

I. Introduction

- A. I read mystery series where same villain spanned 3-4 books doing same villainous things
1. Hero come close to catching him— almost but not quite got him and then got him...
 - a. But he escaped! Then it back to more of the chase and more almost but not quite
 - b. That spanned several books. But then it ended and the villain was brought to justice
 2. But there's no climatic battle, no final Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Moriarty showdown
 - a. Someone else got him, off camera. Sends word, "*You don't have worry about him.*"
 - b. Book review suggested the author must have grown bored with the whole thing!
- B. That review came to mind in after last week in *Unashamed* our series on Romans
1. We left it as a "cliffhanger." We can never win battle in **Rom 7**. Too many voices—
 - a. **Flesh (Rom 7:18)**. Sinful nature. *Part that wants what it wants when it wants it*
 - b. **Inner Being (Rom 7:22)** Spiritual nature. Part that was created in God's image
 - c. **Mind (Rom 7:23)**. Intellect. Free will. The part of me that decides what to do
 - 1) Those are from within; others shout at us from without (*world, people, Satan*)
 - 2) With all those voices screaming, how are we ever going to choose the right?
 - 3) In Romans 8, Paul introduce one more voice—within and without—Holy Spirit
 2. Paul really ends **Romans 7** with a cry of despair and wretchedness (**7:24**)
 - a. If all we have is ourselves and our flesh— then victory is utterly hopeless.
 - b. Law is helpless and hopeless to lead us to holiness. We can't follow the rules
 - 1) That's true of OT Law with 365 negative commands and 248 positive ones
 - 2) It's also true when we turn the NT in 5 steps (really 6 steps—live faithful life)
 - c. If we're can't be saved by our flesh, then we must be rescued by God (**Rom 7:25a**)
 3. That's where we left it last week—we're for the conclusion of our cliffhanger
 - a. But by the time we get to **Romans 8**, the battle is over and we have already won!
 - 1) So when you think about it, our cliffhanger isn't all that much of a cliffhanger
 - 2) Villain is defeated and Paul tells us, "*You don't have to worry about him.*"
 - b. But Paul's call is for us to live like people who have been handed the victory
 - c. We can do that because we have been given the Holy Spirit—that's his point here.
- C. Cliffhanger ends with a declaration of victory: no condemnation (**Read: Romans 8:1-4**)

