

## 16. Romans 8:3-4 The Great Exchange

Romans 8:3-4, Leviticus 19

**Romans 8:3-4 (ESV) For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.**

*Let us pray. Pray to Father for His sovereign grace, to Christ for His teaching of His Word and to the Spirit for His wisdom and understanding.*

Last time we met, we broke down the first half of **Romans 8:3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do.** Essentially we answered "What has God done?", "If the law was not weakened, could the law fulfill what God has accomplished in His gospel?" and "How did the flesh, sin and essentially, us, weakened the law?" Now that we have answered those questions, let us put everything together and see what we get.

The first word of passage is the word "for" which is key in that we know that verses 3-4 ground verse 2 which when we use connection grounds verse 1. The word "for" can almost always be switched out with the word "because" in the New Testament.

Let us reword verses 1-4 and while gramatically it won't, let us see if the big idea becomes a lot clearer:

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus **only because** the authority of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the authority of sin and death **only because** God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do by sending His only begotten Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."

Gramatically, it is quadruple run-on sentences ahoy. But hopefully this gives you a solid big foundation so we can go head first and break down the ideas.

### **I. The law could not save us nor was it ever design to save us.**

Last time, we pulled passages from Hebrews 7 declared commandments to be weak and useless because the Law made nothing perfect and something or someone Perfect fulfilled and did what the Law could not do.

But go back over the Torah and look at the Laws handed by God. Just look at Leviticus 19 for example:

**Leviticus 19:3 (ESV) Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father, and you shall keep my Sabbaths: I am the Lord your God.**

**Leviticus 19:4 (ESV) Do not turn to idols or make for yourselves any gods of cast metal: I am the Lord your God.**

**Leviticus 19:10 (ESV) And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the Lord your God.**

**Leviticus 19:25 (ESV) But in the fifth year you may eat of its fruit, to increase its yield for you: I am the Lord your God.**

**Leviticus 19:31 (ESV) "Do not turn to mediums or necromancers; do not seek them out, and so make yourselves unclean by them: I am the Lord your God.**

**Leviticus 19:34 (ESV) You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.**

**Leviticus 19:36 (ESV) You shall have just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin:I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt.**

In other words...

Obey your mom and dad

Take a day of rest

Don't worship stuff, things or people

Give to the poor

Give your firstfruits and the rest belongs to you

Don't go into witchcraft and sorcery

Treat all strangers, immigrants and foreigners like they were your fellow comrade (or in some cases better)

Don't cheat out other people

... I am the Lord your God.

For the Genesis 3:15 on, God has never said, "Look, I am going to hand down a list of commandments and that is going to save you." No no. He has always said, "I am going to send myself down to you and save you myself." Even when he hands down the law, all the laws point back to God.

Let me get a bit weird for a moment. Has anybody heard of Equidistant Letter Sequences in the Bible. Sometimes in text, some people with enough time on their hands, will count the letters in a piece of literature, like the Bible, and see if you get a pattern.

What has been known for thousands of years by the Jewish Rabbis is this thing that is in the Torah. In Genesis in Hebrew, go to the first 'T' and every 49th letter afterwards, the first 4 letters will spell out TORH or Torah. Check out Exodus, and it happens again. We look in Leviticus and it isn't there. But yet do the same thing with Numbers and Deuteronomy, instead start with the first "H" and we gets something odd, HROT or Torah spelled backwards.

Look more closely at Leviticus and instead of every 49th letter, if we start with the we see a pattern every 7th (square root of 49 is 7) letter when we start with the first "Y", spelling out what Jews call the unpronounceable name of God: YHWH or Yahweh.

I am not asking we build obscure doctrine off of this little tibbit. But how fascinating is it that God would "watermark" or "sign" His Word. More fascinating is that:

Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy  
TORH -> TORH -> YHWH <- HROT <-HROT

When we arrange what we find is that no matter how you arrange the Law, the Law always points back to God.

Jesus Christ comes to fulfill the Law and the Prophet and yet, He points back to God:

**John 17:26 (ESV) I [Jesus Christ] made known to them your name [Father], and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."**

Now that we have that firmly established, let us get into the rest of the text:

## **II. By sending His own Son**

God fortold this in numerous passages throughout the Old Testament. If you want to go into Messianic prophecies, start by studying:

Genesis 3:15 (the Protoevangelion)

Isaiah 53

**Isaiah 53:7 (ESV) He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.**

Psalms 22

**Psalms 22:16 (ESV) For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet--**

Ezekiel 34

**Ezekiel 34:12 (ESV) As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness.**

We can do this all day.

The Father sent His Son to do the job because His Son, in submission to Our Father's will, was the only one able and fully willing to complete mission because God us so much and He desires for everybody to be saved.

