

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

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OF THE
SPIRIT
OF LIFE

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In chapter five of Romans we see that the gift in Christ surpasses the heritage in Adam, in chapter six we are shown our identification with Christ, and in chapter seven we find the bondage of the law in our flesh. Romans 8 is a contrast to Romans 7. In Romans 7 we have bondage; in Romans 8 we have freedom. In Romans 7 we have the law; in Romans 8 we have the Holy Spirit. In Romans 7 we have our flesh; in Romans 8 we have our spirit. Thus, Romans 7 reveals the bondage of the law in our flesh, while Romans 8 unveils the freedom of the Spirit in our spirit.

“There is now then no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has freed me from the law of sin and of death” (Rom. 8:1-2). The phrase “the law of the Spirit of life” is very significant. In this phrase we see three elements that compose one entity—the law, the Spirit, and the life. These three items are one.

THE SPIRIT OF LIFE

We need to consider a glorious and marvelous term found in 8:2—“the Spirit of life.” This term is used only once in the entire Bible. In the book of Romans the term “the Spirit of life” is not revealed until 8:2. However, before chapter eight we do have several references to the divine, eternal, uncreated

life. The first occurrence of this word life in the book of Romans is in 1:17 which says that the just shall have life and live by faith. The word life in this verse denotes the divine life. The second occurrence of this word in Romans is in 2:7, where we are told that God will give to “those who by endurance in good work seek for glory and honor and incorruptibility, life eternal.” If we continually seek God, He will give us life eternal. Romans 5:10 says that we shall be saved in His life, and 5:17 tells us that, after receiving the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness, we shall reign in life. Romans 5:18 mentions justification of life, and 5:21 says that grace might reign unto eternal life. In 6:4 we are told to walk in newness of life. Romans 6:22-23 says that eternal life is the end of sanctification and that the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Thus, in the first six chapters of Romans there are many references to the divine life. Life is the goal of God’s salvation. God has redeemed us, justified us, and reconciled us that we might share this life. Once we receive it, we should be saved in life, reign in life, walk in newness of life, and be sanctified in life.

Although the foregoing chapters in Romans say that we should be saved, reign, walk, and be sanctified in life, Paul has not yet told us how we can do all these things. How can we be saved in life and reign in life? How can we walk in newness of life? How can we experience the sanctification in life? Paul has not told us. Neither has he told us precisely

how the just shall have life. Although he says that this life is out of faith, he has not explained the matter clearly. In Romans 1 through 6 Paul refers to life nine times. Now, in Romans 8:2, he suddenly joins life with the Spirit in the phrase “the Spirit of life.”

The way to have life is the Spirit. The way to be saved in His life is the Spirit. The way to reign in life is the Spirit. The way to walk in newness of life is the Spirit. The way to be sanctified in life is in the Spirit. The Spirit is the way. Life belongs to the Spirit, and the Spirit is of life. These two are actually one. We can never separate life from the Spirit, nor the Spirit from life. The Lord Jesus Himself said, “The words which I have spoken unto you are Spirit and are life” (John 6:63). In this word the Lord Jesus connects the Spirit and life. If we have the Spirit, we have life; if we do not have the Spirit, we do not have life. If we walk in the Spirit, we walk in life, but if we do not walk in the Spirit, we do not walk in the newness of life. Thus, the way to experience the divine, eternal, uncreated life is the Spirit. By this we may see the relationship between Romans 8 and the previous chapters. The seven foregoing chapters lead us to life and consummate in life. Now in 8:2 we are at the point of life. We must give special attention to the word life in Romans 8.

THE FOURFOLD LIFE

The word life is used four times in chapter eight. Romans 8:2 mentions the law of the Spirit of life. Romans 8:6 says that the mind set on the spirit is life.

