



gracefellowship

Series: The Holy Spirit
Date: June 4, 2023

Title: The Spirit of Life
Passage: Romans 8:1-11

Communion

Scripture: John 15:26-16:15

Sometimes in life we get faced with choices that seem pretty easy:

- Would you rather have ice cream or broccoli?
- Would you prefer to be sick or be healthy?
- Would you rather have lots of friends, or be completely friendless?
- Would you rather be dead or alive?

These things are silly because there are obvious answers! And yet, when it comes to our spiritual lives, there are many people who are running around on earth in a state of spiritual death and they don't even realize how dangerous things are for them.

This morning the passage we are going to look at in Romans 8 addresses one of the roles the Holy Spirit has- He brings life!

In fact, you might think of the Holy Spirit as having some nicknames that remind you of the things He does in your life as a follower of Jesus. When we place our faith in Jesus the Holy Spirit dwells inside of us as an Advocate to make us like Jesus. In Scripture the Holy Spirit is called:

- The Spirit of Wisdom
- The Spirit of Truth
- The Spirit of Grace
- The Spirit of Prophecy
- The Spirit of Holiness
- The Spirit of Justice
- The Spirit of Glory

In all of these names for the Holy Spirit we find more about the things He brings to our lives and accomplishes with us as we walk with Him over time.

But the name we want to focus on today is:

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Life.

Let's look at Romans 8 together. Actually, to set up Romans 8 we have to understand something Paul has been wrestling with in chapter 7. This is the famous passage where Paul says the things he wants to do, he can't seem to do; and the things he doesn't want to do- he keeps on doing those things. Sin is at work in him even as He is trying to follow Jesus. Maybe you can relate! As Paul struggles with these desires that are at war inside of him- the desire to please God and live like Jesus, and the desire to do what his flesh craves- he comes to a conclusion and asks a question:

:: Romans 7:24

24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?

Thankfully, Paul knows the answer to that question and he doesn't leave us hanging in a state of defeat!

:: Romans 7:25

25 Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!

When Jesus died on the cross, He paid for all our sin and provided the one and only way for us to escape the penalty of sin. That is where Romans 8 picks up and gives us some really good news!

:: Romans 8:1-2

1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,

2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.

This is so powerful and I don't want you to miss it: for those who have placed your faith in Jesus for salvation- there is no condemnation for your sins! They have been forgiven! Paul says all those things he wrestled with and continues to struggle with in his life as a Christian are still present, but they don't have any power to condemn him! The blood of Jesus covers all our sins!

In John 3 we get the most famous verse in the Bible:

:: John 3:16

16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

But do you know what the next verse is? John tells us what Jesus' motivation is for God's saving work:

17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world not to condemn everyone- but to save the world. If you're view of God is that He is a wrathful, vengeance-filled God, you're dead wrong! He is a loving, saving God! Your rejection of His love, condemns you. His offer to save you is held out to you freely.

There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Let's go back and read Romans 8:1-11 and we are going to see the role the Holy Spirit plays in our salvation and how He brings life to us when we follow Jesus.

:: Romans 8:1-11

1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,

2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.

3 For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh,

4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

5 Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.

6 The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.

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

8 Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.

9 You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are 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.

10 But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness.

11 And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

Romans 8 is one of my favorite chapters in the Bible. I love the themes of this chapter and the powerful imagery we get the deeper into the chapter we go. I've taught this passage numerous times. But a couple weeks ago as we were meeting for our Sermon Team I actually got embarrassed. The more we talked

about the direction for this series the more Romans 8 came up and I have to be honest- I never paid attention to how many times the Holy Spirit comes up in this chapter! There are 19 references to the Holy Spirit in Romans 8! So many times when we read the Bible we get so focused on looking for Jesus that we actually miss this work of the Holy Spirit! And here's what I think: The Holy Spirit is just fine with that!

Some people refer to the Holy Spirit as the shy member of the Trinity. In reality, the Holy Spirit is sent by the Father and the Son to point people to Jesus. There is no ego in the Holy Spirit! He is always pointing to Jesus. The more you look to Jesus and look like Jesus, the more happy the Holy Spirit is!

However, as we read the Bible we need to know how to relate to the Holy Spirit in order to have the life God designed for us. Here's what we find in the first 11 verses of Romans 8:

The Spirit brings life; sin brings death.

