

You're Free

Here's the text to the message I gave last Saturday at the wonderful [Florida Regional Grace Conference](#). You can watch all the messages [here](#). We also had Pastor Richard Jordan with us on last Friday's podcast, which you can watch [here](#). PTL! -j

Romans 8:2 *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.* Surely this verse is worth an "amen," am I right?

**Question: What is true freedom?** I suspect most people equate freedom with civil liberties. Freedom of speech. Freedom of assembly. Free exercise of religion. But, see, civil liberties is just a form of freedom. That's not true freedom. **True freedom is the freedom that God Himself gives you the moment you believe.** True freedom is your freedom from *the law of sin and death*! True freedom is to live under *the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*! Because life in Christ means freedom from sin! Because life in Christ means freedom from the sting of death! And if you're freed from death than you are also freed from the consequence and the power of sin! **That is the only true freedom that exists in life, the freedom that God Himself gave you the moment you believed!** True freedom is your freedom from *the law of sin and death*... No doubt, there may well be hard times ahead for all of us. We may very well be persecuted. We may well lose our civil liberties. But we will never lose the greatest freedom God Himself gave us – our freedom from *the law of sin and death*. This verse is perhaps the most succinct affirmation of the literal, spiritual reality of your new life in Christ by virtue of your identification with His Son and what He accomplished at Calvary.

### Define the Terms

So let's start with sin. What is sin? How do you define the word sin? I'll bet most people would say, "Sin is when we disobey God." Wanna know how *Webster's 1828* defines sin? I'm going to share it anyway. According to Webster, "sin" is "The voluntary departure of a moral agent from a known rule of rectitude or duty, prescribed by God; any voluntary transgression of the divine law, or violation of a divine command; a wicked act; iniquity." So, you're probably like, "Yeah, exactly. Like I said, 'sin is when we disobey God.'" And you would be correct!

**So let me ask Hal-type questions.** Is sin when we willfully disobey God or can we sin accidentally because we're ignorant of His will? YES. I'm reminded of what Paul told us about himself in [1Ti 1:13](#) *Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.* Paul was sinning because he was ignorant of God's will in his state of unbelief. Paul, like everyone before salvation, had his understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that was in him, because of the blindness of his heart. He was sinning because he was ignorant.

**Let me ask another question.** Is sin a wrong we commit against ourselves, a wrong we commit against others, or a wrong we commit against God? YES. I'm reminded of King David, who was guilty of adultery and murder. When David committed adultery, he sinned against himself. Paul said in [1Co 6:18](#) *"he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body."* When David lied and committed murder, he sinned against others, and he sinned against God. He wrote in Psa. 41:4, *"for I have sinned against thee."*

**Here's another question.** Is sin the bad things we do or is it the corruption that's in the flesh? YES. We've all sinned and come short of the glory of God, and Paul says repeatedly in Romans 7 that *sin dwelleth in me*, that is, *in my flesh*.

**Another question.** Is sin carried out by the soul or the body? YES. The Lord said twice in Ezekiel 18, "*The soul that sinneth, it shall die.*" Sin is the act of the *soul carried out by the body*, which is the *instrument of our unrighteousness*. There was a verse I always thought was interesting. Solomon wrote in **Ecc 5:6** *Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin...* Well, wait a minute. I thought sin was already in my flesh! It is! But when the soul is tempted by the corruption of sin in the flesh and that soul chooses to sin, that soul also causes the flesh to sin. Another interesting verse, to me, is Micah 6:7 - "*the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul.*" The body dies because the soul sins, and the eternal punishment for being alienated from God by our sins and rejecting the remedy of the cross is "*Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil*" (Rom. 2:9). The soul that sins is considered dead in the eyes of God because we're separated from *His life*, and our souls will reap the eternal reality of that separation, an eternal separation from God, unless that soul is made alive in Christ before the body dies. So when our souls choose to indulge our corrupted flesh, we sin, which brings about the death of our bodies plus a spiritual death by God, called the *second death* (Rev. 20:14), which is the ultimate consequence of sin, an eternal separation from God in a Lake of Fire, unless the consequence for all of our sins has been satisfied by an act of atonement, which only the Lord's sacrifice on the cross can resolve for us. Sin is the reason we die. "*The wages of sin is death*" (Rom. 6:23). The wages, the consequence, of sin is the death of the body *and* the soul (Eze. 18:4; Rev. 20:14). That's *the law of sin and death*.

