“You Are In The Spirit”

August 26, 2018

John 14:15-20

Please find with me the eighth chapter of Romans.

From what we know of the LORD, He doesn’t have a need to be any different than He’s always been. In Malachi 3:6 we read *“I, the LORD, change not.”*

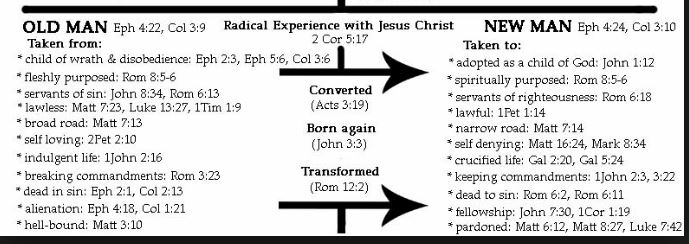
God’s desire is always for good and right. It’s natural for Him. He’s always inclined toward right. He always does the right thing. That’s His nature. God never had to learn to be holy or good or how to do right. He’s always been what He is. But for you and me, the desire for goodness and righteousness and holiness isn’t natural. We need help. And God has provided it in some of the most wonderful ways to help that anyone can imagine.

Do you remember learning how to ride your bike? It’s likely you don’t even remember falling and getting back up and moving forward on your bicycle. At some point it became “natural” for you to just “ride your bike.” Bike riding, for most of us, once we learned it became as ordinary as walking.

So, spiritually speaking, every Christian learns how, for example, to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. As Christians we are not to walk after the flesh. Instead we are to “walk after the Spirit.” And when you walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, then and only then is the righteous-ness of God fulfilled in you.

Today my hope is to help you see the Christian life from what Paul says here in Romans eight about the Holy Spirit. So, I’ve titled today’s sermon “You Are In The Spirit.” Shall we pray?

Let’s begin with the foundation, the difference between what you were before you came to the LORD and what you are now. Here’s a picture of just some of the differences between what you were when you were unsaved and what you are now that you are saved.



And in those days before we came to the LORD we were children of wrath, fleshly purposed, servants of sin, lawless, on the broad road, self-loving, indulgent, breaking all of God’s commands, dead in our sins, alienated from the LORD and on our way to Hell.

But on the day you came to Christ, a radical change took place. Everything changed. You are now adopted as an adult son or daughter of God. You now have spiritual purposes for your life. Whereas once you were a servant to sin, you are now a servant to righteous-ness. Before you were lawless. Now you are lawful. You are on the broad road and now you are on the narrow road; etc. and etc.

And why is there this huge contrast? Because your old man was crucified with Christ and you are now a new man. Here are these two great facts about the death of Christ at Calvary are these. Jesus was crucified and I was crucified with Him.

You see, something happened to your “old man.” Remember what I’ve said before. It’s not what *I* think that is reality; but what the LORD says; that is reality. And He says this about your old man.

Romans 6:6 *“Knowing [realizing] this, that our old man is [was] crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed [rendered inoperative], that henceforth we should not serve sin.”*

Spiritual light, for the Christian, comes in the form of “realizing” things that are already true. And the moment we see these things, you can honestly say you have light. So, what is the light God is right now shining into your heart regarding the old man? Simply this.

What we were like prior to salvation is wrapped up in the words “old man.” And at the Cross your old man was crucified with Him. And once you realize what God says happened to you at Calvary, you did the one thing God commands you to do; you counted it true for yourself.

This is the first command given in the Book of Romans. Romans 6:11 *“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

To “reckon” means “to count true something that is already true.” And what is true is this. I am dead indeed unto sin. And I am alive to God through Jesus Christ.

You see, everything that happened at the Cross happened so that you could be changed. God did something to your old man. He made you something you could never make yourself to be. You are a new creation with a new nature, a nature like God’s. Everything, all things have become new.

II Corinthians 5:17 *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”*

So, salvation has brought you into a brand new realm. That realm Paul calls being “in the Spirit.” This is the effect of salvation. And, if you are seeing this for the first time in your life, rejoice that a measure of God’s light has poured out from God’s heart into yours. You can see something no unbeliever can see.

First, then, the old man has been crucified along with Jesus.

Second, the new man has replaced the old man. A Christian is someone with a new nature; with a divine nature.

Third, a Christian operates inside a house called “in the Spirit.” A Christian no longer has to operate in the realm of the flesh.

Romans 8:1 *“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (2) For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.*

*(3) For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: (4) That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”*

All of this is true simply because of Jesus and His work on the Cross. There’s no condemnation. The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made you free from the law of sin and death. And the righteousness of the Law can be fulfilled in those who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Here’s how Paul explains the Christian’s new life in the Spirit; verse five.

Romans 8:5 *“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. (6) For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. (7)**Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*

*(8) So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. (9) But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. (10) And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*

You see, once your old man was crucified with Christ, you entered the domain of the Holy Spirit. Now we who are after the Spirit mind the things of the Spirit. Now we have a spiritual mind and peace. Now we are subject to the law of God. Now we can please God. All of this because we are no longer in the flesh, but in the Spirit.

You see those who have the Holy Spirit within them are those who are “in the Spirit.” If you do now have the Holy Spirit within you, you do not belong to Him. Only those who have the Spirit of Christ in them are His.

Let me, for just a moment, compare your body to a house. Can you remember a time when went to some large, beautiful, even expensive home? Now, imagine, if you can, that you’ve been invited to move in to this large, tremendous home; a complete mansion. And you moved in. And all the while you lived here, you did whatever you wanted to do whenever you wanted to do it.