### **III. in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh**

God made everything good. Not anything could be better, but He declared what He made was good. This is not creation what you see before you but the natural rhythm of existence (time, heartbeat, provision), marriage between man and woman, sex, love, joy, peace, happiness. God preached the truth in Genesis 1 & 2. In other words, God preached "Observe my words, do what I say, be blessed in what I say and what you are experiencing right at this moment will last forever."

Yet, a false teacher/preacher comes along and preaches something in complete contradiction to what God preached. Satan preaches, "God is holding something back from you. It can get better than this. You have to trust in yourself and depend on yourself. You can do it! True happiness is at your fingertips."

Our original parents and every single freakin' person born of man born and choose to believe the false teaching of Satan (Romans 5:12-21) and every person born of man has substituted God for themselves and thus dying as soon as they are born.

Jesus Christ comes into this world, not born of man but of a woman (Genesis 3:15, Isaiah 7:14, Luke 1), lives the perfect life we can't possibly live and dies the death we should have died and by the power of the Holy Spirit, was raised from the grave (Romans 1:4). In all of this, He condemns sin in the flesh and thus, Christ substitutes Himself as God for us in what Luther calls the great exchange:

"This is that mystery which is rich in divine grace to sinners: wherein by a wonderful exchange our sins are no longer ours but Christ's, and the righteousness of Christ not Christ's but ours. He has emptied himself of his righteousness that he might clothe us with it and fill us with it; and he has taken our evils upon himself that he might deliver us from them." – Martin Luther

By being in the likeness of sinful flesh and bringing all the sins of those who would believe on Him, He becomes the only one who would bear the wrath of God for our sins or propitiate Himself for our sins. With that, His burial and resurrection as He conquered Satan, demons, sin and hell takes away all our sins and thus becomes our 'scapegoat'.

### **IV. in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us**

Jesus Christ being our sacrificial lamb (propitiation) and scapegoat (expiation) is that singular righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled. In a nutshell, the law required in order for you and me to be in the presence of God, you will have to sacrifice a spotless lamb and take all the sins of the people, place them on a

goat and release the goat into the wilderness never to return back again.

Hebrews 2:17 (ESV) Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

1 John 2:2 (ESV) He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

1 John 4:10 (ESV) In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

## **V. in us who walk, not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.**

How do you walk according to the Spirit?

First, you have to be saved. We have been hitting the gospel over and over again so that you, disciples of Christ, might go out in the world and boldly proclaim the gospel of God.

Simply, repent (change your mind) of your sins and iniquities and believe upon the name of Jesus Christ.

Look how it was setup in Acts 2. Peter proclaims the gospel and basically calls out the Jews present as the murderers of Jesus Christ:

**Acts 2:36-37 (ESV) Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified. Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"**

They were cut to the heart, how? How is it that they were understand and desire to be changed by the gospel of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 2:12)? In other words, how were these people able to even sincerely ask from their lips, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

**Acts 2:38 (ESV) And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**

What is the gift? The gift of salvation purchased by Jesus Christ so that we can be with God forever and ever.

Who is the gift by? The Holy Spirit.

So how can you even begin to ask for the gift, let alone receive the gift?

**1 Corinthians 2:12 (ESV) Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.**

Honestly, that is why I contend that evangelism is so frikkin' easy. It doesn't matter how pretty you are, how well you speak, how well you can argue doctrine or you can browbeat a Mormon. Just speak and live the gospel and engage with those whom God has put in your path, your neighborhood, your workplace, your gym, your bookstore, your favorite coffeeshop.

All of that is Step 1: Convert.

Remember, the Great Commission is not about getting converts but what, "Go therefore and make disciples" (Matthew 28:19).

Step 2: Go therefore.

Now that we are free by the authority of the Spirit of life (Romans 8:2), we are free to love God, love others. In other words, I get to love God and I get to love others. Jesus says, "Go".

In other words, go and do. Don't wait around until you are complete healed. Don't wait around until everything is hunky dorky. Don't wait around until you have memorize the bible. Go and do. Once you have gone and did, it is then God gives you grace, strength (Ephesians 6:10) and endurance (Hebrews 10:36).

That is why in one of the last letters that Paul wrote, he declares this:

**1 Timothy 1:12 (ESV) I thank Him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to His service,**

God judges us faithful.

God, then appoints us to His service

God, then gives us the strength and grace and equips us to do that service

I don't care if you were a "**blasphemer of God, persecutor of Christians and a violent opponent**" (1 Timothy 1:13) like Paul was. It is the "**grace of our Lord that overflows for you and me in faith and love that is in Christ Jesus.**"

Let us pray.