

“The Sanctified Mind”  
Romans 8:5-8  
(Preached at Trinity, February 1, 2009)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. For several chapters Paul has been describing our unique union with Christ which is the fruit of our justification. Because of our union with Christ sin no more has dominion over us. We have been raised with Christ to walk in holiness.  
**Romans 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.”
2. But we have not yet reached perfection. In **Chapter 7** Paul described the great struggle the Christian has with indwelling sin.  
Paul cried out at the end of **Chapter 7**:  
**Romans 7:24-25** – “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”  
To which he responds: “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”
3. The Christian will be delivered from this body of sin.  
It is with this great promise of our future deliverance in mind that Paul continues with **Verse 1 of Chapter 8**  
**Chapter 8** opens abruptly from the words of anguish from **Chapter 7** to these words of victory:  
“*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*”
  - A. Just as we are assured of a future deliverance from sin and just as there will be no condemnation in the future as we stand before Christ we also know that we stand free of condemnation now.
  - B. There is NOW NO condemnation.
4. This assurance is based upon our justification. Christian warfare is waged on the basis of Christ's victory and not on the basis of our attainments. We can stand in the battle because the war has already been won and the enemy has already been defeated!
5. In **Verse 2** Paul draws a distinction between the “law of sin and death” and the “law of the Spirit of life.” This verse has sanctification as its focus.
  - A. Christianity maintains a balance between Justification and Sanctification. These two doctrines exist side-by-side in perfect harmony. For those who are in Christ Jesus their sins are not only removed forensically or legally through Justification, they are also removed spiritually through sanctification.
  - B. It is through Christ, by His Spirit that we are set free from the bondage of sin. **Verses 2-4** maintain the perfect balance of Justification and Sanctification. We are freed from the condemnation of sin because of Christ's death on the cross as an offering for sin. His death accomplished not only our justification before God, it also stripped sin of its power.
  - C. God's people now walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

6. As we come to **Verses 5-8** Paul continues to address the fruit of Christ's victory over sin. Here Paul is describing the transforming grace upon the Christian.  
In **Verse 4** Paul speaks of Christians as those who "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."
7. In **Verses 5-8** Paul elaborates more about these two types of people – those who walk after the flesh and those who walk after the Spirit.  
In these verses Paul describes the essence of the difference.  
It is a matter of the mind.  
Christian conversion results in the transformation of our minds – how we think.  
With our minds we willfully seize control over our flesh.  
This is always Paul's focus:  
**Romans 7:25** – "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."  
**Romans 12:2** – "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."
8. The lost man has his mind fixed upon things which satisfy the flesh.  
**Ephesians 2:3** – "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."  
**Romans 8:5** – "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit."  
A. Literally **Romans 8:5** should read, "They that are after the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh" which is the way most English translations translate it.  
<sup>NAS</sup> **Romans 8:5** – "For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit."  
B. Human beings are rational creatures. God has given us minds. This is an aspect of being created in the image of God. When Adam sinned he died spiritually. His mind became clouded in blindness.  
The lost man has a depraved mind.  
**Romans 1:21-22** – "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,"  
1. He became futile in his thinking  
2. The lost man is incapable of thinking right thoughts about God. He is incapable of thinking about spiritual matters.  
C. The lost man sets his mind on fleshly things – he is captivated by this world  
In contrast, the believer sets his mind on spiritual things
9. Last week we looked at the man who walks after the Spirit in contrast to the man who walks after the flesh.  
In these verses Paul confines it to the level of the mind – the man who fixes his mind on spiritual things in contrast to the man who fixes his mind on fleshing things.  
The Christian has a sanctified mind and it is on this level that sanctification continues.  
God is continuing to change the way we think.  
Matthew Henry – "The man is as the mind is."  
**Proverbs 23:7** – "For as he thinketh in his heart, so *is* he:"

10. In these verses Paul establishes some clear distinctions between the sanctified mind and the carnal mind. Remember, there are only two kinds of people upon the earth – those who walk after the flesh and those who walk after the Spirit – those who fix their minds on spiritual things and those who fix their minds on carnal or fleshly things.  
 Nas **Romans 8:5** – “For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.”
11. What are some of these distinctions?
- I. First, Paul describes it as the difference between life and death  
**Romans 8:6** – “For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace”  
**NAS Romans 8:6** – “For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace”
- A. On one hand this speaks of justification
1. The consequence of sin is death  
**Romans 5:12** – “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:”
  2. God in sending forth His Son has freed us from this horrible penalty of sin  
**Romans 6:23** – “For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”
  3. The mind set on the flesh is death but Christ has delivered us from this death.
- B. I believe the death spoken of in this verse speaks more of the life of death that comes from a life continuing in sin.
1. The life of the lost man is a living death. To live without Christ is to live as a corpse – a worthless vile stench
  2. Paul spoke of the Christless widow  
**1 Timothy 5:6** – “But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.”
  3. The life without Christ is a life void of true life. It is a miserable existence of decay and corruption until the poor soul falls headlong into hell
  4. The carnally minded man is dead in sin – he is dead while he lives  
**Ephesians 2:1** – “And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins;”
    - a. This is speaking of spiritual death in which the lost man has no understanding of spiritual things. He has no understanding of God nor interest in God.
    - b. To be carnally minded also leads to a preoccupation with death  
 On the one hand the lost man is terrified by death. It is continually on his mind.  
 On the other hand, he has a morbid obsession with death
    - c. Why do we live in a world of murders, abortion, euthanasia, suicides, overdoses – ours has been called a culture of death.  
 Why do so many enjoy watching movies where killing is glorified?

