

Minding flesh and spirit contrasted (Quality: Good)

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[0 : 0 0] for they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh but they that are after the spirit the things of the spirit for to be carnally minded is death but to be spiritually minded is life and peace the apostle is here speaking to that church the church of Jesus Christ in Rome that church which he had founded by the grace of God those who were made partakers of the things of God and he is setting before them clearly of grace and in this portion we have before us in this chapter the apostle is describing those twin graces justification and sanctification now it does us well to remember what these two graces are the distinction between them and the purpose of them let us firstly then as the Lord may be pleased to help consider justification man is born in sin and shapen in iniquity as in Adam all die so in Jesus Christ all are made alive

Adam by transgression fell Adam fell into sin and because Adam sinned all the whole world from Adam to this day even to the end of time are sinners in God's sight you will remember that Adam was favoured in that garden of Eden to live close to God there was no separation made but he could freely walk in that garden and God himself walked with Adam in that garden and what a blessed portion that was what a blessed season that must have been there was nothing to come in between Adam and his God but the serpent we read is more subtle than any and that serpent it deceived Eve it deceived Adam they sinned against God they for sook that commandment which God hath made that of this tree thou shalt not eat for the day wherein thou eatest thou wilt surely die and you will remember that the serpent said unto her hath God said oh if we can see this portion of God's word that there was in that very act against God that which should bring enmity between

God and man then we are of all men most truly blessed or Adam fell and the whole race fell with him Adam died he died spiritually in that time and there was that separation made and Adam and his wife they were cast out of that garden never to come into the presence of God again oh what a fearful judgment this was upon mankind that Adam should be forever cast out of the presence of God now we are the sons and the daughters of Adam as Adam sinned so have we sinned we were born in sin and shaped in iniquity we have grown up in sin sin is mixed in all that we do we cannot be rid of sin sin is ever before us the Lord

Jesus Christ he came that he might be the sinner's friend he came into the world to save sinners and here is the sinner's hope here is that one hope that God and sinners are reconciled in Jesus Christ the law makes a man guilty of death the soul that's in it it shall die we have all sinned we are all under that condemnation of death and we shall all die in our sins except we be saved by the blood of Christ we stand at the bar of eternal justice we stand in the dock as one who is condemned and the cry goes out guilty guilty of death and that guilt and that condemnation is upon every one of us everyone without exception salvation but this is our mercy this is our hope this is our joy but there is one who stands between the sinner's advocate the sinner's friend tis Christ our only hope and he says

I have paid that price loose him and let him go Jesus became the sinner's substitute Jesus took upon himself that guilt that condemnation and he paid the price that the law demanded he paid that price to the very utmost God cannot condemn the sinner now for he looks upon the sinner and instead of that hideous mass of sin he sees his only beloved son now this is justification justified in the sight of God not by what we have done for we could do nothing for we were under that condemnation from our very birth and who can say that they have lived without sin you know the law demanded that it must be kept to the very last jot and tittle nothing should be left undone if a sinner offended him one point then he offended in all we read in the old testament of that fearful condemnation which was brought in the law and if one should come unto the mount he was to be stoned to death if an animal would but touch the mount it was to be a thrust through nothing of a sinful nature could come unto

[9 : 13] God nothing dare approach unto his holiness but Christ Christ came he paid that price he was obedient even unto death he obeyed the law to the very end he was born in this world but he was not born of this world and we believe in that virgin birth where he took upon himself the likeness of sinful flesh and remember that it was but the likeness sin only accepted that he lived that perfect meritorious life upon this earth and he suffered not for his own sin there was no condemnation I find no just cause of death in this man death there is nothing in him worthy of death but it is

Christ in the sinner's place he died not for his own sins but he died for the sins of all his people from the beginning to the end of time this is justification justified in the sight of God through Christ Jesus and here is the only justification that we can obtain it is in Christ and in Christ alone and then we have that other grace sanctification and this is the grace more particularly spoken of in our text this night that whereby the sinner is separated from a world of sin that whereby he grows in grace and in a knowledge of the Lord and Saviour of

