

I. The Holy Spirit in Biblical Perspective  
*Led by the Spirit*  
“The Essential Evidence of the Authentic Christian”  
Romans 8:1–17  
Dr. Harry L. Reeder III  
January 10, 2016 – Morning sermon

We will park in Romans 8 for about five studies leading up to the mission’s conference. It contains our theme verse for the year and our theme for the year – all who are led by the Spirit are sons of God. This is God’s Word. It’s the Truth. Romans 8:1–17 says [1] *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. [2] For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. [3] For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, [4] in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. [5] For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. [6] For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. [7] For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. [8] Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*

*[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. [12] So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. [13] For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. [14] For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. [15] For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” [16] The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, [17] and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.*

The grass withers, the flower fades, the Word of God abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

Our elders have both affirmed and moved us forward this year into a ministry theme. Every year at Briarwood we take time to focus on some crucial, foundational dynamic of the Christian life. This year is led by the Spirit. Our ministry verse for the year is Romans 8:14 which says [14] *For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.* Why would we choose this theme? Here are some reasons. Last year’s theme was sanctify them in the truth; Thy Word is truth. In other words, we are people of the Book. How did we get the Book? It was through the Holy Spirit. Who gives you the ability to understand the Book? It is the Holy Spirit. Who gives you a desire to embrace the Book? It is the Holy Spirit. Who lets you embrace the One whom the Book points us to – the Son of God? It is the Holy Spirit. So it is absolutely right that the elders would affirm and move us forward in this matter of led by the Spirit. We wouldn’t have the Word of God without the Spirit of God. You wouldn’t want to

know the Word of God without the Spirit of God. You wouldn't embrace the message of God without the Spirit of God and you wouldn't stay the course without the Spirit of God.

Led by the Spirit of God – there are many other reasons why we should cover this. Inside of every one of us is this desire to know the Spirit of God. Personally I can't wait to get into with you. Because of my preparation for this I'm already into this, amercing myself into these passages of Scripture and I have this hunger in me which I know is in you as well because if you're a Christian the Holy Spirit is in you. You want to know of Him and all that He wants you to know.

A study on the Holy Spirit is very much like a sermon series on prayer. I have never preached a series on prayer and someone come up to me and say "Why did you preach on that? Let's move on to something else more that I need." In fact every time I preach on prayer I generally hear something like "Pastor, I needed that." I haven't met anyone yet who has been satisfied with their prayer life. I have never met a Christian who is satisfied with their relationship with the Spirit of God. They want to know more and what all that means.

There is a down side to that and that is when we are so hungry to know the work of the Spirit of God, to surrender to the work of God, to be filled with the Spirit of God, to be led by the Spirit of God, then there is whole set of people ready to manipulate you, ready to use you, ready to distort the teaching on the Spirit of God, ready to bring delusion on the Spirit of God and ready to take advantage of those. Now some of these false teachers are doing it to manipulate, destructively, and purposefully for self-promotion. Some are doing it ignorantly because they themselves have been manipulated.

Here is the way I draw the distinction. In preachers and teachers there are some that are wolves in sheep's clothing but there are some that are sheep in wolves clothing. They have just been diluted themselves and are just passing it on. There is not only false teaching that comes but when I talk about the experience of the believer many think about a second blessing after conversion or an experience on a certain date that we would put into our calendar that is indescribable and that's what we're looking for. If that's it you're a candidate for manipulation and that's acknowledging that there a datable moments and exhilarating experiences but that is not the objective.

What does it mean to be led by the Spirit? What does the Bible call us to? Inside we're draw to it. We want it. Where does the Bible direct us? Where does the Spirit of God actually lead us? Some think that there will not only be the experience but there will be an extraordinary gift of speaking in an incoherent language and so a reinterpretation of an unknown language from the Bible now exists as the documentable evidence that you have been filled with the Spirit if you are now do it in an incoherent language. Then there are those who react against this and see all the excess, manipulation and everything so God's people suffer because of a lack of knowledge, ignorance and I'm not embracing all that the Bible does say and call us to in that absolutely crucial relationship with the Holy Spirit.

