

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

FREED
FROM DEATH
BY THE
INDWELLING
CHRIST

WITNESS LEE

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Living Stream Ministry

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The focal point of the revelation in the book of Romans is that God is transforming sinners into sons to form the Body of Christ. God is expressed in the Son, the Son is expressed in the Body, and the Body is expressed in the local churches. Before we became sons, we were constituted sinners (5:19), not only in name and in position but in constitution. We were constituted sinners because sin had entered into us.

SIN ENTERING INTO OUR BEING

In order for a substance to be constituted in a certain way, a particular element must be added into it. By God's creation, we were good, righteous men. However, due to the fall of Adam, sin was injected into our being. When man fell, it was not that he only made a mistake and did something wrong. If man had only made a mistake, his fall would not have been that serious. However, in the fall something more serious than a mistake occurred: sin was injected into man's being.

Suppose a mother has a bottle of poison at home. She keeps it in a specific place and tells her little boy never to touch that bottle. One day, while the mother is outside, the little boy, wondering what is in the bottle, takes it, opens it, and drinks some of the poison. When the mother finds out what happened, she is not concerned about the mistake her son has made. She is worried about the poison that has gotten into him. Most Christians think that man merely disobeyed God and made a mistake in taking the fruit of the tree of knowledge. Not many realize that by man's eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge, something evil and even satanic entered into man. Through the fall an evil, satanic element was injected into him. The Bible calls this element sin. Sin is not merely a matter of lying or stealing. Such things are the fruit of sin, not sin itself. Sin is the very nature of Satan, the evil one.

In [Romans 5 through 8](#) there are many indications that sin is like a living person: it entered ([5:12](#)), it reigns ([5:21](#)), it can lord it over us ([6:14](#)), it deceives us ([7:11](#)), it kills us ([7:11](#)), and it dwells in us ([7:17](#)). Once sin, the evil element of Satan, was injected into man, man was constituted a sinner. Now instead of being proper men, we are

sinners by our very constitution. The amount of good or evil we have done makes no difference because sin is now in our being. Although our deeds may not be sinful outwardly, we have a sinful nature inwardly.

THE RESULTS OF SIN

Sin results in a number of things. It has brought in both the flesh and the law. Hence, we have the problems of sin, the flesh, and the law. But we have still another problem, the ultimate issue of sin, which is death. Where there is sin, there is death. In [5:12](#) Paul says, “as through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin; and so death passed to all men because all have sinned.” Death comes in through sin and reigns because of sin. Therefore, sin issues in three things: the law, the flesh, and death.

FREED FROM SIN, LAW, AND FLESH

[Romans 5](#) reveals that we have been constituted sinners, and [Romans 6](#) reveals that “the body of sin” has been “made of none effect” ([6:6](#)) since our old man has been crucified with Christ. Through the death of the old man, we are freed from sin. In [Romans 6](#) we are freed from sin, in [Romans 7](#) we are freed from the law,

and in [Romans 8](#) we are freed from the flesh. We are free from sin because our old man has been crucified. The death of the old man has caused the body of sin to be unemployed, to be made of none effect. Because the body of sin has lost its job, we no longer need to serve sin as slaves. This means that we have been freed from sin. Likewise, we have been freed from the law because the old husband has died and has been given a funeral. At the time of this funeral, we were married to our new husband. By losing our old husband and marrying our new husband, we are freed from the law. As [Romans 8](#) reveals, we are freed from the flesh by walking according to the spirit. We are freed from sin by having our old man crucified and our body of sin made of none effect; we are freed from the law by burying our old husband and by marrying another; and we are freed from the flesh by walking according to the spirit.

THE WORKING OF DEATH

But now we must face another problem, the problem of how we can be freed from death. If we would know this, we need to understand what death is. Everyone is under the reign of death and under its working. Within every living person is

something which the Bible calls the working of death. Suppose a certain brother loves the Lord. One morning in his fellowship with the Lord he decides that from now on he will always honor and obey his parents, love his wife, and be kind to his children. This is the desire of his heart. He has also made up his mind never to lose his temper. However, soon afterward a difficult situation arises, and he loses his temper again. You may say that this is the result of the working of sin. I agree. But the effect of sin is death; it is death working in us. After being stung by death, we become so weak that no matter how hard we try to honor our parents or love our wives, we simply cannot do it.

