

LI. Romans in Biblical Perspective  
*The Gospel of God*  
“Led by the Spirit”  
Romans 8:1–11  
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May 14, 2023 • Sunday Morning Sermon

Here is what God’s Word says in what we have covered so far. Romans 8:1-11 says [1] *There is **therefore** now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. [2] For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. [3] For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, [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. [5] 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. [6] For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. [7] 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. [8] Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*

*[9] 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. [10] But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. [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.* The grass withers, the flower fades, the Word of our God abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

This is our 51st study in Romans and our fourth time in Romans 8. Hang with me because this is your life for, I want you to see a couple of things here. One is as we take a look at Romans 8:9-11, I love to do is share the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Good News that Jesus saves and I've been given the privilege to do that in my calling as a pastor and in my calling as a Christian. I love that I can give people a sure Gospel, not a ‘hope for’ gospel. The Gospel is a blessed hope that is secure in Christ. It kind of shows up in the way I open up a conversation to talk about the Gospel – the Good News of how men and women who are wrong with God which all of us are, can be right with God and taken to glory. How can that be true and how could that happen?

The way I can get to that is in the questions I choose to ask people and seek their answers. One of the things I love to ask people is, do you think there's a heaven? I particularly like to do it when I'm on an airplane after we've had some turbulence and everybody tells me, ‘yes’ and do you know why? Here's why. The reason I always ask that question, is because Ecclesiastes 3:11 has already told me that God has put eternity in the heart of a man and no matter who I ask, I know they already know there's eternity. They may try to suppress it, but they know it and so I want to get to that with them. The second question I like to ask them is, how do you think you get there and by the way, do you know (and then I pause for a moment and then continue with), do you know how to get there?

Another set of questions I like to use that open up the opportunity for me to share the Gospel is this one; If you were to die tonight, do you know where you would spend eternity? In fact, I'll ask that question a second time, and put a big emphasis on the word ‘know.’ Then I'll go

to the second question which is, if you were to stand before God and God was to say to you, 'Why should I let you into heaven,' what would be your answer? What am I doing when I'm doing that? I'm doing that to communicate something that the Gospel is the communication of Good News that is infallibly promised to all who are in Christ Jesus. If they tell me they don't know for certain where they're going to spend eternity, I love to tell them 'Did you know that one of the reasons the Bible was written was so that you could know where you're going to spend eternity?'

Then I'll take them to John 6:47 which says [47] *Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes (in Me) has eternal life.* Or I take them to Romans 5:1 which says [1] *Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have (not hope, maybe or possibly) peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.* Or I take them to Romans 8:1 which says [1] *There is **therefore** now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.* Or Philippians 1:6 which says [6] *And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.* Or to Romans 8:28 which says [28] *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose.*

I love to take them to one of these texts to tell them of something that is assured and that is; any and every person who has repented of their sins and by faith put their trust in Jesus Christ alone for salvation, is assured of everlasting life with Him. That's what this Romans 8 text starts us with – there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. If you're thinking as you hear this, you know that there is a crucial point in that promise – every single person who is in Christ Jesus, all of their condemnation has been taken away. All of our guilt, all of our shame, all of the possibility of the wrath of God to fall upon us has been removed. We are beyond the reach of Divine condemnation if we're in Christ Jesus. The question is how do you know if you're in Christ Jesus? There are some people who think that they are in Christ Jesus, who are not in Christ Jesus, and in fact, they're not only deceived, they're deceived all the way to the judgment seat. The self-deception is so great and so embraced that it takes them right up to the judgment seat.

Jesus says in Matthew 7:21-23, [21] *“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.* [22] *On that day (Judgment Day) many will say to Me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and cast out demons in Your name, and do many mighty works in Your name?’* [23] *And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness.’* They weren't in Christ Jesus and Christ Jesus was not in them. They were religious, even religion trafficking in Christianity, yet they did not know Him.

There's something here I want you to get, and I'm grateful as a preacher to be able to preach it to you today. When the Bible teaches the assurance of salvation, it teaches it in two ways. Number one, it gives you the ground of the assurance of your salvation that is infallible. The ground of the assurance of your salvation is you are not saved by the work you do for Jesus or by the work Jesus is doing in and through you. You are saved infallibly, securely, assuredly by the work Jesus has done for you outside of you at the cross. Jesus says 'Father, I lose not one that You've given Me and I will raise them up on the last day (John 6:39).

