

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
CHAPTERS FIVE THROUGH EIGHT OF ROMANS—
THE KERNEL OF THE BIBLE**

Message One

The Line of Life and the Line of Death in Chapters 5 through 8 of Romans

Scripture Reading: Rom. 5:10, 12, 14, 17-18, 21; 6:4, 9, 16, 21-23; 7:5, 10, 13, 24; 8:2, 6, 10-11, 38-39

I. Chapters 5 through 8 of Romans can be called the kernel of the Bible, showing its entire theme in a concrete and detailed way:

- A. These two key words—*life* and *death*—are mentioned repeatedly in Romans 5 through 8; life (5:10, 17-18, 21; 6:4, 22-23; 7:10; 8:2, 6, 10-11, 38-39) and death (5:12, 14, 17, 21; 6:9, 16, 21, 23; 7:5, 10, 13, 24; 8:2, 6, 38) form two contrasting lines through chapters 5 through 8, the line of life and the line of death.
- B. This shows that man is at the center of a triangular situation between God and Satan, life and death; Adam forsook the tree of life, which denotes God as life, to pursue the tree of knowledge, which signifies Satan as the source of death—Gen. 2:8-9, 17; 3:1-7.
- C. The tree of life causes man to be dependent on God (John 15:5), whereas the tree of knowledge causes man to rebel against God and be independent from Him (cf. Gen. 3:5).
- D. In Romans 5 the words *transgression* (v. 14), *offense* (vv. 15-18, 20), and *disobedience* (v. 19) all refer to the fall of Adam, which consisted in his leaving life and choosing death (cf. Deut. 30:19-20).
- E. Christ Himself is the life of God, the eternal life (John 14:6a; 11:25; 1 John 1:2); He came that we may have life and may have it abundantly (John 10:10b); He died a life-releasing death and entered into a life-dispensing resurrection (12:24) to become the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b) as the law of the Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2), giving life to our spirit, our mind, and our mortal bodies so that we might be swallowed up by life (vv. 10, 6, 11; 2 Cor. 5:4).
- F. The tree of life and the tree of knowledge (the tree of death) issue in two lines—the line of life and the line of death—that run through the entire Bible and end in the book of Revelation; life begins with the tree of life (Gen. 2:9) and ends with the New Jerusalem as the city of water of life with the tree of life (Rev. 22:1-2), the light of life (21:23; 22:5), and the glory of life (21:10-11, 23); death begins with the tree of knowledge (Gen. 2:17) and ends with the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10, 14):
 1. The kernel of the Bible is that Christ has been revealed into us as life (Gal. 1:15-16a; Rom. 8:10) and that we live, have our being, and exist by Christ as the divine life (Phil. 1:19-21a; John 6:57, 63); also, God put us into Christ (1 Cor. 1:30) with the desire that we would be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:28-29), that we might be transformed into the image of Christ to be thoroughly one with Christ (2 Cor. 3:18); this is the way that we will be built up together as the living Body of Christ to contain and express Christ for His glory and for our glorification (vv. 8-11; 4:6-7; Eph. 3:21a; Phil. 3:21; John 17:1, 4-5, 10, 22-24; Rev. 21:10-11, 23).
 2. To believe in the Lord is to receive Him as life, and to love the Lord is to enjoy Him as life, to enjoy the very person whom we have received; faith is given to us by God so that by it we may receive Christ as our life; love issues out of such a wonderful faith and enables us to live out all the riches of the Triune God in Christ as our life—2 Pet. 1:1; Heb. 12:1-2a; 2 Cor. 4:13; Gal. 5:6; John 1:12-13; 21:15-17; Col. 3:4.
 3. The very life that we received when we believed in the Lord Jesus is a person, and the only way to apply and enjoy this person is by loving Him with the first love; since the Lord Jesus as our life is a person, we need a new contact with Him to enjoy His present presence at

this very moment and day by day—John 11:25; 14:5-6; 1 Tim. 1:14; John 14:21, 23; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; Rev. 2:4-7; Col. 1:18b.