The Christian life is not a telescope but a binocular. With a telescope there is always that one thing we look for. In fact, I'll give you another problem. Some of us do not engage the work of the Holy Spirit because of arrogance of self-righteousness and self-reliance. One might say "Hey Holy Spirit thank You for getting me safe but I'll take over now." We need binocular because you have one lens that you look through and another lens you look through that combined give you the view of life and how you live life. One is that without Him I can do nothing. All that God called me to do I cannot do a single thing without Him. Then I need another lens. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. How does He strengthen

you? It is with His Spirit. So you never want to turn those binoculars into a telescope. I can't do anything without Him so I'll just go over here and die in a pile or I can do but you don't finish the rest of the sentence. You can do all things through HIM who strengthens us and both of those need to be in place.

We say 'no' to those who would take away our desire for the work of the Spirit and say 'no' to manipulation. We are informed by God's Word and we're not simply embracing it because we need Him. Without Him we can do nothing but in Him and He in us, we can do all things. I can worship, witness, disciple and be disciplined. I can do Gospel deeds and share Gospel words. I can do those things but only through the power of the Holy Spirit who is at work within me. I need to be led by the Spirit of God. So I believe this opens up a great opportunity for us.

We are going to find out what baptism is with the Holy Spirit, what it means to be anointed with the Holy Spirit, what filling of the Holy Spirit is and what the gifts and fruit of the Spirit are. We are going to find out about what it means of the adoption of the Spirit. All of these things are in the Bible, clearly defined and absolutely essential for us to understand, embrace and be led by the Spirit of God.

We will look at many texts throughout the year on this. For instance, where is the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament or is the Holy Spirit just a New Testament thing? There are three key texts. 'Led by the Spirit' are found in two key passages of Scripture – Romans 8:14 and Galatians 5. When you are led by the Spirit of God you will walk in the Spirit. When I see kids walking out in the lobby I can tell who they belong to just by the way they walk and God's people have the walk of the Father, to the Son by the Spirit. Then I love the Paul ends it in Galatians 5. He says they keep step with the Spirit.

The third Scripture we will spend time in is the most definitive place in God's Word about the work of the Holy Spirit and that was from Jesus Himself in one of His sermons which is found in the Upper Room Discourse, found in John 13 through 16. There are some unbelievable insights found here as He tells us about the work of the Holy Spirit. We get to hear from Him what the Holy Spirit is sent to do. It is the promise of the Father, through the Son, to us.

In this study I want to briefly walk you through Romans 8 and give you three affirmations and then some assumptions. The three assumptions are given right at the beginning. The first assumption is that there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Before you understand anything else about the work of the Holy Spirit in your life put this in the mind bank, in your heart and soul. This is what you need to know. If you're in Christ there is therefore NOW no condemnation for those who are in Christ. In other words, we're not trying to do this to get out of our condemnation but we're doing this because our condemnation has been eradicated. So the first affirmation is the eradication of the penalty, shame and guilt of sin to reconciliation with the Father through Jesus Christ.

The second affirmation in the text comes next when it says the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. So the second affirmation is the emancipation from sin's power and dominion to the transformation of your life. That same Spirit that brought you to Christ that took away your condemnation is because Jesus paid it all with His atoning death. He came in the likeness of the flesh, went to the cross, bore our sins in that flesh, fulfilled the laws demands and now there is no condemnation – eradication for God's people and emancipation for He has set you free from the power and dominion of sin for the purpose of transformation. You can live a growing life no longer under the dominion of sin with its

emptiness and death but now under the dominion of grace with all of its glorious life and peace. That's what you have in Christ.

Here is the third affirmation. The Holy Spirit is within you. If you're in Christ then the Holy Spirit is in you. The Bible tells us here in Romans 8 that Christ is in you because the Holy Spirit is in you and the Holy Spirit has brought you to Christ. What is the evidence of the Holy Spirit in you? The indwelling presence of the Spirit shows up with the annihilation of sin. You put to death sin. Where is the Holy Spirit working? He is working in the hearts of God's people and when He is working they go to war against sin. They hate sin to kill it. They kill sin before it kills them or their marriage or their witness or their testimony or their local church. They want to kill sin in order to live unto Christ.

