

What's the Difference?

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[0 : 00] Please take your Bibles again and turn to the book of Romans, Paul's Appistle to the Church at Rome. I will read verses 1 through 9.

Romans chapter 8, verse 1. Romans chapter 9.

Romans chapter 9.

And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.

well amen you know how to warm up a preacher to sing the gospel we've begun a study of what some have called the greatest chapter in the bible and I would not argue with them if they wanted to make that point Romans chapter 8 as sweet as it is long and it begins on this glorious note therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus no condemnation not now not ever from God the judge who knows everything I've ever done no condemnation but how can he say that and for whom how can this be no condemnation when earlier in the book we've read that we all have sinned and come short of the glory of God we all are under God's wrath and condemnation the answer not because of anything at all that we have done but only in all ways because of what God has done for us in Jesus

[3 : 00] Christ and through his Holy Spirit for what the law could not do in that it was weakened through the flesh our flesh we couldn't keep it what the law could not do God did by sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin and so he condemned sin in the flesh sin was condemned in Christ and Christ was condemned that we might never be but that we might be forgiven freed from sins condemning and reigning power over us that's how this can be but for whom for whom is it true that there is therefore now no condemnation well it's not for all sinners it's not for everyone without exception it's rather only for those who are in Christ Jesus who by faith have been joined to Jesus Christ in an inseparable union that can never be severed for all eternity that's who this is true of and so the all important question for you and me and everyone is am I in Christ Jesus

I was born in Adam and in Adam all die all are under condemnation have I been transplanted out of Adam and into Christ where there is no condemnation well that's something that God doesn't want us to be deceived about as many are many make the claim I'm a Christian I'm in Christ he doesn't want us deceived it's not something he wants us just to hope so well I sure hope so no he wants us to be absolutely sure certain and that's this that's the note that sounded throughout Romans chapter 8 that begins with no condemnation and ends with no separation never to be separated from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord God wants you to know for sure and so through Paul he further describes those who are in Christ Jesus and this whole section verses 1 to 11 is given to us it's given to you so that you might know for sure that you are in Christ or that you might know that you are not in Christ so that you might get into him before your door of opportunity closes forever can you not read the love of God in that he finds no pleasure in the death of the wicked but that they turn and live and so if he shows you this morning that you are not in Christ Jesus it is with mercy that he comes to you that you might here and now repent and trust in the Savior be in Christ Jesus joined to him through faith so how are these who are in Christ Jesus described well verse 2 says that they are those whom the law of the spirit of life has set us free from the law of sin and death the power of the spirit has set us free from the power of sin and death have you been set free from the reigning power of sin and death because all who are in Christ have been set free by a superior power that overcomes that down drag of depravity verse 4 goes on to say that all in Christ Jesus are those who are now obeying God's law that's one of the ends for which Christ died verse 4 ends in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fulfilled in us not fulfilled for us fulfilled in us not talking about justification by the righteousness and obedience of Christ here in verse 4 but talking about sanctification you can know those who are in Christ because they obey

God's law it's fulfilled in them is that you well verse 4 goes on to tell how this is possible how can people obey God's law well they do not live according to the flesh but according to the spirit there's just these two powers and one of them is controlling your life is it living according to the flesh the sinful nature or is it the power of the spirit that enables you to live according to the spirit well that's part of the promise of the new covenant that I will put my spirit in them and cause them to follow my decrees and to be careful to keep my laws and so that's why they no longer live according to the flesh but now live according to the spirit now we need to be clear on a couple of points here as we get go further now that's all by way of review but first of all we need to be clear that verse 4b is not a command telling us what we ought how we ought to live that we ought to live according to the flesh and not according to the Holy Spirit no this is a description of what's true of all those who are in Christ Jesus they no longer live as they once lived according to the flesh according to the sinful nature no now they live according to the spirit if any man be in Christ he is what he's a new creation what happened to the old life what's gone what's happened everything has become new nothing's the same in Christ that's the first thing we need to see this is not a command verse 4b it's a description of all Christians secondly this whole section from verse 1 to 11 is not describing two ways that Christians are two ways that Christians live as if some live according to the flesh and others who are more spiritual live according to the spirit no throughout