4. When we love Him, He will manifest Himself to us, and He and the Father will come to us and make Their abode with us (John 14:21, 23); thus, we need to pray prayers such as: “Lord, show me Your love and constrain me with Your love that I may love You and live to You”; “Lord, keep me loving You all the time”; we must continually tell the Lord, “Lord Jesus, I love You. Lord, keep me in Your love! Attract me with Yourself! Keep me all the time in Your loving presence” (cf. S. S. 1:1-4).
5. In the book of Romans, after Paul shows us the working of God’s righteousness reckoned to us, the saturating of His holiness worked into us, and the glorifying of His glory shining forth into us and through us, he brings us into the love of God, which is the heart of God—Gen. 2:8-9; 3:24; Heb. 10:19-20; Rev. 22:14; Rom. 4:22-24; 6:19, 22; 8:18-19, 21; 1 Cor. 1:30; Rom. 5:5; 8:30-39; 1 John 4:16-18.
6. God first loved us in that He infused us with Himself as love and generated within us the love with which we love Him and all the brothers (vv. 8, 16, 19-21); thus, God’s love for us becomes our love for Him and our love for all the brothers.
7. Based upon this, we can sing and pray—“I love my Lord, but with no love of mine, / For I have none to give; / I love Thee, Lord, but all the love is Thine, / For by Thy love I live” (*Hymns*, #546, stanza 1); “Something every heart is loving; / If not Jesus, none can rest; / Lord, my heart to Thee is given; / Take it, for it loves Thee best” (*Hymns*, #547, stanza 1).

II. Today the believer is a miniature garden of Eden—with God as the tree of life in his spirit, Satan as the tree of knowledge in his flesh, and his mind in between; we are either in the spirit or in the flesh; there is no third place for us to be—Rom. 8:6:

- A. In order to live by the mingled spirit, the Spirit with our spirit (v. 16; 1 Cor. 6:17), we must see what the flesh is:
 1. The flesh is the corrupted, polluted, and transmuted body:
 - a. Man’s body was originally pure, but through man’s fall Satan injected himself into man, and man’s body has become the flesh—Gen. 3:6; Rom. 7:18a.
 - b. Our body is “the body of sin” (6:6) and “the body of this death” (7:24); the body of sin is very active and full of strength in sinning against God, but the body of this death is weak and powerless in acting to please God (v. 18).
 - c. As long as we are still living, until the day of our redemption, the body of sin and death is always with us—cf. 8:23.
 - d. The word *flesh* also refers to our entire fallen being; man is totally flesh because the fallen being today is under the dominion of the fallen flesh—3:20; Gen. 6:3a; Phil. 3:3-8.
 2. The flesh is the “meeting hall” and the compound of sin, death, and Satan; the flesh is a hopeless case and can never be improved—Rom. 7:17-18, 21; cf. John 17:15:
 - a. The flesh is at enmity with God, is not subject to the law of God, and can never please God—Rom. 8:7-8.
 - b. Sin is Satan himself as “the evil” in our flesh (John 17:15; Rom. 7:21); “the evil” is the evil life, nature, and character of Satan himself, who is the indwelling sin in us; when sin is dormant within us, it is merely sin, but when it is aroused in us by our willing to do the good, it becomes “the evil.”
 - c. Sin can deceive us, kill us (v. 11), lord it over us, that is, have dominion over us (6:12, 14), and cause us to do things against our will (7:17, 20); all these activities show that sin is a living person.
- B. For the sake of His economy, God in His wisdom and sovereignty uses our sinful, ugly flesh to force us to turn to our spirit so that we may gain more of the Spirit for His building by the growth of God in us—Col. 2:19; Zech. 4:6:

