

# Notes for the Ekklesia Meeting

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## The Life is In Christ

by Dan Trygg

“Therefore now there is not any condemnation for the ones in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup> For the principle of the Spirit of the life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the principle of the sin and of the death.” Romans 8:1,2

“But, you are not in flesh but in Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, this one is not of Him. <sup>10</sup> But if Christ is in you, on the one hand the body is dead because of sin, on the other hand the Spirit is life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup> But if the Spirit of the One raising Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the one raising Christ Jesus from the dead will make alive also your mortal bodies through the indwelling of His Spirit in you.” Romans 8:9-11

“For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more the ones taking-hold-of the abundance of the grace and of the free-gift of the righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.” Romans 5:17

The NT tells us that there is an entirely different way to live. We can either live by our own resources and perspective, or we can be guided and empowered by God. We can try to be good in our own strength, or we can learn to embrace and express the good, gracious, loving life of the Spirit God has put within us. **We can work harder at the old way that never worked before, or we can allow God to teach us to live in an entirely different way**, one that He says is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond our earthly expectations or abilities. We can align ourselves with Adam, and live the life of a fallen, sin-tainted human being, ...or we can align ourselves with Christ, and live the life that God provides to demonstrate and express His heart and character. **We can live a life of this present evil age, or we can live by the life of the age to come, available to us here through Christ.** We can live as though we were still slaves of sin, or we can live as ones who are dead toward sin and alive to God. **We can live a natural human life, or we can live by the nature of a superhuman life.** We can live a self-directed life, or we can be directed by the Holy Spirit. **We can live to fulfill ourselves, or we can deny ourselves to be filled full of the Spirit.** We can look for God to bless what *we* are doing, or we can look to serve and bless what *God* is doing. We can choose to dabble in the darkness, or we can choose to put aside darkness and walk in the light. **We can choose to be like those around us, or we can choose to be changed into something different.** We can live by what we already know, or we can seek to discern God's perspective. We can design our lives by the wisdom of the world, ...or we can choose to follow the wisdom of God, and be considered a fool by the world. **We can be earthly minded, and no heavenly good, ...or we can be heavenly minded and bring the goodness of heaven to earth.** We can seek to be great and powerful, so that others will serve *us*, ...or we can choose to grow in the grace and power of God, so we can serve *others*. **We can live to get glory and honor for ourselves, ...or we can desire to be filled with the indwelling radiant glory of God and live to bring Him the praise and the honor.** The God-empowered life is not obscure or mysterious, yet it was hidden from the eyes of humanity for centuries, a mystery to be revealed at the fullness of time. This mystery is Christ in you, the hope of the glory. **We can earn paychecks of death from serving sin as our master, ...or we can receive and experience God's kingdom-life as a free gift**, when we commit ourselves to Christ as our Source and live for Him. Bottom line, **the life of God is made available to us in Christ.**

The most clearly presented, systematic presentation of NT preaching we have in the scriptures is contained in Paul's letter to the Romans. In the first couple of chapters, he lays out for us the human tendency to disregard the God who is all around us, and live for selfish, sensual pleasures. Whether we have little revelation about God at all, or whether we are moralistic, or even raised in a religious background, **our fallen human tendency is the same: we suppress the truth in order to do what we want to do.** We find a way to disregard what we know is right, in order to justify our behavior. **This is the human condition.** It does not matter what ethnic, racial, social or religious background you may be from. **We all do it. We all even know that we do it.** If the prick of our conscience were not enough, God communicated to us the Torah, the Law or the Instruction, to clearly expose our twist toward sin and selfishness. **Sin came into the world through our first parents, Adam and Eve. They chose to suppress the truth for selfish gain. Sin brought about death.** In fact, *Paul likens death to being like a paycheck for serving sin.* We serve sin, and it may seem to have no negative consequences at all, ...except maybe an uneasiness inside that this is not right. Eventually, however, the paycheck comes in the mail. **Can you imagine a job where the paycheck is a debit on your account?** Would you work there for long? Well, that is what serving sin is like. **Sin is like the old “company store” arrangement** that abusive business owners at one time created. In order to work the job, you had to live in company housing, purchase food, clothing and work supplies at the company store. In theory, it sounded like the company was just making things convenient for the workers. In reality, however, the prices were set so high that the worker was always in debt to the company. Like the old song about the coal miners working under this

scenario, “You dig 16 tons, what do you get? Another day older, and deeper in debt. Saint Peter don’t you call me, ‘cause I can’t go, -- I owe my soul to the company store!” Of course, the poor miner does eventually die, and leaves a huge debt for the family to pay, and they, too, grow up into economic and emotional slavery to “the company”. That, in a nutshell, is the human condition. **There is a hope or promise of life in small experiences, or through years of self-effort, but in the end, it is all a mirage, a scam, and we end up worn out, tired, and feeling the weight of consequences that suck the life out of us.** This whole set-up is what Paul refers to as the “law of sin and death”. **On top of it all, the “business owner”, the god of this world-system, the devil, heaps accusations and condemnation upon us. He is like the company store bill collector,** calling us and harassing us, demanding immediate payment, telling us to work harder, all the while driving us deeper into his clutches.

