

Not In The Flesh, But In The Spirit

Romans 8: 6 – 11

- If you are a Christian, what is different about you? To put it in terms of the illustration I closed with last week, what is the difference between an artificial plant and a real plant?
 - The real plant is alive, and because it is alive it can do things that the artificial plant can never do. It can soak up water and nutrients, it can grow, it can bear fruit, it can multiply.
 - A living plant and an artificial plant may look the same, but they are fundamentally different.
- The Bible says the same is true with a Christian and anyone who is not a Christian. In some ways they may look the same. In fact, the sad truth is that sometimes, like an artificial plant, the person who is not alive, not a Christian, looks better than the person who is a Christian.
 - But it shouldn't be that way, because a person who is truly a Christian is quite different from those who are not. A Christian, who is alive in Christ, is a new creation. Externally, the flesh of the Christian still looks the same, or maybe worse, than those who aren't Christians, but inside, in their Spirit, there is something radically different. They are alive, and because they are spiritually alive, like a living plant, they can soak up and soak in the things of God, which a person who is not alive in Christ can't do.

1 Corinthians 2: 14 The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

- Made alive by the Holy Spirit, the Christian is able to discern, soak up, and apply the Gospel and truth of God's word to their life, allowing them to grow, flourish and bear fruit.
- Does God's Word quicken and excite you spiritually?
 - If encountering God's Word isn't changing you, so that the fruits of the Spirit are growing in your life, then it may be that you are fooling yourself into thinking that you have something that you do not have at all. A Christian is spiritually alive, and because they are spiritually alive, they can soak up the things of God, and grow and bear fruit.
- How do we go from being spiritually dead, to being spiritually alive? A resurrection has to take place. Before there can be a physical resurrection there has to be a spiritual resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15: 45 "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

- Through the first Adam, God brought physical life to humanity. Through the last Adam God gives spiritual life. Who is the last Adam? It is Jesus.
- How does Jesus give us spiritual life? Ephesians 2: 1-10!

- **Eph 2: 1-3** And you were dead in the trespasses and sins and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.
 - Everyone of us was in the same boat as the rest of the world—dead in sin, objects of God’s just wrath. That’s the bad news that sets up the good news.
- **Ephesians 2: 4- 5** But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved.

Romans 8: 1 There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

- By faith in Christ, God has saved you and made you alive. Not by anything you have done or are doing to earn it but by grace alone. And that good news, sets up the really great news.
- **Ephesians 2: 5** And raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.
 - Do you understand what those words mean for your life today? In Christ, through faith in Christ, united to Christ by the Holy Spirit, you, right now, are seated in the heavenly realms.
 - The physical reality is that yes you are seated in a pew at Foothills, but the spiritually reality is you are, right now, seated in the heavenly realms because by faith you are one with Christ. And even though we often forget it, that spiritual reality is just as real as the physical reality of you sitting in pew at Foothills.
 - That spiritual reality is why Paul can write at the end of Romans 8.

Romans 8: 37 - 39 we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- For those who are in Christ Jesus, there is now no condemnation and never will be any condemnation, and because of that there never will ever be any separation from God. In fact, in Christ Jesus:

Zephaniah 3:17 The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.

- If that is what is going in heaven right now, and it is, this is your spiritual reality in Christ, then it’s no wonder that there is nothing that can separate you from the love of God that is yours through Christ.
 - If you are in Christ by faith, then no matter what your physical reality may be, no matter how awful you were or your week was, you are seated in the heavenly realms and God is rejoicing over you with singing. Do you sense that in your life?
 - If that doesn’t thrill your soul, then you are either spiritually dead, or you are spiritually alive but fast asleep.

Do you remember Jesus' parable of the 10 bridesmaids, in Matthew 25? It was a parable about being ready for his return. Jesus taught the parable to teach us that there is nothing more important than being ready for the return of Christ.

- In Jesus' day, a bride would typically have bridesmaids come to her house on her wedding day. Together, they would await the groom's arrival, which was usually in the evening, and then they would all go to the groom's home for the wedding and a celebration.
- In the parable, the groom represents Jesus. The ten bridesmaids represent us. All of them have been invited to the wedding banquet. All belonged to what we today would call the visible church. All professed to have the bridegroom as their Lord. All believed the bridegroom was coming. And all of them fell asleep.
- The only difference was the five wise bridesmaids were ready for the groom with oil in their lamps, and the five foolish weren't. While the five foolish were of trying to get ready after it was too late, the five wise bridesmaids were ready and as a result they were the only ones allowed into the celebration.
- Jesus taught that parable to stress the importance of being ready, being prepared. There is nothing more important in your life than for you today to be ready. Now what does it look like to be ready? Paul told us in:

Romans 8: 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.

- What does it mean to walk according to the Spirit? Again, think back to those verses from Ephesians 2. Do you remember how they ended? After Paul tells us that we are saved grace alone, through the power of Christ alone, Paul tells us why we have been saved.