In Romans 8:10 we are told that if Christ is in us our spirit is life because of righteousness. Romans 8:11 says the indwelling Spirit will give life to our mortal bodies. The first time life is mentioned in this chapter it is connected to the Holy Spirit, the second time it is related to our mind, the third time it is associated with our spirit, and the fourth time it is a matter of our body. Romans 8 unveils a four-fold life. Firstly, life is the Spirit. Then the Spirit comes into our spirit to make our spirit life. Then the Spirit spreads from our spirit into our mind to make our mind life. The Spirit even imparts this life into our mortal bodies to make the body of sin a body of life. We have a fourfold life. The focus of it all is the Holy Spirit indwelling our spirit. This life will spread from our spirit into our mind and throughout our whole soul, even reaching all the members of our body. Eventually, our whole being will be filled with life and we will be a man of life. Have you ever seen this? We may call this the four-fold life. The Spirit is life, our spirit is life, our mind is life, and even our body is of life. Thus, the connection between Romans 8 and all the foregoing chapters is life plus the Spirit.

THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE

In Romans 8 we not only have the Spirit of life, but the law of the Spirit of life. The word life indicates that Romans 8 is a continuation of Romans 6, because Romans 6 ends with life. The word law indicates that Romans 8 is also a continuation of

Romans 7, where the matter of law is discussed. In Romans 8 Paul continues his talk about the law. In Romans 7 he mentions three laws: the law of God, the law of good, and the law of sin. If we only have these three laws we would all have to declare, "Wretched man that I am!" The law of God is just, holy, good, and spiritual. However, the more just and holy this law is, the more it demands of us. Why is the law of God so demanding? Because it is holy, just, and good. If the law were bad, the demands would be very low. However, the law of God is holy and righteous. This law only makes demands; it does not supply. Galatians 3:21 indicates that the law is unable to give people life. The law was not given by God to be a supply, but to make demands. Because we think that we are good, we need the law to expose us that we are not.

Do you remember the circumstances in which the law was given? By His grace, God had brought His people out of Egypt. The exodus from Egypt was not accomplished because the people kept the law, but because God was gracious to deliver them through His redemption. When God brought the Israelites to Mount Sinai, His intention was to make them a kingdom of priests (Exo. 19:3-6). Although the people agreed with this, God knew that they did not realize how bad they were. Therefore, through Moses God made an appointment to meet with the people for the purpose of giving them the law. Immediately, the atmosphere changed and became exceedingly threatening. The people were

frightened. In the midst of this threatening situation God gave the Israelites His law. However, while the law was being given on the mount, the people made an idol, a golden calf. Hence, before the law was given the people had already broken it. Thus, when Moses surveyed the situation he broke the two tablets of stone.

We cannot keep the law. We should never think that the law was given to us to keep. Instead, we must bow down before the merciful and gracious God and say, "Lord, I cannot keep Your law or do anything good to please You." In order to bring us to this conclusion, Paul wrote Romans 7 explaining the matter of the law. Paul was an excellent writer. He was very deep. He wrote every chapter of the book of Romans with the Old Testament view. He wrote the book of Romans in the light and in the knowledge of the Old Testament.

In Romans 7 Paul speaks about the law. Paul shows us that outside of us is the law of God with its demands, that in our soul is the law of good responding to God's law, and that in the members of our body is another law that wars against the good law in our soul. Paul has told us that the law in our mind is weak and impotent, but that the law in our members is potent and full of strength. I believe Paul was a strong person with a strong will. His character was so strong that only the Lord Jesus could subdue him, as He did as Paul was on the way to Damascus. Regardless of how strong he was before he was saved, he could not overcome

the law of sin in his members. He said, “For the good which I will, I do not; but the evil I do not will, this I practice” (7:19). Then Paul continued by saying, “But if what I do not will, this I do, it is no longer I that do it but sin that dwells in me” (7:20). Who is this sin? It is Satan. The law of sin is actually the spontaneous power of Satan himself. Satan is more powerful than any human being. No one, not even Paul, can defeat him. The strength of your will means nothing to the powerful Satan. Thus, if you attempt to keep God’s law, the result will be, “Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death?” Paul used the phrase “this death.” What is death? Death is the result of Satan’s evil power. In Romans 7 we find two terms used synonymously to describe Satan: “the evil” and “the sin that dwells in me.” Satan is sin and evil, and his automatic power is the law of sin. He is so powerful that no human being can defeat him. Even all the human beings added together cannot overpower him. Hallelujah, there is One who is more powerful than this evil giant!

