

Bible Study: Letters of Paul
Central Presbyterian Church
November 23, 2025
Session 12/16: Romans “Life in the Spirit”
Reading: Romans 8:1-17
English text taken from the Lexham English Bible
Greek text taken from SBLGNT (Society of Biblical Literature Greek New Testament)

Romans 8:1–17: The Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus

Contextual Background Audience

Mixed Jewish-Gentile church in Rome (ca. 57 CE), facing tensions over law, sin, and identity in Christ.

Literary Context

Climax of Romans 1–8; transition from justification (chs. 3–5) and sanctification (chs. 6–7) to assurance of final salvation (ch. 8).

Key Theme

Life in the Spirit vs. death in the flesh; freedom from condemnation through union with Christ.

Verse

Greek (SBLGNT):

Οὐδὲν ἄρα νῦν κατάκριμα τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

LEB:

Consequently, there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus.

Gloss:

Οὐδὲν | ἄρα | νῦν | κατάκριμα | τοῖς | ἐν | Χριστῷ | Ἰησοῦ |
| No | therefore | now | condemnation | to-the-ones | in | Christ | Jesus |

Grammatical & Lexical Notes:

- Οὐδὲν...κατάκριμα – Double negation = absolute negation. Κατάκριμα = “condemnation, penalty” (legal term).
- ἄρα νῦν – Inferential (“therefore now”) links to ch. 7’s struggle; eschatological “now” (cf. 3:21; 5:9).
- τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ – Dative of sphere; corporate identity in Christ (Pauline mysticism).

Historical Context:

- Roman legal system: condemnatio = death sentence. Paul uses forensic imagery to declare acquittal for believers.
- Jewish background: Echoes Day of Atonement (Lev 16); Christ as final sacrifice removes guilt.

Synthesis:

The believer's legal status is irrevocably changed: no condemnation because of union with the risen Christ. This is the hinge of ch. 8.

Verse 2

Greek:

ὁ γὰρ νόμος τοῦ πνεύματος τῆς ζωῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ἠλευθέρωσέν σε ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου τῆς ἁμαρτίας καὶ τοῦ θανάτου.

LEB:

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.

Gloss:

| ὁ | γὰρ | νόμος | τοῦ | πνεύματος | τῆς | ζωῆς | ἐν | Χριστῷ | Ἰησοῦ | ἠλευθέρωσέν
| σε | ἀπὸ | τοῦ | νόμου | τῆς | ἁμαρτίας | καὶ | τοῦ | θανάτου |
| The | for | law | of-the | Spirit | of-the | life | in | Christ | Jesus | freed | you | from |
the | law | of-the | sin | and | of-the | death |

Grammatical & Lexical Notes:

- νόμος...τοῦ πνεύματος – Not Torah, but principle/power (cf. 7:23).
- ἠλευθέρωσέν σε – Aorist indicative (some mss: με); decisive past act with ongoing effect.
- τοῦ νόμου τῆς ἁμαρτίας καὶ τοῦ θανάτου – Personified “law” = dominion of sin leading to death (cf. 6:23).

Historical Context:

- Freedom language: Resonates with manumission (slave freed by ransom). Christ is the liberator.
- Jewish view of Torah: Paul redefines nomos – Torah cannot liberate; only the Spirit does.

Synthesis:

The Spirit operates as a new governing principle, breaking the vicious cycle of sin → death (ch. 7). This is liberation theology rooted in resurrection power.

Verse 3

Greek:

τὸ γὰρ ἀδύνατον τοῦ νόμου, ἐν ᾧ ἡσθένει διὰ τῆς σαρκός, ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ υἱὸν πέμψας ἐν ὁμοιώματι σαρκὸς ἁμαρτίας καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας κατέκρινε τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐν τῇ σαρκί,

LEB:

For what was impossible for the law—in that it was weak through the flesh—God did. He condemned sin in the flesh by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and concerning sin,

Gloss:

| τὸ | γὰρ | ἀδύνατον | τοῦ | νόμου | ἐν | ᾧ | ἡσθένει | διὰ | τῆς | σαρκός | ὁ | θεὸς
 | τὸν | ἑαυτοῦ | υἱὸν | πέμψας | ἐν | ὁμοιώματι | σαρκὸς | ἁμαρτίας | καὶ | περὶ |
 ἁμαρτίας | κατέκρινε | τὴν | ἁμαρτίαν | ἐν | τῇ | σαρκί |
 | The | for | impossible-thing | of-the | law | in | which | it-was-weak | through | the |
 flesh | God | — | his | own | Son | having-sent | in | likeness | of-flesh | of-sin | and |
 for | sin | condemned | the | sin | in | the | flesh |

Grammatical & Lexical Notes:

- τὸ ἀδύνατον τοῦ νόμου – Neuter substantive; Torah’s inability to save.
- διὰ τῆς σαρκός – Instrumental; human weakness (not sin per se).
- ἐν ὁμοιώματι σαρκὸς ἁμαρτίας – Crucial: Christ took human nature but not sinful nature (cf. Phil 2:7).
- περὶ ἁμαρτίας – Sacrificial term (LXX Lev 16:5); sin offering.

