

THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Last week we had an opportunity to begin what we consider to be the most fascinating chapter of the most fascinating book in the Bible. The reason we consider Romans to be the most fascinating of all the books is that within its sixteen chapters we find, in a condensed version, the entire message of the Bible. And there is no other book that reveals that message as clearly as Romans. Unfortunately, if you don't have a working knowledge of the Old Testament and the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, you won't be able to grasp the **absolute** wonder of the book of Romans, but believe us what you do get will change your life. Romans chapter eight also begins with one of the top ten fascinating verses of the Bible. In verse 1 Paul writes:

*I So now there is **NO CONDEMNATION** for those who belong to Christ Jesus.*

What a statement for a world full of people who are destined to be judged at the end of their lives because of their sin nature; a nature that they can do nothing about on their own. **God never wanted to see anyone have to pay the penalty for that sin nature**, so He Himself became a man and came to this earth in the form of Jesus, fully God and fully man, so that no one would have to pay any kind of penalty for their sin. Christ would pay for the sin for all people of all time, and He would do it once and for all so that all people could be reconciled to God and have eternity in Heaven upon their physical death. And what was the price that we had to pay to get this awful burden off our backs; a burden that haunts most people in one form or another whether they're willing to admit it or not? There was no price, there were no works that had to be performed. We do not have to crawl five blocks over broken glass. We don't have to pull out our fingernails with a pliers each time we sin. And we don't have to do anything some priest, bishop, or pastor tells us we must do in order to get saved and stay saved. God gives it to everyone as a free gift of faith when we simply believe that Christ died on the cross for our sins. Because of that death and His subsequent resurrection combined with our faith in what He did for us, God declares the believer righteous and will see their sin no more, even sin they may yet commit in the future. And that is why Paul can write in verse 1:

*I So now there is **NO CONDEMNATION** for those who belong to Christ Jesus.*

Once you truly believe, you're in and you won't ever be tossed out because now you're one with Christ and your **salvation and eternity are assured**. Remember what we read in Hebrews 10:17,18?

*17 Then he adds, "**I will never again remember their sins and lawless deeds.**"*

18 Now when sins have been forgiven, there is no need to offer any more sacrifices.

You see the work of Christ was so complete that He perfected us forever. He offered one sacrifice for sin forever. When the accomplishment of Christ's act on the cross becomes the reality in our lives, there will never be any condemnation. Now that doesn't mean that the believer won't ever sin again because he/she will sin, but that sin will not bring condemnation, as John tells us in 1 John 1:5-10:

5 This is the message he (Jesus) has given us to announce to you: God is light and there is no darkness in him at all.

6 So we are lying if we say we have fellowship with God but go on living in spiritual darkness. We are not living in the truth.

7 But if we are living in the light of God's presence, just as Christ is, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from every sin.

8 If we say we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and refusing to accept the truth.

And here is the verse you must all understand and if you don't, please let us know so that we may clarify any questions in your mind:

9 But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong.

10 If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts.

So let's review the first six verses of chapter eight and then we'll continue with verse 7.

*1 So now there is **NO CONDEMNATION** for those who belong to Christ Jesus.*

*2 For the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you through Christ Jesus from the power of **sin that leads to death**.*

In other words the **Holy Spirit of life in Christ has given you a new life through the Gospel Message.**

*3 The law of Moses could not save us, because of our sinful nature. But God put into effect a different plan to save us. **He sent his own Son in a human body like ours, except that ours are sinful. God destroyed sin's control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins.***

5 Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit.

Those who have been saved have been given a new nature with a new direction.

6 If your sinful nature controls your mind, there is death. But if the Holy Spirit controls your mind, there is life and peace.

The believer can sense God's word, His love, and His power, and we can sense His ways. It also says in Romans 8:6 that **we have peace**. Not only are we aware that God is there but through our relationship with Him we have peace. Now let's continue in Romans 8:7:

7 For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God's laws, and it never will.

Even back in Paul's time we see there was tremendous resistance to the rule and sovereignty of God. Verse 7 tells us that the person who is focused on worldly pleasures alone has a mind which is resistant to the things of God. Then Paul writes in Romans 8:8:

8 That's why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God.

Those who hold to the philosophy, "**Life is all about me**," which, incidentally is the dominant theme of our time, can never please God no matter how good they may try to be. You might ask, "*Well, I know some atheists who give a lot of money to their favorite charities, Isn't that doing good?*" It's good from a human standpoint, but God knows the heart. Someone may give \$10,000 for cancer research, and yet submit an income tax return that does not accurately reflect their true income. That same person could be cheating on his wife or husband, or ignoring the children, or any number of other things. According to God **the only things one does that please Him are those things that are done to fulfill His will and for His glory**. Giving \$1 to the church to help feed the hungry or carry the Gospel message to the lost when you only have \$10, and doing it in the name of Jesus Christ, that would please God. When Curt Schilling was interviewed after game 6 of the ALCS playoff series, He gave all the credit to God rather than telling everybody how great he was. That certainly pleased God. But anyone who has not received Jesus as Savior or at least called upon the name of God to help them understand the process for pleasing God, **will not please God under any circumstances**.

