



Text: Romans 8:1-17¹

Series: Right Living -- God's Righteous Transforming Our Lives

Title: Part 10 – Living in the Spirit Living in Us

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There is a piece of a verse later in chapter 8 that I want us to place front and centre in our thinking as we begin our study of Romans 8. In verse 26 Paul wrote that...

“...the Spirit helps us in our weakness.” Romans 8:26

This morning I am so thankful for this truth. The Holy Spirit of God helps us. AND he helps us “in our weakness.” Last week we focused on our weakness as believers in Jesus. Today, I want us to focus on the help that the Holy Spirit is able to give us.

I remember the day when I realized that the Holy Spirit was a person living inside me. I can still see the place in my mind. It was the overflow section of First Baptist Church, Waterloo, ON.

I can remember the event. It was a Sunday evening crusade by the Canadian Revival Fellowship.

I was raised in Bible-believing home and came to a saving knowledge of Christ as a young child.

I attended a Bible-believing church and was taught a Biblical understanding of the Holy Spirit.

I had graduated from Bible school. I took classes on the “person and work of the Holy Spirit”

BUT for some reason, I had never personalized all this teaching.

That day in Waterloo I realized in a startlingly fresh way that the Spirit was a “he,” not an “it,” ie, a person living inside me.

That day I realized that He was able to actually do things inside me to move me toward holiness.

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One simple truth hit home: "He can make changes in me!"

It wasn't an ecstatic experience. No phenomena of the Holy Spirit occurred other than my spiritual eyes were opened and God spoke truth to me and I understood Him.

It wasn't a "let go and let God" moment. I understood that holiness was hard work, BUT I now realized in a deeper way that I had God's help and power available to me.

I wasn't baptized again in the Spirit. I had been baptized in the Spirit the moment I had come to faith in Jesus back when I was eight years old. But on that day I realized that Holy Spirit had been there all along during my Christian life, available but largely unused.

I hope that it won't take you as long as it did me to realize that the Holy Spirit is in you and that He wants to make changes in you -- if you're a believer in Christ.

Before we get into what the Holy Spirit can do for us, we need to be sure that He is in us.

Some years ago when we lived in another community, a woman from our church was at a public meeting regarding a community outreach program that our church was involved in with other churches in that community.

A man came up to her afterward the meeting and asked her: "Are you a Christian?" The woman responded, "Yes, I am."

But then he asked a second question: "Are you a Spirit-filled Christian?"

Have you ever had anyone ask you that? I never really know how to answer that question because I always suspect that what they really mean is, "Are you a Christian like me who has experienced certain phenomena that I believe prove that I have the Spirit living in me?" But I don't think that that is what Paul means when he wrote in Ephesians 5, verse 18 that believers in Jesus are to be...

"...filled with the Spirit." Ephesians 5:18

Paul wasn't talking about phenomena, he was talking about control. To be "filled with the Spirit" is to be controlled by the Spirit. It's to be living in obedience to God's Word. It's to be living by the power of the Spirit to fulfill God's purposes. Being "filled with the Spirit" isn't something that happens during a church service; it's something that happens in the living out of our faith day in day out as we live in obedience to God's Word. Being "filled with the Spirit" is living as a faithful follower of Jesus Christ.



Paul wrote to the Romans...

“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.” Romans 8:9

Do you belong to Christ? Have you put your faith and trust in Christ as your Lord and Saviour? If you are a believer in Christ, you have the Holy Spirit in you. He "dwells in you," Paul wrote and the sense of what he was saying is that the Holy Spirit has taken up permanent residence in you. To the believers in the city of Corinth he wrote...

“Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?” 1 Corinthians 3:16

Last week we talked about the problem of **“indwelling sin”** in believers. Paul wrote about...

“sin that dwells within me.” Romans 7:17, 20

Well here, Paul offers the help we need to deal with “indwelling sin” through the help of the **“indwelling Holy Spirit.”** If you’re a believer in Jesus Christ, the moment you came to faith in Him the Holy Spirit came into your life to help you live for Jesus Christ. When you responded to the gospel message and took Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord, you...

“...were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.” Ephesians 1:13

When you and I came to faith in Jesus, the Bible tells us that...

“in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body” 1 Corinthians 12:13

Paul wrote to the Romans that if they belong to Christ, they have the Spirit of God dwelling in them. But sadly, if they didn’t have the Spirit, they clearly didn’t belong to Christ.

