

• *Christians fulfil the law indirectly by walking in the Spirit*

1. We have a duty

• *Paul preaches holiness by pressing upon them the need for dealing with sin in their lives*

• *By so doing they will reap not death but life in their experience*

2. We have an assurance

• *We can mortify sin*

3. We have a reward

• *Inheritance is reward – and the fruition of our first salvation*

We are released from being directly under the Mosaic law, but we do fulfil the law indirectly by walking in the Spirit¹. **Only** those who have the Spirit can live such a life, says Paul, but his Christian friends at Rome do have the Holy Spirit and therefore can indeed live a godly life. Having said all this, it is natural for Paul to turn aside for a few sentences to actually mobilize them to live this godly life by the Spirit.

1. **We have a duty.** He says, ¹²*So then, brothers, we are not debtors to the flesh in order to live according to the flesh.* ¹³*For if you live according to the flesh you are going to die . . .* Paul is interested in applying his teaching practically. This is the way he preaches holiness. He does not urge them to seek a 'holiness experience'. Nor does he urge them to 'cease from struggling and strife'. He has told them the truth about themselves. He has been convincing them that they are under grace¹, that they have died to sin² and have died to the law³. In the verses just before this one he has been pressing on them the fact that they already have the Holy Spirit. Now he says, 'So then . . .' or 'So therefore . . .', and he begins to press upon them the need for dealing with sin in their lives. We have no obligation to live to the flesh. The flesh still exists but we are not joined on to flesh in such a way that we are enslaved to it. On the contrary, we are enslaved to righteousness. If we do live according to the flesh when there is no need to, we are playing around with death. As at the end of Romans chapter 6, he is reminding them that the kind of life which they left was only leading them to death. It is not that he thinks they can ever die because of sin. He has already told them that they are 'in Christ' and that death can never rule over Christ, and therefore can never rule over them. But sin kills, in one way or another. Paul is not threatening loss of salvation. They will reap death in their experience no matter what they may be in their position, if they do not respond to what he says. He goes on: *but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.* You will reap the blessings of eternal life.

2. **We have an assurance.** ¹⁴*For as many as are being led by the Spirit of God those ones are the sons of God.* ¹⁵*For you have not received a spirit of bondage to lead you again into fear, but on the contrary you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry 'Abba, Father'.* ¹⁶*The Spirit himself bears testimony along with our spirits that we are children of God.* Mortifying sin is a result of being led by the Spirit. Only Christians can do it. When we have the Spirit we do not go back to the 'spirit of bondage'. We are rejoicing in God and that is why we can mortify sin.

3. **We have a reward.** ¹⁷*And if we are children, we are also heirs, heirs of God and fellow-heirs with Christ, provided that we are sharing in his suffering in order that we might share in his glory.*

If we are sure that we are the children of God, then we can be sure we have an inheritance, for all of God's children have an inheritance. Our initial salvation is settled; Paul wants us to focus on inheritance. Inheritance is the fruition of our first salvation. Inheritance is reward! It can be clearly seen in the life of Abraham. It can be clearly seen in the story of Israel's 'inheriting' their land. It can be clearly seen in the way inheritance is presented in the New Testament as conditioned

1 8:1-4

1 5:12-21

2 6:1-10

3 7:4, 6

• *Inheritance is conditional*

by persistent faith. It is for the near future and for the long-term future. But inheritance is conditional. Paul says if we are children, we are also heirs – people who are lined up for the blessings and rewards of God. We are heirs of God and fellow-heirs with Christ. But there is a condition. We shall get to this inheritance provided that we jointly suffer with him, in order that we may be jointly glorified with him. Inheritance is conditional!

Heirs of God

• *Part of our inheritance*

• *Enjoyment of God's presence, pleasures, contentment and satisfaction here and now*

• *And in the future intensified*

• *If we share in His suffering we will share in His glory*

A part of the inheritance is that we are 'heirs of God'. It is enjoyment of the presence of God. It is finding 'pleasures for ever more' in the fellowship of God himself. The Bible talks about 'seeing God'. These few points I have mentioned – presence, pleasures, contentment, secret satisfaction – all refer to the inheritance in this life. But what does it mean to eternally 'inherit God'? Here we come to the limit of our understanding. All one can say is that it must be an intensification of the inheritance we are enjoying now. Paul says they are 'heirs of God and fellow-heirs with Christ'. This does not mean that they automatically inherit God's rewards, because Paul goes on to add a qualification: 'provided that we jointly suffer with him, in order that we may be jointly glorified with him.' To be an 'heir' means that we are on the way to inheritance. It means that we shall inherit provided we do not get rebellious and so block what God wants to give us. Jesus lived for his inheritance. With Jesus, the Christian inherits the nations. 'The meek shall inherit the earth'¹. All things are his². He possesses all things³. 'The blameless will inherit good things'⁴. It seems that companionship with Jesus is the greatest part of the Christian's eternal inheritance. Jesus will have those 'who walk about with him in white'⁵, those who were called, chosen and faithful⁶. Some are called but not chosen. Some are called and chosen but not faithful. Those who inherit reward with Jesus are called and chosen and faithful. Our inheritance comes to us 'if . . .' or 'provided that we are sharing in his suffering in order that we might share in his glory'⁷. It comes when we are willing to be meek, when we are willing to suffer the loss of all things, when we persist in faith amidst hardships, when we serve the Lord from the heart, when we have faith and patience, when we overcome sin.

- 1 Psalm 37:11
- 2 1 Corinthians 3:21
- 3 2 Corinthians 6:10
- 4 Proverbs 28:10
- 5 1 Revelation 3:4, 5
- 6 Revelation 17:14
- 7 8:17



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