And you know what? People are all created by God for the purpose of pleasing Him. We all have it built right into our programming to use a computer analogy. If we don't function according to the way we were designed, we won't run as efficiently as we could, and there is a good likelihood that we'll break down, just like an eight cylinder car that someone tries to run on five cylinders. We'll sputter and jerk and frequently be in for repair. **If we can't please God, our life is not going to experience the kind of fulfillment we could have by living according to His will for us**. Now let's take a look at verse nine, Romans 8:9:

9 But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them are not Christians at all.)

The Greek word used for “*living in*” in this verse was used in a context meaning “*to make His home in you,*” When Jesus makes His home in you, that is evidence of a saved nature. **If you have received Jesus as your Savior, you are no longer controlled by your sinful nature but by the Holy Spirit.** If the Holy Spirit has not made His home in you, you cannot belong to and be one with Christ, **you cannot truly be saved.** If your life is not giving evidence of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit of God, if there is not delight in your heart for the things of God, then the Holy Spirit is not there. And what is it that a person needs to demonstrate within their lives to know that they’re saved? The presence of the Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit is not present in your heart **it doesn’t matter what you claim,** you are not saved and you do not belong to God. So verse nine is a call to self-examination, just like the one we find in 2 Corinthians 13:5:

5 Examine yourselves to see if your faith is really genuine. Test yourselves. If you cannot tell that Jesus Christ is among you, it means you have failed the test.

When you take this self-examination ask yourself these questions:

- ☞ Have I seen evidence of the Holy Spirit at work in my life?
- ☞ Have I experienced those things which the Bible refers to as the fruit of the Spirit?

LOVE	GOODNESS
JOY	FAITHFULNESS
PEACE	GENTLENESS
PATIENCE	SELF-CONTROL
KINDNESS	
- ☞ Have I experienced times that I long to communicate with God?
- ☞ Have I experienced a love for the Word of God even if I might not be feeling that right now?
- ☞ Have I felt a true desire to praise God?

Can you remember feeling those things? If you can, those feelings were produced by the grace of God through the Holy Spirit. He is there if those feelings have ever been there or He is working in you knowing that He is bringing you to salvation soon. Now we’ll move on to verses 10 and 11, Romans 8:10,11:

*10 Since Christ lives within you, even though your body will die because of sin, your spirit is alive because you have been made right with God.
11 **The Spirit of God,** who raised Jesus from the dead, **lives in you.** And just as he raised Christ from the dead, he will give life to your mortal body by this same Spirit living within you.*

Those who receive Jesus as their Savior have a spiritual resurrection and someday they’re going to have a bodily resurrection as well. If there’s any question in your mind about the word, “**resurrection,**” It means your body will rise from the grave and be united with your soul in a physical body that no longer contains a sin nature. If you are saved, you will have the same kind of body as Jesus had when He rose from the grave. So if you have any images of going to Heaven and existing as a form of gaseous substance like

Casper the friendly ghost, you can put those ideas to rest (no pun intended). You will have a physical body very much like the one you have now. This new heavenly body, however, **will be perfect** in every way. It will never get sick, never get sad, never get tired, and never die. And you won't spend your time floating around on a cloud playing a harp, but you'll be having the time of your **new life**, enjoying everything you do to the utmost and doing it all to the glory of God. Just as Jesus regenerated believers spiritually, He will regenerate them physically as well.