:: Romans 8:1-4

1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,
2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.
3 For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh,
4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

The law couldn't bring life. We could not keep the law perfectly, so rather than bringing life, it brought death. That doesn't mean the law is bad. In fact, in Romans 7 Paul is going to say that the law is good. The law even helps us recognize what sin is. But everywhere sin exists, death follows.

The Spirit of God has the power to break us free from the law of sin and death and keep us free!

Again, we see the Holy Spirit accomplish that by pointing people to Jesus. What the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh (our inability to keep it), God did by sending his own Son, Jesus. Now as Christians we do not live according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

Paul is going to put two things beside each other- the flesh and the Spirit- and draw some pretty powerful conclusions.

:: **Romans 8:5-8**

5 Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.

6 The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.

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

8 Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.

To live according to the flesh simply means that our minds are set on everything our body craves. We give in to our base instincts and pursue a life based on the philosophy, "if it feels good do it!" Paul puts two ways of life side by side and we are meant to determine which one will truly bring us life

- Live according to the flesh
- Live according to the Spirit

If you really want to know what life according to the flesh looks like, go and read Galatians 5. Again, Paul is writing and he is holding these two ideas side-by-side in this passage.

:: Galatians 5:16-21

16 So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

17 For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want.

18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

19 The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery;

20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions

21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

In verse 19 you see Paul say that ACTS of the flesh are obvious. The word we might use to talk about this is "gratification." Without the filter of the Holy Spirit we will gratify our sinful nature and do what feels good to us every time.

This is simply what we do when we are in control and there is no restraint of God to point out that these are wrong. Acting in this way, pursuing a life that is full of these actions, leads to separation from God. Another way of saying that is that being controlled by the flesh leads to death- you will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But Paul goes on and he describes what life according to the Spirit looks like:

:: Galatians 5:22-26

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

I want you to catch this- in the first list we had the acts of the flesh. In this list we have the fruit of the Spirit. One is what happens when we are in charge and guided by our desires; the other is what happens when the Spirit is in charge and what He brings to our lives. When you go back and look at Romans 8 you find Paul saying this:

6 The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.

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

8 Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.

When you take inventory of your life, are you being guided by your sinful desires or by the Holy Spirit of God? And we have said this before, but it bears repeating- this all begins in the mind! What you allow your mind to be consumed with, your body will pursue. In Galatians 5, which we read earlier, Paul instructed us to walk by the Spirit...or stay in step with the Spirit. So ask yourself some questions:

- Is the music you listen to in step with the Spirit?
- Are the podcasts you listen to in step with the Spirit?
- The movies you watch, are they in step with the Spirit?
- Do the websites you visit keep you in step with the Spirit?
- Are your friendships keeping you in step with the Spirit?

Here's the question you should ask yourself regularly:

Am I being motivated by my impulses or by my desire to obey the Holy Spirit?

As we walk with Jesus He wants us to learn to yield to the direction of the Holy Spirit so we learn to say "no" to sin and walk in holiness and purity. We don't muster up enough will power to act in obedience to Christ on our own! We surrender to the power of the Holy Spirit to produce those things in us as we work alongside Him to become more like Jesus.

Final Thoughts- if you are a follower of Jesus, here is some good news for you:

:: Romans 8:9-11

9 You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are 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.

10 But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness.

11 And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

For anyone who follow Jesus in faith, there is eternal life available to you. In the same way the Holy Spirit raised Jesus to life, He will raise you to life to be with Jesus forever.

In this series I want to make sure we always bring things back to not just knowing about the Holy Spirit, but having a relationship with Him. So here are some questions to consider as you learn to walk in step with the Holy Spirit:

1. What attachments do I have to things that bring death when the Spirit wants to bring me freedom and life?

Ask the Spirit to lead you away from sin and into freedom. Stop trying to fight sin in your own power. Lean into the Spirit of God and fill your mind with His Word.

2. Can you honestly say your mind is full of life and peace?

Romans 8:6 tells us that the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. Some of you have no peace in your life and the root cause is you have rejected Jesus and have not welcomed His Spirit to change your life. Until you receive Jesus you will have a mind that is restless and insecure. But the Spirit of God can bring peace you can't imagine!

This week try to pay attention to the areas the Holy Spirit brings you abundant life and absolute peace.

Pray