

ROMANS
Lesson 222–September 13, 2015

Welcome To
BARAH MINISTRIES
a Christian Church
Rory Clark
Pastor-Teacher

Good Morning!

Welcome to Barah Ministries...a worldwide Christian Church based in Mesa, AZ...my name is Pastor Rory Clark.

Romans, Chapter 8, Verses 1 to 13...

ROM 8:1

Therefore there is now NO CONDEMNATION for those who are IN UNION WITH CHRIST JESUS.

ROM 8:2

For THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE in Christ Jesus has set you free from THE LAW OF SIN AND OF DEATH.

ROM 8:3

FOR WHAT THE MOSAIC LAW COULD NOT DO, weak as it was through the flesh, GOD THE FATHER DID: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh...and as an offering for sin, the Father condemned sin in the flesh...

ROM 8:4

...so that the requirement of the Mosaic Law (righteousness) might be fulfilled in us, who DO NOT WALK ACCORDING TO THE FLESH but who WALK ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT.

ROM 8:5

For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, set their minds on the things of the Spirit.

ROM 8:6

For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life

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and peace...

ROM 8:7

...because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so...

ROM 8:8

...and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

ROM 8:9

However, you (believers in Christ) are not in the flesh but you are in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, that one does not belong to Christ.

ROM 8:10

If Christ is in you, (and He is for believers in Christ) though the body is dead because of sin (indwelling), yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness (indwelling).

ROM 8:11

But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you (and He does for believers in Christ), He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

ROM 8:12

So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—

ROM 8:13

...for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if you are living by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

Welcome to the continuation of our study of the first passage in Romans, Chapter 8, our introduction to the foundational principles concerning our Mentor, our Guide and our Teacher, God the Holy Spirit.

MUSIC AND REFLECTION

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Be Occupied with the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ
Enjoy the Singing of His Praises

DROPS IN THE OCEAN
Hawk Nelson

The opening song is DROPS IN THE OCEAN by Hawk Nelson.

OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray...

We're grateful, Heavenly Father, for the privilege of studying Your absolute truth...the Word of God...

We ask this through the power of God the Holy Spirit in Christ's name...Amen.

TODAY'S STUDY

God's View of the Flesh

The Thoughts of Watchman Nee

It's always amazing to me when I run across a Christian who has lucid thinking concerning God and His Word and who is able to express Himself in ways that makes complete sense. Watchman Nee is such a Christian. He was born November 4, 1903 and he died May 30, 1972. He was a church leader and a Christian teacher who worked in China during the 20th century. In 1922, he initiated church meetings that may be considered to be the beginning of the Christian church in China. During his thirty-year ministry, Nee published many books which taught biblical subjects. He established churches throughout China and held many conferences to train bible students and church workers. Following the Communist Revolution in China, Nee was persecuted, prosecuted, and imprisoned for his faith, and he spent the last twenty years of his life in prison.

In today's lesson, I'd like to share some of his thoughts concerning "the flesh" with you so you too can have an experience of his lucid thinking on this biblical subject. And what makes his thinking so lucid is that he teaches

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from God’s point of view, a rarity in Christian circles. First, a few announcements.

BARAH MINISTRIES ANNOUNCEMENTS

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Barah Ministries

PENNSYLVANIA AND NEW YORK BIBLE CONFERENCE

Binghamton, NY

September 18-19, 2015

Looking forward to that...

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

EVENING SERVICE

September 20, 2015

6:00P-7:30P

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Next Deacon’s Meeting

September 26, 2015

7:30AM MST

TODAY’S STUDY

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Christians need to be reminded of God’s judgment upon the flesh. John, Chapter 6, Verse 63...

JOH 6:63

It is God the Holy Spirit who gives THE LIFE; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I (the Lord Jesus Christ) have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

Whether it be the sin produced by the flesh (lasciviousness) or the righteousness produced by the flesh (legalism), “the flesh” is futile. That which is born of the flesh, whatever it may be, is flesh, and can never be “unfleshed.”

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Whether it be the flesh in the pulpit, the flesh in the congregation, the flesh in prayers, the flesh in reading the bible, the flesh in singing hymns, or the flesh in doing good...none of these, says God, can profit anything. However much believers may lust in the flesh, God declares it all to be unprofitable... for neither does the flesh profit the spiritual life nor can it fulfill the righteousness of God.

Let us now note a few observations concerning the flesh, which the Lord through the Apostle Paul makes in the letter to the Romans.

Romans, Chapter 8, Verse 6 says, “To set the mind on the flesh is death.” According to God’s view there is spiritual death in the flesh. The only escape is to commit the flesh to the Cross. Regardless how competent the flesh is to do good or to plan or to plot so as to gain the approval of men, God has pronounced upon the flesh simply one judgment: death.

Romans, Chapter 8, Verse 7 says, “The mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God.” The flesh is opposed to God. There is not the slightest chance of peaceful co-existence between the flesh and God. This holds true in regard not only to the sins that come from the flesh, but also to its noblest thoughts and actions of the flesh. Obviously defiling sins are hostile to God, but let us observe that righteous acts can be done independently of God as well.