Following Romans 7 we have Romans 8, which mentions the law of the Spirit of life. This law is not the law of God nor the law of good in our minds; it is the law of the Spirit of life.

Romans 8:2 reveals that God has become the Spirit of life. We may say that the Spirit of life in this verse denotes the processed God. God in Christ has passed through a long process—the process of incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection,

and ascension. The very God of Genesis 1 has undergone such a process. Thus, He is no longer the “raw” God. Although He was the “raw” God in Genesis 1, He is the processed God in Romans 8.

The groceries that you bring home from the store are all raw items. They need to undergo a process of cutting, burning, and cooking in order to be suitable for eating. Without passing through such a process the raw food is not suitable for eating. I do not like to eat anything that has not been processed. All the food in the refrigerator is raw foodstuff, but everything on the dining table is processed food.

We praise the Lord that Romans 8 is not a refrigerator; it is our dining table. Whenever you are hungry, come and dine at Romans 8. On the Romans 8 table we have the processed God, for here His title is neither Jehovah nor the Almighty God, but the Spirit of life. Praise the Lord! Quite often my wife makes broth out of beef or chicken. When she sees that I am tired, she frequently serves me a bowl of broth. This broth is sweet, tasteful, and easy to take in. After drinking a cup of broth, my whole being is revived. The Spirit of life is like the broth. Where does the Spirit of life come from? It comes from God who was once like the big chicken or cow that was processed into broth. In Romans 8 He is no longer like a chicken or a cow; He is the Spirit of life, so easy to take in. We only need to say, “O Lord Jesus, the Spirit of life, Amen. Christ is in you and the spirit is life. Amen. To set the mind on the spirit is life. Amen. The indwelling Spirit shall give life to

your mortal body. Amen.” If we drink the Spirit in Romans 8, we will discover that it is like the broth.

In this Spirit of life there is a law. This law is not the law of the “raw” God with its demands. It is the law of the processed God, the law of the Spirit of life, with its supply. When my wife serves me a bowl of chicken broth, she makes no demands upon me. Sometimes I do not even know what it is that she gives to me, except that it is a broth good for drinking. Praise the Lord that with the processed God there is the law of the Spirit of life! This law is the principle, power, and strength of the processed God. We all must shout, “Hallelujah,” because this law which is the spontaneous, divine power is not outside of us, but it is in our spirit. The law of the processed God is in our spirit.

What do we have in this law? What is the essence of this law? What are its elements? The elements of the law of the Spirit of life are the divine Spirit and the eternal life. The divine Spirit and the eternal life are the elements of this law. So it is powerful and dynamic, and its power is spontaneous. Such a law is in our spirit.

THREE LIVES WITH THREE LAWS

We are complicated people, for we have four laws related to us. Above us is the law of God with its demands. In our mind is the law of good responding to the law of God. In our body is the law of sin which wars against the law of good. All of this is recorded in Romans 7. But Romans 8 tells us that in

our spirit is the law of the Spirit of life. Hence we have four laws: one outside demanding, one in the mind responding, one in the body warring, and one in our spirit supplying, empowering, and overcoming.

Why are we so complicated? We are complicated because we have passed through three stations—the creation, the fall, and God's salvation. We were created, we were fallen, and we were saved. This is our history, our biography. Our biography is simply that we were created, that we fell, and that we were saved by God. In God's creation we received a human life, the life that makes us a human being. In the fall another life was injected into us, the evil life of Satan which came into our body. After we were saved, the processed God as the Spirit of life came into our spirit. Hence, three persons are in us: ourselves in our souls, Satan in our body, and the processed God as the Spirit of life in our spirit. We have three parts to our being, and each part has a person: in our body, sin, that is, Satan dwells; in our soul, our self dwells; and in our spirit, the processed God as the Spirit of life dwells.

