

The Great Contrast

Rom 8:5-8 ⁵ For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. ⁶ For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. ⁷ Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. ⁸ So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

The first four verses of this climatic chapter of the Letter to the Romans tells us of our great victory in Christ. We who have been redeemed are now no longer under condemnation. He has explained why and how this can be. Christ Jesus who knew no sin, who had perfectly kept the law of God had become sin for us and thus condemned sin in the flesh that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us. He now continues this instruction by pointing out the great difference between those who walk after the flesh and those in Christ who now walk according to the Spirit.

A. Let us now consider the great contrast between the believer and the unbeliever.

1. It is seen in the mindset of each one.

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

2. Remind you of the words of our Lord when he responded to the charge against the disciples when they eaten with unwashed hands.

Matt 15:19-20 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man."

3. Scripture tells us that as a man thinks in his heart so is he. - *For as he thinks in his heart, so is he, Prov 23:7.*
4. Paul here is not speaking of the means of salvation, but the result of salvation.

B. Paul points out that those that are in the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh. - *For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh.*

1. The carnal mind thinks only on things that are temporal and passing.
2. They are by nature devoted to the gratification of their corrupt desires.

Gal 5:19-21 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

3. This is why Paul points out in another place that these ought not to be the thoughts and desires of those who name the name of Christ.

Eph 5:3-4 But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.

4. This is not to be looked upon lightly for - ⁶ *For to be carnally minded is death.*

C. The reason the carnal mind is set upon the things of this world, the things that are passing.

⁷ *Because the carnal mind **is enmity against God**; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.* ⁸ *So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*

1. The carnal mind is at war with God.
 - a. Not only is the carnal sinner a dead man he is at war against God.
 - b. Such is not only an enemy, but enmity itself.
 - c. It is not only the alienation of the soul from God, but the opposition of the soul against God.
 - d. It rebels against his authority. - *for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be*

2. This is why Jesus told His disciples that the world would hate them.

John 15:18-19 "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."

3. John tells us that this is to be expected. – *1 John 3:13 Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you.*
 - a. The church ought not to be surprised when the world wants to remove the 10 commandments from public places.
 - b. We are not going to “Christianize” the world by political action.
4. We need to warn the world about us that their mind set will result in an eternal death. - *Rom. 6:23 the wages of sin is death.*
5. At the same time we need to be aware that they **cannot** because they **will not** be of the mind to please God. - *So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*
6. The whole of Scripture is about the need to be born again.
 - a. Jesus said it plainly to Nicodemus.

John 3:6-7 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

- b. We are engaged in a spiritual not temporal warfare.
- c. This is the message of the church.

CONCLUSION – I want to close with this illustration from the life of our Lord.

I would remind us how Peter had rebuked Jesus regarding His upcoming death on the cross and then how our Lord rebuked Peter.

*Matt 16:23 But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not **mindful** of the things of God, but the things of men."*

Peter was concerned about the temporal, an earthly kingdom.

God is concerned about things eternal. About salvation.

But again notice the difference in the mind of Peter at Pentecost after being brought under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

He now understand the purpose of the crucifixion.

He now sees the eternal benefits of the suffering of our Lord.

Acts 2:22-24 22 "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know — 23 Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; 24 whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. . . . 30 Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne.

Note – Peter is no longer concerned about the temporal – now he proclaims the gospel.

Peter's mind was now on things spiritual. He understood . . .

It was not about a temporal kingdom; it was about a kingdom that is eternal in the heavens.

It was not a temporal victory over Rome; it is an eternal victory over death.

Remember how Paul began the opening of this letter stating that he was not ashamed of the Gospel

The reason can be found here - To be spiritually minded is life and peace.

Our hope is eternal life with God our Savior.

Our state is that we are no longer at war with God, but we are now at peace with God our Savior.