Jesus Christ for when we were in the flesh the motions of sin which were by the law did work in our members to bring forth a fruit unto death it was necessary then there must be a new birth for as we are born in sin and shapen in iniquity then do we mind the things of the flesh for they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh now can you look back to a time and no doubt we all can look back to a time when we walked according to the flesh when we had that spirit of the world in us when our desires and our chief concerns and our chief ends and our chief prospects were in this world that we should lust after the things of the flesh when we should walk according to the knowledge of this world and we could see nothing further before us than to dwell in pleasure and in sin we coveted those things which were of the earth we had no desire for the things of

God we had no desire for that life which is to come but our minds were attuned to this world and we sought better and better things we sought a bigger and bigger prospect we wanted the riches the wealth the honour the pomp the ceremony of this world and we were satisfied with those things and this is the sad thing as we look about today in this world in which we live that men and women are satisfied with the things of this earth but they can see nothing further than what they have and what they want how many are out in the world this night are seeking to obtain more of this world are seeking to walk in the ways of sin are seeking to satisfy the lusts of the flesh for they that are after the flesh to mind the things of the flesh because they know no difference they know nothing else their only hope is in this life they have no concern over an ever dying soul they have no desire to think upon the day of their death they have no prospect in eternity therefore they are like the brute beast which must satisfy itself while it has life and once we were accounted amongst them once we sought the pleasures of sin for a season once we walked according to the prospects of this world once our desires were the things for which earth could afford us but was there ever a time was there ever a day was there ever a season which came upon us which made us think differently oh

Nicodemus came to the Lord he came and sought the Lord and the Lord said unto him Nicodemus ye must be born again and you know Nicodemus he had no idea of what the Lord was speaking about how can a man be born again how can he enter again into his mother's womb these things to Nicodemus were impossible but the Lord said ye must be born again and it is that new life that new life of the spirit of Jesus Christ which is given unto the soul now we have to search ourselves we have to ask ourselves this very important question do we know anything of that new spirit is there now a new desire is there now an aching void the world can never fill are we are we dissatisfied with the things of this earth do our prospects rise to those things which are above but they that are after the spirit the things of the spirit this is given unto each child of

[16 : 43] God nor we may not be able to call ourselves the children of God we may not be able to give ourselves such a title as this but has there been any change a change of direction with some it is a most dramatic change we think of the Philippian jailer he was suddenly wrought upon and he sought to take his own life and he cried unto Paul what must I do to be saved and what an answer was given unto him believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and earlier in that chapter we have that account of Lydia oh what a dear character she is as she went to that place as she met for prayer and as she met for prayer the

Lord met with her and she like Timothy were constrained in love they were drawn in they were gently wrought upon from on high but whether your case is like Lydia or Timothy or Paul or the Philippian jailer whatever your case be has there been a change is there now a new desire is there now a blessed prospect of those things which are above where Christ now reigns in glory for to be carnally minded is death but to be spiritually minded is life and peace how offensive is the gospel to some how offensive it is to the natural mind that God should save some and others should be left to perish does this offend you do you find in the hardness of your heart an offense in the things of God for to be carnally minded is death and we all have in us that carnal nature that which shall bring us at last to death now this does not speak of the natural death it speaks of a spiritual death it speaks of that second death that separation throughout eternity from God oh it was with the rich man in the case of the rich man and

Lazarus the rich man he had his fill in this world he sought the things and he had in abundance other things of the pleasures of this life he lacked nothing he had all that he wanted he lived sumptuously he had daily all that ever he wanted but a kind came when he had to die we have set before us that eternal state that in hell he lifted up his eyes and seeing Lazarus far off in the bosom of Abraham he saw Lazarus who had lived that life here upon earth with nothing the dogs came and licked his sword he ate of the crumbs which fell from the master's table he had nothing in this world he lived in poverty he lived in rags he had no hope or prospect in this world he had no pleasure in this life therefore his thoughts were directed to a better life to that prospect which was to come and he was given that hope that one day he should leave the scene of sorrow and be brought into the pleasures of heaven and so we have set before us that of this life of one that lived in the carnal condition of his heart with his desires very much in the world who had everything he wanted here below who had no thought of eternity to come and we have the other who had nothing in this life who suffered affliction with the people of

