

Sermons through

# Romans

## I Walked On The Moon

*Romans 8:10-11*

*With Study Questions*

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## *Romans 8:10-11*

**And if Christ *is* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin, but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup> But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you (Romans 8:10-11).**

### **Introduction**

*What About Bob* was a comedy made in 1991 starring Bill Murray and Richard Dreyfuss. Richard Dreyfuss played the part of a would-be famous psychologist and Bill Murray, playing Bob, was his deeply troubled patient. There is a scene in the movie where Bob, who had endeared himself to Dr. Marvin's (Dreyfuss) family, is in a late night discussion with Dr. Marvin's young son, Sigmund, who has issues of his own.

Sigmund asks Bob (who is afraid of everything) if he's afraid of death. Bob responds in the affirmative after which Sigmund presses the issue by informing Bob of the inevitable, "There's no way out of it...you're going to die...I'm going to die...it's going to happen." Death is on all our calendars. There is an appointment we all have with our last day on this earth.

**And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment (Hebrews 9:27).**

And death is not a pleasant thing. The Apostle Paul calls it an **"enemy" (1 Corinthians 15:26)**. It is often surrounded by pain and tears. It has even had the ability to bring people to question their faith. For this reason the Apostle Peter wrote:

**Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. <sup>13</sup> But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed (1 Peter 4:12, 13).**

A couple of months ago a fellow pastor called me with a concern about a mutual friend. Our mutual friend had gone through many difficulties and it seemed to create a major shift in his thinking. The pastor, a man with many ministerial years under his belt, indicated he had seen this kind of shift in those who have grown bitter due to their difficulties. Like a child who doesn't get what he/she wants, we are capable of rebellion—if not in our actions, at least in our hearts. And in one way or another every person will undergo the difficulty of facing death.

Years ago I heard a young pastor give a message where he conveyed what he was seeking to teach his two young children. “The first thing I want my children to learn is how to die.” I initially found the statement a bit morbid. But it made sense when he concluded with the words “because it is not until they learn how to die that they will know how to live.”

The two verses under our consideration lead to a **“therefore”** *oun* in verse 12, where we are said to be **“debtors —not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.”** In other words, we owe nothing to the flesh that we should obey it. Paul wrote of such people who operate this way (governed by the flesh) in his letter to the Philippians:

**Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. <sup>20</sup> But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup> who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself (Philippians 3:19-21).**

Through chapter 8 Paul appears to lay groundwork for strength against difficulties. In verse 18 he indicates that he considers the **“sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”** In verse 31 he will write words indicating a conflict in which his readers would find themselves. Why else would he write **“If God is for us, who can be against us?”** In

verse 36 he writes **“For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.”**

Christians are not to live in this world as if there will be no difficulties—as if their deliverance from sin and death means they will not be required to fight sin and encounter death. But what we are assured of in a passage like this is the ultimate and final (at the risk of sounding crass) trump card of all eternity—citizenship in heaven and a transformed, glorious body.

Comedian, Brian Regan, has a routine entitled *I Walked On The Moon* where he recounts being at a dinner party with a man who couldn't stop talking about himself; he called him the “me monster.” The guy found it necessary to top everyone else's story and couldn't stop blathering on and on about his business being a global enterprise, his journeys through the Pacific Rim and driving on the autobahn. Regan said he has a social fantasy of being one of the 12 astronauts who walked about the moon because he could beat anybody's story. When the me monster paused for a moment regarding his super exciting and superior life, he would simply interject “I walked on the moon.”

It is in the midst of life's blathering difficulties that the Christian is to find comfort in his/her eternal estate. Paul put it this way:

**For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. <sup>18</sup> Therefore comfort one another with these words (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18).**

**And if Christ *is* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin, but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness (Romans 8:10).**

**The Body is Dead**

That Paul is speaking to Christians is shown by the conditional conjunction **“if”**. We spoke last time of self-examination. How do we know if the Spirit of Christ dwells in us? Do I acknowledge the truth and authority of the word of God? Do I believe Jesus died and rose again for me? Do I seek to ever walk in obedience? But even for the faithful, the body is dead. This statement is to be taken as a concession, as if he were saying “even though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.”

It is not contained in the promise of the gospel that the Christian will advance to the eternal state without facing death. Matthew Henry addresses it well:

**We cannot say but that *the body is dead*; it is a frail, mortal, dying body, and it will be dead shortly; it is a house of clay, whose foundation is in the dust. The life purchased and promised does not immortalize the body in its present state. It is dead, that is, it is appointed to die, it is under a sentence of death: as we say one that is condemned is a dead man. In the midst of life we are in death: be our bodies ever so strong, and healthful, and handsome, they are as good as dead (Heb. 11:12), and this *because of sin*. It is sin that kills the body. This effect the first threatening has (Gen. 3:19): *Dust thou art*. Methinks, were there no other argument, love to our bodies should make us hate sin, because it is such an enemy to our bodies. The death even of the bodies of the saints is a remaining token of God’s displeasure against sin.<sup>1</sup>**

What will keep our minds more attuned to the glory of Christ than the reality of our own sin and subsequent mortality—as young Sigmund said, “We are going to die.” Death for the Christian, as difficult as it might be, is said to be **“Precious in the sight of the Lord” (Psalm 116:15)**, as if God is a parent

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<sup>1</sup> Henry, M. (1994). *Matthew Henry’s commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume* (p. 2212). Peabody: Hendrickson.

putting His children to sleep—knowing that when we awake He is there.

