

**Romans 8:1-17**  
**(Ezekiel 37:1-14; John 20:19-23)**  
**“If Christ Is in You”**

## **Introduction**

How do we think and act and speak differently because of Christ's victory over sin and death? Why are we not more radically changed in our patterns of thought, conversation and behavior? Why is this world still so much with us? Why do we fear the things we fear, love the things we love, make the plans, dream the dreams, spend our lives pursuing the goals that consume us, only to sit back in moments of reverie and wonder why we never became the people we thought that we would one day become?

The apostle Paul was no stranger to such questions. In the previous chapter of Romans, he put it this way: “For I do not do the good that I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing” (7:19). And he cries out in distress, “Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” (7:24). If all that we had were such cries of distress, there would be no particular reason for us to gather together like this in worship, to sing songs of praise and offer prayers, for we would still be just as lost in our sins and spiritually dead to God's presence as is the world around us. However, Paul does *not* stop there. His cry of distress turns to a shout of joy and gratitude: “Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (7:25).

*Too often we think of Christ's victory merely as accomplishing certain things for us without ever really grasping the fact that everything Christ has done for us was in order that he might do something in us and through us. If you are God's child today, then he wants you to know in your life, not only the benefits of Christ's death on your behalf, but the benefits of his resurrection victory. He wants you to experience through the gift of his Holy Spirit the very power that raised Christ from the dead at work in your life – giving you the multifaceted dimensions of his victory over sin and death. He wants to make all things new *for* you and *in* you.*

At the heart of this text is a key to knowing God's gift of salvation in a life-transforming way: the call to live, not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit, by setting one's mind, not on the flesh, but on the Spirit. But what does that mean? Does it mean that we are not to think about sex, drugs, rock and roll, but instead to think about biblical doctrine, not to think about movies and money, but to think about Bible study and prayer? No, it's not nearly that simple, because there are ways to think about sex, drugs, rock and roll, money and movies, that are according to the Spirit, and ways to think about Bible study, prayer and church doctrine that are according to the flesh. In fact, what I hope we will realize from reflecting on this text, is that the heart of our problem today is that most understand salvation only according to the flesh rather than according to the Spirit. What do I mean? Look with me at what Paul writes in our text.

## **Body**

### **1. What has Christ's victory achieved for us (8:1-8)?**

Christ's victory has freed us from sin's guilt and shame (8:1-2).  
Christ's victory has freed us from sin's power (8:3-8).

### **2. How is salvation given to us (8:5-13)?**

The Spirit of God calls our spirits back to life (8:9-10).  
The Spirit of God also calls our bodies back to life (8:10-13).

### **3. How do we know that we have received the Spirit (8:14-17)?**

As children of God, we follow his Spirit's leading (8:14-16).  
As joint heirs with Christ, we live in the light of eternity (8:17).

## **Conclusion**

Paul will go on in this chapter to ask, "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? (8:31,32). Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, that in him we have been given new and everlasting life, and all of the resources we will ever need to be more than conquerors in life and in death.

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