Historical Context:

Sin offering (ἡμεῖς) = Christ as substitutionary sacrifice.

Condemnation of sin in the flesh:

Not Christ condemned, but sin itself judged in His body.

Synthesis:

God accomplished what Torah could not: sin’s power was broken through Christ’s incarnation and atonement. The cross is the divine verdict on sin.

Verse 4

Greek:

ἵνα τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ νόμου πληρωθῇ ἐν ἡμῖν τοῖς μὴ κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦσιν
 ἀλλὰ κατὰ πνεῦμα.

LEB:

in order that the requirement of the law would be fulfilled in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Gloss:

| ἵνα | τὸ | δικαίωμα | τοῦ | νόμου | πληρωθῇ | ἐν | ἡμῖν | τοῖς | μὴ | κατὰ |
 σάρκα | περιπατοῦσιν | ἀλλὰ | κατὰ | πνεῦμα |
 | so-that | the | righteous-requirement | of-the | law | might-be-fulfilled | in |
 us | the-ones | not | according-to | flesh | walking | but | according-to | Spirit |

Grammatical & Lexical Notes:

- τὸ δικαίωμα – “Righteous requirement” (not full Torah observance); moral intent of the law.
- πληρωθῇ – Passive subjunctive; God fulfills it in us.
- περιπατοῦσιν – Present participle; lifestyle/habitual walk.

Historical Context:

- Walk (ἡλὼν) = Jewish idiom for conduct (cf. Ps 1).
- Paul inverts: Not by law-keeping, but by Spirit-enabled obedience.

Synthesis:

The goal of the law (righteousness) is achieved not by human effort but by Spirit-transformed living.

Verses 5–8: Contrast of Two Mindsets

v.5

SBLGNT:

οἱ γὰρ κατὰ σάρκα ὄντες τὰ τῆς σαρκὸς φρονοῦσιν, οἱ δὲ κατὰ πνεῦμα τὰ τοῦ πνεύματος.

LEB:

For those who are living according to the flesh are intent on the things of the flesh, but those who are living according to the Spirit are intent on the things of the Spirit.

Gloss:

| οἱ | γὰρ | κατὰ | σάρκα | ὄντες | τὰ | τῆς | σαρκὸς | φρονοῦσιν | οἱ | δὲ |
κατὰ | πνεῦμα | τὰ | τοῦ | πνεύματος |
| The-ones | for | according-to | flesh | being | the-things | of-the | flesh | mind
| the-ones | but | according-to | Spirit | the-things | of-the | Spirit |

Grammatical and lexical notes:

οἱ ...κατὰ σάρκα ὄντες
Mind set on flesh → death

v.6

SBLGNT:

τὸ γὰρ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς θάνατος, τὸ δὲ φρόνημα τοῦ πνεύματος ζωὴ καὶ εἰρήνη.

LEB:

For the mindset of the flesh is death, but the mindset of the Spirit is life and peace,

Gloss:

| τὸ | γὰρ | φρόνημα | τῆς | σαρκὸς | θάνατος | τὸ | δὲ | φρόνημα | τοῦ |
πνεύματος | ζωὴ | καὶ | εἰρήνη |
| The | for | mindset | of-the | flesh | death | the | but | mindset | of-the |
Spirit | life | and | peace |

Grammatical and lexical notes:

- τὸ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς θάνατος
- Fleshly mindset = death
- τὸ φρόνημα τοῦ πνεύματος ζωὴ καὶ εἰρήνη
- Spiritual mindset = life & peace

Key Terms:

- φρόνημα – “Mindset, disposition” (not just intellect).
- σαρκὸς – Not body, but sinful human nature apart from God.
- πνεύματος – Holy Spirit (capital Π in context).

Historical Context:

Stoic προαίρεσις (disposition) vs. Jewish yetzer (inclination). Paul merges both.
(Skip verses 7 and 8)

Synthesis (v.5–8):

- Two existential orientations: Flesh → self-centered, hostile to God, cannot please Him (v.8).
- Spirit → God-centered, alive, at peace.

Verse 9

Greek:

Ὑμεῖς δὲ οὐκ ἐστὲ ἐν σαρκὶ ἀλλὰ ἐν πνεύματι, εἴπερ πνεῦμα θεοῦ οἰκεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν.
εἰ δέ τις πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ οὐκ ἔχει, οὗτος οὐκ ἔστιν αὐτοῦ.

