

Pentwater Bible Church

Romans Message 28

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Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Romans
Message Twenty-Eight
The Law of The Spirit
November 27, 2022
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Romans 8:2

²For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death (KJV).

The Spirit of life is the Holy Spirit. Sometimes in the Old Testament it is not always clear whether a reference which uses the word Spirit is referring to the Holy Spirit or, for instance, to the breath of God's own mouth (Psalms 33:6). In addition, the fact that He is God and as God is present in the world would involve Him in all the works of God.

The least understood Person of the Godhead is the Holy Spirit. Some find difficulty in the word Person referring to Deity. We speak of three Persons yet one God in the Godhead. In other words, there is one God that is manifest in Scripture in three distinct separate roles and personalities. That is the Lord YHWH (God the Father), Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Spirit seems a strange word to use of a person. Yet a proper understanding of the Holy Spirit is basic to many doctrines including inspiration of the Bible, aspects of salvation, and many facets of the Christian life.

To be considered a person one must possess intelligence, emotions, and will. An inanimate thing lacks these, but the Holy Spirit is not a thing because He has intelligence, emotions, and will.

1. The Holy Spirit is said to know the things of God, and that takes some intelligence (I Corinthians 2:10–11). We also read about *the mind of the Spirit* (Romans 8:27).

2. It is possible to *grieve the Spirit* (Ephesians 4:30), which is rather hard to conceive of doing to an influence or thing.

3. It is the Holy Spirit who distributes spiritual gifts *as he wills* (I Corinthians 12:11). The phrase might even be translated *as He purposes*, because it shows a definite act of the will.

Thus, the Holy Spirit does possess the characteristics of a person. And there are some things which the Spirit does which only *persons* can do. For instance, He prays for us (Romans 8:26). Things and influence don't pray. He also performs miracles (Acts 8:39) something only persons can do.

The proof of the personality of the Holy Spirit does not, of course, include the proof that He is God. The reverse is true, however, for if He is God, He must also be a person as is God.

1. The Holy Spirit, knows the things of God in a way in which man does not and in a way which implies His omniscience—an attribute which only God possesses (I Corinthians 2:11–12).

2. Further, no one can escape the presence of the Holy Spirit wherever He might try to go, and omnipresence is an attribute only God has (Psalms 139:7).

One of the strongest proofs of the deity of the Holy Spirit is the identification of the Holy Spirit with Jehovah (YHWH), of the Old Testament. This is seen in passages where the Old Testament records that Jehovah said something and the New Testament quotation of that same passage is attributed to the Holy Spirit as the Speaker. That says very clearly that the Holy Spirit, like Jehovah, is fully divine (Isaiah 6:1–13; Acts 28:25; Jeremiah 31:31–34; Hebrews 10:15–17).

In the New Testament, blasphemy of and lying to the Holy Spirit are the same as if done to God (Matthew 12:31–32; Acts 5:3–4). Also, the Holy Spirit is associated equally with the other Members of the Godhead in the baptismal formula (Matthew 28:19) and in the benediction of II Corinthians 13:14. All these instances demonstrate that He is a true person.

The Spirit of life is the Holy Spirit, who was present at the creation of the world as one of the agents in the origin of life itself (Genesis 1:2). The Holy Spirit had a part in the work of creation. In addition, the fact that He is God and as God is present in the world would involve Him in all the works of God, including creation.

Particularly, the Holy Spirit's part was related to giving the creation life (Psalms 104:30; Job 33:4), order (Isaiah 40:12–13; Job 26:13), adornment to the glory of God (Psalms 33:6; Job 26:13), and continual renewing or preservation (an aspect usually associated with Christ, though in Psalms 104:29–30 related to the Holy Spirit).

The beginning of Genesis is foundational to the entire Bible. It describes the fact that God was in existence before any Creation efforts were put forth. It has often been pointed out that an understanding of the early chapters of Genesis, and *believing* them, makes the rest of the Bible easy to understand. This one verse also refutes all the “isms,” such as atheism, pantheism, polytheism, materialism, dualism, humanism, and evolutionism. These philosophies are different ways to say there is no God, and are expressions of unbelief. Genesis takes the existence of God for granted. The Bible begins with God and moves into the Creation account. Those who believe in other theories all start with another preexisting matter, or force, that brings about cosmic changes. They describe extremely long periods of time, in order to explain the present earth and humans. The “isms,” or secular philosophies, never answer the question: “what started those forces or matter in the first place?”