The Puritans used to call this mortification – putting to death sin – and vivification – living for Jesus. Put off the old man and put on the new man. I am going to recommend three books for your reading that deal with our theme for the year – led by the Spirit. I won't give you the titles until the next study but I will give you a reason to want those books in this study. One of the books on this work is from John Owen about putting to death sin to put on Jesus. Many of us try to put on Jesus without putting to death sin which is like getting up in the morning and trying to put a suit on over your pajamas. No, you have to take something off to put something on. You have to kill sin to live for Jesus, day after day after day. You're not doing this to get saved because there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. You're not doing this to earn the Holy Spirit because you wouldn't be in Christ without the Holy Spirit.

What does it mean not to quench the Spirit and grieve the Spirit? What is the work of the Spirit? Kill sin and lift up Jesus for that is what the work of the Holy Spirit is all about. So those are the three affirmations in the text. Now I want to give you five assumptions from the text.

Assumption number one is the Holy Spirit is in you. The Father promised the Holy Spirit and all of the promises of God are yes and amen in Jesus. So the Holy Spirit, the promise of the Father, has been sent by the Son. The text tells us that the Spirit has been sent to you to bring you to Christ and He lives in you which means Christ indwells you. As the Spirit of Christ is in you then Christ is in you. So the Father promised, the Son purchased and the Son sent the Holy Spirit to you to bring you to Him. Those who are the sons of God are led by the Spirit and indwells you in order that Christ lives in you – the Hope of glory.

The second assumption is the Holy Spirit who is in you, empowers and inspires you to kill sin and lift up Jesus. The power of Him is in you. Greater is He who is in you, than he who is in the world. He is at work in you. The Holy Spirit is the power of God.

The third assumption is the Holy Spirit is a witness to you that you are the sons of God and the children of God. He brings assurance to you. There are two ways that assurance comes to the life of a Christian. One is objective. I read Romans 8:1 that tells me there is no condemnation for those in Christ and that gives me assurance I'm headed to heaven, forgiven, clothed in the righteousness of Jesus and cleansed by His blood. This is objective assurance because God has told me this. That's true for all in Christ but how do you know you're in Christ? The Holy Spirit brought me to Christ. How do you know the Holy Spirit brought you to Christ? He is constantly bearing witness of Jesus to you, that God is your Father and that you're a part of the family of God. He took you from the family of Adam into the family of the Second Adam, Christ. He declares to you that God is your Father. You cry out by the Holy Spirit, "Abba Father!" Christ is yours and in you and you are in Christ. He bears witness to your spirit.

The fourth assumption is the Spirit is giving you a Christ centered mind so that you can have a Christ centered life. When the Spirit is in you, you are saying 'no' to the mind of the flesh which is hostile to God and 'yes' to the mind of the Spirit which is the mind of Christ which brings you to life and peace. That is at work in your life. I will also be doing a study this year on how to develop a Christian mind. How do you love the Lord with all your heart, soul and mind? We are trying to live a Christian ethic without a Christian mind. We are trying to live in a broken world without a Christian mind to understand it. We're trying to bring Christian worship without a Christian mind. We're trying to have the Christian soul and heart without the Christian mind. We have lost the Christian mind. There is almost an anti-intellectualism that is saying I just want to feel it and that sets us up for all kinds of manipulation. How do we have our mind renewed so we're not conformed to the world? If there is ever a time to need it, it is now. That is what the Holy Spirit does. He gives you a Christ centered mind that you engage in order to have a Christ centered life that you embrace.

The fifth assumption is that Holy Spirit puts you in the family of God two ways. One you are born again into the family of God and two you have been adopted into the family of God. You have the DNA of the Trinity. That is why you want to do what pleases Him and you hate it when you don't do the good that you want to do. Why don't you live perfectly? It is because you still have the DNA of the other family. When we do baptism here at the church we say in full reliance of the power of the Holy Spirit I will endeavor because we can't do it without but with Him I can endeavor to do the things I should. We see the binoculars are on here. You see children who have the DNA of their parents and who have been brought into the family of God through adoption. These are two great Biblical truths.