In [7:7](#) and [8](#) Paul said, “I had not known coveting except the law had said, You shall not covet. But sin, taking occasion through the commandment, wrought in me coveting of every kind.” Covetousness is not an outward matter; it is an inward desire. One day a missionary in China was telling his cook that everyone was sinful. Arguing with him, the cook said that he was honest and never stole from others. Upon further questioning, it came out that even while they were discussing sinfulness and honesty, the cook was thinking about the missionary’s horse

and how he could get the horse. Then the missionary told him, “This is covetousness, and covetousness is sinful.” In [Romans 7](#) Paul also uses covetousness as an illustration. How difficult for us to control covetousness! The more we try not to be covetous, the more covetous we are. The Apostle Paul was trying to be righteous, holy, and perfect. To some extent at least, he was successful. He kept himself from stealing, but he could not keep himself from covetousness. In fact, he learned that it was impossible for him to control his covetousness. Therefore, he cried out, “Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death?” ([7:24](#)).

“THIS DEATH”

What did Paul mean by “this death”? He meant the death that, in the form of covetousness, was constantly killing him. In like manner, something within us is killing us every minute of the day. If we are loose or careless, we shall not realize this. But if we try to be upright, holy, spiritual, and perfect, we shall find that instead of being perfect, we are constantly being killed by death. To experience death, there is no need for us to wait until we are old and about to die

physically. Even with physical death there is the matter of dying gradually. Every day we die a little more, even as we are living. The older we become, the more we die. Suppose you have seventy dollars. If you spend five dollars, you have sixty-five dollars left. If you spend sixty-nine dollars and ninety-nine cents, you will have only a penny left. In like manner, we are spending our lifespan. Whether we are old or young, we are gradually dying.

Death is a profound matter. It kills our body, soul, and spirit. Right now it is killing your body, mind, will, and emotion. It is killing your heart and especially your spirit. This is the reason so many come to the church meetings in a dead way. They sit in their chairs without praying or functioning because they are dead and buried. It is impossible for such a dead one to shout, "Praise the Lord!" Some brothers are dead in the meetings because they have lost their temper with their wife. Even if you are unhappy with your wife without losing your temper outwardly, your spirit will be killed. Sometimes the leading brothers ask me why so many brothers and sisters do not function in the meetings. I tell them that the reason is that these saints are dead and in a coffin. How can you expect a dead one

to function? Do not exhort them or give them regulations. Instead, do something to cause them to be resurrected from their graves. Then they will speak in the meetings. My point is that we all have something within that the Bible calls death. Do not think that death will come only in the future. No, it may prevail within you today. Although its name is death, it is very active and strong, much more powerful than you are. By yourself, you cannot defeat it.

Many times in the meetings you have probably had the feeling to praise the Lord or to give a testimony. Immediately, however, you began to consider and deliberate, thinking that you should not utter anything carelessly. If you are careful like this, it indicates that you are under the influence of death. If you are summoned to appear on the witness stand before a judge, then you must be careful. But when you come to the church meeting, there is no need for you to be so careful. You need to lose your carefulness, release your spirit, and say, "Praise the Lord! Amen! I want to testify that Christ is my life." Any consideration will deaden you. Do you know why you are careful in the meetings? It is because you want to glorify yourself and not lose your face. This kind of consideration kills your spirit.

We have seen that because of the element of sin in us, we have been constituted sinners. The issue of sin is death, which kills and deadens us. Today we have not only the problem of sin, but also the problem of death. The fact that sin and death go together is proved by [Romans 8:2](#): “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has freed me from the law of sin and of death.” The law of sin and of death does not refer to two laws, but one law with two elements—sin and death. Where the law of sin is, there the law of death is also.