Romans 8:29-30 says [29] *For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.* [30] *And those whom He predestined He also called, and those whom He called He also justified, and those whom He justified He also glorified.* What you start with you end with, and the full company is secure in Christ Jesus based on the work that the Son of God did for you

outside of you when He took upon Himself all of your sins and sin was condemned as Romans 8:1 said for all of your sin received its condemnation upon Jesus for you. Therefore, there is no possibility of condemnation. Remember, God will by no means leave the guilty and punished (Exodus 34:7, Nahum 1:3). But God never brings two punishments for one sin. There is no double jeopardy in the Kingdom. If Jesus paid it, He paid it all and it's all paid.

Now the question is, am I in Christ Jesus? Here is the second aspect of Christian Gospel assurance. Who are those who are in Christ? You can be baptized and not in Christ. You can be a member of a church and not in Christ. You can be in the ministry and not in Christ. There is an amazing book and a sermon that was preached during the Great Awakening by Joseph Alleine titled "An Alarm to the Unconverted." We are saved by Christ in Christ. Here's how you know those in Christ; Christ is in them. When He resides in them, there will be evidences, markers in them that will be manifested in them. Those markers are clearly laid out for us in the Scripture.

In this Romans 8 text there are seven of these markers that are given. There are things when Christ resides within you that will show His presence. On this side of eternity you will never be perfect. Our Christian life will always be imperfect. Not only will it be imperfect, it will be uneven. You're going to have seasons where you grow and then boom, they hit a stopping point or they hit the skids for a while or there are some aspects that need to be dealt with in their life. Our Christian life is imperfect and uneven, but our Christian life is evident. There's no such thing as someone with a root that doesn't have fruit. If there's a root, there's a shoot. If there's a root and a shoot, there's fruit – some 30, some 60, some 100 fold. If any man be in Christ he is a new creation (II Corinthians 5:17) and Romans 8 is laying out seven of those evidences of those who are in Christ through Christ in them.

When you are saved, you are saved by the work of the Son of God for you, outside of you but the only way you can be in Christ is the work of the Son of God in you, by His Word and by His Spirit. You can't be in Christ without the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit working with the Word of God is not a second blessing. If you don't have the Spirit of God and you don't have the Word of God at work within you, you can't be a Christian. Those in the flesh cannot please God (Romans 8:8). You can't be in Christ without the Spirit of God bringing you from death and to life and the Spirit of God always works with the Word of God to bring you from death into life. Now, when the Spirit of God is at work in you to bring you to Christ so that you are in Him, what does that look like? It doesn't look like perfection. It doesn't even look like a steady graph growth. There are ups and downs. There are steps forward, steps backwards. It's imperfect, but there will always be certain evidences and He has given us seven of them.

We've already covered two. The text for this study says the law of the Spirit has come and where the law of the Spirit that is the principle of power of the Holy Spirit has emancipated you from death and to life and where the law of the Spirit is there is life. Where the law of the flesh is, that is living life apart from the Spirit reliant upon self, one's own religion and one's own works is death. The law of the flesh is death. In other words, there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus and that's the ground of our assurance for there's no condemnation because of the work of Christ Jesus outside of us and for us, to redeem us and ransom us.

How do I get to Christ? Jesus Christ sends His Spirit from heaven and the blood hound from heaven starts tracking you down, using the Word of God to bring you to conviction. It's a process called evangelism, external calling and internal calling that He's bringing you so that you have eyes to see and ears to hear. It's no longer just a song that you like to sing that says 'just as I am' but it's a way of life now – 'just as I am without one plea, but that Your blood was shed for me.' I need You every hour and it's brought home to the heart and the law of the Spirit

emancipates you. We call it regeneration. The way you get to Christ in justification (no condemnation) is the work of the Spirit with the Word that comes to you through people who have brought the Gospel to you. Then the Word of God and the Spirit of God got hold of your heart and brought you from death to life by bringing you to Christ and you came to Christ where now His Spirit takes up residence in you. You are sealed and secured with His Spirit. You are baptized with His Spirit. He is poured out from heaven in you. You're being sanctified by Him.