Paul is describing the difference between the saved and the lost the Bible knows of no Christian whose life is lived according to the flesh that that characterizes their life it once did but it no longer does and these two are contrasted all the way through those who are in Christ and those who are outside of Christ that's what's going on in this passage only two kinds of people and two ways of living there are those in Christ and there are those who are still outside of Christ these are not under condemnation these are still under condemnation these have been set free from the reigning power of sin and death these are still under the bondage of sin's reigning power and death these live according to the spirit these live according to the sinful nature or the flesh and in these the law of God is being fulfilled and these do not submit to his law nor can they you see all the way through we find these two ways two kinds of people in Christ and out of Christ and the way that that is fleshed out and seen in their lives one last thing by way of introduction what is said of those who are in Christ is true of all those who are in Christ and what is said about those who are outside of Christ is true of all those who are outside of Christ it's not that you have a few super Christians that live like this no what's here said of those in Christ is true of them all and just the opposite with those outside of Christ so there's just these two controlling life principles there is the the flesh the sinful nature directing those over here outside of Christ and there is the power of the Holy Spirit the third person of the Trinity directing the life of those who are in Christ now we'll see more of that Lord willing next week but we were all born over here outside of Christ without the Holy Spirit in us and so our lives were directed and controlled by our fallen sinful nature that's why we sinned we sinned because we were sinners by nature but the Holy Spirit sent from heaven quickened us to life and joined us to Jesus Christ we are now in him if we're true Christians and the Holy Spirit took up his home in our heart and that's why life before Christ is so was so different from what it is now we were just dead branches on the ground over here we have now been joined to Jesus the fruitful vine you can't be joined to Jesus and have his spirit dwelling in you and not be bearing fruit a different fruit than what you bore outside of Christ so as we come today our text is verse 5 to 8 verses 5 to 8

Paul is continuing to describe this great contrast between those in Christ and those outside of Christ those with the Holy Spirit in them and those without the Spirit now in verses 5 to 8 it's not hard to find out what Paul's emphasis is in this part of his argument no less than five times in four verses Paul mentions the mind the mind so that's what Paul's going to talk about this morning and the point being made is this there are two opposite mindsets one for those in Christ and those one for those who are outside of Christ and what you predominantly think about tells you a lot about who you are as a man thinks in his heart his mind his heart so is he and so Paul says in verse 5 for those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires but those who live according to the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires so the next great contrast then is between those in Christ and out of Christ has to do with what they set their minds on and to begin with he begins with the unbeliever how does he do with his mind well he sets his mind on the things of the flesh or on what the flesh desires think of it he's without the

[14 : 35] Spirit so he wouldn't set his mind on the things of the Spirit all he has is by nature his own sinful nature so what do you think he will be setting his mind on the things of the sinful nature the things his sinful nature desires that's his focus that's his preoccupation that's what his mind is set or fixed upon so what are these things of the flesh what are the things that he fixates upon and what we find it's a very broad category if you're familiar with Galatians 5 you don't need to turn to it but you might want to we're coming back to Romans 8 but in Galatians 5 we have a list of some of the things of the flesh you remember how Paul contrasts the acts of the flesh and the fruit of the spirit again he's making these two comparisons and contrast and so he says in Galatians 5 19 the acts of the flesh are obvious sexual immorality all kinds of sexual immorality impurity debauchery which is sensuality idolatry and witchcraft hatred discord jealousy fits of rage selfish ambition dissensions factions and envy drunkenness orgies and the like what a variety of sins to choose from but what they all have in common is that they are they are against

God's law they are they are what the flesh desires not what the spirit desires and here we see the great variety sandwiched between sexual immorality witchcraft drunkenness and orgies there's the the two ends and in between our sins of the heart like hatred like rage like discord selfish ambition jealousy envy and then we see that there are the more socially respected sins included along with those that may be outwardly very not moral immoral and they both are in the category you see of the things of the flesh and then he just adds and the like what's he doing there he's letting us know this isn't a full category of all the acts of the flesh there's many more this is just a mere sampling but you get the idea the kinds of things that those outside of

Christ their minds and hearts gravitate toward and then he finishes by saying those who live like this won't get as many rewards in heaven no that that would put it over here but Paul doesn't do that no no these are the acts of the flesh these are of those who are outside of Christ and who live according to the flesh and they should not even think that they will inherit the kingdom of God it's describing the but there are billions of ways to hell and one tailor made for each of us and the devil doesn't care whether he gets us there by sexual immorality and orgies or whether he gets us there by hatred and bitterness and selfish ambition the things of the flesh are what he sets his mind on that's where it goes because that's all he is is flesh and sinful nature he doesn't have the spirit and it goes beyond then just these things that

Paul lists in Galatians 5 we're back in Romans 8 and verse 6 where he says the mind set on the flesh is death but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace so the mind that is set on the flesh is death not only does it lead to death for sure the second death as well but it is death the sinful mind the mind set on the flesh is death and what is death death is separation from God at its core what Paul is telling us is that the mind of the flesh is separated from God that in all his thinking there is no room for God he sets his mind on everything but God there's no room his mind is separated alienated from God Ephesians 4 17 says that they live in the futility of their thinking and it goes on in 18 to say they are darkened in their understanding their minds and separated from the life of