Now, remember, you don’t own the home. You’ve just been given permission to temporarily live there. You’re only a guest in Someone Else’s home. And yet, you made yourself at home; came when you chose; returned whenever you chose; lived as you pleased. And you became quite comfortable in this large, expansive dwelling place. And soon you began to act as though it was yours, even though you were the guest.

Now, I want to let you in on something you noticed. Every once in a while you observed a man working around the place; caring for things; making things right whenever they’d been disturbed or spoiled by your activities.

Then one day you entered the library and noticed something you hadn’t seen before; an envelope. It had been carefully placed on the desk and it had your name on it. So, out of curiosity, of course, you opened the envelope and began reading. And in your reading you discovered that the man who sometimes would appear and would often take care of things wasn’t just “some man.” He owned the house in which you now lived. And He was the One Who invited you to be His guest. And He was somewhat displeased with the way you were living in His house. Yet, perfect Gentleman that He is, and because He’d given you permission to live there, He wasn’t going to remove you. Instead, He wanted you to come to Him the next time you saw Him and invite Him to take full control of you and everything that you considered your own in the entire place. The choice, He said in the letter, was up to you. He closed with this question. “Would you like me to show you how to live according to the ways I know are the best and the right ways for you to live in My house? Sincerely, Mr. H.G.

Think with me for a moment about this. Suppose your body and your life was just like this house. And suppose you’ve lived in this house, your body and your life, for years, thinking and believing that it was yours. You made it yours. You did as you pleased. And then, one day, as a Christian, you noticed that the Bible said that the Holy Spirit indwells you and that He wants to have full control of your life. And think with me about this. Perfect Gentleman that the Holy Spirit is, He wants you to know that your life and your body really belong to Him and He knows full well how to manage and maintain your life so that your Heavenly Father is pleased with you. Yet, just like Mr. H.G. in the story I told you, the Holy Spirit waits patiently for you to let Him have full charge. You see, since the Holy Spirit has come into your life, He’s not a guest. You are His guest.

You, Christian, are “in the Spirit” because the Holy Spirit is in you.

I want you to think of the Holy Spirit today as The Major Controlling Influence of your life. After all, His fruit is love and joy and peace and longsuffering and gentleness and goodness and faithfulness and meekness and temperance. And yes, there are lots of influencers that influence you day after day and year after year. But the One Who wants to have the greatest influence on you is oftentimes relegated to a little work here and there now and then.

As a Christian you are “in the Spirit.” Yet, how long will it be before you recognize that the Holy Spirit lives in you and that He isn’t interested in the least in how you want to live and what you want to do. Rather He’s been sent by your Heavenly Father to enable you to do the things that please Him most. But, He also wants full control. Sharing control has never been the way of the Holy Spirit.

He wants you to walk after the Spirit and to stop walking after the flesh. You clearly know what you want and you know how you want to live. But are you willing to surrender the full charge of your life to Him; even it if means you won’t achieve your goals in this life?

Now we who are after the Spirit mind the things of the Spirit. We have a spiritual mind and a peace the world could neither offer nor give. And we are subject to the law of God. We can please God. All of this because we are no longer in the flesh, but in the Spirit.

Here’s the prayer Paul prayed for the Church at Ephesus. Notice what He asks for. Ephesians 3:14 *“**For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, (15) Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, (16) That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;*

*(17) That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, (18) May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; (19) And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*

*(20) Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, (21) unto him be glory in the Church.”*

Now, how? How can you respond properly to the words of the Holy Spirit spoken here by the Apostle Paul when he describes you and me? Here’s how.

Remember Whose house you are in.

First, be respectfully quiet.

Of all the things that so often characterize Christians, this is one of the most typical. We are so busy. We are so determined to do things quote “for God.” We are quote “living for God.’ So our lives are filled with activity, Christian activity, and noise and we have so little time to show any quiet respect to the Perfect Gentleman Who lives within us. We talk too much. We say too much. Our minds are so active that we think that something is wrong when we have a few quiet moments to reflect and wonder and think.

First, for some of us, start very slowly, be respectfully quiet.

Second, be grateful. For what? Just be grateful. The LORD will know full well what things you are grateful for. Stop wanting more and thinking you need more and won’t settle for less and stop thinking that you need more holiness or more prayer or more spirituality. Simply practice showing the LORD from the inside that you are grateful to Him for anything He’s given.

Then third, and maybe most important when it comes to the Holy Spirit. Listen. You see the Perfect Gentleman Who lives within you speaks surprisingly softly. He’s got the ability to create and earthquake or a forest fire or a tempest. But when it comes to helping you, He does so with His perfectly quiet, controlling, gentle voice.

You see, the Holy Spirit is The Major Influencer in your life. But He’s also very patient. For some of us He has to wait years. And He waits until we’re finally done with doing things “our way,” even for most us, waiting until we’re sick of our way and ready to let Him have full control. Then, it’s like He’s totally ready to lead, to direct, to strengthen and to use you as a man or woman who, like Jesus, pleases your Heavenly Father.

So, here’s a prayer. “Holy Spirit, I give you my spirit, my soul, and my body to use as you please. Strengthen me so that the LORD Jesus dwells in my heart by faith and so that I am grounded in Your love.”

I can’t imagine the Holy Spirit being anything but ready to head your cry.

Shall we pray?

Hymn # 501 “Now I Belong To Jesus”