

**THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE**

## Romans 8 - Selected Verses

**Intro:** This will be the third message that I have given on the Holy Spirit in this series, and it will be the last one – not the last in the series, but the last having to do especially with the Holy Spirit. I am sure that I will be making other references to the Holy Spirit because the work of the Spirit extends to every part of our lives as Christians.

Some believers are inclined to shy away from anything having to do with the Spirit because there are many people who have carried their emphasis on the Holy Spirit to extreme, non-Biblical limits. I don't think that we can place too heavy an emphasis upon the Spirit and His work *if we stay within the limits of Scripture*. But unfortunately not everybody who professes to be a Christian, does that. And so we have preachers telling us that we have to pray to receive the Holy Spirit, and that the only way we can be sure that the Holy Spirit is in us, is that we will speak in tongues. Neither one of those teachings is Biblical. Even here in Romans 8 the Apostle Paul made it very clear that “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Rom. 8:9). To be “none of His,” means that such a person is not saved! And the NT nowhere teaches us that we have to speak in tongues in order to be sure that we have the Holy Spirit. In fact, there was never a day in the early years of the church when everyone spoke in tongues. And the purpose of tongues is over. Tongues were used in the early days of the church to spread the Gospel of Christ. You can see that very clearly in Acts 2 that the Jews were amazed on that very special Day of Pentecost after our Lord ascension that they were all hearing in their own languages “the wonderful works of God” (Acts 2: 7-8, 11b).

And we also hear professing Christians, and sometimes people who aren't Christians saying that the Lord told them this, or the Spirit of God told them that, but what they repeat cannot be found anyplace in the Bible. Today God speaks through His Word, and you need to beware of those who say that the Lord told me this or that if you can't find it in Scripture.

There are always those who take good doctrine to an extreme beyond what is written in Scripture, and when they do, the result is always heresy. Years ago (and this teaching is still going) it had to do with the Fatherhood of God. Now one of the most wonderful teachings of Scripture is that God is the Father of His children. But liberal theologians, pastors,

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and professing Christians were teaching that we are all the children of God, and so God is the Father of us all. It denied the necessity of the new birth. It made the work of Christ that of a martyr, not that of a Savior. And many people were deceived, and people are still being deceived by that false teaching. In Gal. 3:26 the Apostle Paul said to the believers in the churches of Galatia, “Ye are all the children [or sons] of God by faith in Jesus Christ.” “By faith in Jesus Christ” means that you have been saved by Jesus Christ, you have been born again.

So even though there are people who emphasize the work of the Holy Spirit beyond what the Word of God teaches, let us not ignore the Holy Spirit, nor should we stay away from what the Word of God teaches about the Holy Spirit. *The ministry of the Holy Spirit is extremely important! No one can possibly live the Christian life, a life pleasing to God, without the Holy Spirit.* But let us be sure that we are following the Word of God in what it teaches about the Holy Spirit. Martin Luther used to speak about his soul being captive to the Word of God. That ought to be true of all of us who know the Lord. If you can’t find what people tell you about the Holy Spirit in Scripture, don’t believe them! And the same is true about God, and about Christ, and even about ourselves.

Romans 8 is a chapter which deals in a very special way with the ministry of the Holy Spirit. He, because He is a Person, a Person of the Godhead, is mentioned at least *nineteen times* in the chapter! Only one of those is questionable. Not all MSS have “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” in verse 1. But it belongs in verse 4. There is an element of truth in the way it stands in the Authorized Version, the KJV, because if a person is “in Christ Jesus,” he or she is going to be walking in the Spirit.

Now I am not planning tonight to give an exposition of this chapter, but I simply want to point out some of the ways in which the Apostle Paul referred to the Holy Spirit in this chapter in relation to the lives God intends for us to live as His children, a life that would be impossible if it were not for the fact that all of us who truly know the Lord have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, working in us, and working through us.

So let me take verse 4 to begin with, but we really can’t deal with verse 4 without including verses 2 and 3.

### **I. WALKING AFTER THE SPIRIT (Rom. 8:2-4).**

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It might be confusing to read the way the Apostle Paul used the word “law” in these verses.

It seems that he was using “the law” in three different ways:

- 1) “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” has to do with the Gospel.
- 2) “The law of sin and death” speaks of the bondage we all were under until we came to Christ.
- 3) “The law” in verse 3 is obviously the Law of God which was given to Moses, and through Moses to the people of Israel.

The basic idea in the word “law” is that of authority. It speaks of a controlling power. The object of the Mosaic law was to make people holy. It was an indicator of the righteousness of God, not just the ten commandments, but all of the Law. But people could not be saved under the Law, nor could they become holy under the Law. Why? Because they were also by nature under the authority of sin and death. But it was through the coming and sacrifice of Christ, breaking the bondage we were all under because of “sin and death,” and through our salvation imparting to us the very Person of the Holy Spirit, that what the Law could not accomplish, *i.e.*, to make us holy, is now possible by “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.” That practical righteousness is now possible to us because of the presence of the Spirit of God in our lives, and providing we walk “after the Spirit.”

To walk “after the Spirit” is to walk *according to the Spirit*. And the only way we can walk according to the Spirit is to walk according to the Word of God, the book which the Holy Spirit has given us. And He it is Who gives us the power to live lives that are pleasing to God.

Read on down in Rom. 8 from verse 5 to verse 8.

A passage that is very similar to this is Gal. 5:13-26. (Read.)

So this all means that if we are to live lives that are pleasing to God, we must depend upon the Holy Spirit to give us the power to obey the Word of God. The NT is full of commandments. The Christian life is not what we say it is; it is what God says it is. It is a supernatural life. And so we need to be very careful about our relationship with the Holy Spirit. That is why what Paul told the Ephesian believers, “be filled with the Spirit,” or *keep on being filled with the Spirit*, is not a special class of superior Christians, but it is the pattern for all of us who want to please God. This

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is why we must not grieve the Spirit (Eph. 4:30), nor are we to quench the Spirit (1 Thess. 5:19).

