

LIFE IN THE SPIRIT
Romans 8:9-11

INTRODUCTION

Romans 8 is arguably the greatest chapter in the Bible. Why? Because it covers so much within the Christian life, and it is written as an encouragement to the Christian who is weary of the daily battles that we have with sin, with culture, with hardships, and the question of “am I really saved?” That is why Paul declares at the beginning of this chapter, “There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus!” He is saying do not be afraid, Christian! You will not be condemned but commended!

For us to see the beauty and the grace of this truth, Paul then gives us an example of the differences between those who will stand condemned and those who will enter into eternal rest; those whose minds are set on the flesh and those whose minds are set on the Spirit. Last week, Pastor Mike unpacked what it looks like to have one’s mind set on the flesh: hostile to God, unable to submit to God’s law, unable to please God himself. This leads us to ask, what does it look like to have one’s mind set on the Spirit? What does it look like to have life and peace in the Spirit?

Our text today answers that question.

TEXT: Romans 8:9-11

9 You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

10 But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

This text is all about how the Holy Spirit has given us spiritual life and binds us to Christ through the righteousness that he has given to us, thereby securing our eternal destinies and the resurrection of our physical bodies on the last day.

OBSERVATION 1: Life in the Spirit is Freedom from the Flesh.

“You, however, are not in the flesh...”

After Paul’s description of what it means to have one’s mind set on the flesh, our souls are thirsty and in desperate need of this news. He declares emphatically that the Christian has been set free from the clutches of the flesh. It is easy to forget how glorious this is for the sinner! This is miraculous! Christian, you are free! You are free from your vices, from your sin. You can now love God and love his word. It is amazing to think that you, once a hostile enemy, a traitor, a lawbreaker would suddenly change your mind and join the One who you were hostile towards. There is no logical explanation for that except that something supernatural must have taken place. Your Father in Heaven has transferred you from one realm to another, from enemies of

God to children of God, from the realm of the flesh to the realm of the Spirit. God has reprogrammed your default settings. Instead of defaulting to fleshly desires you will now default to a life that wants to please God and seeks to glorify him by loving his commands and carrying them out. Life in the Spirit not only liberates you from the flesh but it also unites you with the Spirit in an eternal fellowship.

OBSERVATION 2: Life in the Spirit is United with the Spirit.

Paul continues “...*but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you.*” This seems like an odd statement. Which is it? Are we in the Spirit or is the Spirit in us? The answer is a simple “yes.” Paul is not trying to confuse us or trip us up, he is simply making a point that, sadly, many Christians miss. From the time a sinner is transferred into the realm of the Spirit until the day we see the Lord Jesus, the Christian will be in-dwelt with the Holy Spirit and we will not be separated from him. He lives in us and we abide in him. I have heard some people try and separate Christians into two different categories, “Spirit-filled Christians” and other “Christians.” This simply isn’t true. If you are a Christian, then you are filled with the Spirit. If you are filled with the Spirit, then you are a Christian. The Christian and the Spirit are inseparable. Both the Father and the Son have sent him to be our helper, our illuminator, our revealer, our comforter, and the one who convicts us. He is God’s gift to the Christian while we strive here on earth.

One of the greatest works that the Spirit does in the life of the Christian is sanctification. To live in the Spirit, to walk in the Spirit, is to undergo the process of sanctification. Sanctification simply means that you are being set apart. God sets you apart for himself by giving you his Spirit to cleanse you and make you holy so that on the last day when the Lord Jesus presents us to the Father, we will be spotless and clean.

1 Thessalonians 5:23

Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Thessalonians 2:13

But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.

Sanctification is not an overnight thing, it is a lifelong process. It is a daily war that you fight against your sin. Each day you gather your strength from the Spirit that lives in you and you follow him into war. You will be victorious because it is not your own power or might that you are fighting with, but with the power and might that come from the Father through the Spirit. Not only does Life in the Spirit liberate you from the flesh and unite you with the Spirit, but it also eternally binds you to Christ.

OBSERVATION 3: Life in the Spirit Binds You to Christ.

“anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.”