Ephesians 2: 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

- Through Christ, God is at work making you into His masterpiece to show forth His glory to the world around you. Jesus put it this way:

Matthew 5: 16 let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

- Now these good works, this letting your light shine, isn't something we do an hour here or there throughout the week. It's a lifestyle. Just like the battery, a Christian is ever ready. Listen to what Jesus taught right before the parable of the 10 bridesmaids.

Matthew 24: 45 – 46 "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? ⁴⁶Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes.

- Blessed, happy is the servant who is busy with the work of the master when the master comes in the door. What does that mean? It means the servant is ever ready--always prepared for the master to come.

- Wait a minute. How can a person do that? I've got school, work, family, sports and on and on. I can't be busy doing Jesus' stuff all the time. I've got a life. No, we don't really, if we are a Christian.

1 Corinthians 6: 19 – 20 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, ²⁰for you were bought with a price. So, glorify God in your body.

- Glorify God with your body, with your life. You were created in Christ Jesus to do good works to glorify God.
 - Not just at church for an hour or two each week, but at school, at work, at home, on vacation. As a Christian, your life is no longer your own. You no longer walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. Not just occasionally but as a lifestyle.

Galatians 5:25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

- This is Paul's whole point here in Romans 8.

Romans 8: 6 – 11 For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. ⁸Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. ⁹You, 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. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹If 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.

- A Pew research study found that in 2007 78% of Americans defined themselves as Christians. Today it is down to 63%. But if that is really the case, then why is the church having so little impact on the world around us?
 - Think how differently the world would look if even 63% of Americans were living ready for the return of Jesus. Living like Jesus:

Philippians 2: 3 – 5 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus

2 Corinthians 8: 9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.,

- What would the world look like if everyone who calls themselves a Christian lived like that? It would look like the Kingdom of Heaven had come to earth.

"The greatest single cause of atheism in the world today is Christians, who acknowledge Jesus with their lips and walk out the door and deny Him by their lifestyle. That is what an unbelieving world simply finds unbelievable." ~ Brennan Manning

- There are so many who call themselves Christians who would never think of themselves as breaking the third commandment, because they would never

consider taking the Lord's name in vain, but do you realize that when we deny Jesus by our lifestyle, by living a life that looks like the world, that is exactly what we are doing.

- When we, who call ourselves Christians, walk by the flesh, gossiping, lying, flying off the handle, or are unloving and self-centered, we drag the name of Jesus through the mud.
- Why does that happen in our lives? Because we forget. We forget who we are because of what Christ has done for us.
- If you are a Christian, you are alive—alive to love as you have been loved. You are different from the world.

Romans 8: 7 – 9 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. ⁸Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. ⁹You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you.

- Those who are dead in the spirit and only alive in the flesh cannot do any good work that is pleasing to God and brings God glory, because every good work that do is tainted with the sin of self—trying to earn a righteousness of their own.
 - But a Christian is different. A Christian is free to do good works for no other reason other than love and gratitude. A Christian knows that by faith in Christ, the righteousness of Christ is theirs and because of that God is exulting over them with loud singing.
 - A Christian doesn't have to do a thing for selfish reasons trying to get God's attention. They already have it. In fact, the reason a Christian knows they already have it is because the moment they become a Christian, God sends His Holy Spirit to dwell in them to confirm that they have it.

Romans 8: 9 – 10 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. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

1. The Spirit is in you

- Anyone who is a Christian has the Spirit in them. In fact, notice the progression of thought in verses 9 and 10. In Paul's thinking, the Holy Spirit in us, is the Spirit of Christ, and because the Spirit of Christ is in us. Christ is in us.
 - Now, let's just make a theological distinction here because it is super important. When Jesus was raised from the dead, he wasn't just alive in the spirit, he was alive in the flesh, but it was resurrected flesh.
 - That flesh could walk along a road with disciples, it could eat with disciples, it could be hugged by Mary, it could talk, it could be touched. In fact, interestingly enough the nail scars were still there to be touched.
 - A resurrected body is perfect. Free from all disease and infirmity, but apparently it will not be scar free.

“Our scars are a sign of grace in our lives. Oh, Father how You brought us through. When deep were the wounds; and dark was the night; the promise of Your love You proved.” Matt Redmond It Is Well

- Why were Jesus’ wounds still visible in his resurrected body? They are a sign of grace in our life—the proven promise of His love.
- Jesus’ resurrected body was a real physical body. Physical can only be one place at a time, but God’s Spirit can be everywhere at once. That is why God sent the Holy Spirit to be with us.
 - The physical resurrected presence of Jesus is seated at the right hand of God, and do you remember where we said we are at this moment if we are in Christ? We are seated in the heavenly realms. How? Because the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ is in us connecting us in a very real, but spiritual way to the presence of Christ in the throne room of heaven.
 - Where Jesus is we are, and where we are Jesus is.
- Through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, Christ is in you, and you are in Christ, and because of that God is rejoicing over you with loud singing. And if that doesn’t change the way you look at your life then you are either not alive in Christ, or you are asleep in Christ.