How does that show up? It shows up through a different mindset. The old mindset was on the world, the flesh, the devil and sin and that just brings death. Now you have a new mindset. Romans 12:2 says *[2] Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.* When Jesus shows up, not only is His Spirit living within you but He is with you everywhere you go and your activity is either surrendering and rejoicing in Him, or grieving and quenching Him – in those hours in the computer alone in a room. He's there. He's always with you. He never leaves you. He abides in you and He's there to do this takeover makeover and the first place He starts is the mind.

The word is metamorphosis – the ugly caterpillar, cocoon, beautiful butterfly. Your mind is transformed. Spiritually it's stinking thinking, Jesus, His Word, His Spirit. Now we start getting the mind of Christ. Now we start thinking on the things that really matter in life, the things that are eternal. So there's two evidences. Those two evidences is regeneration where God's Spirit now dwells within you, and two, the renewal of our mind where our mind is being transformed, we're being discipled and we're starting to think Christianly with the mind of Christ about the themes of Christ, about what really matter in life and for life. The mind set on the flesh is death, the mind set on the Spirit, the things of the Spirit which is the Word of God, is life. Your assurance keeps growing.

I've rephrased this Gaither lyric and here's the way I would say this. I am not where I ought to be as a Christian. Can you identify with that? But I'm not where I used to be. Can you identify with that? How did I get from there to there? The Spirit and the Word from Jesus in Heaven took me from where I was to where I am now and will take me to where I ought to be and where I want to be. The highway to the heart and the highway from the heart is through the mind that's been renewed.

The third thing is we're being led by the Spirit. Romans 8:9-11 says *[9] 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. [10] But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. [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.*

If the Spirit has brought you to Christ, then now Christ by the Spirit dwells in you and according to this text you're going to get a resurrected body out of this thing as well. Here we have the third evidence which is through the Spirit your life will manifest the things of Christ, not perfectly or evenly. The first evidence is the power of the Spirit has emancipated you from the reign of sin though you still have remaining sin but through you're no longer under its reign. The second evidence, is the Spirit and the Word has enthroned Jesus in your heart as He dwells there and now you're starting to think Biblically with the mind of Christ. Now, every day you want to be led by the Spirit of God with the Word of God to the glory of God and not by the world.

Here are two things from this. One is the ground of your assurance infallible, is the work of God through the Son of God outside of you, for you, at the cross, where He takes away your sin with His atoning death, and He gives you His perfect righteousness. So, you're both forgiven and now accepted, wrapped in the righteousness of Christ. Now we're going to growing assurance. Now we're going to maturation assurance. I'm no longer under the reign of sin. I've been emancipated by the presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Look, my mind is changing. I'm starting to think Biblically instead of worldly. Look, when I get up in the morning, I'm not wanting to be led by the world, the flesh and the devil. Remember, we're imperfect, we're uneven, but I now want to be led by the Spirit of God. I don't want to grieve the Spirit, throw water on the Spirit or quench the Spirit. I want to surrender to the Spirit and be led by the Spirit of God. I don't want to be led by the flesh, living independent in rebellion and self-reliance. I want to be led by the Spirit in full reliance upon the Holy Spirit and the Word of God that Jesus sent from Heaven to me.

Paul said in Romans 1:16-17 says *[16] For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. [17] For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."* It says here that the Gospel is the power of God, and the righteousness of God. Do you see where we are in Romans 8? The Gospel is the righteousness of God, therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. I'm innocent for I have the righteousness of God around me and my growing assurance comes with the presence of the power of God – the Holy Spirit and the Word of God, who brought me from death and to life (regeneration), who has given me a new mind in sanctification, who is now leading me by the Spirit in life for the Lord. This is God's Word and God's Spirit – God's power plants – that are at work in my life that are greater than my sin. (29:05)

If you want to know if you're in Christ, you will get a hunger for God's Word. Do you have a hunger for God's Word? That's not an accusation. It's just question. I'm just doing inventory and that's directed to all of us. In the decisions we make where does grieving the Spirit come in? We does surrendering to the Spirit come in? Do you seek the wisdom of the world or the wisdom of God? It won't be perfect, but there will be this pulsating desire where God's Spirit and God's Word is, that you want to know Him. I want to know Him Biblically. I want to know Him accurately. I want to grow in my relationship with Him.