In other words, if you’re a believer in Christ, you have the Spirit. If you don’t believe in Jesus you don’t have the Holy Spirit in you. The Spirit can’t help you unless you believe in Jesus.

What does God’s Spirit want to do in you and me? There are many things but supremely, he wants to help us in our battle against sin so that we are enabled to lead **lives that bring glory to God.**

Up to this point in his letter to the Romans, Paul has been talking about what Christ has done for us. We have been justified by God’s grace through faith in



Christ's sinless life and sacrificial death on our behalf. We stand in a right relationship with God through faith in Jesus. We no longer stand under God's wrath against sin. We've been mercifully and graciously forgiven through Christ's death on our behalf. He took our punishment. He died in our place. Paul summarizes all that wonderful truth in chapter 8, verse 1...

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

By faith, we are **“in Christ”**:

included in him when he died to the penalty of sin,

included in him when he rose again,

included in him when God credited us with his good works.

included in him when God looks at us -- He sees us dressed in the perfect righteousness of His Son.

Now, Paul turns to consider the reality of **“Christ in us.”** Notice the emphatic way in which Paul brings this truth to our attention...

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

“You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you.” Romans 8:9

“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.” Romans 8:11

The Holy Spirit brings the life of Christ home to us -- up close and personal

This morning I want us to focus on **four things** that the Spirit does to weave the life of Christ into the fabric of our lives.

First...

The Spirit in us empowers us and urges us to live in obedience to God's Word

“By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, 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.” Romans 8:3-4

I love the word “walk.” The NIV translates this word as “live” and that is not an inappropriate translation but the literal meaning of the word is “walk.” It's a



dynamic word. It pictures movement and action. It is the intended purpose of the Spirit to change the way we “walk.” The old expression about “walking the talk” fits exactly with the purpose of the Spirit in our lives. God wants us to live according to His Word and the Spirit’s role in our lives is to empower us and enable us to obey Him from the heart.

Many years before Jesus came, God spoke through the prophet Ezekiel to his people Israel about the need for an internal change of heart. He said...

“And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.” Ezekiel 36:26-27

The role of the Spirit is to empower God’s people to “walk” in obedience to God’s Word.

If it weren’t for the Holy Spirit prompting us on, we’d give up! But the Spirit continually whispers into our hearts: “You CAN do it!”

The battle we studied last week continues. There are times when we stumble and fall into disobedience -- but we keep going forward! Paul wrote to the Philippian believers...

**“Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.”
Philippians 3:12**

It’s the Spirit who urges us forward!

We’re not perfect -- but we’re making no excuses! God has declared that His Spirit will empower us to “walk” in obedience to His Word and because of that, Paul declared...

“I can do all things through him who strengthens me.” Philippians 4:13

It’s the Spirit who empowers us to live for God’s glory!

Because we have believed in Jesus there is no condemnation from God against us!

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



And because we are “in Christ,” the Spirit of Christ is “in us” enabling us to live in obedience to Christ. We have all the help we need and we have a choice to make:

How will I walk with the help of the Spirit?

Will the pattern of my life reflect the values of the world or those of God? Do I recognize that because the Spirit of God has been given to me I am without excuse for failing to live according to God’s will and purpose? I can live for God – will I choose to do so?

Secondly...

The Spirit in us tunes our minds to know God’s will

“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.” Romans 8:5

"The mind" is the control centre of the spiritual battle in which we find ourselves. Paul uses the expression, "to set our minds upon." He isn't talking about casual thoughts or impressions. He's talking about a determined decision of the mind. It doesn't come about randomly or haphazardly. The "set" of our minds is the result of what we choose to set them upon. One Bible scholar defines this "mind-set" as "the convictions and heart attitude that steers the course of our life." (Moo, Romans, p. 251)

We need to “set” our minds on things that the Spirit finds desirable. This calls us to an active involvement with the Spirit of God in us!

We need to make some choices about what we put into our heads and into our hearts. You’ve probably heard the old computer programming expression: “GIGO: Garbage In, Garbage Out!”

What does the Spirit desire? Paul gives us a checklist in his letter to the believers in Philippi...

“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.” Philippians 4:8-9

As we train our minds to recognize the true, the honourable, the just, the Spirit whispers into our minds, “This, not that” or “That, not this.” And how do know



these things? Paul told the Philippians to focus their attention on what they had “learned and received and heard and seen” in him. In other words, they were to make the priorities of God’s revelation through the apostles and prophets the standard by which all of life is evaluated.

