

IV. The Holy Spirit in Biblical Perspective

Led by the Spirit

“The Law of the Spirit and Liberty”

Romans 8:1–17

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February 7, 2016 – Morning sermon

It's a super Sunday! Every Sunday is a super Sunday because our Lord is risen! Praise His Name! 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, God's Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

As some of you know I've had three surgeries this past month and two of the doctors gave me a clean bill of health to get back to exercising. Perhaps you look at my body and think that I don't exercise. I'll give you my workout regimen if you'd like to have it. It is not overly taxing at all. Perhaps you think I run or jog but mine is what I call a 'slog.' Every once in a while I see a lady from church when I'm doing my 'slog' on the greenway. The first time I saw her I said 'Oh you workout?' She said 'Yes I do a powerwalk.' She pretty much does a powerwalk as her powerwalk went right past my slog and I just saw her go in the distance as she moved ahead.

That's what you have in Christ is a powerwalk. Those who are in Christ are led by the Spirit of God and if you're in the Spirit of God then you walk by the Spirit and you have a powerwalk, not one of personal resolution but the powerwalk of the personal presence of the Holy Spirit. It is with the One who came and powerfully led you from the wages of sin to the

gift of life. It is the One who led you from the tomb of sin to the triumph of Christ, from death unto life and from your sin to the Savior. It is the power of the Spirit of God who is in you so no longer are you a dead man walking but you are a living man walking in the Spirit.

For this entire year our focus is on being led by the Spirit. In fact Romans 8:14 which says *[14] For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God* is our theme verse for the year. We are starting off with five studies in this magisterial text on the Holy Spirit in Romans 8. We have already covered three things from the text in Romans 8:1–17. The first thing we learned is the necessity of the Spirit of God in you and leading you. Romans 8:9 says *[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.* Here he puts it in the negative. If you don't have Christ then you don't have salvation.

In other words, the work of the Spirit of God is not a second blessing. The Spirit of God obviously brings many blessings in the life of a converted believer. The Spirit of God is the blessing of God to bring us from death unto life that we would lay hold of Christ. If you don't have the Spirit of God you're not missing the second blessing, it's that you've never come to Christ. You can't come to Christ without the Spirit of Christ so if you don't have the Spirit of Christ then you don't have Christ and that means you're still in your sins, still need a Savior and you need to come to Him by the power of the Spirit.

Then he puts it in the positive in Romans 8:14 which says *[14] For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.* If you are led by the Spirit of Christ then you have Christ and if you're led by the Spirit of Christ then you are sons of God. That is a technical term. It is a term of inheritance. You are not just children of God for you have the title right inheritance for sons only in that culture inherited. So by the Spirit of God in you, you have been brought into the family of God and you now inherit the blessings and benefits that are purchased for us in Jesus Christ.

That leads us to the second thing we have studied and that is as a Christian I am not alone, I am never alone and I will never be alone; therefore I will not, I must not live as if I am "on my own." As a Christian our Savior has said to us the Spirit of God is in you and if the Spirit of God is in you then Christ is in you. Christ says 'I will be with you all the way to the end and I will never leave you nor forsake you.' So why would we ever live like we're on our own? We would do that for two reasons. One there is an enemy outside of you and his name is Satan. Satan is constantly by intimidation and delusion attempting to marginalize you and make you think you're isolated and all alone. You are never alone for your Savior is with you by the presence, personal power of His Spirit, the Holy Spirit, who is upon you, in you and who seals you.

There is also another enemy and that is the enemy inside of you. You and I do not start out in neutral. We start out in the flesh. Flesh is a very technical term in the Bible. Don't just think of body here but it starts to be introduced with all of its theological importance in Genesis 6, when the depravity of man is made manifest. God is about to bring an initial judgment of water upon all of humanity. It says that God looked upon all flesh. Genesis 6:5 goes on to say *[5] The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.* Flesh is used to describe men and women living independent of God, self-consumed, self-absorbed, self-reliant and self-confident but the Christ is not in the flesh. The Christian is in the Spirit and we say 'no' from a declaration of independence from God.