God because of the ignorance that's in them due to the hardening of their hearts this is the heart or the mind of the unbeliever and since he's spiritually dead toward God he gravitates to the things of earth rather than the things of heaven so Paul can write of those who are enemies of the cross of Christ and say they mind earthly things their mind is fixed on earthly things they don't do what Paul says in Colossians chapter 3 to set our minds on things above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God no no they live in this world this is where their mind operates day in and day out without God he lives forgetful of God dead to God as if there was no God he does not acknowledge God in all his ways Proverbs 3 and verse 6 tells us but it goes about life without

[20 : 58] God in mind and so the mind of the flesh is death it is separation from God so he does family life without God he does business life business transactions job life without God he does recreation and entertainments without God in all his thoughts this is the mindset on it set on earthly things everything but God but the man in Christ sets his mind on just the opposite it says of him that those who live according to the spirit have their mindset on the things of the spirit on what the spirit desires and what would those be well you remember how Paul after describing the works of the flesh went on to describe the fruit of the spirit is love joy peace patience kindness goodness faithfulness gentleness self control that's that's that's a whole different world from anger bitterness sexual immorality you see he sets his mind on godly things

Christ like things he's spiritually minded just as this guy is fleshly minded what what is involved in the things of the spirit not just the nine fold through the spirit this is one of the things of the spirit isn't it who inspired this book holy man to write it was the holy spirit these are the things that the spirit desires these are the things of the spirit so the man in Christ has found this book to be life to him the woman of God has found that this book is the most important book in the world and it trumps everything else of earth she's not the way she used to be had little interest in the things of the Bible but now the Holy Spirit lives in her and she's got new interests a new mindset and it goes above just the things of earth and now she's thinking of

Christ that's another one of the things that the Spirit desires you know he's come to glorify Christ and so you can know that the Spirit is in you if you are being drawn to Jesus Christ who he is what he's done what he will do the things of the Spirit you used to not be concerned about being right with God but now it's the one thing needful and what else is encompassed in this broad category that they set their minds on the things of the Spirit well the Bible says in verse six that the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace the mind set on the flesh is death but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace spiritual life eternal life and what is eternal life it's to know the true and living

God in Jesus Christ whom he sent and now that's important that's what he sets his mind on I want to I want to fellowship and his mind is not dead and separate from Christ no his mind is alive to God he's joined to Jesus Christ and so he wants to meet with his God he wants to fellowship with his God he enjoys that life and peace that comes from knowing that all is well between me and my God no condemnation and so he's alive to God and that's seen everywhere in his life just as this person did family without God this person does family with God in view and he thinks about what would God want me to do in family what would God want me to do in my job my education my recreation God is in view he's alive to

God and in all his ways he acknowledges God as the giver and sustainer and the helper and in all his thoughts there is now room for God whereas before there was no room and so the one who is living according to the spirit his mind gravitates to the things of the spirit of God duh does that not make sense if the spirit of God is in him would not the spirit move him toward the things of the spirit is your mind set on the things of earth alone without God or is it set on the things of the spirit when there are decisions to make about what to do or not to do which is your concern what the flesh desires or what the holy spirit desires the man in

[26 : 28] Christ lives according to the spirit and sets his mind on the things of the spirit now Paul comes back to the mind of the flesh in verse seven and gives us the next thing that we're told about someone who is outside of Christ I'm sorry if I said in Christ we're coming back to the man outside of Christ in verse seven and this is something else that's true how will you know if you're one who is in spirit has the mind of the flesh is hostile to God it is not subject to the law of God indeed it cannot be so suppose you went to the mall up at grape road and you conducted a one question survey the question you asked everybody that you met do you hate God I'm sure you'd have a whole bunch on one side of your paper that said no of course not and you would have a hard time finding anybody who would say yes

I hate God but here Paul says that everyone who is not in Christ is hostile to God is at enmity with God hates God many would say well I may not love him but I sure don't hate him that's not what Paul says everyone outside of Christ has a mind that's set on everything but God why so why is there no room for God in their mindset it's because they hate him they're at hostility against God they're at enmity with God you see the mind of the flesh is not neutral toward God when the the scientists outside of Christ looks through his microscope he's not just looking for truth with some neutral mind he hates