II. Life in the Spirit

- A. This exact word “*condemnation*” only appears here and earlier in **Rom 5:16,18**
1. Now Paul says that there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus
 - a. At the end of chapter, Paul will say that we become “*more than conquerors*”
 - b. He goes from “Wretched man that I am” to “no condemnation” in one verse!
 - 1) Maybe this is a little dramatic, it just not our drama—it’s all about Christ!
 - 2) Heavenly army in **Rev 19** just hang around Christ & Satan gets slaughtered
 2. Just a quick aside about Bible translation here, because it makes a point in our text
 - a. Greek word “*sarx*” literally means “*flesh*.” It means flesh in any number of ways
 - 1) Sometimes it just means limitation, “*Spirit is willing but the flesh is weak*”
 - 2) Usually it’s “*sinful nature*,” the part that “*wants what it wants when it wants it*”
 - a) Translated that way in NIV and many others, but sometimes that gets in the way
 - b) NIV went back to “*flesh*” in many texts; one difference in the old and new NIV
 - b. Like this one. Text uses a play on the word “*flesh*” to makes a point (**Rom 8:3**)
 - 1) The OT Law was flawed by flesh, that is, by our inability to keep it
 - 2) Jesus appeared in likeness of sinful flesh and condemned sin while in the flesh
 - 3) Now there no condemnation! Paul sums up the Gospel; it’s all about Christ!
 3. Paul is recreating the end of *Saving Private Ryan*... with one big directorial change
 - a. He declares we’ve been saved, “*there is now no condemnation for those in Christ*”
 - b. He doesn’t get in our face, “*Now earn this.*” He says, “*Now live this!*” (**Rom 8:4b**)
 - c. Life in Spirit is not just what He will do you you—***what we must do in return!***
- B. Let’s let Paul walk us through his description of what this life in the Spirit looks like
1. **First**, Paul says it starts with where we let our minds take us (**Rom 8:5-6**, NLT)
 - a. Paul talked about mind (**Rom 7**); too many voices shouting at us. Now the Spirit
 - b. But our mind still must decide who to hear; we’re sanctified, not possessed by Spirit
 - 1) Holy Spirit fills us and leads us, but He does not dispossess us of our free will
 - 2) We still must choose what kinds of things we will put into our minds (**Phil 4:8**)
 - c. “*Garbage in, garbage out*” is more than an old computer programming truism!
 - 1) **Negative**: Can’t fill mind with worldly and negative things and focus on God
 - 2) **Positive**: Paul’s point is to intentionally look for positive things to think about
 - d. And if we don’t “*think on these things*,” we’ll never please God (**Rom 8:7-8** NLT)
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2. **Second**, there are two possible realms (**Rom 8:9**) *We can only serve in one*
 - a. We can't be in the realm of the flesh and the realm of the Spirit at the same time
 - 1) God simply doesn't grant dual-citizenship. You can be in his kingdom or not
 - 2) Passport to the kingdom here is simple—you must have the Holy Spirit!
 - b. You can't have Christ without the Spirit! Remember Paul at Ephesus in **Acts 19**
 - 1) He runs into new converts and grills them a bit. Cause that's what you do!
 - 2) He asks about the Spirit; they gave the absolute Christian answer (**Act 19:2**)
 - a) Many screwball notions about the Holy Spirit—*like he lives in leather-bound book*
 - b) Can un-teach that, but he starts all over here; you can't have Christ without Spirit!
 - c. Why is that? Why is it so important he be in the realm of the Spirit? (**Rom 8:10-11**)
 - 1) It's a matter of life and death! Our bodies remain dead; we'll struggle with sin
 - 2) But the same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead is at work in us
 - a) This "*I'll fly away...*" That means right now, resurrection power is at work!
 - b) Without the power of the Holy Spirit, there is no victory over sin now in our lives!
3. **Third**, we have obligation to follow the Spirit, not the flesh (**Rom 8:12-13**)
 - a. We have this choice to make; our mind still casts the final vote as to behavior
 - 1) The word "*obligation*" is the word for "debt." As in "*forgive us our debts*"
 - 2) Paul points us back to his line opening "*there is now no condemnation.*"
 - b. We don't deserve what we're given; we can't earn it. We can live according to it
 - c. "*Much obliged*" goes beyond saying thank you to God. We must live by Spirit
4. **Fourth**, the Spirit calls us to be the true children of God (**Rom 8:14-15**)
 - a. Another word on translation here—*because it lets me talk about a point in text*
 - 1) NIV generally uses gender-neutral pronouns ("*children of God*" and not "*sons*")
 - 2) This isn't "*politically correct.*" Greek includes both genders; English should
 - 3) So why would it use rather stilted, KJV-sounding "*adoption to sonship?*" (**15**)
 - a) It's technical Roman legal term- "*full legal adoption with inheritance standing*"
 - b) We don't just live in God's house and call him "*Papa.*" We get His stuff & power
 - c) Since "*the earth is the Lord's, and everything in it,*" that is a pretty big deal, right?
 - 4) All God's sons & daughter's (*nothing to do w/gender*) have this thru the Spirit
 - b. Spirit tells us we are God's children, but there are two sides to that story (**8:16-17**)
 - 1) We don't jump straight to glory; there is suffering to go through (*next week*)
 - 2) Well, is that fair? Jesus did! But as we suffer, thru the Spirit we cry, "*Abba!*"

III. Conclusion

- A. The real power in all this is provided by the Holy Spirit of God
1. Sure, we must set our minds of this things of the Spirit—Paul is clear about that
 - a. Whole point of **Rom 7** is that we are wretched people who can't be holy ourselves
 - b. We need to be rescued from sin, and once we are we need help living as holy people
 - 1) My problem is not just that I have sinned; my problem is that I am a sinner
 - 2) After I am rescued from sin, my sin problem remains; I need help all over again
 2. Don't think of holiness/sanctification in terms of God doing his part, us doing ours
 - a. This is more like the night Michael Jordan scored 69 points for the Chicago Bulls
 - 1) Rookie Stacy King got in at the end of the game and scored a single free-throw
 - 2) His reflection, "*I'll remember it as the night me and Michael combined for 70*"
 - b. We must keep step with the Spirit, but God is doing the heavily lifting here!
 - c. Anytime we're discouraged because sin it too great, remember who carries the load
 - 1) Sure, we can quench the Holy Spirit. And we grieve the Holy Spirit.
 - 2) If we do, it's because we rebel, not because His power isn't great enough
- B. Before the Italians were driven from Eritrea in North Africa in WWII, they sabotaged it
1. They filled several large barges with concrete and sank them at entrance of the harbor
 - a. They hoped this would make this important harbor inaccessible to the Allies
 - b. The way those barges were eventually moved took a bit of Yankee ingenuity
 2. Sealed huge gas tanks so they'd float; chained them to barges when tide went out
 - a. When the tide came back in, displacement took over and the barges had moved
 - b. In time, the barge reef was moved from the harbor entrance—harbor was opened
 - c. What was the real force that moved the barges? Tanks? Chains? Water?
 - 1) Actually, it was the gravitation attractional force of the moon on the ocean!
 - 2) It took a power from another world to really create the different
 3. That is how we will reach holiness in our lives—*real power is from another world*
 - a. Sure, we must focus on the right things— and Paul talks about that here
 - b. Sure, we must serve in the right realm— and Paul talks about that too
 - c. Sure, we must follow God in the right way of the Spirit. Paul reminds us of that too.
 4. Real power to do that comes from something outside of ourselves, inside ourselves
 5. It is not about us. It's always about what God did in Christ and does thru His Spirit