God and yet in heaven he had all in abundance and that one he lifted up his eyes being in torment and cried but you see there was this great gulf fixed between them that one could not enter into heaven if he would and those in heaven could not enter into hell if they might that great gulf was fixed and it was then too late too late for that one to think about eternity too late to have any prospects of heaven life was at an end it was finished with him and now even at this time eternity still goes on that man is still in a wretched condition and there is no hope at all ever for him to be carnally minded is death where then are our prospects where are our hopes where are our desires do we call ourselves

Christians do we come to the chapel to the church on the Lord's day and in the week we enjoy the pleasures of this world oh how searching a text like this is to the true child of God where are our thoughts where are our desires where are our prospects are they in heaven or are they upon the earth yes if we have that new spirit there will still be that old nature which will war against it there will be that at times which rises up within us which will bring us or seek to bring us down to the earth but are our prospects in this world do we choose to suffer with the people of God do we set our hopes and our desires on things above or are they still in this earth below are we seeking after riches is it the greed of money that we see all around us at this time is this our desire do we want to build bigger and better barns do we want to fill those barns or do we want to lay up in store that which will see us through our old age that which will keep us in comfort that which will do us good thou fall this day this night thy soul shall be required of thee and what then what if

[25 : 02] I should gain the whole world and lose my eternal soul to be carnally minded is death not will be death mark the wording here to be carnally minded is death because that sentence of death is already passed upon us we are as dead men if we are of that carnal nature to be spiritually minded is life and peace now it is of no avail calling ourselves a christian and not walking in the pathway of life but ye are not in the flesh but in the spirit if so be that the spirit of god dwell in you now mark these words how separating they are now if any man have not the spirit of christ he is none of his i will repeat them but if any man have not the spirit of christ he is none of his we must be born again we must have that new heart we must have those new desires we must have that new heart given unto us and that can be given by god alone have we then any marks any evidences any prospects that the spirit of christ dwells in us by their fruits shall ye know them and it is by those fruits that we show forth how we live whether we live to the god of this world or whether we live to the god of the heaven above for the word of god is very clear come ye out from amongst them and be ye separate saith the lord and i will be your god and ye shall be my people it is then this work of sanctification this separation from the things of this life as i have said we will still retain that old nature for as long as we live here below there will be that constant warfare but it will be a warfare once we could live easily in this life in the things of this world but now there is that battle that battle which takes place constantly day by day and night by night there is that warfare which shall end in victory for if the lord has given you a new heart and a new will then you will savour the things of christ you will look unto jesus and as we spoke this morning you will be a seeker and those who seek shall find but they that are after the spirit the things of the spirit to be spiritually minded is life and peace it is that witness of the spirit within us which gives us hope which gives us hope in this life and in the life to come and have

we got the spirit of christ dwelling in us have we any evidence at all to say that we have a desire for him that we have no prospects in this life but we see that prospect in the life which is to come that our hope is to be found with christ in heaven that i desire to be with jesus for whilst walking in the gospel way we would see jesus every day now you may not be able to speak of great things you may not be able to speak as some are able to speak of what the lord has done for them but have you any desire do you know what it is to hunger and to thirst after righteousness as the heart panteth after the water brooks so longeth my soul after thee oh lord these are the things of the spirit they are life and truth and peace you see the carnal mind it seeks those lusts which are in the world those ambience those strides and all that which surely will bring about death oh to have a prospect in this life but if ye be led of the spirit ye are not under the law now the works of the flesh are manifest which are these adultery fornication uncleanness lasciviousness idolatry witchcraft hatred variance emulations wrath strife seditions heresies envying murders drunkenness revelings and such like of the which I tell you before as I have also told you in time past that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of death

God now here is that spiritual death those that walk according to the spirit of this world but the fruit of the spirit is love joy peace long suffering gentleness goodness faith meekness temperance against which there is no law and they are that are Christ have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts if we live in the spirit let us also walk in the spirit let us not be desirous of vain glory provoking one another envying one another now which apart are we in where are we to be found this night or it will be of no avail saying in that day that we have done this in thy name and we have done that in thy name for he will say I never knew you but it is those who can speak of walking after the spirit of

