

Romans: Verse-by-Verse

Romans 8:12-15 (Introduction)

Student Notes

A graphic picture of our part in victory over sin is. Paul's portrayal of the Christian life as a "life and death" battle with the power of Sin and the Flesh: "Mortification".

Three things Paul emphasizes: 1. What mortification is. 2. Why we should practice mortification. 3. How we accomplish mortification.

- **The Obligation: vv. 11-12**

"Therefore ... we have an obligation – but it is not to the sinful nature..."

We have an "obligation". The basis of our English word, "debt". Because the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in us ... we do have a debt that we owe to God.

Paul puts that obligation or debt in negative verbiage. He says, "We do not have a debt or obligation to the sinful nature." In more conversational language: "You don't owe the *sarx* – the sinful desires of your old nature – anything." See: Romans 8:5, 8

Because the Spirit is dwelling in us and governing us – the sinful nature has no claim on us. We owe it nothing.

- **A Repeated Theme:**

Romans 7: the Mosaic Code:

Do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to men who know the law—that the law has authority over a man only as long as he lives?

So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God. For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death. But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code. -- Romans 7:1, 4-6

Under the Old Testament, a man or woman was “bound to” the Mosaic Code (all of it) as long as they lived. Only death broke their – and here’s the word – “obligation” to the Law.

Men and women had an obligation, a debt to follow the Code and all of its requirements.

At our rebirth, what happened? We died to the Mosaic Code and were transferred to freedom in Christ. The Mosaic Code ceased to be our obligation.

Once released from the Law, what would have happened if God left us in the grips of the flesh? Wouldn’t it have produced anarchy in our lives?

- **Enter the Holy Spirit:**

Having been set free from the Law, we have been given the indwelling Spirit of God. The flesh produces death, but the Spirit produces “Life and Peace”.

Because of the Holy Spirit we have not been left to our own devices in trying to please God and avoid the chaos of sin.

- **A Sad Ignorance:**

One of the reasons many Christians have been defeated in the battle

with the flesh, is because they have been taught little to nothing about the Holy Spirit.

The entire Book of Acts is the story of the Holy Spirit. It's normally called the "Acts of the Apostles", but it can just as easily be titled, "The Acts of the Holy Spirit".

Almost every chapter has something to do with the direction the power, and the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the lives of God's New Testament people.

Robert Bowman: "There are less than a hundred references to the Spirit in the whole Old Testament, about 58 references to the Spirit (by whatever precise name, including Paraclete) in all four Gospels combined, [and] 57 in just the Book of Acts..."

A Walk-Through Of the Holy Spirit in Acts:

- The very first sentence in Acts: "In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen" (1:1-2).
- The first meeting after Jesus' Ascension: Peter says, "Brethren, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit foretold through the mouth of David concerning Judas." – Acts 1:16.

Note: References to the Holy Spirit (speaking) indicating God's will for the Church or for individuals: Acts 8:29; Acts 10:19-20; Acts 13:2, 4; Acts 21:11

- The Holy Spirit either blocking the apostles from entering certain areas or directing them to others: "They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. When they had come opposite Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them."- Acts 16

- The Jerusalem Council: “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials”. - Acts 15:28

The Book of Acts both begins and ends with a reference to the Holy Spirit: See, Acts 1:2; Acts 28:25-26.

- **Returning To Paul's Arguments:**

If we live according to the flesh, that will lead to death. But we have an escape from that downward spiral: We have the indwelling of the Spirit.

A pertinent question: “If being governed by the flesh leads to death, why would we choose that if we have an alternative?”

We have no obligation to the flesh: Like the Mosaic Code, it cannot produce life. We are not obligated to fulfil the desires of the sinful nature, but we must see the results of such an attitude.

A “life and death” view of being governed by the flesh or the Spirit: “For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.” v. 13

John Stott: “... There is a kind of life which leads to death, and there is a kind of death which leads to life.”

What kind of death leads to life? It's the process of “Mortification” – in other words, putting to death the actions and affections of the sinful nature.

Next time, we will look carefully at “What is Mortification?”