

THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT

Romans 8:5-27

Sunday May 23rd 2010 Morning Service

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What is Holy Spirit doing in your life? In this passage there is a Huge Problem, 3 Assurances and 4 Consequences.

1. I. A Huge Problem

Summed up in phrase 'living according to the sinful nature/flesh' (v4,5). Word 'sinful nature/flesh' comes 8 times in v5-13. To do with what our 'mind is set on' v5, how we therefore we 'live' v13. This is our sin dominated self. None of us needs lessons in how to be proud, selfish, unkind, resentful, angry impatient, impure, greedy, scheming or malicious. Our sinful nature we all have inherited at birth. V5-13 is devastating about what the sinful nature is & does.

- 1) It is death: v6 'the mind of the sinful nature is death'.
- 2) It is alienation from God: v7-8 'hostile to God': 3 terrible negatives. If the sinful nature rules in yr life, there is nothing in your life that is unaffected and nothing you do, can please God.
- 3) Leads to death: v13 'if you live according to the sinful nature you will die'. Has eternal consequence. Leads you forever away from God & his glory.

2. II. Three Assurances

1.A Greater Power

There is another way to live v5 'those who live in accordance with the Spirit'. Word Spirit comes 18 in this passage. Everything said about the sinful nature is reversed by work of Spirit v5-9. There is greater power to give you a different mind, different life style, different experience & different destiny. Maybe you feel you are in grip of something you cant master. There is a power to set you free. He is called the Holy Spirit.

2. An Assured Presence

v9 'you however are controlled NOT by the sinful nature but by the Spirit'.

- 1) Confidence If you are a Christian you have the Spirit. 'If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ'.

2) Realism: v10 'If Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness'. Still in a fallen world. Paul is not telling us to pretend. We still die. We struggle with the sinful nature. But we have spiritual life, 'your spirit is alive'

3) Permanence. What phrase comes three times in v9-11?

The Holy Spirit is forever resident in you.

4) Transcendence. V9 refers to each member of Trinity being in you: the Spirit, who is both the Spirit of God & the Spirit of Christ is in you. The answer to the grip of the sinful nature is the awesome reality of God Almighty taking permanent residence in you.

3. A Glorious Future

The sinful nature spells death. But look in v11: twice refers to the Spirit living in you and twice refers to fact of Jesus being raised from the dead: and on those 2 immense foundations he asserts he will also 'give life to yr mortal bodies through his Spirit'. Your eternal future is sorted.

3. III. Four Consequences

v12 begins 'Therefore/so then', a call to action.

1. Battle To Fight v13

v13 is like standing at junction of 2 roads: one is marked way to death: the other to life. Everyday, even every minute, we make the choice which path we are on. If you live according to the sinful nature you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body you will live'.

A warning: if we live to please our sinful nature we can be assured of death.

An alternative: The remedy is in 2nd part of the sentence: 'but if'.

A helper: 'by the Spirit', down the path to life the Spirit is our companion.

An action to take: 'put to death the misdeeds of the body'. We have to chose to act. 'Put to death' means to execute, kill. Killing pride, lust, gossip, selfishness, anger and so on. I have to apply this to what I do with my eyes, my hands, my thoughts, my feet, my lips. I am at war. But even as I do all this, v14 says we are 'led by the Spirit'. He goes ahead showing us the way.

A promise: if you do this 'you will live'. God guarantees it. The Spirit is given for this very purpose to give us continuing strength for the battle. Not one of us exempt. Even Jesus fought this battle. He has 'been tempted in every way just as we are- yet was without sin'. Heb 4:15.

2. Relationship To Enjoy v14-17

If you live like this, you are to be sure, 'sons of God' v14. When this passage speaks of being sons of God, it is the position of privilege which is extended to any Christian, man or woman. How do I know if I am a son of God? v15-16. 'You received the Spirit of son ship. By him we cry Abba, Father'. The Spirit gives reality to our relationship with God. Not just a form of language. Being God's child is real.

3. Future To Live For v17-25

The Spirit guarantees eternity future. We live in a suffering and broken world v17-23. But 'we have the first fruits of the Spirit' v23. The first fruits were the first crops of the new harvest, just forerunners of all that was to come. Live now in light of tomorrow. 'We wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies'. We are already God's sons but we have not yet inherited. Our bodies are not yet resurrected & transformed. But they will be. Whole creation will be set free. Glory is ahead. So 'wait eagerly' v23 & v25. Live now so to be ready for then. Don't live for the football results, for the next holiday, for the pay rise. Live for glory.

4. Pray In The Spirit v26-27

How honest v26 is. Speaks of prayer as an area of 'our weakness'. Adds 'we do not know what we ought to pray for'. But the Spirit 'helps us', which means 'joins to help'. He comes to intercede for us, as we pray. Does it passionately & perfectly & utterly as God wills. You mustn't miss out on this: get in your knees & pray. And we find the Spirit is there with us mingling his perfect petitions with our faltering attempts. We do not pray alone.

So how is it with the Holy Spirit this morning? How much we need his help. And how wonderfully he is given to help us. Let us fight the battle, cry out to God as our Father, set our sights on glory & fall on our knees, confident that in all these things the Spirit of God will help us.

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