God and you know it is the work of the spirit the holy spirit to lead the sinner to Christ it is the work of the spirit to draw and to give that sweet influence that desire for Christ and not only they but ourselves also which have the first fruits of the spirit even we ourselves grown within ourselves waiting for the adoption to wit the redemption of our body for we are saved by hope but hope that is seen is not hope for what a man seeth why doth he yet hope for but if we hope that we have for that we see not then do we with patience wait for it for to be carnally minded is death but to be spiritually minded is life and peace those that have the spirit of Christ in them do mind the things of Christ now if we say that we have the spirit of

Christ within us then we cannot we will not we must not walk according to the knowledge of this world but we will seek those things which are pleasing unto God we will seek to do the will of Christ here upon earth we will seek to speak in that most holy name we will seek to walk according to that light which has been given unto us we are not to walk in the darkness of sin and unbelief but that hope will be given unto us that hope and that desire that we shall be found with Christ hereafter where can we obtain peace in this world oh we look around us oh we see wars we see strifes we see envies death and decay in all around I see peace perfect peace in this dark world of sin the blood of Jesus whispers peace within this man is our peace it will be then a looking unto Jesus it will be that desire to know him and the power of his resurrection it is that desire to know him as our intercessor in the courts of heaven above that we are justified by his precious blood by what he hath done we will see in and of ourselves that we have nothing our righteousness is our before him as filthy rags we will see our emptiness and our poverty and you know the lower we become the higher will our thoughts be of Christ the more we crucify the flesh the more we will exalt a precious saviour all to know the spirit the spirit of Christ dwelleth in us this will give us peace yes there may be those many difficulties which we have to face in this world there may be those many troubles in our circumstances we may have a body wracked with pain we may feel the infirmity of old age coming upon us we may have to pray our way along day by day for that sufficient strength to be given unto us but we will have that inner peace we will have that witness of the spirit that we are the children of

[36 : 58] God now look not to self look not to your own flesh look not to that mass of sin which you can see within but look to Jesus he's the only hope he's the only peace that we can have in this world oh we mention Balaam in our prayer he thought to die the death of the righteous but he had no desire to be found with the children of God how close it comes the Lord spake through him he prophesied an angel appeared unto him all the evidence that he had in speaking in the Lord's name called upon to curse Israel he blesses them instead or he had much evidence of the power of God but it was of no avail his heart and his mind and his desire were for the filthy riches of this world and we see at the day of his death that he was fighting against the people of God fighting on the side of the enemy fighting with the unrighteous he had his feet firmly planted in this world oh how vain then to pray that prayer let me die the death of the righteous if we have no desire to live according to the righteousness of God it will be an evidence and what a blessed evidence it is that we have a hope of eternity that are desires where are they are they toward the things of God are they toward the people of God do you find that unity of spirit with the child of

God do you long to be found amongst the people of God week by week do you desire to be found in the cause of heaven itself oh how often the Lord has been pleased to use means and bless the preaching of his gospel to the saving of souls and who gave you that desire to be found here this night but oh we cannot leave it there we will long we will pine after Christ for we will see in him our only hope of salvation that day is fast approaching it cannot be long before each one of us must be laid in the grave how will it be with us in that great day there will be many who will call upon the rocks to come and fall upon them and to cover them that they might not be subject to the sight of God to his eternal wrath oh what a day of wrath is to come upon this wicked world how the judgment of

God will be brought upon this untoward generation where are we this night are we accounted amongst the people of God or are we still in a world of sin or that we might be given that desire that good hope through the grace of Jesus Christ that we are his eternally his and here is a blessed portion that once in Christ in Christ forever what a glorious exaltation is brought forth at the end of this chapter for I am persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come nor height nor depth nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of

God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord we love him because he first loved us and if we love him we will desire to please him to do his will will be thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven oh may the dear Lord then give us that new heart that new will that spiritual mind of which we'll take of the things of God which will bring us into union and a communion with the blessed Lord Jesus may our lot be found with the people of God and not with the people of sin amen