### **Flip Back to Romans 7**

**First, who is Paul talking to in this chapter?** Look at vs. 1. **Rom 7:1** *Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?* Paul is speaking to those who knew the law experientially. Look at vs. 5. **Rom 7:5** *For when we were (past tense) in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.* Paul is writing specifically to those who knew the law experientially and he speaks of the past. He connects with them over the commonality they shared when they *were*, past tense, *in the flesh* (Rom. 7:5) under the law and how the motions of sins in their flesh brought forth fruit unto death. Paul in Romans 7 illustrates his internal conflict as a Jew in the flesh *under the law*. He illuminates vividly the strength of the law in stark contrast to his weakness in the flesh and the fallacy of trying to attain God's righteousness by perfectly obeying the law. Look at vs. 23. **Rom 7:23** *But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.*

**As a Jew, as a Hebrew of the Hebrews, Paul wanted to obey the law.** He consented unto the law that it was holy, just, and good (Rom. 7:12,16). But because of the sin in his flesh, he was unable to fully obey the law as he wanted. The members of his body, the corruption of sin in his flesh, warred against his mind, which brought him into captivity of *the law of sin*. This is the same law of sin called the *law of sin and death* in Rom. 8:2.

If I were to characterize *the law of sin* in a sound-byte, I'd say it is essentially **a spiritual law about the consequence of sin**, the corruption of sin that brings about the death of our bodies, which is followed by the *second death*, the ultimate consequence of sin. Now, after you get saved, you still reap what you sow. You can make mistakes and not gain rewards at the Bema Seat for poor service, which Rom. 8:1 is talking about, but verse two is talking about the consequence of sin in the sense of that corruption of sin in his flesh was bringing about the death of his body (Rom. 6:23) and the fact that he'd also be facing the eternal consequence of his sin, which is the *second death*. So Paul is saying in chapter 7 that the members of his body, the corruption of sin in his flesh warred against his mind tempting him to sin, and when Paul acquiesced to the desires of his corrupted flesh, he sinned (Rom. 7:23), which meant he would die in his sins like every unbeliever. That put him in bondage to the law of sin. Then Paul says in vs. 25, "*So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin*". **Paul was not a sinner because he broke the law. He broke the law because he was a sinner.** And not one person to whom he was writing, who knew the law experientially, couldn't relate to these thoughts and the hopeless struggle they experienced in the flesh under the law. The struggle for Paul was so exacerbating, he would cry out, "*O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*" So *who has delivered us from the bondage to sin in this body of death?* **The Lord Jesus Christ Himself!**

So we get out from under the law in chapter 7 and into the Spirit of Christ in chapter 8 whose spiritual baptism made us "*free from the law of sin and death*" (Rom. 8:2). **We're free from the dominion and the consequence of sin and death!** In chapter 7, Paul was in bondage to *the law of sin* (Rom. 7:23). In chapter 8, he's been freed from *the law of sin* (Rom. 8:2). In chapter 7, Paul spoke of the past when they were still *in the flesh* (Rom. 7:5). In chapter 8, vs. 9, he speaks of our present tense spiritual reality how we *are* no longer in the flesh but *in the Spirit*. In chapter 7, Paul could not fulfil the law walking in his flesh. In chapter 8 Paul *could* fulfil the law by love walking in the Spirit. What could not be accomplished in the flesh under the law can now be accomplished in the Spirit freed from the law of sin and death!

### **Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus**

**So how would you define *the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*?** I think Paul defines it for us in chapter 8. **Rom 8:10** *And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.* **Rom 8:11** *But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.* Is the Spirit inside of you? We know He is, because we're all temples of the Living God. The moment you accept the gospel by faith, the Spirit takes up residence inside you and baptizes you into the Body of Christ and then what? **You're free! You're free from the bondage and the consequence of sin and death!** But you're more than that. **You're also alive unto God, because His life now resides inside of you!**

So you have this great contrast between *the Law of Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus* vs. *the Law of sin and death*. **I'd say they are both spiritual laws of consequence.** Before your salvation, you're under *the law of sin and death*, because you're subject to the consequence of sin. Because of sin, you're in bondage to sin in the flesh. Because of sin, you're facing the consequence of sin with the death of the body and the *second death*, an eternal separation from God, unless you

get saved. But when you get saved, you're baptized by the Spirit, indwelt by the Spirit, sealed by the Spirit, and you're under *the Law of Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus*, because you have by the Holy Spirit been made alive unto God! Because of the Spirit, you're now reaping the benefits and the glory of His life for having faith in His Son! Because of the Spirit, you're now free! You're free from the consequence of sin. You're free from the bondage of sin! **You're alive unto God with His life in you!**

Under *the Law of sin and death*, you have the negative consequence of death because of sin. Under *the Law of Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus*, you have the positive consequence of life because of faith. All of this is possible because of our identification with Christ.

### **Our Glorious Identification with Christ!**

*Rom 6:3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Rom 6:4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

**As Jordan would say**, "There's not one drop of water in these verses." How can this be about water baptism when Paul tells us in Eph. 4:5 that there's only one baptism, which has to be the baptism of the Spirit? So what is Paul talking about here? He's talking about the spiritual reality of your new life in Christ. He's saying that you are dead, buried, and risen with Christ.