THE BODY OF SIN AND DEATH

[Romans 6:6](#) speaks of “the body of sin” and [7:24](#), of “the body of this death.” The body of sin is very active and energetic in doing sinful things. In doing the things of God we often feel tired, sleepy, and in need of rest. But when there is the opportunity to do something sinful, the tiredness disappears because the body of sin is so powerful. Although the body of sin is strong, the body of death is weak. In going to worldly amusements the body of sin is active, but in going to the church meeting the body of death is weak. The body of death may cause us to say, “I can’t go to the meeting. I don’t feel well, and my

child kept me awake last night. I'm so weak and tired. I need to stay home and rest." Depending on what it is related to, the same body may be either the body of sin or the body of death. In relation to sin, it is strong; in relation to God, it is weak. When our spirit is quickened, living, and exercised, our body is not tired. But when our spirit is cold, or even lukewarm, we may not desire to go to the meeting, but prefer to stay home and rest. Some sisters may say, "I have been so busy for the last three days that I am exhausted. I can't go to the meeting; I need to rest." Although this appears to be a fact, it is actually a false excuse.

LIFE FOR OUR MORTAL BODIES

As we have seen, in [7:24](#) Paul cried, "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death?" The way to be free from this death is found in [8:2](#). It is by the Spirit of life. We need to turn to our spirit and walk according to our spirit. Do not believe your feelings of tiredness. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred, such feelings are a lie. When it is time to go to a meeting, do not say that you are tired. That is a lie, and you should not believe it. Neither should you try to make up your mind to do something,

for that will not work. What we need to do is actually very simple: Turn to the spirit, stay in the spirit, and act, behave, and walk according to the spirit. If we do this, the Spirit of life in our spirit will give life even to our mortal bodies. Those who are burdened by the Lord to fast may go for days without eating and feel neither hungry nor tired, because they are living not by their physical strength but by the strength which comes from within their spirit. The spirit within becomes the source of the power for their living. If unbelievers fast in this way, they may be deadened after just one or two days. But if we, the believers, are led of the Lord to fast and if we fast in the spirit, we may go for many days without any problem. During that time we are living not by our physical strength but by the strength which comes from our spirit. From within our spirit the indwelling Spirit gives life to our physical body. It is in the same principle that we are freed from death.

If we are silent in the meetings, it is a sign that we are under the killing, the deadening, of death. At such times we must turn to our spirit and praise the Lord. If we are tired of attending the meetings, praying, or fellowshiping with the saints, this also is a sign that we are under the

killing and weakening of death. If we want to be free from this, we must turn to our spirit and say, “Praise the Lord! Lord Jesus! Hallelujah! Amen!” Immediately you will sense that power and strength from the fountain in your spirit are being transmitted into your mortal body.

CHRIST MAKING HIS HOME IN US

Romans 8 is a deep chapter, not only in doctrine but also in experience. The more we experience it, the deeper it seems to become. As far as doctrine is concerned, it is very easy to recite the verses in this chapter. But the experience contained in it is unfathomably profound. It is impossible, for example, to exhaust the experience in **verse 11**: “But if the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from among the dead dwells in you, He Who raised Christ Jesus from among the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit Who indwells you.” This verse reveals that the indwelling Spirit gives life to our mortal body. We must take this verse along with the preceding verse, which says, “if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is life because of righteousness.” Because Christ is in us, our spirit is life, although our body is dead because of sin. **Verse 11** says

that this Christ, who is the Spirit, must not only be in us, but also indwell us. To have Christ in us is one thing, but to have Christ indwell us is another. In [verse 10](#) we have the word “in”; however, in [verse 11](#) it is no longer just a matter of “in,” but of indwelling. Is Christ merely in you, or is He dwelling in you? We need the indwelling of Christ. For this, we must give Him the ground in our being. Christ is in you, but He may not be dwelling in you because He does not have the ground, the room, in you. If you allow Christ to dwell in you, the indwelling Christ, who is the indwelling Spirit, will impart life from your spirit into your mortal body. This means that the indwelling Spirit will spread Himself from your spirit into the members of your body.