LEB:

But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, this person does not belong to him.

Gloss:

| Ὑμεῖς | δὲ | οὐκ | ἐστὲ | ἐν | σαρκὶ | ἀλλὰ | ἐν | πνεύματι | εἴπερ | πνεῦμα |
θεοῦ | οἰκεῖ | ἐν | ὑμῖν | εἰ | δέ | τις | πνεῦμα | Χριστοῦ | οὐκ | ἔχει | οὗτος |
οὐκ | ἔστιν | αὐτοῦ |
| You | but | not | are | in | flesh | but | in | Spirit | if-indeed | Spirit | of-God |
dwells | in | you | if | but | anyone | Spirit | of-Christ | not | has | this-one | not
| is | his |

Grammatical Notes:

- εἴπερ – “if indeed” (confident condition).
- πνεῦμα θεοῦ / πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ – Interchangeable; Trinitarian hint.

Historical Context:

- Indwelling Spirit = Old Testament promise fulfilled (Ezek 36:26–27; Joel 2:28).
- Belonging to Christ = covenant membership.

Synthesis:

Identity marker of a Christian: possession of the Spirit. No Spirit = no Christ.

Verse 10

Greek:

εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, τὸ μὲν σῶμα νεκρὸν διὰ ἁμαρτίαν, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ζωὴ διὰ δικαιοσύνην.

LEB:

But if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

Gloss:

| εἰ | δὲ | Χριστὸς | ἐν | ὑμῖν | τὸ | μὲν | σῶμα | νεκρὸν | διὰ | ἁμαρτίαν | τὸ |
δὲ | πνεῦμα | ζωὴ | διὰ | δικαιοσύνην |

| If | but | Christ | in | you | the | on-one-hand | body | dead | because-of | sin
| the | on-the-other-hand | Spirit | life | because-of | righteousness |

Grammatical Notes:

- τὸ μὲν...τὸ δὲ – Correlative contrast.
- σῶμα νεκρὸν – Mortal body, still subject to decay.
- πνεῦμα ζωῇ – Spirit as source of life (or human spirit made alive?).

Synthesis:

- Already/not yet: Body → still dies (sin's consequence).
- Spirit → already alive (righteousness imputed and imparted).

Verse 11

Greek:

εἰ δὲ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ ἐγείραντος τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐκ νεκρῶν οἰκεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν, ὁ ἐγείρας
Χριστὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν ζωοποιήσκει καὶ τὰ θνητὰ σώματα ὑμῶν διὰ τὸ ἐνοικοῦν
αὐτοῦ πνεῦμα ἐν ὑμῖν.

LEB:

And if the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you, the one
who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also make alive your mortal bodies
through his Spirit who lives in you.

Gloss:

| εἰ | δὲ | τὸ | πνεῦμα | τοῦ | ἐγείραντος | τὸν | Ἰησοῦν | ἐκ | νεκρῶν | οἰκεῖ |
ἐν | ὑμῖν | ὁ | ἐγείρας | Χριστὸν | ἐκ | νεκρῶν | ζωοποιήσκει | καὶ | τὰ | θνητὰ |
σώματα | ὑμῶν | διὰ | τὸ | ἐνοικοῦν | αὐτοῦ | πνεῦμα | ἐν | ὑμῖν |
| If | but | the | Spirit | of-the-one | having-raised | Jesus | from | dead | dwells
| in | you | the-one | having-raised | Christ | from | dead | will-make-alive |
also | the | mortal | bodies | of-you | through | the | indwelling | his | Spirit | in
| you |

Key Phrase:

ζωοποιήσκει...τὰ θνητὰ σώματα – Future resurrection guaranteed by indwelling
Spirit.

Historical Context:

Resurrection hope = core Jewish belief (Dan 12:2); now personalized in Christ.

Synthesis:

The same power that raised Jesus will raise believers. The Spirit is the down
payment of resurrection (cf. 2 Cor 1:22).

Verses 12–13: Moral Imperative

Greek (v.13):

εἰ γὰρ κατὰ σάρκα ζῆτε, μέλλετε ἀποθνήσκειν· εἰ δὲ πνεύματι τὰς πράξεις τοῦ
σώματος θανατοῦτε, ζήσεσθε.

LEB (V13):

For if you live according to the flesh, you are going to die, but if by the Spirit you
put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

Gloss:

| εἰ | γὰρ | κατὰ | σάρκα | ζῆτε | μέλλετε | ἀποθνήσκειν | εἰ | δὲ | πνεύματι |
τὰς | πράξεις | τοῦ | σώματος | θανατοῦτε | ζήσεσθε |
| if | for | according-to | flesh | you-live | you-are-about | to-die | if | but | by-
Spirit | the | deeds | of-the | body | you-put-to-death | you-will-live |

Grammatical Notes:

- θανατοῦτε – Present active; ongoing mortification of sin.
- πνεύματι – Instrumental dative; by means of the Spirit.