Here's where I'll begin to close. When I say led by the Spirit, almost every one of you immediately go to the out of balance at best and wrong at worst teaching of certain elements of the Charismatic Movement. What you begin to think of is the Holy Spirit giving you extra Biblical revelation of what house I'm going to buy, the name of the person I'm going to marry, the college I go to. You might be thinking right now, "Harry Are you saying that God doesn't lead us providentially?" No, I'm not saying that. I know God leads us providentially, but that's not what this text is talking about. This text is talking about the Spirit of God leading you in life with the Word of God to holiness.

I want to look at I Thessalonians that's a commentary on this text that Paul himself wrote. I Thessalonians 4:1-8 says *[1] Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. [2] For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. [3] For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; [4] that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor,*

*[5] not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; [6] that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. [7] For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. [8] Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.*

In other words, he is not saying go be holy to be saved. He is saying those whom Jesus has saved and given his Holy Spirit, now march to the drum of the pursuit of sanctification and holiness that this body will belong to Jesus. This life will belong to Jesus. It's not Jesus at the top of my life. It's Jesus as my life. Will I do it perfectly? No. Will I be uneven? Yes, but that is the impulse that is there with the Spirit and the Word. Are there times that it's barely pulsating because I've allowed things to influence me that ought not to be there? Yes, but it won't stay that way. If the Holy Spirit acts within you for He'll bring conviction and send you back to following Jesus. That's what it means to be led by the Spirit.

I'll give you an illustration since this is Mother's Day and this is a great way for me to get to a conclusion on Mother's Day. I love Cindy. God did not tell me to marry Cindy Lou Miller. Actually it would have been wrong of me to seek that information. Deuteronomy 29:29 says *[29] The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.* God told me what a wife is and what a husband is. He told me there will be one who wants to be a completer with you. There will be one who loves Jesus. There will be one who responds to servant leadership from you. You don't go sit in a corner looking at a navel saying, 'Can you give me her initials?'

Even when it comes to college, dare I say that today? My question to people is not where are you going? I'm asking, why are you going? What are you going to do with what you have learned? I am glad when God gives me these providential hints in decision making, but the drive of the will of God is not seeking the Holy Spirit to give us extra Biblical revelation. The drive of the will of God is for God's Spirit to guide us with this Word that become the channel markers of life – here's where I live my life. The decisions that honor the channel markers of God's Word are those knowing that you are in God's will. I am in God's revealed will and that's what I'm called to be.

Those who are led by the Spirit of God have a hunger for God's Word, have a hunger for the things of God, not perfectly, not evenly, but it's evident. It's working. So I'm telling you today, every single person in Christ Jesus is justified and no condemnation and no wrath. I'm also telling you today, here's three of the seven things that we've learned. One, is the Word of God and the Spirit of God has liberated you from the dominion of sin. You don't have to sin. There is still remaining sin, but it's not reigning. Secondly, you're on your path to a renewed mind, to think Biblically, increasingly, day by day as you're being disciplined. Thirdly, you don't live life alone. Jesus is leading you by His presence through His Spirit and He will be with you every day to the end.

Have you ever noticed in the text when Paul refers to the Holy Spirit he starts talking about the Spirit of Christ? Do you know why Paul is doing that? Here's why he's doing it. The Holy Spirit was poured out upon Jesus in the womb, at the virgin birth, childhood, increasing in stature, favor with God. The Holy Spirit was poured out upon Him at baptism, in His teaching, in the wilderness, and the Holy Spirit led Him to the Cross, out of the tomb, and the Holy Spirit received Him back to glory. Now, enthroned, He pours His Spirit in you. And the reason Paul refers to the Spirit as the Spirit of Christ, is to communicate to you the Holy Spirit with you means Jesus is with you. The same Spirit that was with Jesus from the womb to the tomb is with

you from your conversion to glory, and He leads you with God's revealed the Word which you can't do if you don't know. That's why He gives you a hunger for it.

What are the other evidences? I'm glad you asked for we have four more and we'll start there in the next study. Let's pray.

Prayer:

God, thank You so much for the time in Your Word today. Thank You for the foundation and the ground of our assurance through the finished work of Jesus Christ. Thank You for the growing assurance as we're growing in grace and the evidences that this is You in us. You have taken up residence. You have liberated us from the dominion of sin. You are teaching us how to think Biblically and You are leading us every day by Your Spirit. Where we grieve You, O God, be patient and O God, give us that peace of Christ and the assurance of salvation that is manifested with the joy of obedience. Give us the joy of obedience that affirms that we rest in Jesus, in whose name I pray, Amen.