**The purpose of the Law was to show us what was really going on.** It was like turning a light on in the darkness. **Unfortunately, it was powerless to change our situation.** Even worse, having the light on means we have to pay for the electricity! **The Law actually aggravated the burden.** Seeing how bad things are just increased the level of frustration, and people find themselves driven to do more to alleviate their inner pain. They find themselves suppressing the truth in order to get a little pleasure or selfish advantage. **The Law, which was meant to be a good thing, actually revealed our desperate plight, and our inability to deliver ourselves.** It showed that the power of sin inside of us actually will drive us to do what we know is wrong, and we can’t deceive ourselves about it anymore. Sin is shown to be utterly sinful. **In that way, the Law prepares us to see the need for a Savior.**

Into all this darkness, heaviness, gloom and pall of death comes the bright light of the good news of salvation. **God has loved you enough to pay all your debts, and offer you a new way to live life.** See, here is the tricky part. We believe the first part, that Jesus paid for our sins, but most of us don’t ever really believe the second part, that Jesus calls us to a new life, ...or if we intellectually acknowledge it, we don’t believe it enough to really pursue it. We’ve grown up in the devil’s system, and we know how to “survive” there, ...at least, we think we do. **Most of us are content to ask God to pay our account at “the company store”, but we continue on as we have.** Before long, we are back in debt, and we find ourselves doing the same kinds of things we used to do to feel better when we felt bad. **We continue to serve sin as our master, and we keep getting those negative paychecks.** We keep cashing them, and the consequences continue to suck the life out of us.

This is NOT what salvation is all about! This is NOT what it means to be a Christian! **Jesus did not come to pay our debt and leave us in our slavery. Jesus came to liberate us from slavery to sin, death and the devil. He calls us to come out of our prison** (company housing, company job, company store) **and follow Him. Discipleship is the process of reorienting our lives to discover true freedom, life, power and purpose in Christ.**

If we look at Romans 8:1,2, we are confronted with some startling information. First of all, **there is now no longer any condemnation for those who are in Christ. NONE!** God does not look at us with judgment or rejection. **Why? Because He has already redeemed us out of sin’s penalty, power and dominion. We are His,** ...lock, stock and barrel, as they say. His salvation plan is much bigger, much broader and much deeper than what we are typically aware of. Oh, He knows our failings, our confusion and our aberrant behaviors. He knows that we are still punching the enemy’s time clock, and getting the paychecks that proceed from serving sin. **BUT, He knows who will win out at the end. He knows the power of the resurrection life which has been released into our world.** He knows that anyone who has truly been joined with Jesus will be transformed in the end. He wants us to embrace the process of transformation now. He wants us to escape the cycle of deception, serving sin, getting the negative paychecks, ...because they are painful and destructive to us and to others. **BUT, He knows that, whether now or later, He will eventually see us totally renewed, standing before Him in purity and glory.** So, having chosen to love His Son makes us precious to Him, and He looks at us with compassion now, not judgment.

The second part of this passage may come as a surprise to some of us, however. “the principle of the Spirit of the life in Christ Jesus *has set you free* from the principle of sin and death.” **We have already been set free!** There is a spiritual principle that is greater than the principle of sin and death we have lived with all of our lives. The principle is “the Spirit of the life [that is] in Christ Jesus”. **What overcomes the sin and death principle is an infusion of life from the Holy Spirit. The Spirit takes the things of Jesus, ...the things He purchased and did for us, all that He is for us..., and makes them known to us** (Jn. 16:13-15). Jesus *is* the life (Jn. 1:4; 11:25; 14:6). As we take Him into us, and as we abide in Him, He will be our life in the here and now (Jn. 6:35; 15:1). He can satisfy our empty longings, and fill us with joy (Jn. 7:37-39; 15:1-11; cf. Neh. 8:10). **Before, sin reigned in death over us. Now, by taking hold of the rich, overflowing abundance of inworking energy and grace provided for us in Christ, we can reign in life over the power of sin and death that is around us and within our earthly bodies.** As long as we are in these bodies, **the application of the life of Jesus does not just happen. It must be chosen and applied.** We must put off the old way of living and put on the new way. **The healing, overcoming, empowering life is in Jesus. Faith goes after, discovers and applies it. Those who are serious will invest themselves in knowing and following Him.**