We declare our total, absolute dependence on God that we have no confidence in ourselves. We say to the Lord, 'let us die to ourselves so we can be God-reliant and God-absorbed.' Whatever we do we want to do all to the glory of God. We were created and redeemed to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. He doesn't exist for me. I exist for His glory and that is my joy forever. Without Him I can do nothing but in Him I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. So I will not believe the lie of Satan that I am alone or the lie of the old man that keeps telling me I can handle things on my own. That's why I love those moments of either an ordination vow, church membership vow or baptismal vow, for all of those covenant vows contain this statement; in humble reliance upon Divine grace and the power of the Holy Spirit, I will endeavor... I am not depending upon myself but upon Him and His power.

That brought us to a third study which told us that the Spirit of God sent by the Father to lead Christ has been sent by Christ to lead you by grace to glory. In other words, 2000 years ago in fulfillment of God's covenant promise God send His Son, the Son of God, to become the Son of Man and He came in the weakness of the flesh. He is sinless but it's a real body that He has. He has a real human soul and body and He humbles Himself, not by laying aside His deity, but by taking upon Himself humanity. He laid aside privileges of deity but not deity and then takes upon Himself humanity. Therefore He comes to be the Christ, the Anointed One, the Prophet, Priest and King. He comes as the Prophet to give us the Word. He comes as the Priest to bring the sacrifice and be the sacrifice for sinners. He comes as the Shepherd King to gather His people to Himself.

As He comes in the likeness of flesh the Father has a second promise. That promise is that He will send His Spirit to rest upon Him. Have you ever stopped and thought about that? If the Son of God, becoming the Son of Man, needed the Spirit of God to accomplish His call as the Christ, how much more do you and I need the Spirit of God to exalt that Christ and follow that Christ? By the Holy Spirit the Son of God is brought from the throne to the womb conceived by the Holy Spirit and in fulfilling the prophet Isaiah the Spirit of God rests upon Him in His formative years. In Isaiah 11 the Spirit gives Him wisdom and understanding and that's why Luke 2:52 says [52] *And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man*, as the Spirit of God formed the Son of Man to be our Savior.

Then He goes to His ordination in fulfillment of Numbers 8 to be baptized. The Spirit of God falls upon Him and the Father says 'This is My Son in whom I am well pleased.' Then the Spirit of God upon Christ drives Jesus into the wilderness as it says in the Gospel of Mark to do battle with Satan. Now the Second Adam defeats Satan with the Spirit of God and the Word of God in the wilderness, having fasted, unlike the first Adam who fell in the garden. Then the Spirit of God leads Him in power into Galilee for His three years of ministry. According to Hebrews 9 the Spirit of God then leads Jesus up to the cross where He offers Himself to be our Redeemer as our Prophet, Priest and King. Then our Savior is forsaken on the cross so that you will never be forsaken forever. As He goes to the tomb the Spirit of God comes upon Him and according to the Gospel of Mark He throws away that stone and the Son of God comes forth as the risen Savior in victory and triumph. He then ascends with the Spirit of God into heaven.

Now according to Romans 8 the risen Savior who was led by the Spirit as the Christ to purchase our redemption to redeem us of our sins, fulfilling the promise of the Father, now sends His Spirit upon you. The Spirit of the Incarnate Christ is upon you. The One who was with Him in the womb is the One who brings you to be born again. The One who formed Him in His childhood is forming you as you grow by the Spirit of God and the grace and knowledge of Christ. The Spirit of Christ is upon you to seal you, grow you and take you from here all the way

to glory. The same Spirit who purchased your salvation has come to you to bear witness to bring you to that Savior with all of those victories and benefits and that same Spirit is upon you, from the tomb of your sin to the glory of redemption.