The spiritual benefits of the Spirit are endless. Paul told the Ephesian church that God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. Through the Spirit we experience the love of the Father through the Father's giving of the Spirit, and because we have the Spirit, we will be forever identified with Christ and he will forever identify with us. If you have been filled with the Spirit, you belong to Christ! There is nothing comparable to the many excellencies of Christ. He is the Good Shepherd who lays his life down for his sheep, he seeks after those sheep who have been lost and he always finds them. He is the Door that opens us to eternal life, he is the only way that we can come to the Father. He is a warrior that will defeat all of his enemies and the enemies of his bride, the church. He is God's Son who created all things and in him all things are held together. He became a man and was obedient to one of the most violent public executions in history, in order that he may atone for your sins, paying the debt that you could never pay. He was laid in a tomb under the ground, wrapped in grave cloths for three days...dead. And on that third day his heart began to beat, breath entered his lungs, his legs and arms moved, the soldiers passed out, the stone was rolled away, and Jesus rose victoriously, nullifying the fear of death, destroying the power of death, rendering it useless. Do you belong to this Jesus? I hope you do. There is no greater question to ask yourself than, "Do I belong to Christ?" The answer to that question determines your eternal destiny. Are you his, do you treasure him above all else? Is he the source of your joy, is he your everything? If you are a Christian, that is, if you are one who is "Spirit-filled" then you must remember that you are not your own.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God with your body.

This King, this Savior, this God has purchased many sinners with the greatest of currencies, his own blood. I pray that you are one of them. If you do not yet know this King, repent of your sins right now and receive him. He is the greatest treasure, he is the pearl of great price, he is worth far more than we could ever imagine and he gave himself as payment for our dead souls. There is no greater calling than the call of God on the life of the dead sinner.

If you belong to Christ that also means that you have experienced a spiritual resurrection.

OBSERVATION 4: **Life in the Spirit is a Result of a Spiritual Resurrection.**

Paul continues, *...if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of Righteousness.* Another bi-product of being united with the Spirit and being bound to Christ is the promise that your spirit has been resurrected from spiritual death. Paul recognizes the fact that our physical bodies are a liability to us in this life. At the very first thump of our heart beat, our bodies begin to age, they begin dying. Why? Because of sin. God created our bodies to live a life free from sin. Our bodies were not created to carry the burden of sin but, because of Adam's sin we have been infected and it is killing our bodies. But, even though our bodies are dying, our spirit has been brought to life. How? Paul says it is because of "righteousness." But where does this righteousness come from? It certainly is not our own, Paul has already made that clear earlier in chapter three, where he says that, "all have sinned," and

“no one is righteous, no not one.” So where does this righteousness, that is the cause for the life we have been given, come from? How have we obtained this righteousness?

Romans 4:5

And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness,

Ok, so somehow our faith, that is our trust in God, is credited to us as righteousness. Paul is recalling a story from the book of Genesis where we are told how Abraham believed the promise that God had made to him that through his descendants God would bless the nations of the world, and it was that belief that was counted to Abraham as righteousness. Now, Abraham was not a perfect man, he loved God but he committed some major sins. He was an adulterer and a liar. On two different occasions he was willing to risk his wife’s purity to save his own neck. But he was repentant and believed in God’s promise. However, this was not based on his own righteousness, so whose righteousness is he receiving?

2 Corinthians 5:21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Jesus lived the perfect life; never ever once did he sin. Because he was both a human and God, he was able to offer himself as the currency by which he could make restitution for the sins of those who belong to him. And so, he went to the cross and willingly made the payment with his life. That righteousness that he died with was then applied to those who believe in him. Now we can stand redeemed before the Father. Your spirit is made alive because of the righteousness that Jesus has given to you. This is good news, but it doesn’t stop there.

OBSERVATION 5: Life in the Spirit Guarantees the Physical Resurrection of Our Bodies.

God has thought of everything! Listen to how Paul finishes out this text, *“if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.* Ok, so you know how Paul said our bodies are dying in the last verse? Well they are dying, BUT God is going to raise these bodies and give them new life. We are going to have resurrected bodies just like Jesus did. What a gift the Spirit is to the Christian, that same Spirit that raised Jesus will also give our bodies life!