Synthesis: Indicative → Imperative:

- Because you are in the Spirit (v.9),
- Therefore put sin to death by the Spirit (not self-effort).

Verses 14–17: Adoption & Inheritance

v.14 Greek:

ὅσοι γὰρ πνεύματι θεοῦ ἄγονται, οὗτοι υἱοὶ εἰσιν θεοῦ.

v.14 LEB:

For all those who are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

Gloss:

| ὅσοι | γὰρ | πνεύματι | θεοῦ | ἄγονται | υἱοὶ | θεοῦ | εἰσιν |
| As-many-as | for | by-Spirit | of-God | are-led | sons | of-God | are |

Grammatical and lexical notes:

- υἱοὶ θεοῦ ἄγονται
- Led by Spirit = sons of God

v.15 Greek:

οὐ γὰρ ἐλάβετε πνεῦμα δουλείας πάλιν εἰς φόβον, ἀλλὰ ἐλάβετε πνεῦμα
υἱοθεσίας ἐν ᾧ κρίζομεν· Ἀββὰ ὁ πατήρ·

v.15 LEB:

For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have
received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry out, “Abba! Father!”

Gloss:

| οὐ | γὰρ | ἐλάβετε | πνεῦμα | δουλείας | πάλιν | εἰς | φόβον | ἀλλ’ | ἐλάβετε
| πνεῦμα | υἱοθεσίας | ἐν | ᾧ | κρίζομεν | Ἀββᾶ | ὁ | πατήρ |
| not | for | you-received | spirit | of-slavery | again | into | fear | but | you-
received | spirit | of-adoption | in | which | we-cry | Abba | the | Father |

Grammatical and lexical notes:

- πνεῦμα υἱοθεσίας
- Spirit of adoption

v.16 Greek:

αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα συμμαρτυρεῖ τῷ πνεύματι ἡμῶν ὅτι ἐσμὲν τέκνα θεοῦ.

v.16 LEB:

The Spirit himself confirms to our spirit that we are children of God,

Grammatical and lexical notes:

- συμμαρτυρεῖ
- Spirit co-testifies

v.17 Greek:

εἰ δὲ τέκνα, καὶ κληρονόμοι· κληρονόμοι μὲν θεοῦ, συγκληρονόμοι δὲ Χριστοῦ,
εἵπερ συμπάσχομεν ἵνα καὶ συνδοξασθῶμεν.

v.17 LEB:

and if children, also heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer together with him so that we may also be glorified together with him.

Gloss:

| εἰ | δὲ | τέκνα | καὶ | κληρονόμοι | κληρονόμοι | μὲν | θεοῦ | συγκληρονόμοι
| δὲ | Χριστοῦ | εἵπερ | συμπάσχομεν | ἵνα | καὶ | συνδοξασθῶμεν |
| if | but | children | also | heirs | heirs | on-one-hand | of-God | co-heirs | on-
the-other-hand | of-Christ | if-indeed | we-suffer-with | so-that | also | we-may-
be-glorified-with |

Grammatical and lexical notes:

- Συγκληρονόμοι
- Co-heirs with Christ

Verses 14-17 Key Terms:

- υἱοθεσία – Roman legal adoption (full heirship).
- Ἀββᾶ – Aramaic intimacy (Mark 14:36).
- συμπάσχομεν – Suffering with Christ → glory with Him.

Historical Context:

- Roman adoption: Adult sons adopted as full heirs; irreversible.
- Jewish sonship: Israel as “son” (Exod 4:22); now expanded to Gentiles.

Synthesis (v.14–17):

Believers are:

- Led by the Spirit (v.14)
- Adopted as sons (v.15)
- Assured by inner testimony (v.16)
- Heirs through suffering with Christ (v.17)

Summary of Romans 8:1–17

Theme / Content

No Condemnation (1–4)

Legal acquittal & liberation by the Spirit

Two Ways of Life (5–8)

Flesh vs. Spirit; death vs. life

Indwelling Spirit (9–11)

Guarantee of resurrection

Ethical Living (12–13)

Mortify sin by the Spirit

Adoption & Inheritance (14–17)

Sons, heirs, co-sufferers with Christ

Theological Center:

The Spirit applies Christ's victory – from justification to glorification – transforming believers into sons who walk in freedom, kill sin, and await resurrection.

Let the Spirit of life lead you as you walk (peripateō) in Him.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What does “no condemnation” mean for believers?
- How does the Spirit confirm our identity as God's children?
- How can we live “according to the Spirit”?