So what are the evidences if He is with us? Let's go back to Romans 8:2 which says *[2] For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.* Doesn't law constrict? No, this is a law that sets you free. It's the law of the Spirit. When you think of law, I want you to think of how a king rules. The rule of King Jesus in your life is accomplished by the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God is reigning in your life where He has taken you from death unto life. He has set you free from sin and death. The law of the Spirit of God brings liberty to set you free from the law of sin and death. I am no longer under sin's penalty and power if the Spirit of God is upon me, the Spirit of Christ in me. There are five areas where the text shows us where the law, the reign of Christ in the name of the Spirit, as set you free.

The first one is the law of the Spirit has set you free in your **being**, who you are. I'm so grateful for a man who discipled me early on in life for he has a little formula that has always stuck with me. It was know-be-do. Know who you are in Christ. Be who you are in Christ and now you're ready to do for Christ. Paul never starts off telling us how to do for Christ but he always tells you who you are in Christ. In Ephesians 1 through 3 we see the blessings of the elect in Christ. Then when he gets to Ephesians 4 he urges us to walk in a manner worthy of our calling – not worthy to be called but in the name of the worthy One who has saved you, walk in a manner worthy of His calling. So he doesn't get to our call for Christ until he tells us of the life we have in Christ.

Paul does the same thing in Romans. The first 11 chapters are all about what it means to be set free from our sins in Jesus Christ. Then in Romans 12:1 he says *[1] I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.* In other words, when the Lord is at work in our life there will be evidences and the first thing is our being. Who am I in Christ, not because of what I do but because of what He did for me and what He is doing in me.

The first thing I learned about my being in Christ is that I'm forgiven. I'm innocent. Romans 8:1 tells me this, *[1] There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.* Why is there no condemnation? Romans 8:3–4 says *[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.* There is no condemnation of sin in you because Christ has come and condemned sin for you. He has defeated and eradicated sin for you.

That's why at the end of Romans 8 he'll say in Romans 8:33–34 *[33] Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. [34] Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.* The same Spirit who was in Christ when He condemned sin in the flesh is upon you, sets you free and points you to the promises of God that are 'yes and amen' in Jesus. You are forgiven and have been justified by faith in Christ Jesus. He has paid for all the sins of all of His people for all of eternity and my sin no longer hangs over me. My guilt and shame have been taken away through the blood of Jesus Christ.

I know there has to be some reading this that haven't come to the Savior to be forgiven. You are still convinced that a baptismal service will do it or a church membership will do it or

personal resolution or maybe you'll just buck up and do better. My dear friend if that were at all possible God would have never sent His Son in the likeness and weakness of flesh and then the Spirit of God upon Him to take Him to the cross to pay for your sins. He would have just said 'do better' but we can't do better and there is a Savior who loves you and the Spirit of Christ upon you. Charles Wesley wrote in that hymn Arise My Soul Arise, "Forgive him, O forgive," they cry, "Nor let that ransomed sinner die!" He has eradicated my sins in Christ.

So the second evidence is in our walking. Now that you are that in Christ, you power walk in the Spirit. He has not only eradicated you from sin but He has emancipated you from the power of sin. If any man be in Christ he is a new creation, the old has passed away behold the new has come. So I don't have to be a dead man walking for I am living man walking by the life of Christ and the same Spirit that was in Christ in in me for I have been born again by the Spirit. I have been called by the Spirit, am indwelt by the Spirit and now I can have the family stride. For some of you I can tell who your kids are just by the way they walk. God's people have the family stride. They walk in the Spirit to follow Son to the glory of their Father. That same Spirit who walked with Jesus all the way to the cross and then back to glory is upon you and you walk in the Spirit of Christ guided by the Word of God for Christ.

Thirdly, is the evidence is in our thinking. Romans 8:5-7 says [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.* If I am thinking self-reliant, self-oriented, self-affirming then that is death. God has not only eradicated me from the penalty of sin and emancipated me from the power of sin but He is transforming my thinking so that now I can have the mind of Christ. This is so I can think in a way that honors Christ and to see life in light of Christ and not the sovereign self.