**Are we dead with Christ?** Gal. 2:20 says, "*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live...*" Are we buried with Christ? Rom. 6:4 just told us that we are "*buried with him by baptism...*" And are we risen with Christ? Col. 2:12 tells us "*...ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.*" **We are dead, buried, and risen with Christ living in His newness of life right now!**

The same tenets you accept by faith to become saved are the same tenets you accept by faith to reckon everything you are in Christ. Because it all goes back to death, burial, and resurrection, doesn't it? Because if you consider the all-sufficiency of what Christ accomplished on the cross, how can we not become identified with His death, burial, and resurrection? Because the very point of Christ dying on that cross is to have victory over sin and death! You have to become dead, buried, and resurrected *with Christ* in order for that victory to become a reality in your life the moment you believed! It's as if God the Father is saying, now that you've reckoned that my Son died, was buried, and resurrected for you, now go reckon that truth for yourself as being dead, buried, and resurrected *with My Son*. Identification goes hand-in-hand with the gospel because in order for you to become a new creature alive unto God freed from the bondage and condemnation of sin, you to have become dead, buried, and risen with Christ. The fact that identification goes hand-in-hand with the gospel is illustrated by Paul challenging all of us at the beginning of Romans 6 and says repeatedly, "know ye not?" He's saying, basically, "don't you realize the magnitude of what Christ accomplished for you, and in you, and through you? In order for eternal life to become a reality the moment you believe, by logical necessity, you must be identified, you must be dead, buried, and resurrected *with Christ*!"

**Do you realize what he's saying here?** His death became your death. His burial became your burial. His resurrection became your resurrection. **And the newness of His life** after His resurrection became your newness of life and you are to walk in that newness of life!

**J.C. O'Hair** loved to say that we are living His resurrection life right here, right now. When we place our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, we spiritually die *with Him*. Our *old man*, which is our old selves, is crucified *with Him*. **Put to death!** Then, we are spiritually buried *with Him*. Our old man and all our sins, including our bondage to sin as part of the fallen human race *in Adam*, are buried *with Him*. And finally, we are spiritually risen from the grave *with Him*, "*like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father.*" Our resurrection with Christ places us under *the Law of Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus* because we've been freed from the sting of death and the power of sin over us! We are made victorious in our spiritual resurrection *with Him* now freed from the bondage of sin and death just as Christ Himself was freed after He rose again, and we are now living *His* resurrected life, an eternal *newness of life*.

**In that moment of salvation, the moment we accepted the gospel**, we were joined in an eternal union to Christ in Heaven and the all-sufficiency of His work on the cross. Christ's life became your life. Christ's victory became your victory. Christ's riches became your riches. Christ's glory became your glory. When we place our faith in Him, we are brought into the *perfection of His work on the cross*. We are brought into the *perfection of His victory*. We are brought into the very *perfection of Christ Himself*. When we place our faith in Him, we are forever identified with His work on the cross, spiritually transformed as Christ was literally transformed, and we're made to be risen with Him by the same power found within the glory of the Father, which is the Spirit of glory, who raised Christ from the dead. We enter a new state. We became *new creatures* – behold, all things new! We have God's righteousness imputed to us (Rom. 4:23-25). We're made *alive unto God, complete in Him, accepted in the beloved* (Eph. 1:3), *blessed with all spiritual blessings* (Eph. 1:3), *sealed by the Spirit* (Eph. 1:13), seated in the *Heavenlies* (Eph. 2:6), *forgiven all trespasses* (Col. 2:13), baptized into the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13), one with Christ (Eph. 5:30), freed from the *curse of the law* (Gal. 3:13), *heirs of God* and *joint-heirs with Christ* (Rom. 8:17), washed, regenerated, and renewed by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5), and now you and I are literally living His resurrection life until our bodies are redeemed.

### **Yes, We're Freed from Sin!**

Look at Rom. 6:11, "*Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*" Look at Rom. 6:22, "*But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.*" Isn't that amazing? He says, "*But now being made free from sin*"! We have been *made free from sin*!

**God made you to be free from the bondage of sin!** Why? Because *he that is dead is freed from sin*. How can this not be a *literal* reality of what God has *made* us if we're dead, buried, and risen with Christ? How can we not be literally freed from sin's dominion over our souls if we are spiritually dead, buried, and risen *with Christ*? Once you have grasped the magnitude of your identification with Christ, then the question becomes, "How can it not also be true that we've been literally freed from sin's power over us?" Why? Because *he that is dead is freed from sin*.