I hope we all understand this, and that we are continually looking to the Holy Spirit to give us the will and the power to obey the Lord.

Think of Acts 1:8 in this connection.

This truth is foundational to all Christian living. I repeat, the Christian life is impossible apart from the Holy Spirit.

Now let us look at verse 14.

### **II. THE LEADING OF THE SPIRIT (Rom. 8:14).**

(Read the verse.)

We could actually reverse the two parts of this verse without changing the meaning in the least. If we are the sons of God, then we are led by the Spirit of God. There is no question about this. And I think that this is one way we can test our salvation.

This will make a difference in the way we read the Bible. We want to learn all that we can about what the Bible teaches. But basic to the reading that a true Christian does is a desire to be led by the Bible into a life that is pleasing to the Lord. Anyone who can just read the Bible as literature, or to learn history, or biography, but who is not particularly interested in how the Bible tells that we should live – that person is probably not a Christian. The Spirit of God has not only brought us to Christ by the Word of God, but He leads us by the Word. Life becomes completely different for a person who has become a Christian. Before he mainly was concerned about pleasing himself, or about pleasing people. But having come to the Lord, now his purpose is to be pleasing to God. And this brings him, or her, to the Word of God for leading into such a life.

I think that you can see that all of the points I am making tonight are bound together.

Let us move on to verse 15.

### **III. THE SPIRIT AND THE FAMILY OF GOD (Rom. 8:15-17).**

At this point the Apostle Paul makes it very clear who is a child of God, and who is not!

If people who do not know the Lord have one basic attitude toward God, it is one of fear. When things go wrong, they immediately are inclined to feel that God is judging them for some reason. Of course, in our society today we can look at tragedies like that which took place in New York on September 11, and not give a thought to God. But God is not an object of love and trust, but one of suspicion and fear.

The Apostle Paul makes it very clear that the Holy Spirit is the One Who is responsible for giving us a wonderful new attitude toward God. We view Him now not just as the Almighty and Eternal God, but we look upon Him as Father. It is the Holy Spirit Who makes us understand this truth, and causes us to go to God in prayer as any child would go to his earthly father – only this is even more wonderful. “Abba,” you should know, is baby talk. It is what every father waits to hear from his child. And regardless of how many men we have in our lives, each of us has only one father. So this means that God has a place in our lives that no one else can have, or will have. He loves for us to come to Him even as our Lord Jesus Christ did, and call Him, “Father.” That is how the Lord taught His disciples to pray, and that is how the Spirit of God will teach us to pray also. “When ye pray, say, Our Father.”

And this very fact about our relationship to God gives us assurance which also the Holy Spirit is responsible for.

We have just finished studying 1 John in SS. And many of us have just finished memorizing that wonderful epistle. But what was John’s purpose in writing it? Or I should phrase that a different way: What was the Spirit’s purpose in causing the Apostle John to write it? The Spirit’s purpose became John’s purpose. “That we may know that we have eternal life.”

No words can possibly express the joy of such a life – we are the children of God. We have His very life in us, a life that finds its greatest fulfillment and joy in pleasing our heavenly Father.

Let me make one more point before I close.

#### **IV. THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE (Rom. 8:18–25).**

There is more to be said about the Holy Spirit from this chapter, and I plan to get to some of these in future messages, but I will conclude with this one tonight. This has to do with “the redemption of our body.”

(Read Rom. 8:18-25.)

Our salvation is to have a glorious outcome. It is called our ‘hope.’ And the Holy Spirit not only anticipates this hope, but He guarantees our hope. What is it? It is “the redemption of our body.”

Verse 11 also may apply here, but it may have more to do with our present victory over sin. But the hope is here in this chapter. We now have “the firstfruits of the Spirit.” We often talk about “the fruit of the Spirit” which we read about in Gal. 5:22-23, but why would the Apostle Paul here call them “the firstfruits of the Spirit”? What we have now – the forgiveness of our sins, a new nature manifested in the fruit of the Spirit, victory over sin, a new relationship to God and to all others who are in the family of God. But the “first” in “firstfruits” means that there is more to come. What is it? “The redemption of our body.”

Our bodies are included in God’s redemptive plan. And that is evident from the bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. And it is clearly taught in 1 Thess. 4:13-18 and 1 Cor. 15. And it is implied in Paul’s prayer at the close of his first epistle to the Thessalonians where he said,

23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess. 5:23).

Listen also to Phil. 3:20-21:

20 For our conversation [NKJV - citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:  
21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

All creation groans, longs, for that glorious day. And the Holy Spirit longs for it, too, and prays for us concerning it. (See Rom. 8:26.) So we should be longing for it too, and living as God’s children who know that we are not going to be here forever, but some day we will be “forever with the Lord.”

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**Concl:** You can see, can't you, how vitally important the Holy Spirit is in all of our lives. He convicted us of our sin, and need of a Savior. He drew us to Christ. He is working day by day on our sanctification. He leads us. He makes us know how wonderful it is to be a child of God. He assures us of our salvation. And He is praying for that wonderful day when even outwardly, in our bodies, we will display the glory of God and our likeness to our precious Savior. These are all ways in which He is constantly taking the things of Christ, and showing them, revealing them to us, not apart from the Word, but in the Word.

No wonder that the Lord Jesus said, "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you" (John 16:7).

Let us thank God for the Holy Spirit, and for the Word that He has given us, and pray daily that we will trust Him to lead us according to the Word that our lives might be more and more pleasing to our heavenly Father, and to our Savior.