It was the work of the Spirit of God to bring about the energizing action, and to activate the power of the Word of God. This happened when God's Spirit moved. The Hebrew word used for “*spirit*” is *ruach*, which is also the word for “wind” or “breath.” The Hebrew word also suggests a rapid back and forth movement. For example, in engineering for any movement or energy production, there must be a prime mover that provides the impetus initiating motion. The operation of energy in the cosmos is in the form of waves—light, heat waves, sound waves, and so forth. In fact, except for nuclear energy, which breaks the fundamental structure of matter itself, there are only two fundamental types of forces that operate on matter: the gravitational forces and the forces of the electromagnetic spectrum. Both are associated with fields of activity, and transmit by wave motion. Waves are oscillations produced by a mechanism that is a wave “producer” of sorts. Energy cannot create itself. It is most appropriate that the first impact of energy on the universe is described as the “vibrating” movement of the Spirit of God Himself!

As the energy from God's Spirit began to flow outward to permeate the cosmos, gravitational forces were activated, and water and earth particles came together to form a great sphere moving through space. Other such particles would soon come together to form a sun, moon and stars throughout the universe. The earth was then ready for light, heat, and the other forms of enlivening energy.

The Holy Spirit is also the power behind the rebirth of every Christian, and the one who helps us live the Christian life. The Holy Spirit sets us free, once and for all, from sin and its natural consequence, death. Paul has used the word law (nomos) with a variety of qualifiers in his letter: “God’s law” (7:22); “law of sin” (7:25); “law of my mind” (7:23); and now law of the Spirit. A parallel can be found in 7:6, where Paul contrasts the freedom, we have to serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code. Paul is referring to the binding authority of the law when he says, *I am liberated from the old authority and placed in the new*. Paul is also referring to the consistent ways that the Holy Spirit works. These fall under two main functions: what the Holy Spirit does for us and what he does in us. First, this law of the Spirit sets us free. What both we and the law were *powerless to do* (Romans 8:3), God did for us. Second, having been freed, *the Spirit of God lives in us* (Romans 8:9), so that we actually *live according to the Spirit* (Romans 8:4; Galatians 2:20).

The chief human instrument that God used in the Old Testament to give His message to man was the prophet, but superintending him was the Holy Spirit moving and guiding so that the writer communicated exactly what God wanted mankind to know. Referring to the Old Testament writers, Peter said that *men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit* (II Peter 1:21). There are many specific examples (II Samuel 23:2; Micah 3:8). In addition, the New Testament attributes many Old Testament Scripture verses to the Holy Spirit (Matthew 22:43; Acts 1:16; 4:25). In New Testament, the Lord promised that the Holy Spirit would recall to the apostles’ minds the things which He had taught them (John 14:26). Therefore, the Holy Spirit was the single Author guiding and guarding the revelation; the instruments or agents were men, and the ultimate source was the Holy Spirit who is God.

The Bible says that the Holy Spirit was in certain Old Testament people. He did indwell in those days (Genesis 41:38; Numbers 27:18; Daniel 4:8; I Peter 1:11). But sometimes the Holy Spirit is said to have come upon Old Testament people (Judges 3:10; I Samuel 10:9–10). Coming upon indicates that the Holy Spirit was going away as well (Judges 15:14 with Judges 16:20). When the Lord contrasted the relationship of the Spirit to Old Testament men and those living after the day of Pentecost, He said that the Spirit had been abiding with them and that He would be in them (John 14:17). There is difference in the pre- and post-Pentecost relationships, though the word *abides* shows that His ministry was not an erratic one in Old Testament times. Today all believers are permanently indwelt. This universality and permanency were not guaranteed in Old Testament days.

The Spirit’s special empowerment was also for particular tasks like the construction of the tabernacle (Exodus 31:3) as well as for other mighty works (Judges 14:6; I Samuel 16:13). Restraint was also His special work from the earliest times (Genesis 6:3), and His very names and titles had a restraining effect on men as they thought about Him (Nehemiah 9:20; Psalms 51:11).

THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST

Gabriel told Mary that the baby to be born to her would be conceived by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35), and Joseph was informed of the same fact by an angel (Matthew 1:20).

Christ was anointed by the Holy Spirit in some special way at the time of His baptism (Luke 4:18; John 1:32). This empowered Him for service (Acts 10:38). Our Lord was also filled with and led by the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:1; John 3:34; Isaiah 42:1) and He was empowered by the Holy Spirit to do miracles (Matthew 12:28). The fact that Christ depended on the power of the Holy is a reminder of our need of the Holy Spirit’s power as we live our lives on earth. If He depended, how much more must we?