C. The sanctified mind is life

1. This applies to more than eternal life – it points to fullness of life upon the earth. The lost man is a living death. The Christian has found true life  
**Proverbs 3:1-2** – “My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: <sup>2</sup> For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.”  
 There is much to be said for true abundant life
2. Those who have life in Christ have life abundant  
**John 10:10** – “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly.”
3. Notice it is the spiritual mind, the mind fixed upon things of the Holy Spirit that has found life. His life is filled with Christ – a life rich and full. He has discovered the gift of life. He knows the full appreciation of God’s creation. The Christian alone knows how to enjoy life.

II. Second, Paul describes it as the difference between peace and war

**Romans 8:6-7** – “For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. <sup>7</sup> Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God”

A. The believer lives in a state of harmony with God

1. He is in harmony with Christ. His conscience is clear. He knows what it means to be in fellowship with Christ
2. Paul spoke of a peace that is beyond comprehension  
**Philippians 4:7** – “And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”
3. To have a mind fixed upon Christ is to have comfort, hope, confidence, reconciliation, relationship  
 It is a world restored to order

B. The unbeliever is in a constant state of conflict with God

1. He has raised up his weapons of rebellion – He is at war with God.  
 It is a futile proposition.  
 He knows no peace
2. The things he savors in his mind are those things which God forbids  
**Romans 8:7** – “Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God”
3. He savors the things of this world, but only as they satisfy his flesh. He knows nothing of the spiritual life in Christ.  
**James 4:4** – “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”
4. He knows nothing of the peace of walking with Christ  
**Ephesians 4:17-19** – “This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

III. Third, Paul describes it as the difference between obedience and lawlessness

**Romans 8:7-8** – “Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. <sup>8</sup> So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.”

A. The sanctified mind is characterized by righteousness

1. The spiritually minded man seeks after holiness
2. His focus is upon honoring Christ in obedience to His Law – he delights in the Law of God.
3. He hasn’t yet become perfect. In fact there is still much imperfection in him. He struggles against his indwelling sin.
4. Our battle is at the level of the mind - It is with our mind that we wage war against our flesh

**Romans 7:25** – “So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.”

5. The Christian is striving to bring his thoughts under Christ’s dominion  
**2 Corinthians 10:4-5** – “(For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) <sup>5</sup> Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;”  
 NAS – “destroying speculations”

B. The carnal man is characterized by lawlessness

1. He is incapable of obedience

**Romans 8:7** – “for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”

- a. Herein lies the problem – God is the Governor of the universe. The lost man will not submit to this authority.
- b. This is the problem. Look all around you. People will not submit.  
 “You must not lie – because God says so”  
 “You must not covet or be given to idolatry – because God says so.”  
 “You must not lust after other women – because God says so.”  
 “You must worship God alone – because God says so”  
 “You must love the Lord Jesus Christ – because God says so”  
 But the lost man says NO!

2. He is incapable of pleasing God.

**Hebrews 11:6** – “But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

- a. There is nothing that he does that pleases God
- b. 1689 LBC – “Works done by unregenerate men, although for the matter of them they may be things which God commands, and of good use both to themselves and others; yet because they proceed not from a heart purified by faith, nor are done in a right manner according to the Word, nor to a right end, the glory of God, they are therefore sinful, and cannot please God,”

3. The lost man dwells in darkness – God is light. The lost man is defiled. God is holy. He is enslaved to sin under the power of sin. His will is corrupt, his mind is corrupt.
4. The lost man is characterized by lawlessness – though he doesn't believe he is.  
**Ephesians 4:18** – “Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart”
5. Salvation can only come as the sinner lays down his weapons of warfare against God.

#### Conclusion:

1. Oh how we need to have our minds conformed more and more to Christ.
2. We must recognize that our struggle is at the level of the mind  
**Romans 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.”  
**Romans 12:2** And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.  
**1 Peter 1:13** – “Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;”
3. We must fix our minds upon the things of the Spirit – upon things that promote righteousness.  
**Philippians 4:8** – “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things.”  
**Colossians 3:2** – “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.”  
**frone, w** – best translated mind. The Christian sets his mind on spiritual things.
4. Upon what do you set your mind?  
**NAS Romans 8:6** – “For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace”
5. What are you filling your mind with? What are you listening to? What are you watching?  
How much time are you spending filling your mind with God's Word?