God and there's few that will be faithful to what they see without that hatred for God being read into what their eyes are seeing the mind of the flesh is anti God remember what David said in Psalm 51 against thee and thee only have I sin all sin is against God all sin is anti God it's a vote against God it says I don't like you and I don't want you and if I had my way I would write you out of existence and that's why when for the first time men could get their hands on God what did they do to him they crucified him they hated him and they nailed him to the tree they wanted him gone out of their world out of their life and so there is this moral aversion to God now many lost people would object to that they would be offended by such a charge especially lost religious folk who are found in churches today who would claim to love

God but the God they love is a God of their own imagination it's a God of their own making it's a God that is all love and a God without wrath and a God without justice and a God without righteousness he's not a God that judges men for their sins and sends them to hell if they have not put faith in Jesus Christ well they don't love that God in fact they have written him out of existence by believing in a God of their own making they've done away with him of course they love a God of their own making it suits their fancy that's how they make their God but that's not the one true and living God him they hate him they oppose with hostility so one's real attitude proven by what they say I love God notice what Paul says one's attitude toward

God can be rightly determined by what they do with God's laws God's law you see it in verse seven the mind of the flesh is hostile to God it does not submit to the law of God it won't put itself under God in its thoughts its will it will not willingly submit to God's law and what he says that's the proof of our attitude toward God and every lost person reveals their hostility to God by what they do with his laws God's own holy nature is reflected in his holy laws and if a man is hostile to God what do you think will be his mind's attitude toward his laws the same he will not submit to God's law and that shows him to be a

[32 : 02] God hater let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us is the language of everyone outside of Christ now the dirty little secret is out then men hate God because God tells them what they can and cannot do and if God would just mind his own business and leave me to do my thing we'd be good we'd be good we'd have no quarrel with God but because he tells us what we can and cannot do we hate him that's what it means to be outside of Christ and that's the rub his law is the rub it's the bone of contention it is the issue it is the explanation for why men hate God they don't want God to be king and rule over them with his laws no this is not just some people who are outside of God outside of

Christ this is all people who are outside of Christ so Paul is telling us here they don't submit and they show their hostility in that way now the hostility is not only shown in the same way kindly tell a homosexual at a gay pride event what God's law says about his way of life and he may curse God and he may curse you but think of all the respectable outwardly moral people who are in church today who are still lost they've not trusted in Christ they've not been set free from sin's condemnation and power in their lives and every Sunday they sit and they may even hear the preacher tell them what the law of God is and with a smile after the service they'll chat with other people and then quietly go home just ignore what they were told both have shown their hostility toward

God by not submitting to his laws different expressions but they're outside of Christ they don't want God to tell them what to do and it shows by their not submitting to his laws now some of the things they do may be in agreement with what God says in his laws some of the things that the one outside of Christ does are the things that God says but they don't do it because God says it you see so they don't lie and cheat on their taxes well that's according to God does that mean that the person outside of Christ is therefore submitting himself to God's law not at all he picks and chooses which commandments of God's law he will obey and what does that show shows that he still sitting in judgment of God's law and if I agree with it I'll do it but if I don't agree with it

I will not submit myself word with what God says he doesn't do it because God said it's not done with faith in God and unto God and so he's not submitting himself to God's law you know the real test of submission to God's law it's what happens when what God commands is something you don't want to do do you then submit your mind and will to God's or do you refuse to submit if you choose to submit then you will not be picking and choosing which commands you obey because it's because God says it whatever he says you obey now that's a difference then the way that the unbeliever comes to the law of God there's something even more telling about the unregenerate mind of the flesh it's not only that he does not submit to

God's law but did you notice it says that it cannot do so the mind of the flesh cannot submit to God's law it's a moral impossibility for a mind that is hostile against God to submit to God's law and since God's law spells out what is pleasing to God Paul follows up with verse 8 and says so then those controlled by the flesh those in the flesh cannot please God if they cannot obey and submit to God's law well then they can't please God either and that ends Paul's comparison between those in Christ and those out of Christ I said at the beginning the most important question for all of us is to ask am I in Christ or am I out of Christ you've seen the comparison where are you are you one of whom it said there is therefore now no condemnation for those in

[37 : 15] Christ or if you're honest would you have to say Paul's description of the person outside of Christ best describes me if so don't deny it if so don't deceive yourself many are and if you see yourself outside of Christ this morning friend can you see just how desperately lost you are and how desperately you need a savior who does all the saving it's not a little thing it's not a light thing to hate God out of all of God's loss if the greatest commandment is to love God with all our heart soul mind and strength then is not the greatest sin to not love God but to hate him and if we show our love to