Hebrews 9:14 refers to the Holy Spirit which says He offered Himself as a sacrifice through the Holy Spirit; (Romans 1:4) and the Holy Spirit's worked in His resurrection (I Peter 3:18). He gave commandments to the apostles and through them to us by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:2).

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN SALVATION

Without question, one of the most important and largest areas of the Holy Spirit's work today is in relation to salvation. Indeed, it is primarily His work from the beginning of conviction to the final delivery of that person in heaven.

BY CONVICTING

The convicting work of the Spirit is the placing of the truth of the Gospel in a clear light before the unsaved person so he acknowledges it as truth whether or not he receives Christ as personal Savior. Conviction is making the message clear, not the saving of the soul—that's regeneration. In other words, the one who testifies about the saving grace of God must depend on the Holy Spirit even to make that testimony understood clearly.

The truth He makes clear is the truth about sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8). The proof that men are in a state of sin is because of the Fall of Adam revealed. The righteousness of Christ is proved because of His resurrection from the dead and ascension to the Father. All of His righteous claims were fully validated when He returned to Heaven. The proof of judgment to come is based on the past judgment of Satan. In other words, if Satan, Christ's archenemy, has been judged (John 12:31), what chance can any man hope to have of escaping judgment if he refuses the grace of God?

The order of the Spirit's work of conviction is a logical one. Man needs first to see his state of sin, then he needs to have proof of the righteousness of the Savior who can save him from that sin, and finally he needs to be reminded that if he refuses to receive the Savior, he will face certain judgment and condemnation.

BY REGENERATING

Although the word regeneration is used only twice in the Bible (Titus 3:5, where it refers to the new birth, and Matthew 19:28 where it refers to the millennial kingdom), the concept of being born again is found in other passages, notably John 3. Technically, it is God's act of providing eternal life in Heaven to one who believes in Christ. While faith and regeneration are closely associated, the two ideas are distinct, faith being the human responsibility and the channel through which God's grace is received, and regeneration being God's supernatural act of imparting eternal life in Heaven through the Holy Spirit. The two happen together. Some argue that since a man dead in trespasses and sins cannot believe, God must first regenerate him in order that he may then believe. But, if that were true, that is, if he already had been regenerated and thus been given the gift of eternal life, then why would he need to believe? The two must be simultaneous. The Word of God is also closely associated with regeneration as the necessary revelation to give proper content to a man's faith (I Peter 1:23; James 1:18).

Although the antecedents and consequences of regeneration involve processes in time, the act of regeneration itself is instantaneous. One is either unborn or born, and that great change happens in a moment of time. An individual may not know precisely the moment of his salvation, but in God's sight he is either dead in sins or born into the family of God. Regeneration brings with it a new nature (II Corinthians 5:17), which means a new ability to serve in righteousness. The old nature is not eradicated, for the capacity to

serve self continues until the Rapture and Resurrection or we die, after which we will be Glorified. Regeneration does not make a man perfect, but it places him in the family of God and gives him the new ability to please his Father by growing (sanctification) into the image of Christ. Fruit from the new nature is proof that regeneration has occurred (I John 2:29).

BY INDWELLING

The distinctive feature of the ministry of the Holy Spirit today is His indwelling *every* believer, regardless of his spiritual condition. The easiest test of this is to notice that in the New Testament, sinning Christians are said to be indwelt. Paul says, without making any exceptions, that the Holy Spirit lived within their bodies (I Corinthians 6:19). Romans 8:9 makes it clear that the absence of the Spirit is evidence of an unsaved individual.

How can a believer know that the Holy Spirit of God is within Him? There are two methods of assuring evidence. One is simply to believe the Word of God which says this is true. The other is to look at one's Christian experience as evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence and working in one's life. However, experience may not always be convincing since sin may hinder His work, and in the normal process of Christian development one's growth will be slow but steady with no unusual demonstrations of the power of God. This unspectacular kind of progress should never be diagnosed as indicating the absence of the indwelling Holy Spirit. He does abide forever in every believer's life (John 14:16–17).