**To "reckon" is to take inventory, take stock**, "count it so" as true. We took our first steps of faith by accepting that Christ died on the cross, was buried, and rose again, as the ultimate sacrifice for our sins. We accepted that truth by faith. We reckoned that truth a reality and believed on His Son unto eternal life. Now, in our quest for spiritual growth to serve God as He would have us to serve Him, we take our next steps of faith and we reckon as true right now

what God tells us about the new spiritual reality of all that you are in Christ – **you are dead, buried, and risen with Christ Himself**, which means that you are now and forever freed from the power of sin. We reckon ourselves to be dead, indeed, unto sin and “*alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*” God tells us that we are *dead to sin*. **Do you believe it?** Have you reckoned it? The power to stop sin in your life begins with you reckoning that you have been freed from the power of sin, and you’re free to live like the saint God made you in Christ!

**Your day of real spiritual growth in your life is a day of reckoning.** It’s the day you *reckon* God’s truths a reality, the day you reckon as true who you are in Christ, what God has made you in Christ by virtue of your identification with His Son’s all-sufficient work on the cross. It’s the day you declare yourself to be dead, buried, and risen *with Christ*. It’s the day you reckon your old man dead. And it’s the day you reckon yourself literally freed from sin. It’s also the day, and every day, you choose to *yield to His righteousness* by allowing yourself to submit to the direction of Holy Spirit through the study of His Word. It’s the day you allow yourself to be empowered by His grace with the Spirit having your mind renewed through the study of His Word, prayer, and meditation. Then we allow all that spiritual wisdom to be fortified in our souls to guide our feet.

**I love the fact that Paul says in Rom. 13:12** to just *cast off the works of darkness*. All you have to do is *cast off the works of darkness*. Do you believe it? I’m going to start talking like Des Strydom for a minute here. Does Paul say here that we’re to confess our sins? No or no? Does he say that we should apologize to God for doing those sins? No or no? What does Paul say? He says, simply, that we are to *cast off* all those *works of darkness*. Why? We’re free from condemnation. We’re free from the bondage of sin. And we’re free to *go and sin no more*. Victory over sin is as easy as casting them off in our minds. Why? Because we’re no longer weak in the faith. Because we know what God has made us in Christ and we know that we’re empowered by His grace to cast off all those works.

**So how do you cast off all those sins in your mind?** How do you do that? You spend time in His Word! As long as we live in these mortal bodies there will always be that conflict between the flesh and the Spirit (Gal. 5:17). And for us now, as new creatures, sin becomes a choice. Period. But if we walk in the Spirit, we shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. And how do we walk in the Spirit? **We study His Word!** We strengthen that inner man by His Spirit. We allow all His words of grace to be fortified in our souls forever. We reckon as true what God made us in His Son and then we spend time getting into the finer details of all that it means to put on the Lord Jesus Christ. We put off the works of darkness and put on the attributes of Christ Himself. We align our earthly walk with our new heavenly identity in the Lord Jesus Christ. We clothe ourselves with Christ in the outliving of our faith. We enter into His views. We let His life live out of us, and we stand firmly on His side no matter the cost. We move forward and not look back. **We look up, not down.** Instead of focusing on, for example, anger in your life, focus instead on the love of Christ living out through you. Quote verses to yourself. I do that all the time! Focus on the meaning of those verses. How do those verses apply to your situation?

**Because the issue here is a matter of faith. How do you see yourself?** Do you see yourself as being weak in the flesh over some kind of sin? Do you look up at the Lord in tears through the eyes of the old man or do you look upon yourself in joy through the eyes of the new man



because you now see yourself as God sees you in Christ? Holy. Righteous. Beloved. Elect. Complete in Him. Because the problem here isn't that you're inherently weak. **The problem here is that you haven't yet by faith reckoned yourself to be strong.** The problem isn't that the flesh is too strong for you. **The problem is that your mind hasn't yet freed itself from the power of sin to become empowered by His grace,** the power of living according to what God has made you in Christ, so that His life can live out through you!

### **Conclusion**

**This brings me back to the question when we started. What is true freedom?** I'd suggest that true freedom is perfectly encapsulated in Rom. 8:2. We have here this contrast between *the Law of Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus* vs. *the Law of sin and death*, two spiritual laws of consequence. Under *the Law of sin and death*, you have the negative consequence because of sin: death of the body followed by the *second death*. Under *the Law of Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus*, you have the positive consequence of eternal life because of what the Spirit made you in Christ by the will of the Father. He identified you with His Son. You're now dead, buried, and risen with Christ, which freed you from sin and death. You're now free from the consequence and the dominion and power of sin! True freedom is the freedom that God Himself gave you the moment you believed. True freedom is your freedom from *the law of sin and death*! Life in Christ means freedom from sin! Life in Christ means freedom from death! Nothing and no one can take away from you the true freedom God Himself gave you that moment you believed! The truest freedom any soul can ever possibly receive is your freedom from *the law of sin and death* to have life in Christ. So do you believe it? Have you reckoned this truth for yourself? Reckon yourself to be free.