

## THE FILLING OF THE SPIRIT

### Part 6

#### Romans 8:9-28

**Intro:** The Apostle Paul mentioned the Holy Spirit more frequently in Romans 8 than he did in any other single chapter that he wrote in the Bible. And they are all found in the first twenty-seven verses of the chapter. The Holy Spirit is mentioned 19 or 20 times, depending upon whether you count verse 1. I think that most of you know that the latter part of verse 1 is not in the better MSS, but that it belongs in verse 4 where you will see the same phrase: “Who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” But we could say in defense of verse 1 that, while we are not justified by our walk, yet our walk is the greatest evidence that we have been justified “in Christ Jesus.”

There are many wonderful aspects to the work of the Spirit. You will see from verses 9 and 11 that Paul confirms what we have learned about the Holy Spirit, that He dwells in every believer. We learn from verse 16 that our assurance comes from the Holy Spirit. He bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. In verse 14 we learn that we are led by the Spirit of God. We also learn from verse 9 that it is proper to call the Spirit, the Spirit of God, and also, the Spirit of Christ. There is a unity among the Members of the Godhead that is really impossible for us to explain fully. Often the Holy Spirit takes the things of Christ, and shows them to us. At other times He shows us the glorious attributes of God. Sometimes He works on behalf of Christ; sometimes on behalf of God. But there is never any conflict between the Holy Spirit, or Christ, or God the Father. Neither is there ever any conflict between the Members of the Holy Trinity and the Word of God.

When I think of some of the things of Scripture that are hard to understand, I was reminded by Lucille this week as she has been going over letters which my Mother wrote to us, and some to other members of our immediate family, that my mother used to say that theology is when men take the simple truths of Scripture and explain them in such a way that nobody can understand them. That is often the case, isn't it? It is often the best just to take what the Scriptures say, and enjoy them, and rejoice in them, so that we can profit from them.

But as we have been looking at various truths concerning the Holy Spirit in our Sunday morning services, there is one very wonderful work of the

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Holy Spirit that I want to concentrate on this morning. That is the ministry of the Holy Spirit in prayer. It is impossible for me or anyone else to minimize the importance of prayer in our lives as Christians. That is why Paul wrote to the Thessalonian church, “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17). It ought to be the first thing that we do in the morning, and the last thing that we do as we go to bed at night. But if we are to pray without ceasing, this means that we need to be praying all through the day – worshipping the Lord, praising Him for His blessings as they come to us throughout the day, asking for guidance as we need it, praying for deliverance from temptation and from sin. But added to that we all have people on our hearts for whom we pray – members of our families, fellow-believers at Trinity, people we have known in the past, pastors and missionaries, our leaders in government – and the list can go on and on. With the Apostle Paul that was the way Ananias, who had never met him, but who had heard a lot about him, was told by the Lord, “Behold, he prayeth.” Paul as Saul of Tarsus, a devout Jew, had probably *said* many prayers, but he never really prayed until after he was saved. Paul told Timothy, speaking as an Apostle, therefore the messenger of God in a special way, said, and his words are recorded in 1 Timothy 2:8, “I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.” To the Philippian church Paul wrote in Philippians 4:6-7,

6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

We all know that we need to pray, and that the Lord wants us to pray, but somehow it is easy to neglect prayer, and that is one reason we get ourselves into a lot of trouble that we shouldn't have. Every person needs to be told when they are saved that there are at least four things that should have the greatest priority in their lives every day. We all need to read the Bible every day. We need to pray every day. We need to apply what we read to our own lives. We need to seek to have fellowship with other believers. That may be with your husband or wife, or with your children, or getting to a church where you are going to hear the Word and have fellowship with other believers. It may be when you unexpectedly meet someone during the day whom you know is a child of God. That all sounds like a big order, but it can be done! Many of you are already doing it, and all of us should be.