Here is the problem. When you have an adopted child you bring the DNA from the other family. You have to start to work patiently because that is one of the great challenges of adoption. You don't get the blank slate. When you are born again you now have the DNA of the Father in you but when you're adopted you still have the DNA of the old way of life that you have to kind of keep working through. So we have the DNA of the fallen family of Adam even though we have been adopted by Jesus the Second Adam into the forever family of God. The power of God is within us so God can and will change us to be like His Son Jesus.

Here is the takeaway. It is not very unique but it's simply this; all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. So if God's Spirit is in you He is leading you. If He is leading you then you are sons of God. You will not be a son of God unless you're led by the Spirit of God. Some of you are probably thinking I'm being politically incorrect by saying all of us are 'sons of God' instead of me saying all are sons and daughters of God. But in this case I cannot do that because then theologically I'd become incorrect. Ladies you are included in this because later in the text it says to be a son of God is to be a child of God and to be a child of God you can be male or female. I don't care whether you are male, female, black, white, rich, poor, old or young because you all have a title if you are led by the Spirit of God.

The title is you are sons of God. Why is that important? In that culture only the son could inherit. You are in the position of inheritance from the Father in the name of His Son Jesus. He gave His Son to bring many sons to glory. You are a joint heir with Jesus Christ and that's a title that has been given to you and me. Okay you Downton Abbey fans, you can't understand the last season until you understand the first season. The first season was all about a rich man who has an estate and everything but he doesn't have an heir. He has three daughters and in that society they couldn't inherit nor vote. Now in our society this hasn't been the case for about a hundred years now, but in Downton Abbey back all the way to the Bible they

couldn't vote, bear witness in a court and could not inherit. That is why very carefully He doesn't call us daughters of God but in that context and culture He gives us the right title whether you're male or female, you're the son of God and you inherit everything from the Father through His Son Jesus. In Downton Abbey the only way one of those daughters would get the inheritance is if they marry someone.

Now for you to inherit the blessings of the Father you have to have Jesus, to have Jesus you have to have the Spirit and if you have the Spirit you're led by the Spirit. That word led in your Bible is very important. In the Bible that word is always used this way; you're led from something to something with a purpose. For instance in the Old Testament, God's people were led from Egypt to the Promised Land indwelt by the Shekinah glory, the glory cloud and the glory cloud was in the tabernacle. The tabernacle was in the midst of the people and that's why Moses said to the Lord, 'If You don't go with us don't lead us up from here for the way that people know that we are Your people and You are our God is not because of our success but because our God is with us.' Jesus said, "I will be with you always" and how is He with us? He is with us by the Holy Spirit. He will take us from our sin all the way to the land of promise, in the new heavens and a new earth.

That Old Testament picture was fulfilled in Jesus as Jesus was led by the Spirit. That is why in this text the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Christ. That same Holy Spirit that was upon Jesus is in you right now and will be with you when you leave here. He is the same Spirit that led Jesus from the womb to the tomb. The Holy Spirit came upon Mary and then led Him to a manger. The Holy Spirit led Him to Egypt, to Nazareth and anointed Him and baptized Him affirming Him as Prophet, Priest and King in the River Jordan. Then the Holy Spirit led Him in the rejections of His people and empowered Him in the wilderness through the temptations. The Holy Spirit led Him throughout His life all the way to Calvary. Then the Holy Spirit led Him from the tomb back to glory. That is the Spirit who is leading you right now and is in you.

So what does this mean? The Holy Spirit has led you from sin and condemnation to the Savior and salvation. You are being led from the mind of the flesh to the mind of Christ. You have been led from the wages of sin which is death to an inheritance of Christ which is life. You have been led from the orphanage of sin to the family of God and you have been led from fear to the Father where you cry out "Abba Father!"

