. I am a miserable [wretched] person! Who will rescue me from the body of this death [the old sin nature]? Thanks be to God or grace belongs to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then, on the one hand, with my mind I am myself serving the law of God; but on the other hand, with my flesh [old sin nature in control of the soul], I am serving the law of the sin nature. (Rom 7:23-25)

And then remember, in the original language of scripture there is no chapter break, **There is therefore now no condemnation for those who 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 (Rom 8:1-2).** Paul discovered that the battle between the O.S.N. and living the spiritual life is overcome by a new and powerful principle, that of the Spirit of life, or zoe found in the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul found his answer in realizing that even as a believer he could not keep the Law, and that religion, rituals, program spirituality, man-made rules only kept him in bondage. Paul no longer felt any obligation to try and change. He had finally accepted the fact that he was totally depraved, and there was no hope of pleasing God unless God did the work Himself. He really understood what he wrote in next verse. **For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin,**

He condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit (Rom 8:3-4). Paul made the great discovery that when he stopped relying on self and instead relied on God to express His resurrection, live through him, the righteous requirement of the Law was fully met in him.

Why is there no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus? Why has the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus set us free? Why did God send His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for a sin offering? Verse 4 tells us the reason for the entire grace policy of God, **in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us.** What is the righteous requirement of the Law? First, the law demands perfection. If you want blessing from God, God demands perfection. Therefore, God had to perfect us before He could bless us. The Law promises blessing to those who are righteous. Who are the righteous? Those who have personally believed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

God is perfect and perfection cannot bless imperfection. Therefore, God must give us something of Himself to make us perfect. At salvation perfect righteousness was imputed to us. Now that we have perfect righteousness, we are qualified to receive fantastic blessing from God. Perfect righteousness qualifies us for grace blessing. In fact, perfect righteousness demands blessing from the justice of God. Not from the love of God, but from the justice of God. For the righteous requirement of the Law to be fulfilled in us, we must receive the blessings that come from being perfectly righteous. What are these blessings? They are blessings that have been designed specially for each one of us. They are defined in general for us in two passages (Deu 7:12-26; Deu 28:1-14).

Why is there no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus? Why has the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus set us free? Why did God send His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for a sin offering? The answer is in the phrase, **in order that the requirement of the Law,** the Greek word for “requirement” is the noun “dikaioma” which is where we get the word righteousness from, so we translate it **the righteous requirement of the Law.** So, as we have seen, the righteous requirement of the Law first of all demands perfection. Secondly, the Law promises blessing to those who are righteous.

So, what did the Lord Jesus Christ do? Did He abolish the Law or fulfill it? **“Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches {them,} he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you, that unless your righteousness surpasses {that} of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven (Mat 5:17-20).** The Lord fulfilled the Law completely, and therefore the righteous requirement of the Law was fulfilled in Him. **“And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved” (Act 4:12).**

You are in union with Christ, and therefore you share in everything that He has. You share His life which is eternal life (1Jo 5:11-12). You share Christ's righteousness (2Co 5:21). We have a double perfect righteousness: that of the Father's from imputation at salvation, and that of the Son's through union with Him. We share the election of Christ, an escrow election (Eph 1:3-4). We share the destiny of Christ, a protocol pre-destination (Eph 1:5-6). We share the sonship of Christ (Gal 3:26). He is the Son of God; we are sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus. We are the heirs of God and joint-heirs with the Son of God (Rom 8:16-17). We are a royal priesthood, sharing the priesthood of Christ (1Pe 2:5, 9). We are adopted into the royal family of God (Eph 1:5). We are a royal family of kings (Rev 1:6, Rev 5:10). So we share everything Christ is, and everything He has, for the head and the body are united into one spiritual entity. We have fulfilled the Law because of our union with Christ. All of these principles just mentioned reveal some of the grace blessings we received from the day of our salvation.

So in Rom 8:4 **in order that the righteous requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us,** here is the whole issue behind the zoe life and the grace of God, and the believer becoming a recipient of that grace in time. The phrase **might be fulfilled** is “plerote” which means: 1) To fill up a deficiency. We all have a deficiency after salvation. Our deficiency after salvation is that we lack the blessings that God ordained for those who are perfectly righteous. 2) To fully possess, the righteousness of the Law or the righteous requirement of the Law might fully possess us. For the righteousness of the Law to fully possess us we need to receive what the Law promised to those who would fulfill it. 3) To fully influence, if the perfect righteousness of the Law fully influenced us we would be totally blessed. 4) To

fill-up with a certain quality, the perfect righteousness of the law will fill us up with a certain quality of life that will lead us to fantastic blessing.

The law requires perfect righteousness, and the divine righteousness in us meets the requirement. God wants the Law to be fulfilled or filled up in us. At the moment of salvation we have a deficiency. We are all minus divine blessing which is the companion of divine righteousness. Divine righteousness and divine blessing go together. The believer's goal is to glorify God. The believer's means to do this is perfect divine righteousness, and the believer's result is divine blessing. All of this brings glory to God in the angelic conflict, and qualifies the believer to be entered into the historic trial of the angelic conflict as evidence for the prosecution. So maybe you will have these blessings, maybe you will not, it all depends on your daily decisions, for you must make decisions.