Ephesians 5: 14 “Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”

- Asleep and unprepared you are missing out on the joy of serving Christ in this life, and possibly even the eternal joy of being in the presence of God, hearing Him rejoicing over you with loud singing.
- The first distinguishing thing about being Christian different from those who are "in the flesh" is that we are "inhabited" people. And Paul says it three ways: 1) "the Spirit of God dwells in you" (v. 9b); 2) "you have the Spirit of Christ" (v. 9c); 3) "Christ is in you" (v. 10a).
- The Spirit communicates so much of Christ that it is fitting to say Christ himself is present in you, controlling you.

2. The Spirit of Christ controls you

- You are still in the body, still in the flesh, but look what Paul says in:

Romans 8: 10 But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

- Because the Spirit Christ is in you, the power of Christ is in you, and that power becomes the decisive influence on your life.
 - Certainly not the only influence. There are enemies and competitors to the Spirit’s influence. The power of the flesh is real. But to be "in the Spirit" is to come from the power of darkness into the power of God.

Acts 26: 18 to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God,

- That is what the power of Christ does in your life. It takes you from darkness into his marvelous light. Out of a life of futility and into a life of fruitfulness.

- Notice the contrast that Paul makes from being in the flesh to being in the Spirit. To be in the flesh is to be held in bondage to the flesh, to be under the power and captivity of the flesh, so that we can't submit to God's law and can't please God.
 - But then in verse 9. Paul says:

Romans 8: 9 You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit

- The Spirit has broken that dominion of the flesh and now holds the reins of your life. You are in his hands, not in the hands of the flesh. As Paul said in Romans 6: 14, "you are no longer under the dominion of sin but under grace."
 - By grace, the Spirit liberates us and empowers us from inside of us. The Spirit is not just outside barking commands. He is inside, working a new heart and a mind conformed to Christ, so that we will delight to do what he commands. This is one of the great evidences that he is there. There is a change in us whereby we desire the flesh less and less and things of Christ more and more.
- But what else does the Spirit being in us do for us?

Romans 8: 9 Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him

- Now that sounds ominous and it is, but if that is true then the opposite is also true. If the Spirit is in you, then you belong to Jesus. That is one of the main functions of the Holy Spirit in our lives. To remind us that we belong to Jesus.

1 Corinthians 6: 19 - 20 your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So, glorify God in your body.

- Now think what that means. Christ bought you with his blood. Having given up so much to have you as his own, do you really think that He will ever let you go? To Jesus you are the pearl of great price that he gave up everything to have.
- But Jesus not only bought you, through his Spirit, he dwells in you. You are his possession and his dwelling place, and because of that your eternity is certain and sure.

Ephesians 1: 13 – 14 In (Christ) you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

- Those verses from Ephesians directly tie into Paul's teaching in:

Romans 8: 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.

3. The Spirit gives you life today and for all of eternity



Your resurrection is as certain as Christ's resurrection because the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead now dwells in you. Christ did not purchase your body, with his blood, to throw it away. Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ. And just as Jesus raised up the temple of his own body in three days, he will raise you up and live in you forever and ever.

- The day you came alive in Christ, the Holy Spirit moved in, and he is never moving out. That is why:

Romans 8: 37 – 39 we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- The more you think on that the more your life will change. The less important the things of the flesh will be to you, and the more important the things of the Spirit will be. The problem is we don't really think on that enough, do we?
- The Bible is very clear in its teaching. If you are alive in Christ, the Spirit of Christ is in you. Are you alive? Do you sense the presence, joy, power and leading of the Holy Spirit in your life? If you don't, do not leave here today with speaking to me. I don't have magic prayers or a magic formula, but I can share with you what changed my life and made me alive in Christ.
- And if you are here and you know you are alive and the Spirit of Christ is in you, just consider this. There are two things that Bible says you can do with the Spirit that has been given to us. You can't get rid of it once you have it. He is not leaving, but you can either quench the Spirit or fan it into flame.
 - How do you quench it? You can quench it by being a Beverly Hillbillies kind of Christian. Do you remember the show?
 - What made the show funny was that even though they moved and even though they had a new life, they still thought like hillbillies, so even though they had more money than Bill Gates, they continued to live the same way they always did. How they thought controlled how they lived.
 - Even though they had millions in the bank, a mansion, the cement pond, and all the rest; they still lived like hillbillies. They dressed like hillbillies, they ate possum like hillbillies, they drove an old jalopy just like hillbillies.
 - How you think, what you think about, controls how you live.

Colossians 3: 2 – 3 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³ For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

- If we forget who we are in Christ, we will quench the Spirit and continue to live in the flesh as if nothing has changed in our lives.
- But if we remember the Gospel, remember that we were dead in our sins and objects but God's wrath, but by grace God who is rich in mercy has made us alive in Christ and seated us in the heavenly realms with Christ, the flame of the Spirit will burn bright in us, and the power of the Spirit will more and more control our lives.