The Holy Spirit bears witness of you and you cry out. When I hear people teach this I hear them say "Abba Father, Daddy" so that in the mountain top intimacy with the Spirit you can coo 'Daddy, Daddy, Daddy.' I certainly believe you can call Him Father with intimacy but that is not the text. In the midst of suffering the Holy Spirit, in this broken world, with its challenges and opportunities, will bear witness with your Spirit and you're just like the little boy falls off the bike, bruised and cries out "Abba Father!" In the world, the unbeliever goes through all the brokenness of sin and they'll cry out to God also, usually with a four letter expletive behind it. You cry out because of the Spirit. It's not the coo of intimacy although that is certainly appropriate but it is the cry of challenge and question. It is the cry of the moment of adversity yet with confidence. You may not understand it but your God is your Father.

When my dad was in the Carolina League we lived in Greensboro, North Carolina. We lived in this old tenet house from what was once a big plantation house. We rented this house. I had always wanted to climb that wall and go over to that big house. One of the reasons I always wanted to climb that wall was because of all the apple trees in that yard. My daddy had told me not to climb that wall and the fence or go in that yard. I sinned against my father because I did it all. On one particular day when I had climbed the wall, the fence and grabbed for that apple tree

limb I lost my grip and fell about twelve feet to the ground and where I hit the ground there was sticking up out of the ground a pipe.

I won't give you the description of it all but the pipe went up the back of my head. It nicked an artery and I came close to dying. I remember sitting up, with blood spurting and I could not see anything with focus but I still saw my dad coming down from those second story steps. The cry was 'father, father, father.' He came, rescued me, stopped the bleeding and I'll never forget it.

When you are facing the challenges of life, death, despair and all of those things, you have the presence of the Spirit, the mind of the Spirit and when you get bruised you cry out "Father!" And your Father will come for you and the Holy Spirit will remind you and lead you to that Father. I am not into denial. I know our culture is in a death spiral but I also know that greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world and I am not ready to retreat to the catacombs.

This past year we had 400 plus people from the board directed ministries accept Christ. This Saturday I'll be going to Brother Bryan Park and look at that statue. There was Brother Bryan who used to walk these streets and pray for revival in Birmingham. I believe God answered those prayers two decades later when Dr. Charles Carter, Dr. Dick Vigneulle, and Dr. Frank Barker to this city. He did it at a timely moment in the 1960s. We have been seeing that blessing of God ever since then.

Since I've been at Briarwood we have been able to plant nine PCA churches. There are sixteen PCA churches within ten miles of Briarwood. The Southern Baptists have planted solid church after solid church and other evangelical churches as well. It's amazing what God is doing in Birmingham. I know what's coming here but I know what can leave here and go out there so I'm not ready to go to the catacombs. I'm willing to go but I'm not going there. I want to bring what is here out there. So instead of retreating because of what is out there, could we be a part of an epicenter work of the Gospel that would send from here just like He did at Jerusalem and just like He has done from other places, with those who are led by the Spirit, with the power of the Spirit and the joy of Christ because of the Spirit who bears witness with us?

I know without a doubt what is coming. I also know without a doubt the hope and power of a Spirit led Gospel to this world. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could have together. Thank You for my brothers and sisters and for the privilege to be in Your Word and to walk our way through this passage of Scripture in the coming studies. We want to know but we don't want to simply know. We want to engage and we want to embrace. We don't want to quench the Spirit or grieve the Spirit or ignore the Spirit or neglect the Spirit nor do we want to be led astray by those who would take our desire to manipulation. Holy Spirit lead us with Your Word to Christ and allow us to surrender and be filled by You to be led by You, as the inheritors of the Kingdom – sons of God – and we'll give you praise in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Power Point

LIFE TAKEAWAY

*All who are led by the Spirit are Sons of God*

- *From sin and condemnation to the Savior and salvation*
- *From the mind of the flesh to the Mind of the Christ*
- *From the wages of sin to the Inheritance of Christ*
- *From the orphanage of sin to the Family of God*
- *From fear to the Father*