Setting our minds on “the things of the Spirit” requires that we engage in regular, Spirit-led and Spirit-filled contact with God’s Word. The only way we can change the “set” of our minds is by allowing the Holy Spirit to direct us toward what God desires and away from what the flesh desires. Again, we have a choice to make:

On what will I set my mind with the help of the Spirit?

Will I concentrate my attention on things that reflect God’s truth and priorities, or will my convictions and attitudes be shaped by a world that is in rebellion against Him?

Thirdly...

The Spirit in us kills our rebellion and enlivens our obedience to God's leading

“For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.” Romans 8:13-14

“Put to death” may sound like pretty radical language to describe our approach to our rebellion but listen to the words of Jesus on the topic of dealing with our rebelliousness against God...

“If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.” Matthew 5:29-30

Jesus knew that sin came from the heart, not the eye and the hand. Jesus is using very graphic language to describe the seriousness of dealing with sin in our lives. What he’s talking about is taking practical, decisive action to deal with sin in our lives. For one it’s a problem with the “eye,” for another it’s an issue related to the “hand.” The point is that if you recognize that are particular areas of temptation in your life, do whatever you need to do in order to get that issue under control.

"Putting to death" is never final. The structure of Paul’s statement points to the fact that an ongoing “putting to death” of sin is required. Remember, last week we talked about the distinction between our sin nature and our sin guilt. The guilt



of our sin has been completely atoned for through the death of Christ on our behalf. Jesus died in our place once and for all to remove our sin guilt. But our sin nature is still alive in us. We need to relentlessly attack it again and again.

One of the results of receiving the saving grace of God is that it begins a work in our lives of training us to live Godly lives. Part of our challenge of putting sin to death in our lives is taking decisive steps, as Paul wrote to his friend Titus,

“...to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ...” Titus 2:11-13

There is something in us that needs to regularly hear the word, “No.” There is “ungodliness” and there are “worldly passions” that need to be renounced, denied, rejected and refused. And there is a life in us that needs to be fed and encouraged. It is the life of God brought into our lives by the indwelling Spirit of God.

You’ve probably heard the old story about the man who kept two dogs for fighting. When asked which one would win, his answer was “the one I feed the most.” As much as I deplore dog fighting, the old story has a point and it begs a question. Which nature are we feeding? If the flesh seems particularly strong, we need to take a survey of our spiritual diet. On what have we been “setting our minds”?

Paul’s words are directed to you and me. He says very clearly that the killing of our sin nature is something that we must do. You and I are to “put to death the deeds of the body.” But please notice that we are to attack them “by the Spirit.” That means that we need to use spiritual means to address our sin problem.

Paul is calling us to establish a vital spiritual life where, aided by the help of the Holy Spirit, we do battle with sin. Writers on the spiritual life have a phrase with which you and I should be familiar. The phrase is “the means of grace.” How do we put to death our sin deeds? We use the means that the Holy Spirit has created for us to do so. You can find a very comprehensive listing of them in chapter 6 of Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians where he refers to them as “the whole armor of God.” This morning I only want to draw your attention to two these means of the Spirit.

First of all, Paul invites us to take...

“...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” Ephesians 6:17

In order to “set our minds on the things of the Spirit” we need to constantly feed ourselves on God’s Word. I can’t count the number of times as I’ve read the



Bible that God's Spirit has put his finger on something in my life that is out of step with his will for me. The Spirit has used the Word to correct me. Nor can I count the number of times when God's Spirit has spoken to me words of instruction and encouragement as I've read the Bible. He's taught me and trained me.

We need to come again and again to the Bible because of our sin nature's tendency to justify itself and hide itself. The Spirit uses God's Word as a sword that cuts through and exposes my hypocrisy and rebellion against Him for what it really is ... rebellion and hypocrisy!

Secondly, Paul invites us to be people who are...

**"... praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication."
Ephesians 6:18**

Prayer is communication with God. We pour out our hearts and in turn we listen to hear our Father's heart. The Spirit is the one who makes this communication possible. Remember that little piece of a verse we began with this morning? Here is the whole thing...

"Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words." Romans 8:26

The Spirit takes our jumbled, broken pleas and cries and lifts them up to the throne of God on our behalf. He prays for us. "In our weakness," in the middle of our battle against sin, while we cry out for deliverance from "this body of death" (7:24; 8:23), the Spirit of God communicates our need to the throne of God and from that throne he bring into our lives the grace we need in our time of need. (Heb 4:16)

We've been turning these truths about the Spirit into questions for self-examination and let me do that with this truth. The question I'm asking myself is this...

What am I doing to put to death my ungodliness with the help of the Spirit?

How am I actively renouncing all that is sinful in my life?

But there's a second, matching question we need to ask ourselves...

What am I doing to feed the life of God in me with the help of the Spirit?

Finally...

The Spirit in us confirms to our spirit that we are God's child



“For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God....” Romans 8:15-16

Through faith in Jesus Christ we have been brought into God’s “forever family.” Even in the middle of our battle against sin, we need to listen for the reassuring voice of the Spirit of God telling us that we are “children of God.”

“Abba! Father!” The term “Abba” was a term of great endearment, somewhat similar to our term, “dad.” Paul is referring here, to a very important moment in the life of Jesus. As Jesus prepared himself for the ordeal of dying on the cross, he spent time praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. He was in great agony of spirit as he anticipated the awful burden he was about to bear for us on the cross and so in prayer he cried out...

“Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.” Marks 14:36

There, in the middle of Jesus’ most agonizing battle, he called out to his “Abba,” his father, his “dad.” Paul’s message here to you and me is that in the midst of our spiritual battles, especially in our battle to live lives for God’s glory, the Spirit wants us to know that “Abba” will not cast us away. The Spirit wants us to know that as we engage in battle with sin we are showing ourselves to be Abba’s children. The question we need to ask in the midst of our battle is this...

With the help of the Spirit, will I say with Jesus, “Abba ... not what I will, but what you will”?

Will I entrust my life to my Father in heaven? Will I determine to live my life Abba’s way?

As I conclude this morning I want to pull together what we’ve been looking at by sharing a true story with you. The news has been filled recently with stories about the turmoil surrounding the Olympic torch relay in preparation for the games being held in China this summer. Ten minutes from the Olympic Village, another struggle has been taking place, but it hasn’t made the TV news.

Pastor Hua lives just ten minutes from the Olympic Village and leads a house church of 60 people. The Chinese government has regularly harassed him. In 2007 Pastor Hua was serving a six-month jail term. When his 77-year old mother came to visit him, she was arrested on trumped up charges and jailed for two years where she remains today.



When Pastor Hua was released from prison in July of 2007 the police continued to harass him, demanding that he name all the members of his house church, telling him that they were holding his mother in jail as a hostage until he cooperated. He refused.

In October of 2007 he was again arrested but this time he was confined to house arrest in his parent's home. The police welded the front door to the house shut. They stationed 30 policemen on the roof. They cut off the electricity and would not allow any visitors to the home.

Quoting from the story in *The Voice of the Martyrs Newsletter* (March 2008)...

For a week, Hua, his wife and elderly father were held captive. Police came in and out of their windows, stealing their belongings. At night they shined spotlights in the bedroom to disturb their sleep. They sat outside the bedroom, gambling and talking loudly. The police wanted to provoke the family so they could arrest them. However, Pastor Hua calmly read his Bible, while his wife prayed.

Take “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

“Praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.”

After a week, the police took Hua to a police station and in the transportation a mob gathered and Hua was attacked by a mob of 50 police officers and bystanders. He was hospitalized and lapsed into a coma for three days. When he awoke on October 16, his wife was with him, as were members of the police force.

His first words were, ‘It doesn’t matter whether I live or die, as long as Christ shines in me and the gospel increases.’

“Abba ... not what I will, but what you will?”

Pastor Hua remains under house arrest today, only ten minutes from the Olympic Village.

*Though he endured much, God enabled Hua to love his persecutors. **Listen to this:** ‘From my flesh, I hate,’ he says. ‘They have beaten me. They have taken all my possessions from me and from my family. But I don’t want to live in the flesh. I don’t want to hate. With God’s help, I continue to pray for the salvation of those people and that they will understand Christianity more.’*

“From my flesh, I hate...But I don’t want to live in the flesh...With God’s help, I continue to pray....”



How does someone learn to live like this? "With God's help," by the Spirit.

Let's pray.

- The Lord's Table
- Songs of Communion
 - *Communion*
 - *And Can It Be?*
- Benediction