Romans, Chapter 8, Verse 7 says, “The flesh does not submit to God’s law...indeed it cannot.” The more the flesh works, the farther away it is from God. How many of the “good” people are willing to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? Their self-righteousness is not righteousness at all; it is actually unrighteousness. No one can ever obey all the teaching of the Holy Bible. Whether a person (an unbeliever) is good or bad, one thing is certain...in his flesh, he does not submit to God’s law. When being bad he transgresses the law; when being good he establishes another righteousness outside of the righteousness of Christ and thus misses the purpose of the law...Romans, Chapter 3, Verse 20...“...through the law comes knowledge of sin.”

Romans, Chapter 8, Verse 7 says, “Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.” This is the final verdict. Regardless how good a man may be, if the doing is out from himself, it cannot please God. God is pleased with His Son

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alone (propitiation); aside from the Lord Jesus Christ and His work, no man nor any work can delight God. What is performed by the flesh may seem to be quite good...nevertheless, because it derives from self and is done in natural strength it cannot satisfy God. Man may devise many ways to do good, to improve, and to advance, but these things are considered carnal by God, and cannot please Him. This carnality is not only the providence of the unregenerate (unbelievers); it is likewise true of the regenerated person (believers in Christ). No matter how commendable and effective should anything be that is done in a person's own strength, even the believer fails to bring upon himself the approval of God. God's pleasure or displeasure is not founded upon the principle of good and evil. Rather, God traces the source of things. An action may be quite correct, yet God inquires, "What is its source?"

From these scripture references, we can begin to appreciate how vain and futile are the efforts of the flesh. A believer who is shown precisely God's estimation of the flesh will not blunder easily. As human beings we distinguish between good works and evil works; God on the other hand goes behind and makes a distinction as to the source of every work. The most excellent deed of the flesh brings down upon it the same displeasure of God, as would the most defiled and wicked work of the flesh, for they all are of the flesh. God hates unrighteousness, and so He abhors self-righteousness. The good acts done naturally without the necessity of regeneration or union with Christ or dependence upon the Holy Spirit are no less carnal before God than are immorality, impurity, licentiousness, and all of the other immoral sins. However beautiful man's activities may be, if they do not spring from a complete trust in God the Holy Spirit, they are carnal and are therefore rejected by God. God opposes, rejects, and hates everything belonging to the flesh regardless of outward appearances and regardless whether done by a sinner or a saint. God's verdict is: the flesh must die. Let's take a music break, and then we'll continue.

MUSIC BREAK

HE IS EXALTED

Twila Paris

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But how can a believer see what God sees? God is so adamant against the flesh and its every activity; yet the believer appears to reject only its bad features while clinging affectionately to the flesh itself. He does not reject categorically the whole thing of “the flesh.” Instead, he continues to do many things in the flesh...he even assumes a self-confident and proud attitude about it as though now he is rich with God’s grace, he is qualified to perform righteously. The believer literally is making use of his flesh. Because of such self-deceit the Holy Spirit of God must lead him over the most shameful path in order to make him know his flesh and help Him attain God’s view of the flesh. God allows that soul to fall, to weaken, and even to sin, that he may understand whether or not any good resides in the flesh. This usually happens to the one who thinks he is progressing spiritually. The Lord tries him in order that the person may know himself. Often the Lord so reveals His holiness to such a person that the believer cannot but judge his flesh as defiled. Sometimes the Lord permits Satan to attack the person so that, out of his suffering, he may perceive himself accurately. It is altogether a most difficult lesson, and it is not learned within a day or night. Only after many years does one gradually come to realize how untrustworthy is his flesh.

There is uncleanness even in his best effort. God consequently lets him experience Romans, Chapter 7 deeply, until he is ready to acknowledge with Paul, in Romans, Chapter 7, Verses 18...“I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh.” How hard to learn to say “the flesh” genuinely! If it were not for countless experiences of painful defeat the believer would continue to trust himself and would consider himself able. Those hundreds and thousands of defeats bring him to concede that all self-righteousness is totally undependable, that no good abides in his flesh. Such dealing, however, does not terminate here. Self-judgment must continue. For whenever a Christian ceases to judge himself by failing to treat the flesh as useless and utterly detestable but assuming instead even a slightly self-flattering and vainglorious attitude, then God is compelled to run him again through fire in order to consume the dregs. How few are they who humble themselves and acknowledge their uncleanness! Unless such a state is realized God will not withdraw His dealings. Since a believer cannot be freed from the influence of the flesh for a moment, he should never cease exercising the heart to judge himself; otherwise he will step once more into the boasting of the flesh.

