

Life in the Spirit

Romans 8:9-11

I think that one of Paul's main reasons for writing Romans 8 was to give believers in Jesus Christ assurance of our salvation even in the midst of our very real struggle with sin that Paul described so vividly in chapter 7. So chapter 8 begins with the powerful truth (Rom. 8:1), **"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus."** Then in verse 2 he explains why (8:2), **"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death."** The Holy Spirit imparts new life that frees you from the condemnation of your sin. In verses 3-4 he explains that this came about through the substitutionary death of Jesus, God's Son, who took our condemnation for us, bearing the death penalty for our sin.

Now, those of us who are in Christ have a new way of life (8:4b): [we] **"do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."** This new way of life is characterized by a new mindset. Those who have been justified set their minds on **"the things of the Spirit."**

In contrast, in verses 7-8 the mind set on the flesh, **"is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God."**

Now in verses 9-11, Paul turns to us who are born again and explains how the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ (8:9). Paul goes on to explain (8:10) that although your physical body will die, the Spirit has given you life because you are righteous in Christ. And, although your body will die, the same God who raised Jesus from the dead will one day resurrect your mortal body through His Spirit who dwells in you (8:11).

Please follow along in your Bibles as I read Romans 8:9-11:

9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

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

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

In Romans Paul as used several phrases to describe a true Christian. Christians are those who have been justified by faith (Rom. 5:1). We are those who have been reconciled to God through the death of His Son (Rom. 5:10). We were baptized into Christ Jesus united with Him in His death and resurrection (Rom 6:3). We are those who are dead to sin and alive to God (Rom. 6:11). We are slaves of God in Christ Jesus (6:22). We are joined to Christ (Rom. 7:4). We are in Christ (Rom. 8:1). We are those who walk according to the Spirit and have our minds set on the things of the Spirit (Rom. 8:4,5).

Now in verse 9 Paul describes believers as those who are **"in the Spirit."**

Today I want us to consider some realities that are true of every Christian. What does it look like to be **"in the Spirit"** and therefore to **"walk according to the Spirit"**?

1. A new master

The Christian has experienced a change of dominion in his life. Before we came to Christ we were **"in the flesh,"** and our way of life was **"according to the flesh."** We

were under the dominion or rule sin in the flesh. The flesh, the fallenness of our humanity, called the shots for our life. The flesh demanded, influenced, motivated, rewarded, and controlled. If you are **“in the flesh,”** you are still in Adam not in Christ. And as we saw last time, in the flesh you will naturally set your mind on the things that the flesh finds pleasing, and you will not please God.

But we have a new master! Verse 9, **“But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit.”** Paul contrasts the old you with the new you. Negatively, **“you are not in the flesh.”** Positively, you are **“in the Spirit.”** You were in the flesh as we saw in verses 3-4 God sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh for sin and condemned sin in the flesh. When you come by faith to Jesus Christ, the dominion of the flesh ends.

Why do so many Christians make such poor improvement in their Christian walks? One major reason is that they think they are still in the flesh. They still listen to the old sovereign even though they have died to the flesh through Christ. That is why Paul commands us in Colossians 3 to **“Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.”** Because that is who you are. You have a new master, a new Lord. Think constantly about Him. Listen to His word. Obey His voice.

The mighty Spirit who brooded over the face of the deep at creation, who breathed life into man, who raised Jesus from the dead—He is the sphere of your life. You are now under His influence.

We must not think of the Spirit as a mild-mannered guest but as sovereign exercising dominion. As verse 8 says, He is the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ. He is God, He is Lord. He works to form Christ in us (Gal. 4:19). He conforms us to the image of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:29).

You live in His realm and no longer in that of the flesh. You are in the Spirit.

2. A new resident

I love the next phrase in verse 9, **“if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you.”** Paul is saying you cannot be in the flesh since the Spirit of God dwells in you.

Do you remember back in Romans 7:17, Paul talked about **“sin which dwells in me.”** Sin remains as a squatter that has taken up residence without due authority in our mortal bodies. But here Paul contrasts the squatter with the permanent rightful residence of the Holy Spirit.

Does the Holy Spirit live in you? It is clear throughout the scripture that every believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God. In 1 Corinthians 3:16 Paul says, **“Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?”** And again in 1 Cor. 6:19-20, **“Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.”**

In Ephesians 2:21-22 Paul pictures us in the church as a holy temple in the Lord that is growing and being built together **“for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”** In John 14 Jesus explained to the disciples that the Spirit would be in them, and that His indwelling equaled Christ's coming to believers. When that happened, He said, **“At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you,”** (John 14:20).

Think of the richness of this language. The Spirit of God **“dwells in you.”** He takes up residence—as Lord of the house!

Do you notice the Holy Spirit in your life? Do you recognize His presence? Do you acknowledge Him by your actions, your conversations, your activities, your habits, your ambitions? Do you notice the Spirit? How do you know He is present? He fills you with joy at the truths of the gospel and the revelation of Christ's faithfulness. He is grieved over your sin. He is quenched by your putting aside and neglecting the Word of God. He floods you with gratitude when you recognize that every good gift comes from God's kind hands.