BY SEALING

When we believed and fully trusted that Jesus of Nazareth is exactly who the Bible says He is we received the Holy Spirit. One way of expressing the certainty of the Christian hope is to say that the people of God have been "Sealed with the Spirit." The term, *sphragizo* occurs three times in the Epistles; (II Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30). In the Old Testament the literal meaning of *sphragizo* is somewhat more common, but in the New Testament (at times also in the Old) the term is used only metaphorically, in the sense of 'ratify', 'confirm', 'attest'. In the three texts in which Paul uses the term it refers to the marking of the believers as God's property. The Holy Spirit is the mark of the child of God. But the sealing has a reference to the end of the age, for God will deliver all those who have his stamp on them (Revelation 7:4).

The background for the concept of sealing may be seen in tattooing, or in the marking of Cain, or in the marking of Jewish house with blood at the first Passover, or in the marking of the foreheads of the faithful before the judgment from Ezekiel 9. The seal of the old covenant, circumcision, must also be considered as a form of sealing. It is not surprising, since the believers are incorporated into the Christian community by baptism (which is often related to the work of the Holy Spirit), that baptism is known by some as sealing.

However, sealing with the Holy Spirit is an assurance to the believer which can be seen as the *earnest* (deposit) of the Holy Spirit (II Corinthians 1:21). It is even more explicitly stated in Ephesians 1:13, 14: *In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.* It is worth noticing here that the sealing with the Holy Spirit takes place when men listen unto salvation to the word of truth, the Gospel.

That the sealing has an eschatological reference is borne out even more clearly in Ephesians 4:30, where the apostle informs us that we were sealed with the Spirit *unto the day of redemption.* The Christ-event, which lies in the past, is made real for us by the Spirit, which also assures us that final redemption awaits

us at the end of this age, obviously yet future. This word of assurance, however, is coupled with the admonition *And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God by whom ye are sealed unto the day of redemption* (Ephesians 4:30).

In two of the three passages, which speak of the sealing with the Spirit, the Spirit is called the *arrhabon*. If we add II Corinthians 5:5 to II Corinthians 1:22 and Ephesians 1:14, we have the three passages in which the Holy Spirit is spoken of as the earnest. The word *arrhabon* is a Semitic lending term meaning ‘surety’ or ‘pledge.’ In Genesis 38:17, 18 and 20 the substantive is used for the pledge, which Judah gave Tamar. As a rule, the word occurs as a verb in the Old Testament, but always with the basic idea of surety or guarantee. Nowhere, however, does it signify the partial payment of a money debt. It is as a word used by those who grant loans so that in Greek that ‘earnest-money’ becomes more than a pledge; it is a partial down payment. A pledge is taken back when the contract is fulfilled, but earnest money is payment in advance of full payment. God who has promised us to redeem us will never take back His promise. It is against His nature.

Therefore, when we believe, the Holy Spirit seals us with Himself. This sealing is the earnest deposit that God gives the believer as a pledge that the believer has eternal security and God will redeem His chosen at the “Day of Redemption”.

BY BAPTIZING

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is something that is automatic at the point of salvation. This person is baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Church. There seems to be a lot of confusion concerning the baptism of the believers. Much of this confusion is related to some individual’s experiences. It is difficult if not impossible to persuade some individuals that their experience is not scriptural. Church tradition is also another source of the introduction error into some believers thought process. Many who are raised in a certain environment are unwilling to accept that their particular practice is unscriptural. We call these denominational beliefs.

Further since there are several baptisms mentioned in Scripture some people will fail to distinguish between the different types. They begin to confuse the types and cross one’s characteristics over to another. Once a person actually gives his life to Christ the Holy Spirit baptizes him. It does not happen again to the same individual after that immediate event. I Corinthians 12:13, says *For by one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Greeks, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.* This gives the concept of being baptized into the church.

We are given a place in that body, the church, at the very point of salvation. Several characteristics must be offered in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of this Scriptural concept.

A) It is for all believers, no matter their spiritual condition. The Corinthians were carnal and babes and they are classed as being baptized, and are seen as the temples of the Holy Spirit.

B) It is by the Holy Spirit. Much of the confusion stems from people building their doctrine on experience and poor interpretation, rather than proper exegesis of the Scriptures. John the Baptist mentions this baptism in Matthew 3:11, (John the Baptist is speaking), *I, indeed, baptize you with water unto repentance, but he who cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and with fire.* The Spirit baptism is promised by John the Baptist and the indications are that this baptism would come from Christ in some manner. (Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16, John 1:33). Luke makes

mention of a baptizing that was to take place yet future. This baptism was the first occurrence of the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing people into the Church. Acts 1:5, [Christ speaking] *For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.* The initial Baptism of the Holy Spirit was on the day of Pentecost in Acts two when the Holy Spirit descended and began the church age.

