

Wednesday, March 18, 2026

Romans 8:9-11

We read today from Romans 8:9-11. Read the passage now or at the end of this devotion. What can we learn today from the light of God's word to us?

Settle yourself in a comfortable posture. Sit up straight and breathe into your stomach. Focus on slowly taking calming breath in through your nose and out through your mouth. After a moment or two, breathe out and breathe in four times slowly to these phrases. "I am in Christ." "I am a new creation." "The old has gone." "The new has come."

This week, we are going to talk about selflessness. Our study will take us through the first 17 verses of Romans 8. We will break the bigger section into smaller texts that we will discuss and learn more about how our selflessness must be centered in Christ.

Years ago, when Kristin and I were on a trip to Israel, we visited an archaeological site on the east side of the Sea of Galilee. If you know your geography, you know that we were right on the edge of the Golan Heights, some hotly contested real estate over the last 80 years or so. Everything was quiet and peaceful at the time we were there, but there was a stark reminder that we needed to be wise as we walked in this space.

As we walked up the hill towards the site we were visiting, the trail bordered an old fence that was overgrown, but clearly still sturdy and would be difficult to climb. The difficulty increased in some spots because of the amount of barbed wire wound in, through, and above the fence. This was not a barrier you were intended to breach. Eventually we saw signs that told us why.

"Danger. Mines. Do not enter this space." The signs were written in several languages including Hebrew and Arabic. My steps on the trail changed after that.

Our tour guide told us that the fence and mine field were very old, even from the 60s and 70s. He said that the field had been cleared of mines by specialists over the years, but that they would occasionally find a forgotten one. He also shared that sometimes livestock would breach fences in pursuit of grass in these fields only to discover that the field was not fully cleared. Yuck.

On our side of the fence, we could step freely and with confidence. On the other side of the fence, every step would be fraught with danger and uncertainty.

"You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ."

Two realms. Two different experiences. We hope we are in the right realm on the right side of the fence, but how can we know for sure.

"The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so." Verse 7.

Have you obeyed God? Have you followed Jesus? Does his law compel you in your behavior? If we do not know Christ, we are incapable of obeying him. Our obedience assures us what side of the fence, what realm we are in.

As the passage continues, Paul clarifies, in the realm of Christ, we know life, and we know it both now and forever. We are not consumed by a mortal body with its brokenness and selfish desires. Christ work of redemption has already changed our story.

We are on his side of the fence. But do we live like we know where we are?

Imagine (heaven forbid!) that you were in a minefield. How would your footsteps change? Would you even want to move? How would you feel? I think we would all share the same terror, hesitation, and powerlessness of what that space would be. Contrast that with your own backyard, a space of freedom, life, joy and blessing that comes in each step. There really is no comparison.

So may we be a people who live into the constant conversation with the Spirit that we spoke of yesterday, living in tune with how the Spirit is calling us to love and serve our God and others in everything that we do. May we live out this conversation in joy and freedom recognizing that the space we are in is the realm of the Spirit governed by his presence and great love for us. He is doing his good work of making us new.

That should really put a spring in our step.

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord turn his smile towards you and give you his peace.

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

I love you all. Blessings.

Feel free to share this devotion with others.

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