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Many suppose the Holy Spirit's conviction of sin pertains just to the people of the world (unbelievers), for does He not convict them of their sins into believing the Lord Jesus? But Christians ought to know that such operation of the Holy Spirit is as important in the saints as it is in the sinners. Out of necessity He must convict the saints of their sins, not merely once or twice but daily and incessantly. May we more and more experience the conviction of the Holy Spirit so that our flesh can be put under judgment unceasingly and never be able to reign. May we not lose, even for a moment, the true picture of our flesh and God's estimation of it. Let us never believe in ourselves and never trust our flesh again, as though it could ever please God. Let us always trust God the Holy Spirit and at no time yield the slightest place to self.

As it pertains to the believer's experiences in this life, if ever there was one in the world who could boast of his flesh that person must be Paul. For as to righteousness under the law, he was blameless. And if any could boast of his flesh following regeneration, it certainly must be Paul again because he has become an apostle who has seen the risen Lord with his own eyes and who is used greatly by the Lord. But Paul dare not boast, for he knows his flesh. His Romans 7 experience enables him to realize fully who he is. God already has opened his eyes to see, via his experiences, that there dwells no good in his flesh, only sin.

The self-righteousness of which he boasted in the past he now knows to be human excrement and sin. He has learned and learned well this lesson; hence he dare not trust the flesh again. But with this lesson he does not cease. No, Paul continues to learn. And so in Philippians, Chapter 3, Verses 3 and 4, the Apostle declares that he can. "Put no confidence in the flesh. Though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If any other man thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more." Despite the many reasons he can marshal for trusting his flesh, Paul realizes how God regards it and well understands how absolutely undependable and untrustworthy the flesh is.

If we continue reading Philippians 3, we shall discover how humble Paul is with respect to trusting in himself. Philippians, Chapter 3, Verse 9... "Not having a righteousness of my own" ... Verse 11 ... "...that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead" ... Verse 12 ... "not that I have

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already obtained this or am already perfect; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.”

Should a believer aspire to attain spiritual maturity, he must preserve forever that attitude which the Apostle Paul maintained throughout his spiritual walk; namely, “not that I have already attained.” The Christian dare not entertain the slightest self-confidence, self-satisfaction or self-joy, as though he could trust his flesh.

If the children of God honestly strive for the life more abundant and are ready to accept God’s assessment of the flesh, they will not esteem themselves stronger and better than others, notwithstanding their extensive spiritual progress. They will not utter such words as, “I, of course, am different from the others.” If these believers are disposed to let the Holy Spirit reveal to them God’s holiness and their corruption and do not fear to be shown too clearly, then hopefully they will come to perceive by the agency of God the Holy Spirit their corruption at an earlier time, with perhaps a consequent lessening of the painful experiences of defeat. How lamentable it is, though, that even when one’s intention may not be to trust “the flesh,” that there may yet lurk beneath the surface some little impurity, for such a one still thinks he has some strength. In view of this, God must permit him to encounter diverse defeats in order to eliminate even that little confidence in himself.

I could go on and share more of Watchman Nee’s thoughts with you...but I have some thoughts of my own. Let’s review the passage before I give them to you. Romans, Chapter 8, Verses 1 to 13...

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I found myself, at this point in the lesson preparation, feeling much like I did when I first discovered I had a nature prone to sin...when I first discovered I had “the flesh” inside of me...I felt helpless...I felt there was nothing I could do to please God...and now three decades later I realize it is true...there is nothing I can do to please God...not my positive actions in “the flesh” ... not my negative actions in “the flesh.” I find that I have no strength. I find that my life is filled with failures...defeat after defeat designed to teach me that I have no strength, and I am certain I have learned the lesson, and that I will keep on learning it...for in the moment that I stop learning it, I will go back to deciding I have strength.

I conclude then that I have no idea what the Christian Way of Living really is...what is it really like when I am being all God wants me to be...I don’t know. I do know this...the fantasy I have in my mind about the Christian Way of Living is not accurate...because it contains me. I don’t know what life is like without my self-sufficiency in it. But I know God can teach me. I am eager to learn. Won’t you join me?

**When the Lord Jesus Christ
Promises Salvation, It’s a Guarantee!**

ROM 3:10

...as it is written, “There is none righteous, not even one”

ROM 5:8

But God the Father demonstrates His own unconditional love toward all mankind, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

JOH 3:17

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For God the Father did not send the Son (the Lord Jesus Christ) into the world to condemn the world, but the Father sent His Son into the world that the world might be saved through believing in Him.

JOH 1:12

But as many as received the Lord (taking advantage of the free gift of salvation), to them He gave the right (once and for all time) to become children of God...to those who believe in Christ's name...

CLOSING SONG

WHEN YOU SUFFER

June Murphy

CLOSING PRAYER

Let us pray...

THANKS - INTERCESSION - PETITION

And we pray that You continue to shape messages from this pulpit that accurately reflect Your unconditional love, Your glorious Person, Your lucid thinking, Your impeccable work, and Your magnificent essence...we ask this through the power of God the Holy Spirit, in Christ's name, Amen.

Thanks for coming!
Thanks for watching!
Thanks for listening!

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