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Another good thing for us to do is to be reading good books which will help us in our understanding of the Word and/or help us with knowing how to live to please God. I am always on the lookout for books or tapes or CD's on prayer. I am reading two books on prayer right now. One is a book I have read before, probably more than once. It is the life of George Mueller who is remembered for his life of prayer. The other is by a man who lived over a hundred years ago, Octavius Winslow. He spoke of the Holy Spirit as "the Author of prayer." If the Lord is ever pleased to give us a true spiritual awakening in our city or state or nation, it will be evident in larger and longer prayer meetings as we all feel a deeper sense of our need of the blessing of God.

There are five verses that I want to give you this morning which have to do with the Holy Spirit and prayer. Let me give them to you, and then speak briefly to you about them.

The first two are right here in Romans 8. Look with me at verses 26 and 27:

26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

The third one (I have given you two in Romans 8) is in Ephesians 2:18:

18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

The fourth verse is also in Ephesians, chapter 6, verse 18:

18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

The fifth and last verse is Jude 20, but I will have to give you verse 21 with it:

20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,

21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

All of these verses have to do with the Holy Spirit and prayer. But there is a basic difference between the first two verses in Romans 8, as compar-

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ed with the other verses I have given you. Perhaps some time today you could write out all of these verses, or type them into your computer, and then tell what the difference is between the verses in Romans 8, and all of the other verses. But since we can't do that now, I am going to point out the difference, and then you look at the verses when you can, and see if you can tell the difference which I am going to point out to you.

Romans 8:26 and 27 tell us that the Holy Spirit prays for us, and why. Ephesians 2:18 and 6:18, as well as Jude 20 and 21, tell us how we are to pray with the help of the Holy Spirit. Let me say that again. (Repeat the first sentence of this paragraph.)

Now let us look at Romans 8:26-27. (Read them.)

Here is a wonderful truth that every Christian should know. We may have know it in the past, but it is so easy for us to forget it. It is that the Holy Spirit is praying for us. Think about that until the astounding nature of that truth really grips your heart. And I want to do the same. The Holy Spirit is praying for you individually, and for me individually. And the same truth applies to all true believers in Christ.

But why is He praying for you, and why is He praying for me? For two reasons: First, because He wants to help us. Secondly, because we don't know what we should pray for as we ought. It sounds like Paul was saying that we don't know what we should pray for ourselves as we ought.

The Holy Spirit prays for us to help us with our infirmities. What is an infirmity? It is a weakness. And Paul gave us that word in the plural because we don't just have one weakness; we have lots of them. We hear people say all of the time, "You can do anything that you want to do." What a stupid statement that is!

What did the Holy Spirit have to say about this? Let me read his words to you which are found in James 4:13-16:

13 Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:

14 Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

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15 For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.

16 But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil. The truth is that we are the personification of all kinds of infirmities. We have infirmities of knowledge. We quickly turn from the truth to error. We have physical infirmities. Isaiah wrote long ago that “even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall” (Isa. 40:40). We have moral infirmities. We are always falling before temptations of various kinds. When you stop to think about it, we are the personification of weakness. The Holy Spirit prays for us and our weak-nesses. He doesn’t do away with them, but He helps us by praying for us. Our lives would be full of a lot of troubles that we don’t have if it were not for the way the Holy Spirit prays for us, strengthening us where we are weak, weak in our understanding of the truth, weak in body, weak morally. Probably when we get to heaven we will understand how the Holy Spirit has helped us throughout our lives by His intercession for us. And He does it “with groaning which cannot be uttered.” That is, we are unspeakably weak. The Holy Spirit longs for the day when for all of us our weaknesses will be no more.

Who searches our hearts? God does. So He knows what the Holy Spirit is praying about as He prays for us because the Holy Spirit makes intercession for us, lit. “according . . . to God!” There may be days when you and I don’t pray for ourselves, but there is never a time, day or night, when the Holy Spirit is not praying for us. What a blessed people we are!