Rom 8:4, in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. Only those who walk according to the Spirit, or live the spiritual life can ever have the requirement of the Law fulfilled in them. When a believer walks according to the Spirit, he develops a capacity that qualifies him to be able to receive his escrow blessings in time, and this is how a believer glorifies God. We glorify God not by what we do, but by allowing what He has done to be manifested in time in our lives. The only way we can glorify God is by growing spiritually so that we can receive the divine blessings. Nothing we can do glorifies God. We glorify God by simply being able to receive what He has done for us. What He has done for us ultimately has been done from His grace. Now that His justice is satisfied his grace is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, but just as it is written, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, And which have not entered the heart of man, All that God has prepared for those who love Him."

(1Co 9:8-9)

If Paul concentrated on keeping the Law rather than on trusting in the Lord, his old nature was stimulated and he sinned. When Paul concentrated on trusting the Lord, the Spirit energized his new nature, and he found himself living a righteous life. Our obligation is not to the Law, but to respond to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so; and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. (Rom 8:5-8)

For if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" (Rom 8:13-15)

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, (Rom 8:28-29)

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Paul now understood what he was about write to the Phillippian church, **For I am confident of this very thing, that He who has begun in you an absolute good work will complete it until the day of Christ Jesus (Phi 1:6).** Many believers feel they are not making any spiritual progress unless they are swiftly and constantly forging ahead. However, don't worry God is in control. **Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, will equip you in every good thing to do His will (Heb 13:20-21).** This means He will strengthen, complete and perfect you, and make you what you ought to be, equip you with every good thing that you may carry out His will. This includes the execution of the spiritual mechanics, the spiritual skills, and the spiritual dynamics, or living in the dynamic spiritual life.

But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you. (Rom 8:11)

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Notice this resurrection life, or zoe life, having the spiritual mechanics parlayed into spiritual dynamics can happen to you now, in your mortal bodies. It has always taken resurrection life for God to express Himself in human beings. Resurrection life is exactly what God provides for those who **“live in accordance with the Spirit” and “have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.”** The spiritual life that God has provided for you is not designed to change your personality or make you different in your personality, as legalists attempt to do. There are all kinds of personalities in the Christian life. Each personality has its very own purpose.

God has given you your very own spiritual life, and you are the only one who can live it. Believers are all different, yet all are in the same hand of God. God has provided for every believer his very own spiritual life with a uniform set of principles and divine mandates, and a means of glorifying Him. There are changes which occur in you as a result of your Christian life, but there is no mold in the Christian life into which you must fit. All kinds of personalities commit the same sins. The whole issue then, simple as it may said, is to get to know Him. How do you know if you are truly getting to know Him?

And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. (1Jo 2:3)

This is how we may discern that we are coming to know Him to perceive, recognize, understand, and become better acquainted with Him: If we keep, guard, bear in mind, observe, practice, His teachings precepts, or commands. **The one who says, “I have come to know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: the believer who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked. Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard** [a reference to Gospel all the way back to Gen 3]. **On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you** [basically the proof that a believer is living in the spiritual life], **which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining (1Jo 2:4-8).**

The phrase “light shining out of darkness” is a reference to the surpassing greatness of the power manifested in us by God, and not from ourselves; **The one who loves his brother abides in the light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes (1Jo 2:10-11).** We are back to the subject of impersonal unconditional love being the manifestation of resurrection life alive in you. God have given you everything you could ever need to have this life. The first category of the dynamic spiritual life includes the spiritual gifts and the power of the spiritual life. This is the filling of the Holy Spirit, metabolization of doctrine, and the ten problem solving devices. To abandon your spiritual life is one of the greatest tragedies in life.

The spiritual life is defined in 2Co 4:18 under its simplest concept, **“While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”** Many believers do not discover until death how useless their life has been, because they have spent their life trying to prove something in this life to others. When we ignore the power of God found in the filling of the Holy Spirit and metabolized doctrine, we will self-destruct through our own bad decisions, and avoid taking the responsibility for them. This puts us into direct contact with the supreme court of heaven for divine discipline.

True wealth is not measured by God in terms of materialistic things, but in terms of what you have in the right lobe of your soul. Therefore, the emphasis in Scripture is on saving the soul. Thought is wealth. The thinking of doctrine or the “mind of Christ” is provided by God. When we have it circulating in the right lobe of the soul, our spiritual wealth begins to pay great dividends. True wealth is found in such passages as Eph 1:6-7, **“To the praise of the glory of His grace, which (grace) He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, on the basis of the riches of His grace.”** The “riches of His grace” is our portfolio and extends into every aspect of our life. These riches are provided in grace, you do not earn them, nor do you deserve them.