C) This baptism is for the Church age only. The Church age began with Pentecost not Adam, Abraham or some other early patriarch. It was not mentioned in the Old Testament and is not mentioned again after the end of the Book of Acts.

D) It can be a non-experiential work of the Holy Spirit. That is, it occurs whether the believer is aware of it or not. Some believers sense a new awakening and others simply see their lives gaining a new direction or order. Others still do not sense anything at first and gradually find themselves examining spiritual studies with new understanding in a deeper manner.

E) It brings about our union with Christ in His death unto sin in our lives. Colossians 2:2 and Romans 6:1-10 discuss our dying to the old life and putting on the "New Man" which can only happen if God gives us a new heart by His Spirit.

F) This particular baptism does not guarantee a special power. It places us in a position in Christ where we are enabled to receive power. The spirit as a result of being baptized into the Body will give us gifts. However, some such as the carnal Corinthians received the Spirit and continued to live as they had before. They did not demonstrate a special power as a result of the initial Holy Spirit baptism.

BY FILLING

The baptism of the Spirit is different than the filling of the Spirit. Filling has the idea of control by the Holy Spirit. The baptizing is the act, which causes the new believer to enter into the body of Christ. You can be saved and baptized into the body without being filled with the Holy Spirit. Filling is something that is subsequent to our salvation and is related to our walk. Baptism is related to our position in Christ. Therefore, the filling of the Holy Spirit is the influence or control the Holy Spirit exercises over us when we yield ourselves to Him. The Spirit of God, who has given us new life and who has taken up residence within us, wants to fill our lives with His goodness and power. He wants us to let Him take control of our lives. Even so, He does not use His power as God to overwhelm or force us; rather, He fills us only as we submit to Him.

In this sense, then, being filled with the Holy Spirit means that we have placed ourselves under His influence and control. We have yielded to Him, letting Him take over our lives. The Bible itself uses the word "filled" in the same way (Luke 6:11; Acts 5:17; 13:45).

To be filled with something, therefore, means to be under its control. This truth is stated clearly regarding the Holy Spirit in Ephesians 5:18, *And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.* Paul used this analogy because a person who becomes intoxicated with alcohol places himself under its influence or control. Similarly, a Christian who submits to the leading of the indwelling Holy Spirit puts himself under His influence or control. Both the person who consumes enough alcohol to become drunk and the Christian who yields to the Holy Spirit have placed themselves under the control of something or someone outside themselves.

On the Day of Pentecost, people who heard the apostles speak in languages they had never learned accused them of being drunk. Even though that experience characterized the baptism of the Holy Spirit they were filled too. Moreover, in the pagan ceremonies of Paul's day, worshipers often got drunk to have a religious experience. The analogy, therefore, had some background in Paul's thinking. A group of Spirit-filled Christians singing with great enthusiasm may have a superficial resemblance to a band of pagan worshipers, drunk with wine, singing praises to their gods.

The similarity, as already indicated, is only for illustration. A person who is drunk with wine, and therefore under its control, suffers impaired judgment. He says and does things he normally wouldn't do, and he often can't remember what he did. On the other hand, a person filled with the Holy Spirit, and therefore under His control, enjoys improved judgment, acts in a sane and responsible manner, and remembers what he is saying and doing while being controlled by the Holy Spirit.

We are greatly influenced by whatever it is that fills us. If we are filled with anger, we will be influenced to such an extent that we will say and do things we may later regret. A person who is filled with anger against God may become so controlled by his hatred that he becomes irreverent, blasphemous, defiant, and rebellious toward everything.

To be filled with the Holy Spirit, then, is to be so influenced by, controlled by, or permeated by Him that we will reflect God's moral character and be strengthened by His power. We will be loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle, and self-controlled-virtues that Paul referred to as *the fruit of the Spirit* (Galatians 5:22,23).

BY GIVING GIFTS

Spiritual gifts are given by the Holy Spirit as He will, (I Corinthians 12:11) and specifically (I Corinthians 12:8–10). A spiritual gift is a God-given supernatural ability for service. The gift of Pastor for example is the ability to give shepherd like care to people and the ability to clearly communicate God's truth. Every Christian has some gifts (I Peter 4:10). Most are explained in I Corinthians chapters 12, 14 and Romans 16.

Next message: ROMANS CHAPTER Eight Cont.

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