Now all of this work that God is doing in us is a result of the work of the **Holy Spirit**. We've talked about the Holy Spirit before and will many times again. Some of you may have some questions about who the Holy Spirit is and just what He does. The Holy Spirit brings to the believer all of God. In a genuine sense, the Holy Spirit is our representative sent from God to be with us constantly during our lifetime (see John 14:16). The Holy Spirit is God in you. How can God be three in one? Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? I don't know and neither does anyone else. But the Bible clearly states this is the nature of God. God wants to be near you, so He has devised a way to come and live within you so that He can make you as good as you want to be. Anytime we ask God for something that God knows is good for us, He will grant it. When we ask for something and He knows that something is bad for us, even though we think it would be good for us, He does not give it to us. The Holy Spirit interprets that will of God to us and also communicates the thoughts of our heart to God. Listen to the promise we find in Romans 8:26,27:

*26 And the Holy Spirit helps us in our distress. For we don't even know what we should pray for, nor how we should pray. But **the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words.***

*27 And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, **for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will.***

This is also something you're never going to figure out while you're on this earth. You have no idea how many people don't like to pray because they don't think their words are grand enough or they can't put thoughts together that will please God. Well fear no more because no matter what you say or how you say it, your prayers, your words go through the filter of the Holy Spirit and He makes the feelings of your heart to be most eloquent before God. Think of it this way: the Holy Spirit is God walking next to you every moment of every day. He will protect you, provide for your needs, and teach you, if you only ask. When you pray you might even want to think of Him as sitting in a chair next to you or directly across from you and saying, "*Come on AJ. I love you so much. I want to know everything that is in your heart so that I can give you everything I know is the very best for you.*" The Holy Spirit is God and the power of God is always available to us.

Let's pause for a moment and recall just what the Holy Spirit does for the person who receives Jesus as their personal Savior. He frees us from our bondage to sin and death. He enables us to fulfill God's Law. He changes our nature and makes us all new on the inside. And someday when these mortal bodies we now live in are resurrected, He will

make us all new on the outside as well.

This takes us to verses twelve and thirteen of Romans 8, Romans 8:12,13:

12 So, dear brothers and sisters, you have no obligation whatsoever to do what your sinful nature urges you to do.

13 For if you keep on following it, you will perish. But if through the power of the Holy Spirit you turn from it and its evil deeds, you will live.

If we have received Christ as Savior, we no longer need to follow those things we know are sinful, for that is the part of our life we no longer want to pursue thanks to the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit now living within us. In verses twelve and thirteen we see that because of the great gift we have been given, **we now have a great responsibility**. We have a responsibility to wage war against the temptation to sin that will always be with us until we die. And now you have all the power of God living within you to win that war. Do you remember what we told you last week? That we believed in a very important theological truth, and that truth was that **everything that is a fact is also a responsibility**. That also applies to faith. The faith and salvation we are given by God is a free gift. Once we receive that free gift, we owe a great debt to God and that debt is **to be** responsible to live within His will. Those who are not saved do not have such responsibility because, if you'll remember, they cannot keep the Law of God because they do not have the power of the Holy Spirit available to them. A person who is saved has the **responsibility to do the leg work** and God gives them the power to accomplish what He requires of them. God also handles the miracles when they're necessary.

When the Holy Spirit of God is in you, the full power of God comes with Him. The Spirit of Christ dwells in you and empowers you to do what Christ would do. All you need to do to have the full power of God available to you is to submit to the Holy Spirit's leading as Paul writes in Ephesians 3:14-16

14 When I think of the wisdom and scope of God's plan, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father,

15 the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth.

*16 I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will give you mighty inner strength **through his Holy Spirit**.*

The Holy Spirit gives us power to overcome sin and even covers us with the Armor of God as we learn in Ephesians 6:10-18:

10 A final word: Be strong with the Lord's mighty power.

*11 Put on all of **God's armor** so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies and tricks of the Devil.*

12 For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against the evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against those mighty powers of darkness who rule this world, and against wicked spirits in the heavenly realms.

13 Use every piece of God's armor to resist the enemy in the time of evil, so that after the battle you will still be standing firm.

*14 Stand your ground, putting on the sturdy **belt of truth** and the **body armor of God's righteousness**.*

15 For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News, so that you will be fully prepared.

*16 In every battle you will need **faith as your shield** to stop the fiery arrows aimed at you by Satan.*

*17 Put on **salvation as your helmet**, and take the **sword of the Spirit**, which is the word of God.*

*18 **Pray at all times and on every occasion in the power of the Holy Spirit**. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all Christians everywhere.*

There is a very obvious equation between the Holy Spirit and power in the Scripture. This is an essential reality that we need branded on our minds and heart because we need to know that as Christians, people who possess the Holy Spirit of God, **we have the power to overcome sin**. This is very important for us to know because if we are not seeing victory in our lives over sin, **it's not because we lack** the power for victory. **It's a lack of our activating that power in order to obtain victory**.

