

ALIVE IN THE SPIRIT

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Romans 8:1-17 (John 8:42-59)

Prayer: Collect for the Fifth Sunday in Lent.

Romans 6:14 (READ). Chapter 7 demonstrated our need to be released from the Law, but that need does not mean that the Law is sinful. The Law, because it is good, still has a purpose in our lives to live wisely and righteously, but this only comes through the abounding grace of God poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

We are released from the Law by God's grace in Jesus whose death delivers us from the realm of the flesh enslaved to sin and Whose resurrection transfers us into the realm of the Spirit enslaved to righteousness. Therefore, sin does not reign in our mortal bodies, and we do not have to obey its desires that lead to increased lawlessness. Instead, by God's grace, we may now offer ourselves to God as instruments of righteousness; because, we have been brought from death 'in Adam' to life 'in Christ' by His death and resurrection. Therefore, we, as Christians, are now **Alive in the Spirit**. Therefore, Christians live according to the Spirit as people who are...

1. **...Free from the 'Law of Sin and Death'**

- a. Gospel READ Romans 8:1-4. By grace we, as Christians are **Alive through the Spirit**
- b. "Therefore" sums up all of Paul's argument up to this point of what it means to be transferred from 'death in Adam' to 'life in Christ' by God's grace. It means for the Christian, there is now...
- c. ..."no condemnation", which would be separation from God, death, because of our sin. This is a statement of assurance for Christians here, and Paul restates this security for our assurance in *verse 39* that there will be "no separation" from God for the person now "in Christ" (**READ**).

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- d. "Christ has brought life to those who deserved death and freedom to those who were guilty under the law. Through the death of Christ, believers receive righteousness; through the Spirit they are empowered to obey the essence of the law – to love." (Faithlife NIV).
2. **...Set on What the Spirit Desires (Verses 5-8 READ):** Life in the Spirit is here contrasted with death in the flesh. It is an elaboration of what Paul touched on earlier in *Romans 7:5 (READ)*.
 - a. Setting our minds on what the Holy Spirit desires is setting our minds on pleasing God; because, we love Him with all our being; and because, He first loved us as demonstrated in the Cross of Christ. We are unlike those who cannot please God; because, they are in the realm of the flesh.
3. **READ (verses 9-11) ...Promised Life to Our Mortal Bodies**
 - a. In *verse 9*, Paul is talking about the same Spirit; the Holy Spirit, and we will try to explore this more in our Bible study after the Service.
 - b. The focus here is on our resurrection bodies, which, Lord-willing, we will explore on Easter as we conclude our study of 1 Corinthians 15.
 - i. Note this is a glorious resurrection for those who have the Spirit "in us" because, it is the same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead living in us; giving us spiritual life now and guaranteeing us our resurrection bodies like Jesus for the future.
 - ii. This new Spiritual life frees us; therefore, we are...
4. **...Not obligated to [render obedience to] the Flesh [which refers to all that is characteristic of this life in its rebellion against God] (verses 12-13 READ)**
 - a. The 'flesh' is an old master that leads us to death, and we do NOT need to listen to it. Are you listening to it? (*Galatians 5:19-25 READ*)
 - b. The Spirit in the Christian puts to death the misdeeds of the body; because, He leads us as slaves to righteousness with

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increased holiness. This is the Christian's mortification/killing of the flesh made possible by God's abounding grace "through the Spirit". Therefore, we live as who we are "in Christ", as...

5. ...Children of God (READ Romans 8:14-17)

- a. We become part of God's family by adoption in Christ, our Big Brother.
 - i. **READ Galatians 4:6-7**
 1. The Holy Spirit calls out "Abba, Father", and because the Holy Spirit abides in us, He bears testimony with our spirits that call out "Abba, Father!" in *verse 15*. Two witnesses make this testimony valid and sure. What an assurance of our new spiritual life now!
- b. We can only call God our Father; because, we are '**Alive in the Spirit**'. As God's children, we have nothing to fear; because, He loves us and will not withhold anything from us that we genuinely need. He proved this already when Jesus died for us when we were still enemies. Those not alive in the Spirit are not God's children. Rather, they are the children of His wrath; because, they are hostile to Him.
- c. We are children "not of bondage, but of adoption." Jesus is King, and we get to co-rule with Him, even judging the angels. As the Father's Children, we are heirs in glory...but as heirs, we must await our inheritance, and waiting may involve suffering.

All this has implications for our lives; as people **Alive in the Spirit**. Notice the description of who we are as Christians, and it is all because of what Christ did FOR us. Therefore, Christ's Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, "IN us" leads us to eternal glorious life through increased holiness and righteous fruit-bearing in our mortal bodies now for God's glory. Jesus' death and resurrection are the foundation of our present new lives in the Holy Spirit and of our future glory as children

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of God. In *Romans 8*, Paul's aim is to assure us of our adopted status as children of God by describing those "in Christ" "alive in the Spirit" who serve King Jesus as slaves to God in "the new way of the Spirit" (*Romans 7:6b*) in contrast to those described "in Adam" "dead in the flesh" who cannot please God. There is no exhortation here. You are either one or the other.

Romans 8:5-9, 13 (**READ only "flesh" parts**). This is the unbeliever; the non-Christian dead "in Adam" and enslaved to sin. But, the person "in Christ" is alive in the Spirit and lives according to the Spirit (dwelling in them) enslaved to righteousness as seen with increased holiness by the abounding grace of God. That is the person described in *Romans 8:5-9, 13* (**READ only "Spirit" parts**). Do you see? As one commentator states, Christians live "out the 'life' placed within us by the Spirit who has taken up residence within" (Moo, p. 496). This is what I call reflexive living for the Christian. My righteousness led by the Holy Spirit is as reflexive as my lungs expanding to take in air and as my heart pumping to circulate my blood.

Sinclair Ferguson writes, "'Abba! Father!...' is the cry of a child who has stumbled, tripped, and fallen, and is crying out for his or her father to come help. It is the deepest instinct of the child in need...an instinct that is absent from the unbeliever's consciousness. [This] cry is the fruit of the ministry of the Spirit; it is his co-testimony with our spirit; even in the hour of darkness the believer possesses an instinct, a testimony: he or she knows him- or her-self to be a child of God!" - "The Whole Christ" (pages 209-210). Therefore, today's Collect is of great comfort; because, we know that we will be "governed and preserved in both body and soul by the great goodness of our Heavenly Father through the Holy Spirit in Christ our King." AMEN