There are basically two sets of glasses out there that you are all wearing right now. Some of you have the glasses of the flesh – the mind set on the flesh and it's all about us, the sovereign self or by God's grace the Spirit of God has put your mind on the mind of Christ and increasingly you are seeing life in a God-centered way. Some as we think Biblically and see things Christ-centered the world keeps coming in to smudge the glasses. We have to clean them so that we see clearly. We don't want to see life through the lens of the sovereign self where we determine our gender, marriage and who God is which leads to death but we want to see through the sovereign God as He has revealed Himself.

A man who was an elder in a church sat at his Christmas day dinner table in 1967. Across from him his dear wife lurched forward with a cerebral hemorrhage. The doctors said she was most likely dead before her face landed on the table. His 39 year old wife died and left four girls ages 4, 6, 8 and 10 sitting around the table. He immediately grabs her and takes her to the hospital. A church gathers around them. There was a young man visiting that church at that time who was at the end of himself looking for hope back where he had heard it from his parents years before. He wandered far from it in a profane, ungodly, dissipated life, now 21 years old wanting to know if there was any help. By request he insisted on helping the family by driving the car for the funeral because he had simply been visiting the church.

Then after the funeral, back at the house, he went up to the man who had just lost his wife, with his four children standing in the hallway and he said "I don't know what to do but if there is anything I can do please tell me." The man looked at him with the tears still filling his eyes and said "My dear friend, I sense you need to know something. If I could bring my dear

wife back I would not do it.” The young man had no category for that and thought maybe there was trouble in the marriage. He went on to say “Do you know what she has right now? Eye has not seen nor ear has heard, for why would I be so self-absorbed to bring her back from all that she enjoys. Another reason is that I have a God who has saved me and He not only has taken my dear wife to be with Him but I have known her since I was 14 and were married at 18, I have four girls to raise and am not sure how I will do that but God has given me a promise that all things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose. He never told me that everything was going to be good in this broken world but He did tell me He was going to work it together for good so He is doing something and I am trusting Him. Besides young man, it won't be that long till I'll be with her anyway and it won't be that long until you'll be somewhere in eternity. Where will you be?”

There is a man who did not deny the reality of grief by any means whatsoever but the tears were filling his eyes. Yet the experience did not inform him. God's Word instructed him and he by the Spirit of God understood what God was doing yet he did not know all that God would yet do. So he looked at it through the mind of Christ. I'm so glad he did because of what he did that young man went into the next room, knelt and surrendered to Christ and that was me. Here was a man that had every reason to be absorbed in self-pity but instead the preeminence of Christ in the midst of the most difficult situation, humbly yet gloriously came through. The Spirit of God not only emancipates you from the power of sin, eradicates the penalty of sin but also transforms our perspective on life that we see it through Christ and not for ourselves.

Living is the fourth evidence because we'll live by the Spirit. Romans 8:13 says *[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.* You live by the power of the Spirit through the Son of God who is at work within you. The Spirit of God is leading you to live by the Spirit. The Spirit of God is reigning in you. Here we see sanctification because you have been set apart. You belong to Him and that means you now become a sin slayer. Those who are led by the Spirit put to death the deeds of the body. When the Spirit is reigning within you, you become a sworn assassin of sin for the rest of your life and a joyful giver of praise to God.

What is sin? All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. God, by Your power and the Spirit of Christ who dwells within me, no longer do I want to come short of the glory of God and exalt myself but I want to assassinate sin and exalt You. For the rest of my life I not only get the opportunity to enjoy my forgiveness of sin and the power of sin broken, I get to kill sin now and until I get to go be with Jesus, exalting Christ all along the way. We are assassins of sin to exalt Christ in our life.

Fifthly, because the Spirit of God is reigning with in you, you are praying. Romans 8:15–17 says *[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 Spirit of God is within you and in this broken world when people die, sickness comes, jobs are lost and I falter, the Spirit moves me not only to pray but to call out to God saying ‘My Father, Abba Father!’ There are three people in this world that can call Me Father. There are untold numbers because of the Son of God that can today, by the Spirit of God call out ‘Father!’ When you are bruised and fall, you cry out, ‘Father!’ And your Father will not give you a stone but He will give you the presence and power of His Spirit.