**If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! <sup>9</sup> If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, <sup>10</sup> even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me (Psalm 139:8-10).**

It is from the “**second death**” that those in whom the Spirit of Christ dwells have been delivered.

**But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death (Revelation 21:8).**

## **The Spirit is Life**

The concession of inevitable death is followed by the great promise of true and eternal life—as if we were told “You can’t have the Rambler but you do get the Rolls Royce.” Because the first death is nothing compared to the second. The second death never holds the euphemism of sleep. It is this life that is our hope, our true citizenship. And life is to be lived in light of that reality. It is for this reason that we are debtors—not to the flesh.

And what does it mean that the “**Spirit is life because of (through *dia*) righteousness?**” Whose righteousness? For chapters Paul laboriously denounced the ability of man to present himself righteous to God. There is only one righteousness that has the power to lift men beyond the second death—it is a righteousness of Christ given by grace through faith.

**For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21).**

Eternal life is not merely eternal existence—it is quantitative (eternal) and qualitative (life *zoe*).

**When the body dies, and returns to the dust, *the spirit of life*; not only living and immortal, but swallowed up of life. Death to the saints is but the freeing of the heaven-born spirit from the clog and load of this body, that it may be fit to partake of eternal life.<sup>2</sup>**

Let us have no misgivings about the joy of heaven. “Heaven” it has been said “is a prepared place for a prepared people.” The sinful man, in his current sinful estate, can no more enjoy heaven than a fish can enjoy a banquet in a fine palace. God, by His love and grace, invites us, inclines us and dresses us for dinner.

**As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness; when I awake, I shall be satisfied with your likeness (Psalm 17:15).**

**But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you (Romans 8:11).**

### **Life to the Body**

There are various theories about the state of men after death. Some think our souls enter as a drop in an ocean of souls into eternal oneness. Others think we remain disembodied spirits floating in a sort of super celestial bliss. The eternal state of man is neither immaterial nor does man lose his individuality.

It is true that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8), but there will be a final resurrection where our souls will be reunited with our bodies. The

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<sup>2</sup> Henry, M. (1994). Matthew Henry’s commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume (p. 2212). Peabody: Hendrickson.

second to last chapter of the Westminster Confession of Faith succinctly explains the state of men after death, and the resurrection of the dead:

**1. The bodies of men, after death, return to dust, and see corruption: (Gen. 3:19, Acts 13:36) but their souls, which neither die nor sleep, having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them: (Luke 23:43, Eccl. 12:7) the souls of the righteous, being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God, in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies. (Heb. 12:23, 2 Cor. 5:1,6,8, Phil. 1:23, Acts 3:21, Eph. 4:10) And the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day. (Luke 16:23-24, Acts 1:25, Jude 6-7, 1 Pet. 3:19) Beside these two places, for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledgeth none.**

**2. At the last day, such as are found alive shall not die, but be changed: (1 Thess. 4:17, 1 Cor. 15:51-52) and all the dead shall be raised up, with the self-same bodies, and none other (although with different qualities), which shall be united again to their souls for ever. (Job 19:26-27, 1 Cor. 15:42-44)**

**3. The bodies of the unjust shall, by the power of Christ, be raised to dishonour: the bodies of the just, by His Spirit, unto honour; and be made conformable to His own glorious body. (Acts 24:15, John 5:28-29, 1 Cor. 15:43, Philip. 3:21)<sup>3</sup>**

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<sup>3</sup> *The Westminster confession of faith.* (1996). . Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

The power of the cross does not fall short of redeeming the mortal body of man—simply put, there will be hugging in heaven.

**(Jesus) will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself (Philippians 3:21).**

**So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable (1 Corinthians 15:42).**

**For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.<sup>54</sup> When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.”<sup>55</sup> “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting” (1 Corinthians 15:52-55)?**

Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown give these words of encouragement, to which we all can take heart:

**Your bodies indeed are not exempt from the death which sin brought in; but your spirits even now have in them an undying life, and if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, even these bodies of yours, though they yield to the last enemy and the dust of them return to the dust as it was, shall yet experience the same resurrection as that of their living Head, in virtue of the indwelling of same Spirit in you that quickened Him.”<sup>4</sup>**

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<sup>4</sup> Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (Ro 8:11). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

## Questions for Study

1. Do you have difficulties in your life? Does it make you question your faith? How should a Christian understand difficulties—even death (pages 2, 3)?
2. Why is it important to learn how to die (page 3)?
3. What does it mean that we are no debtors to the flesh? To whom are we debtors (pages 3, 4)?
4. How is the Christian to be comforted (page 4)?
5. What does the inevitability of death accomplish in the life of a Christian (page 5)?
6. What is the second death? Whose righteousness delivers us from the second death? Explain (page 6).

7. Discuss the state of men after death and the resurrection?  
Do we remain disembodied spirits? Do we lose individuality  
(pages 7-9)?