I would like to say more about this, but I must move on. Now let’s look at Ephesians 2:18 where we are learning how the Holy Spirit leads us to pray for ourselves, and others.

Ephesians 2:18 teaches that “through Him,” and Paul had been speaking about our Lord Jesus Christ, “we both” (Jew and Gentile believers) “have access by one Spirit unto the Father.” All prayer is to be directed to the Father, and it is the Holy Spirit Who teaches us that we can only come to God through Christ. The Holy Spirit has told us in the Word through the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, that there is no salvation from God except through Christ. Cf. John 14:6. And the Holy Spirit teaches us that our only way of daily access to the Father in prayer is through Christ. No other prayer get through to God.

And just as there is only one way of salvation, whether a person is a Jew

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or a Gentile (and we are all either one or the other), except through Christ, so the same is true of prayer. And God delights to hear from us that we know that we do not come in our own names, but we come to Him, whether for our needs, or to give God our thanks, or to pray for someone else, or to confess our sins, the way to the throne of grace for any of us is always and only through Christ.

Time is getting away from me, so let us move on to the third passage I have mentioned to you: Ephesians 6:18:

18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.

Paul reminds us that as important as it is for us to put on the whole armor of God, the armor is not sufficient without prayer under the direction of the Holy Spirit. And as we keep praying, we are to keep watching. We are to anticipate that God is going to answer. Prayer is a part of our spiritual warfare. By prayer in the Holy Spirit we are being used by God to see to it that our fellow-soldiers in Christ are victorious too. We don't go to war by ourselves. When we pray for others, their victory is our victory too.

And now we come to the last two verses I gave you earlier which are found in that one chapter epistle of Jude. The verses are 20 and 21.

If you look at the verses which immediately precede these two verses, you will see that Jude was talking about those who do not have the Spirit. Let me read to you verses 17, 18, and 19:

17 But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ;

18 How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.

19 These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.

One of the chief differences between a Christian and a non-Christian, is that a Christian, a true believer in Christ, has the Spirit; the non-Christian does not have the Spirit. Jude was really speaking here about what Paul was speaking of in Ephesians 6:18. How can we be prepared to face the opposition that we will receive from ungodly people in an ungodly world? Verses 20 and 21 give us our answer. Not just prayer, but "praying in the Holy Spirit" is our greatest need. And evidence that we are doing God's will in His way, doing all by praying in the Holy Spirit, we need to be

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doing three things continually as we are told in verses 20 and 21 of Jude:

20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,

21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

1) We need to be building ourselves up in our most holy faith. How do we do this? By the daily habit of reading the Word of God, trusting by prayer that the Holy Spirit will strengthen us spiritually by the Word.

2) We are to keep ourselves in the love of God. What does this mean? The Lord answered this question when in the Upper Room He told His disciples this. His words are on record in John 14:21:

21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

For us to keep ourselves in the love of God means to keep living in obedience to the Word of God. That is how we experience true fellowship with the Lord and where we experience and rejoice in the love that God has for us. It is a love that never changes, but we don't experience the blessing of His love except when we are living obediently to His Word. And it is the Holy Spirit who makes this our prayer, a prayer that the Father will invariably answer for our blessing and His glory.

3) We do this "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." And so we do all of this in anticipation of what will be ours by the Holy Spirit when our Lord returns to take us to Himself in glory.

**Concl:** I trust that you have been both instructed and blessed to see that when we pray, we are not praying independently. The Holy Spirit prays for us even in times when we fail to pray, and that God always answers His prayers. But as we learn to trust the Holy Spirit to teach us and to lead us, we learn to pray in the Holy Spirit, which always means to pray in harmony with the Word of God where is the place that God has revealed His own grace and sovereign will.

I hope that you will go back over these verses with the prayer in your heart that you will be filled with the Holy Spirit, trusting Him to guide you in your praying that you might enjoy that precious fellowship with all of the Members of God which you earnestly desire as a child of God.