The Holy Spirit dwells in you and He is not silent. He is not a guest to tiptoe around but Lord in the heart and life. He makes Himself known in ways that cannot be confused with chance or luck. He asserts His authority over those in whom He dwells.

3. A new belonging

Paul frequently uses negative and positive in order to drive home truths. He does this again in the second sentence of verse 9. **"Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His."** If the Holy Spirit does not dwell in you then you do not belong to Christ. If the Spirit does not indwell you then Christ has not justified you; and you are still lost in your sins.

If we turn that around to the positive we could say, If anyone has the Spirit of Christ, that one is Christ's!

The true Christian is one who belongs to Jesus Christ by virtue of the price paid to ransom him from sin and to redeem him from eternal loss. He belongs to Jesus Christ whose death removed the enmity that separated him from God, and who consequently, adopted him into the heavenly family. He belongs to Jesus Christ who secured him before God, having satisfied the justice of God on his behalf and having joined him to His resurrection so that he might have life. He belongs to Jesus Christ who promises to never leave or forsake him, who always lives to make intercession for him, and who will one day return to take him to the Father's House where he is presented with the church as the Bride of Christ.

You belong to Jesus Christ. Not to self, not to the world, not to the flesh but you belong to Christ. You no longer belong to your job or to your hobby or to your ambitions, but you belong to Jesus Christ. Other powers try to regularly make claims on you. You dare not heed their siren cries. You belong to Christ. You sometime struggle with old desires for the flesh, but that is no longer who you are. You belong to Christ. Remember whose you are!

I can't help but think that the church would be very different if everyone would live daily in the reality of the truth, "I am not my own; I now belong to Christ." My tongue is not my own to use to yell at my family when I'm upset. I must use it to glorify Christ. My eyes are not my own, to look lustfully at women. I must use my eyes to glorify Christ. My money is not my own to use as I please. I must use it to glorify Christ. My time is not my own to squander on frivolous pursuits. I need to use it to serve and glorify Christ. It's a life-transforming principle! The mark of being a Christian is, the Spirit dwells in you and you now belong to Christ.

4. A new life within

Verse 10 says, **"And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness."**

Notice the contrast between the body and the Spirit. **"The body is dead because of sin"** Sin has lasting effects on our physical bodies, on our flesh. That is why even though we are new creations in Christ, even that we have died with Christ and are

raised spiritually with Him to newness of life in the Spirit, even though all of that is true, believers still die physically. We live in a mortal body, a body of death as Paul has called it in chapter 7.

As Paul put it in the 2 Corinthians 4:16, **“Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.”** That should encourage us not to lose heart. While our bodies face the effects of sin, our spirits are brought to life by the righteousness of Jesus Christ. The effect of sin equals death; the effect of righteousness through Christ equals life. That’s true of every believer. Every one of us is simultaneously dying yet very much alive through the righteousness in Christ applied by the Spirit.

Though you are mortal and every day one foot closer to death, the Spirit applied righteousness of Jesus Christ makes you vitally alive. You are alive to the Lord God in ways that you never dreamed. You are alive to the cross and its implications. You are alive to the power of the Holy Spirit. You are alive to the church as the body of Christ. You are alive to the eternal hope that is yours in Christ. You are alive to the richness of the Word of God. You are alive to the privilege of prayer. You are alive to the joy and humility of worship.

Do you have this new life within?

5. A new body in the resurrection

What hope for the future Christ brings us through the Spirit! Hope is one of the chief characteristics of the Christian. One word that describes our world, is hopelessness. Look at the pictures of sin’s ravages in the world by disease, bombing, natural disasters, or old age. Hopelessness is written across people’s faces. People live their lives, however short or long, rich or poor, good or bad, but when they come to the end, what is there to look forward to? This life is over and the great unknown beyond the grave lies ahead. And they have no hope.

But not so for those who are in Christ! Verse 11 says, **“But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.”**

This is the assurance that gives a certain hope, a living hope for us as believers in Christ. It transforms our attitudes even in the worst that the fallen world can throw his way. The Holy Spirit links us experientially to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, not only in a spiritual way as we’ve considered in Romans 6 but also bodily.

The Holy Spirit guarantees that our mortal bodies will be raised to immortality.

This is the finishing work of the Spirit in the believer. The same Spirit that called us, regenerated us, baptized us into the body, sealed us for the day of redemption, fills us, empowers us, strengthens us, grieves over our sin, reveals Christ to us, and sanctifies us, will one day **“give life to your mortal bodies.”** How do we know this? Paul tells us, **“If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you,”** then count on it, mark it down, flood your heart with hope and certainty, He will treat you just as the Father treated His own Son who died for you.

Conclusion

Do you know this assurance of the indwelling Spirit? Do you have a new master in your life?

Do you recognize the evidence of the new resident—the Holy Spirit—dwelling in you? Do you see where He is transforming you into the image of Christ?

Do you find comfort in this new belonging—that you belong to Jesus Christ? Does that bring you more satisfaction than all the riches of the world?

Are you alive within by the Holy Spirit? Do you see the evidence in who you love and what is important to you?

Are you ready to die? Do you have the assurance that your body will be raised when Jesus comes again so that you will be fitted for the new heavens and the new earth to live with God forever?