God by obeying his commandments and submitting to his commandments is it not true that a failure to submit to God's commandments as a lifestyle that when we bump up against God's law what comes out ahead is us then it shows that we hate God whose commandments we will not submit to you were made to know God you were made to obey him you were made to please him to enjoy him you are responsible to obey him to know him to please him but you cannot obey his laws if you're outside of Christ you cannot please God without faith it is impossible to please God you cannot because you will not even though

God is the most lovable and loveliest of all persons in the universe and why can you not and will you not love him because your mind is set on things that the flesh wants your mind is hostile to God and will not submit to his will and law and with such a mind you cannot please God you're still under the reigning power and condemnation of God and that's the Bible's diagnosis of your problem with God it's not something you can fix you need a new heart you need to be born again of the spirit Hebrews 11 6 says it is impossible to please God without faith but how can you put your faith how can you trust someone that you hate that your mind is hostile against well come to the middle cross on

Calvary and behold God the son dying in agony why is he here oh he's here in the place of sinners why is he suffering so because he's receiving what the sinner deserves the condemnation that they should have had that he takes that they might never have what kind of sinners is he here dying for oh for for God hating Christ hating sinners who love their sin and hate God for forbidding it and judging it for sinners who live according to the flesh who set their minds on the things of the flesh not the things of God who refuse to submit to God's law and cannot please him and don't want to please him that's who he's dying for will you will you go on hating a

God who gave up his own son his one and only son for a world of such sinners as are described here will you will you go on hating God the son who here lays down his life for sinners that have been described who hated God and refused to live according to his will it's at Calvary that the heart of God is revealed and then Christ rose from the dead and is alive and enthroned in heaven and that very same Jesus welcomes you to come and receive salvation as a free gift that he purchased on the cross and he says you've got to come just as you are you got to come and confess that yeah I don't like you in my face I don't like your laws I don't like you I'm a sinner and that's a big sin we come and we own what we are to him and he is willing to receive us freely do you know that this is the only kind of sinners

[42 : 44] God has ever saved do you know that every one of us here who is saved were those kind of sinners God hating sinners that's the only sinners there are everyone outside of Christ has been described here so come come to Christ he's never turned one of us away and he will not turn you away and believers this is how the Holy Spirit found us just as was described to us God haters rebels against his law mindset on everything but God and in our hell deserving helpless state God sent the Holy Spirit to our hearts after he sent Christ to the cross to die in the place of such sinners he sent the Holy Spirit to our hearts personally didn't he and he opened our eyes to the loveliness of Jesus and we began to repent for having loved the one who loved us so much that he gave himself for us and the Holy Spirit drew us to Christ and united us to Christ forever so that what Christ did and being condemned for sin is counted as ours so there's now no condemnation for those who are in Christ and now the Spirit lives in us to make us willing to obey his commands and we can say with Paul in chapter 7 in verse 22 now I find that as to my inner being I delight in God's law I didn't used to but the Spirit has come and he set my mind on the things of the Spirit I'm a new creation I'm a new person and that hatred and aversion to God I used to have it's gone and what's in its place is love for God and love and submission to his laws as the Holy Spirit is now enabling me to obey it working in me both the desire and the power to do what pleases God you see all of that is evidence believer that you're now in Christ Jesus and that there is therefore now no condemnation for you and all because of our

Savior being condemned in our place so let's rejoice in such a sweet promise in such a sweet Savior but let us never forget what we were what we were when his lost sheep he sought and found us and let us never forget what it cost the good shepherd to save us Colossians 1 21 and 22 once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior but now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight without blemish free from accusation no condemnation don't forget what you were and don't forget what it cost

Christ to say of you never will you be condemned which is the greater wonder that I should ever hate a God of such love or that God should ever love a God hating sinner like me two wonders I confess the wonders of redeeming love in my own unworthiness let's confess that to the Lord in our closing song has he loved us like this when we were hating him then let us show our love by keeping his commandments stand and sing with me from the overhead I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene and I wonder how he could love me a sinner condemned unclean sing it to him father father we're humbled to think that we ever hated you and your son when his love for us your love for us will be the eternal song in heaven we thank you for opening our eyes and changing our minds our hearts and showing us the loveliness of your heart and of your son and of your spirit and thank you that you were willing to crush him so great your love for us that we might forever escape that wrath and condemnation help us to live as children who have been bought with such a price and to love you with all of our heart soul mind and strength and so to have our hearts conquered and subdued by grace to obey your commandments by the power of your spirit in us to that end you died to that end receive glory in our lives we thank you for

Jesus we pray that some even today here would come to know him in Jesus name we pray amen