1. Judicially speaking, both Satan and our flesh were condemned once for all on the cross (Rom. 8:3; John 3:14; Heb. 2:14; 2 Cor. 5:21), but God allowed the flesh to remain with us to help us and force us to turn to Christ in our spirit and have no more confidence in the flesh (Phil. 3:3).
2. Without the help rendered by the sinful, ugly flesh, we would not be as desperate to gain the Lord or to have Him wrought into us—Rom. 7:24-25; 8:2, 6, 13.
3. Our goal may be holiness or spirituality or victory, but God's goal is to work Himself into us to make us glorious; often when we are in a difficult situation, we are more open to the Lord and more willing to turn to Him and allow Him to work Himself into us—vv. 28-29; Eph. 5:27.
4. If we seek Him, even the sinful compound of the flesh will become a help to us in gaining the Lord; because we fail so often, we are desperate to turn to the spirit, and in this way we gain more of the Spirit—cf. Exo. 23:23, 29-30; Judg. 2:21—3:4.
5. Our hardships, defeats, failures, and disappointments force us to realize that there is no hope in the flesh; the flesh is good only to force us to turn to Christ in our spirit, to press us into the spirit, to make us desperate to get into the spirit, and to keep us watchful to stay in the spirit—Matt. 26:41; Eph. 6:17-18.
6. The Lord does not care for whether or not we have a victory; the Lord cares for only one thing—that we gain Christ as the Spirit—Phil. 3:8; 2 Cor. 3:17-18.
- C. Our spirit is a wonderful compound—compounded with Christ, the Spirit, and grace—2 Tim. 4:22; Rom. 8:16; Gal. 6:18:
 1. God wants us to walk according to this wonderful compound spirit (have our being and our living with all that we say and do according to the spirit)—Rom. 8:4; Phil. 1:19; 1 Cor. 6:17; cf. Exo. 30:23-25.
 2. Only the persons who walk according to the spirit can be the proper members for the building up of a local church; if we do not have such a walk, sooner or later we will be a trouble to our local church—Gal. 5:16-26.
 3. Romans reveals that whatever we are, whatever we do, and whatever we have must be in spirit; whatever is in us is vanity unless it is “inwardly,” in our spirit, not “outwardly,” in the flesh; everything that God is to us is in our spirit—Rom. 1:9; 7:6; 2:28-29; 8:4, 10, 13, 16; 12:11; Phil. 3:3; 2 Tim. 4:22.
 4. Our spirit today is the real Bethel, the house of God and the gate of heaven; when we turn to our spirit, we are in the third heaven, the Holy of Holies, touching the throne of grace and being sustained by Christ to live a heavenly life on earth—Eph. 2:22; Gen. 28:12, 17, 19; Heb. 10:22a; 4:16.
 5. In our spirit we can overcome the world, and the evil one cannot touch us; the only way to overcome Satan is to stay in the high tower of our regenerated spirit—1 John 5:4, 18; John 3:6; 14:30.

III. In Romans 5 we are in Adam, in Romans 6 we are in Christ, in Romans 7 we are in the flesh, and in Romans 8 we are in the spirit; the Adam in chapter 5 is experienced in the flesh in chapter 7, and the Christ in chapter 6 is experienced in the spirit in chapter 8:

- A. We believers in Christ have a factual and positional transfer out of Adam through Christ's death and into Christ through His resurrection—6:3-8:
 1. In Adam we inherited sin that constitutes us sinners (5:12a, 19a); we inherited death that, on the one hand, weakens us, disabling us to do things pleasing God, and that, on the other hand, reigns over us (vv. 12b, 14a, 17a); and we inherited condemnation under the law unto death (v. 16a).
 2. In Christ we have been gifted with righteousness, life, and justification under grace unto life, in which we reign with grace over all things—vv. 17b, 18b, 21.

- B. We believers in Christ have a practical and experiential transfer out of the flesh (the practical and experiential Adam) through our being crucified with Christ (6:6; Gal. 2:20) and into the Spirit (the practical and experiential Christ) through our union with the Spirit (Rom. 8:16a; 1 Cor. 6:17); this practical and experiential transfer out of the flesh and into the Spirit is experienced by us in the following ways:
1. We must set our mind on the mingled spirit unto life and peace, and we must walk and have our being not according to the flesh but according to the mingled spirit unto the fulfillment of the righteous requirement of the law—Rom. 8:4-6.
 2. We must enthrone Christ as our King to be the throne of grace and the throne of glory in the center of our being—Heb. 4:16; Isa. 22:23; Matt. 8:8-10; Ezek. 1:22, 26.
 3. This is so that we may be filled with His ruling presence to be enthroned as kings and reign in life with grace over all things through the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness—Rom. 5:17b, 21; John 1:16.
- C. The ultimate issue of these two divine transfers will be a glorious, eternal, and corporate consummation, the New Jerusalem, which is the totality of the eternal life as the universal incorporation of the processed and consummated Triune God and the processed and consummated tripartite man—Rev. 21:3, 9-10, 22; 22:17a.