I have heard some people say that they think that Heaven will be boring and we will all just float around on clouds. Believe me, it will not be boring! We are going to be living in a new Heaven and a new Earth with physical bodies that can eat, and drink, and run, and play, and work. And we will never be more satisfied than when we have our new resurrected bodies. The best example for this is the resurrected body of Jesus. When he was resurrected, he was a physical being that ate and drank with his disciples. He hung out with them in a new resurrected body. Think about it, our new bodies won’t grow weary or tired. I wonder how fast we will be able to run in a resurrected body. I wonder what food will taste like with resurrected taste buds. I wonder what real joy and peace will feel like with the absence of anxiety and worry. Every day we experience some level of worry or anxiety; some of us more than others. Whether it is our

commute to work, marriage, parenting, school, or any number of things, we always have something to be concerned with and worry about. Those things will all be gone. Sickness? What's that? I wonder what worship services will be like. I wonder what it will be like to hear Jesus speaking his word to us all the time. Seriously, try and imagine the best version of Heaven and I promise you, it will be better than that. How do I know? Because God has a bigger and better imagination than I do.

So, all of this sounds amazing, but how does this affect us now? How does this teach us to live now?

Ok, so quick recap:

- (1) You have been liberated from the flesh.**
- (2) You have been united with the Spirit, and he is cleansing you from sin.**
- (3) You are bound to Christ.**
- (4) Your spirit has been brought to life.**
- (5) Your bodies will be resurrected.**

So here is the application, **Be Courageous.**

This text is all about how the Holy Spirit has given us spiritual life and binds us to Christ through the righteousness that he has given to us, thereby securing our eternal destinies and the resurrection of our physical bodies on the last day.

You have been given every reason to live a life of courage, to live a life without fear. God has taken care of everything. It is easy to make excuses.

You may say, *"I am not good enough to share the Gospel with people."* He has liberated you from all of the reasons you think you are not "good enough." Remember, if you have the Spirit, then you belong to Christ, you are not your own. Your life is in the hands of the Christ.

There is no excuse for you not to live a life of courage, faith, joy, sacrifice, and love.

I have two stories that I would like to close with, the first comes from the book of Acts.

There was a man named Stephen. He was full of grace and power, and the Pharisees could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit that he spoke with. So they began to stir up the people to bring false accusations against him. He responded by preaching the good news that God would no longer dwell in temples made of stone but within his people. He boldly called them out as stiff-necked people who would not receive the truth of God's word. So they stoned him to death. Despite the brutal way in which he died, his last words were a prayer for those who were murdering him. He died with courage.

Another story of Christian courage comes from church history:

There was an old pastor whose name was Polycarp. He lived in the 2nd century in modern day Turkey, in a city called Smyrna. He lived during a time when Christianity was still frowned upon by the Roman government because of the Christian's refusal to call Caesar Lord.

When Polycarp was 86 years old, the local authorities came to take Polycarp into custody and led him away to be executed. The proconsul then led him to the stadium where he again urged Polycarp to swear by the name of Caesar that he should be set free, and Polycarp said,

"Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He never did me any injury: how then can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour? "

And when the proconsul yet again pressed him, and said,

"Swear by the fortune of Caesar,"

He answered, "Since you are so vainly urgent that, as you say, I should swear by the fortune of Caesar, and pretend to not know who and what I am, hear me declare with boldness, I am a Christian. And if you wish to learn what the doctrines of Christianity are, appoint me a day, and you shall hear them."

The proconsul then said to him,

"I have wild beasts at hand; to these will I cast you, unless you repent."

But he answered,

"Call them then, for we are not accustomed to repent of what is good in order to adopt that which is evil; and I am glad that I have changed from what is evil to what is righteous."

But again, the proconsul said to him,

"I will cause you to be consumed by fire, seeing you do not care about the wild beasts."

But Polycarp said,

"You threaten me with fire which burns for an hour, and after a little is extinguished, but you are ignorant of the fire of the coming judgment and of eternal punishment, reserved for the ungodly. Why are you wasting time? Bring forth what you will."

So they piled up wood and attempted to nail Polycarp to a stake so that he could not flee from the flames, but Polycarp said that God will give him the strength to endure the fire. So they lit the fire, but it seemed that those the flames did not consume him, and so they stabbed him with a dagger and he died.

Christians like Stephen and Polycarp were human beings just like you and me. Before the Lord saved them, there was nothing extraordinary about them. But they were filled with the Spirit. They lived and died like they had been liberated, like they had been united with the Spirit, like they had been bound to Christ, like God had raised their spirits from the dead and they looked forward to the hope of the resurrection in the presence of their King.

Be courageous and take risks that honor God. Don't live your life in according to the flesh in fear, live life in the Spirit.