Each of these persons has a life with a law. Satan has his Satanic life with its evil law, the law of sin. Our natural man has a created life with a good law. The processed God as the life-giving Spirit has the divine life with the law of the Spirit of life. Therefore, we have an evil law, a good law, and the law of the Spirit of life, in brief, the law of life. This law of life is opposed to both good and bad; it has nothing to do with good and bad, for both good and bad belong

to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:9, 17). The law of life certainly belongs to the tree of life (Gen. 2:9). Within us we have the tree of knowledge and the tree of life. Therefore, each one of us is a miniature garden of Eden. Man is here, Satan as the tree of knowledge is here, and God as the tree of life is also here. These three parties that once were in the garden of Eden are now all in us. The battle that was raging between Satan and God in the garden of Eden now rages within us. This battle involves three persons, three lives, and three laws.

GOD IN OUR SPIRIT

As I have pointed out on other occasions, God is revealed progressively in the book of Romans. In Romans 1 He is God in creation, in Romans 3 God in redemption, in Romans 4 God in justification, in Romans 5 God in reconciliation, and in Romans 6 He is God in identification. We can see the process or the progress of God from creation to redemption, from redemption to justification, from justification to reconciliation, and from reconciliation to identification. God has advanced from creation to identification. In His creation God was outside of His creatures; in identification He has made us one with Himself by putting us into Himself. As many of us as have been baptized have been baptized into Christ (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27). God has put us into Christ, thoroughly identifying us with Himself.

In Romans 8 God becomes the God in our spirit. He is not only the God in identification, but the

God in our spirit. He has not only made us one with Him, but He has also made Himself one with us. Now our God is in our spirit. What kind of God is He? He is the processed God in our spirit. The God in creation has passed through redemption, justification, reconciliation, identification, and He is now in our spirit. The God in our spirit is not merely God; He has been processed into the Spirit of life, for the Spirit of life is the processed God. According to our experience, nothing is more pleasant than this. We may feast upon such a God.

THE ENJOYMENT OF CHRIST

To come to a dining table to enjoy God as food is not my concept. In the gospels the Lord Jesus said that the gospel was a feast. The Lord Jesus said that all things are ready and that we should come to the feast (Luke 14:16-17). He told us to come and dine. We even find this thought in the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32). When the son returned home, the father put the best robe on him, a robe signifying Christ as our righteousness for our justification. When the son returned, he was like a poor beggar standing before a rich father. There seemed to be no correspondence between them: the father was rich and the son was poor.

Thus the father told the servants to take the best robe and to put it on the son. After this robe had been put on him, the son was justified before the father and corresponded to him. Now the son is like the father, justified and approved. Christ as righteousness

covers the returned son. Although this satisfied the father the son might have said, "Father, I do not care as much about the robe as I care about my empty stomach. Father, I am hungry. You are satisfied, but I am not." This was why the father told the servants to prepare the fatted calf, process it, and put it on the table. The father said, "Let us all eat and be merry." Who is that fatted calf? The calf is Christ who was processed on the cross over nineteen hundred years ago. After He was processed on the cross, He became the life-giving Spirit in resurrection (1 Cor. 15:45).

Where is Christ today? Where did He go after He was processed through His death and resurrection? Undoubtedly, He went into the heavens. However, if He were only in the heavens, it would be impossible for people to eat Him. The heavens are too far away. But Christ is not only in the heavens (8:34), but also in us (8:10), even in our spirit (2 Tim. 4:22). The dining table is our spirit. After being processed, Christ became the life-giving Spirit. The processed Christ is the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17). He has come into our spirit as life and as the life supply for our enjoyment.

Although Christ is life, it is difficult for Christ to give you life. Who gives life? It is the Spirit that gives life (John 6:63; 2 Cor. 3:6). Christ is life, but it is the Spirit who gives us Christ as life. Without the Spirit Christ may be life, but Christ as life cannot be given to us. By being the Spirit Christ is imparted into us as life. Today, after being processed, the very Christ is the life-giving Spirit. Now in our spirit we may enjoy this wonderful Spirit. Never forget that

Christ is the very God, Jehovah the Savior, God with us. Christ is God. This Christ, after being processed, is now the life-giving Spirit. We have to enjoy Him in His fullness as such a Spirit. Our regenerated spirit is the dining table, and the processed Christ is our food. He is not food in a physical form, but in the form of the Spirit. Our food is the Spirit. What a rich Spirit this is! Divinity, humanity, love, light, life, power, righteousness, holiness, grace—everything we need is in the Spirit. Romans 8 certainly is this dining table.

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