After the indwelling Christ enlivens your spirit, He wants to quicken the members of your deadened body. I have the confidence that you have Christ in your spirit and that your spirit is life, but I am concerned that Christ has not been able to impart life into the members of your deadened, mortal body. On the one hand, our body is a deadened body; on the other hand, it is a mortal body. Praise the Lord that in [8:11](#) we see the way life can be supplied to our deadened body! The way is to allow Christ to dwell in us, to make

His home in us. The Greek word translated “dwells in” is not the word for “abide.” It is from the same root as the word used in [Ephesians 3:17](#) for Christ making His home in our heart. This root means house or home. Hence, it is not the ordinary word for abiding, but a weighty word related to Christ making His home in us.

GIVING CHRIST THE GROUND

Christ wants to gain more ground in us and to make His home in us. But He may not be free to settle down in us. Undoubtedly, our spirit is life, but we may not have life in our body. We may have Christ in our spirit, but not express Him. Some have said that shouting and praising are vain. But if they are vain, why is it some can say, “Praise the Lord!” and others cannot? Many pastors cannot say this because, in a sense, they have been killed. A few years ago a young man stood up in a conference and said that he did not agree with calling on the name of the Lord Jesus. But as he was speaking, he spontaneously called, “O Lord Jesus!” There have been many cases like this.

Many do not praise the Lord because their spirit is weak and their body, which has not been enlivened by the indwelling Christ, has been

deadened by the indwelling death. However, if we allow Christ to gain even an inch of ground within us, life will be ministered to our mortal body. It will spread out of our spirit into our deadened members, and we shall begin to praise the Lord. The more we praise the Lord, the more our whole being is empowered.

BEING LIBERATED PEOPLE

We cannot deny that the elements of sin and death are in us. How we thank the Lord that we also have the element called “the Spirit of life.” Furthermore, we have the element of the indwelling Christ. Having all these elements within us, the question is which we shall use in our “cooking.” A sister has many elements in her kitchen, but everything depends on which elements she chooses to cook with. We need always to turn to our spirit and to live according to our spirit. If we do this, the indwelling Christ will be real to us, and we shall see how unlimited He is. Eventually, He will spread Himself from our spirit into our deadened, mortal body. In this way we shall be completely freed from death.

When we are freed from sin, the law, the flesh, and death, we are truly liberated people. As such persons, we are no longer under sin, the law, the

flesh, and death. The way to be free from all these things is to have our old man crucified, to have our old husband buried, and to turn to the spirit, set our mind on the spirit, and walk according to the spirit. If we do this, we shall eventually be freed completely. This word may be rather simple and brief, but if we practice and experience it, we shall see that it is unlimited, unfathomable, deep, and profound.

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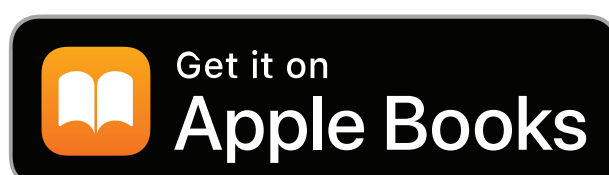
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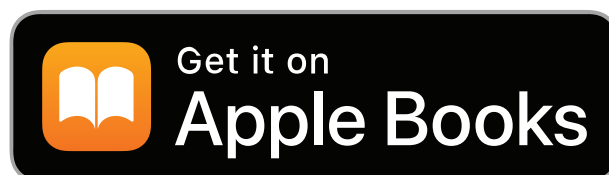
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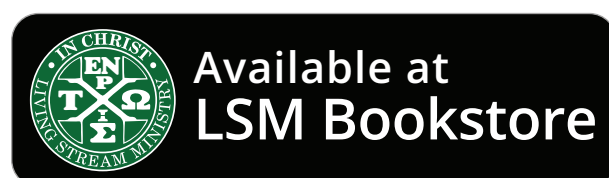
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