

Two Kinds of People

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Date: 11 October 2026

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[0:00] Good morning. Please turn with me in your Bibles to Romans chapter 8. Hey, before I jump into this text, I know some of you are aware of the opportunity! I know some of you are aware of the opportunity to today for our former pastor, Jonathan Sign, and Chris. If you do not know, their youngest son, Caleb, was killed in a car accident a few weeks ago. So I just thought we would take this time to just lift up that family as they deal with the pain of losing a son and walking these next steps in the Lord's comfort, in the Lord's grace.

And ultimately, in the Lord's mercy. Please pray with me. Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, we just come before you this morning both to worship you. It is the time of Thanksgiving, and we give thanks for all the mercies that you bestow upon us from just this opportunity to come together as a church to lift up your name, to praise you, to seek out your wisdom, O God, to share our desires, our longings. And right now we just, we're petitioning you to work in the Sign family, O Lord. It's a tragedy that they have endured with the loss of their son, Caleb.

There is very little in life that can prepare a family for such devastation. Father, I give thanks for several things. One, their knowledge of the gospel.

Two, their desire to root their faith in you and to draw near to you through this time. Father, I give you thanks that Caleb has indeed heard the gospel, seen it lived out.

By all accounts is the lover of you. He is in glory, but he leaves behind some pain in his brothers and his parents.

[2:38] So, Lord, I ask that you would give them sweet comfort in you. May you impress upon them your love, your joy, and your mercy as they just contemplate and ask you for wisdom on what comes next.

Father, we know that you are real and that you do indeed hear our prayers. And we pray that the Sign family would find favor upon you this hour as they seek your face.

We ask these things in your most gracious and glorious name. Amen. Like I said, please turn in your text to Romans 8.

If you are new, passing through, visiting, welcome. My name is BK. I have the pleasure of serving here as one of the pastors. And we are in one of the most celebrated passages in all of Scripture, Romans 8.

This morning, I want to begin simply by reading this passage to you. Beginning in verse 5 of Romans 8, it says, For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh.

[4:07] For to set the mind on the flesh is death.

But to set the mind on the spirit is life and peace. 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. For those who are in the flesh cannot please God. This is a loaded passage that I am going to unpack before you this morning.

But I want to remind you first how we got here. Where are we? We're in this passage between Romans 6 and 8. And it's a part of the text that Paul answers one of mankind's great, I don't want to say it's greatest, but it's one of the great questions that every man and woman asks.

It's, can I change? And if so, what does change look like? The fact of the matter is, our instinct is often to try to fix ourselves, right?

[5:28] I know I'm supposed to be this, but I'm that. But if only I try harder, become more disciplined, I create more laws for me to follow, I can get there.

And there's something said in many believers that if God saved me, it is now my responsibility to become more holy.

It's all on me. God did the heavy lifting. He sent his son to die on the cross. Now the rest is up to me. Well, if you've been with us, you know that that is false.

The fact is, we know that the law is perfect. But we are indeed imperfect. We are sinners. The law is capable of showing us righteousness.

And when we look at it, we can see our own righteousness. But that law can't make us righteous. So the question is, what hope do we have?

[6:39] Here Romans 8 begins with a magnificent declaration found in verse 1. Therefore, there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ.

Last week, Paul explained to us, God did what we could not do. The law could show us righteousness, but it could not rescue us from sin.

Because of this, in his great mercy, God sent his own son and condemned sin in the flesh. And at the cross, God dealt with our guilt without setting aside his perfect justice.

And through faith in Christ, we, the broken people that we are, are declared righteous.

And by the Spirit, God begins transforming how we live. Verse 4 describes those who benefit from the work that Christ did on the cross.

[7:50] He says, people who walk according to the Spirit. So this morning, Paul explains why Christians live differently.

And the first thing you're going to notice is, Paul is not going to tell us that Christians live differently because they're naturally better people. He's not going to say that.

He's not going to say that Christians live differently because they've got more willpower. He's not going to say that. And he's not even going to say that Christians live differently because they're more religious.

You see, our transformation begins with God. But here's the reality. Our world divides people into a hundred different ways.

There's the successful and the unsuccessful. There's the educated, the uneducated. Rich, poor, religious, irreligious, respectable, rebellious. And then, of course, there's the colors, right?

[8:52] Whether it be black, white, yellow, brown. There's always these contrasts that the world tries to draw in. But Paul is going to tell us there's only two contrasts or different people that are important for us to understand.

Paul simply states, one, there's those who live according to the flesh. And two, those who live according to the spirit.