Keep in mind that sometimes there are obstacles in our lives that keep that power from working to its fullest, even when we seek to the best of our ability to activate it. In those cases we must **take steps** to remove those obstacles. Those obstacles could be our own willfulness, a desire to control our own lives, or some deeper psychological obstacles. We can again, however, call on the power of the Holy Spirit to help us become aware of the nature of the obstacle that may exist. God wants those obstacles removed from our lives as much or more than we do. He wants to show us which **steps** to take in order to allow the Holy spirit to break through those obstacles. So He will answer the prayer to show us what **steps** to take to remove the obstacles that stand in the way of our living in victory. We must then take whatever action is indicated, according to the nature of the obstacle. Then, as we continue to submit to the Holy Spirit, He strengthens us *"in the power of His might"* giving us the victory over sin in our lives.

To be filled with the Holy Spirit means to let the Word of God fill your entire life. When you allow the Holy Spirit to fill you, you will find yourself thinking His thoughts, feeling His feelings, and obeying His will. You will ask minute by minute, hour by hour, day by day, *"Holy Spirit, fill me. Please give me your thoughts. Put your words in my mouth. Please, Holy Spirit, control me. Show me what you would have me do or say in this situation."* Requesting guidance from the Holy Spirit of God throughout the day indicates a posture of submissiveness to God. This is what it means to be controlled by the Holy Spirit.

Quite frankly you are controlled by whatever fills your mind. You probably have heard the old computer saying, **"Garbage in, garbage out."** Whatever you put into your computer, **your mind**, is going to be reflected in your behavior. Whatever, or whoever,

controls your mind will control your behavior. If you allow the Spirit of God to control your mind, then you will have a mind that is intent on obeying the will of God. That will result in godly behavior. When we hear the words, “*to be filled with the Spirit,*” that doesn’t mean to fall over backwards in some kind of trance. It doesn’t mean you flip out into some kind of out of body experience. It simply means that you place yourself under the control of the Holy Spirit of God so that He fills your life. All you have to do is say, “*God, take over. I’m putting you in control of my life, thoughts, and will.*” “**Filled**” here means to be submissive, to be totally under the control of the Holy Spirit. We see the results of such submission in selected verses beginning in Ephesians 5:18-20:

18 Don’t be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, let the Holy Spirit fill and control you.

19 Then you will sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, making music to the Lord in your hearts.

20 And you will always give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Verses 5:25-6:4

25 And you husbands must love your wives with the same love Christ showed the church. He gave up his life for her

26 to make her holy and clean, washed by baptism and God’s word.

27 He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault.

28 In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man is actually loving himself when he loves his wife.

29 No one hates his own body but lovingly cares for it, just as Christ cares for his body, which is the church.

30 And we are his body.

31 As the Scriptures say, “A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.”

32 This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one.

33 So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

6:1 Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do.

2 “Honor your father and mother.” This is the first of the Ten Commandments that ends with a promise.

3 And this is the promise: If you honor your father and mother, “you will live a long life, full of blessing.”

4 And now a word to you fathers. Don’t make your children angry by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction approved by the Lord.

In other words, if you allow yourselves to be led by the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit will

affect every relationship that you have. Now let's look at a similar passage in Colossians 3:16-21:

16 Let the words of Christ, in all their richness, live in your hearts and make you wise. Use his words to teach and counsel each other. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts.

17 And whatever you do or say, let it be as a representative of the Lord Jesus, all the while giving thanks through him to God the Father.

18 You wives must submit to your husbands, as is fitting for those who belong to the Lord.

19 And you husbands must love your wives and never treat them harshly.

20 You children must always obey your parents, for this is what pleases the Lord.

21 Fathers, don't aggravate your children. If you do, they will become discouraged and quit trying.

Skipping to verse 23 we continue reading to 4:2:

23 Work hard and cheerfully at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.

24 Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and the Master you are serving is Christ.

25 But if you do what is wrong, you will be paid back for the wrong you have done. For God has no favorites who can get away with evil.

1 You slave owners must be just and fair to your slaves. Remember that you also have a Master—in heaven.

2 Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart.

Being controlled by the Holy Spirit and being controlled by the Word of Christ go hand in hand. If you want to live a Spirit-filled life, don't look for some out of body experience. Simply get your life under the control of the Word of God. As you saturate your heart and mind with the truth of the Word of God, it will begin to show in Spirit-controlled behavior. You must saturate yourself with the Word of God so that whenever situations come at you, your involuntary trigger responses are godly.

Think on these things throughout the week and we'll pick up again on this theme next week.