Romans 8:26 says [26] *Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.* The Spirit of God is not only calling you to pray but the Spirit of God is calling you to pray intimately to the Father with confidence and the Spirit of Christ is interceding for you with groanings too deep to be uttered. This doesn't mean you will give incoherent language while in the Spirit. This is no language that is possible. You can't utter them because it is the Spirit of God who is translating your groanings in a broken world into the prayer request to bring to Jesus who is interceding for you. The Spirit of God has now translated your groanings into those requests through Christ that come to the Father. Have you ever been so sick that all you can do is groan? My wife, when I groan, seems to know exactly what I'm groaning about.

I had the privilege to go speak to VMI in the 1990s and one of the city officials told me there was someone I needed to visit. They took me to a man who in the 1990s was only one of two men who were still living in an iron lung. He could do nothing. The iron lung kept him alive. He couldn't even muster the breath to form words. All he could do was groan but every groan that was nonsensical to me would be interpreted by his dear wife. We live in a broken world and we're just groaning to be delivered. The Spirit of God is translating it right to Jesus and our prayer life goes in power. So what is our takeaway?

The takeaway is to be led by the Spirit of God is not only a triumphant declaration of our new destination, but is also a celebration of our liberation. Do you see the Spirit of God upon you? In the brokenness of this world you just cry out "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by Thy Name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever." I am forgiven. My sins are paid for. I still have sin living in me but I don't need to live in sin. Now You are transforming my mind so that I think the thoughts of Christ instead of the thoughts of myself.

The Spirit of Christ that is renewing my mind is at work within me so that I can have the family stride for the Father as I follow the Son, constantly calling out. Now praise and prayer govern my life instead of profanity and blasphemy, filling my words, thoughts and deeds. It is all because of the same Spirit that was upon Christ is now reigning and growing in me the grace and knowledge of Christ.

The Bible is full of examples. Take a religious terrorist like Paul. As the Spirit of God comes upon Paul he becomes a preacher, evangelist, church planter and a discipler. Here he is on his way to Damascus to kill some more Christians and the Spirit of God takes him from death unto life and falls upon him. Then Christ tells Ananias to go see Saul, the man who was killing Christians, so how did Ananias get his comfort to do that? 'When you see him behold he prays.' The reign of the Spirit had taken a persecutor to a prayer warrior and a preacher. That is what He'll do with you and me. The reign of the Spirit of Christ is life. Please don't die. In Christ is life forevermore. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could be together in Your Word. If the Spirit of God has begun that work in you this day to take you from sin's penalty to forgiveness, from sin's power to liberty, from a mind set on the flesh to a mind set on life in Christ, from walking in the deeds of the flesh to walking in the fruit of the Spirit, from being a dead man walking to walking in the life of the Spirit, then would you come to Him today? You might think if you call on Him how

will you know He will hear you but that question gives yourself too much credit. If you're calling on Him it's because He is calling you. Now call upon Him who gives life. Father, for all who know the Savior and the Spirit of Christ rests upon them, allow us today to put no confidence in the flesh for it is the Spirit who gives life. Your Word is Spirit and life, for Jesus' sake, Amen.

Power Point

The necessity of the Spirit of God in you and leading you.

As a Christian, I am not alone, I am never alone and I will never be alone; therefore I will not, I must not live as if I am "on my own."

The Spirit of God, sent by the Father to lead Christ, has been sent by Christ to lead you by grace to glory.

THE EVIDENCES OF GOD IN THE LIVES OF THOSE LED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD

- Being
- Walking
- Thinking
- Living
- Praying

LIFE TAKEAWAY

To be led by the Spirit of God is not only a triumphant declaration of our new destination, but is also a celebration of our liberation.