Those are the only two things God cares about. And all the different contrasts of the world and how different we are, those that live according to the flesh and those that live according to the spirit.

And what we're going to learn this morning is who we belong to shapes what we desire, how we live, and has consequences for today and eternity.

This morning, we will look at four things. We're going to look at, one, what rules us? Two, where does it take us?

[10:07] Three, who do we resist? And four, why we need God. You with me? All right, let's take a look at the first point, verse 5.

What rules us? Verse 5 says, 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 things of the spirit.

Probably one of the most misunderstood, I'm not going to say the most misunderstood, but it's in there. Top thousand lists of the most misunderstood words of the Bible is the word flesh.

Okay? And we need to begin by answering that question. What does Paul mean by flesh? First of all, he's not talking about skin. When Paul says flesh, he is describing human life under the dominion of sin.

If you remember, going back, there is a dominion of death upon which Satan rules, and there is a dominion of life where God rules.

[11:13] You with me on that? And Paul kind of uses different terms to describe those things. To live in the flesh means you live in this domain of Satan and darkness.

That's where you reside. Now, I want you to pay attention because a lot of people get this mixed up. He is not talking about living according to the flesh when you belong to the kingdom of light.

You with me on that? A lot of people read this text, and they say, well, he's living according to the flesh, and maybe he's a Christian. No, no, no, no, no, no, no. Paul is talking about, he's making a, I'll just call it a kingdom distinction.

You're either in the flesh, or you're either in a statement. What Paul is stating here is a fact statement. And one of the reasons we sometimes get confused reading passages like this is we insert our own interpretation.

All too often we read this and we say, oh, the flesh. Paul must be talking about scandalous sins, right? And so we think, oh, I know who fleshly people are.

[12 : 27] I know who they are. It's the addict, the adulterer, the drunk, the atheist, the openly immoral person. That's who Paul must be talking about here, right?

They're living according to the flesh. And the truth is, yes, the flesh can look like that, but the flesh can also look very respectable. The flesh can wear a suit.

The flesh can have a university degree. It can run a successful business. It can give lots of money to charity. And the flesh can even come to church and do all the religious things that we do.

And this explains why someone can be respectable and religious and still need to be saved. The greatest illustration is the person of Paul.

Paul, would we describe him as some wild, immoral pagan? No. Before he came to Christ, he was disciplined. He was religious.

[13 : 33] He was moral, zealous. Boy, did he know the Bible. But the reality is he belonged to the kingdom of flesh.

See, those who belong to the Spirit are people in whom the Holy Spirit dwells and gives new life. And these are the two categories in mind that Paul has.

It's important to know that Paul is describing and not commanding. Because some people, when we see and read this text, we start to say, Oh man, I've got to have more spiritual thoughts.

Right? I've got these fleshly thoughts that have taken over. I've got to have more spiritual thoughts.

That's not what's going on here. Paul is making a very simple distinction.

He's simply describing two kinds of people. And I want you to notice the order. Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh.

[14 : 44] And those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. Now, if you were reading Greek, we would understand this term.

But that word live is a form of the verb to be. What Paul is simply saying, those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh.

Those who are according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. You with me on that distinction? Because this is massive in understanding this.

Because we're going to see the implications in how we live here. Paul later in verse 9 says, You, however, are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit.

That's another way to say you live. You are. If in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. So this is big. There's two distinctions.

[15 : 47] Flesh kingdom. Spirit kingdom. And because of that, who you are, what kingdom you reside in, will shape what you desire, will shape what occupies your mind, and it will guide the direction of your life.

Because here's the thing. We often get Paul's order backwards. We think, if I change my behavior, if I can change my thinking, and then all of a sudden I can be a child of the Spirit.

I can move over here. But Paul says the gospel works in the exact opposite direction. God first changes the person.

Amen? And the changed person begins to think differently and live differently. And here's the truth. Churches get this teaching wrong all the time.

There's been these approaches to what's called the church growth movement. And basically they say, if we can get an unbeliever into church, if we can make an unbeliever comfortable, get them involved, get him or her participating, get them adopting Christian habits, hopefully they'll kind of move on over here.

[17 : 17] Right? They live in the flesh, but if they act like this, maybe they will move over to this side. Now, church, the fact is we want unbelievers here.

We want them welcome. We want them hearing God's Word. We want them around other Christians. But I think we must never confuse assimilation with regeneration.

The fact is we can teach someone Christian vocabulary. We can teach them Christian morality. We can get them serving. We can even get them to clean up their behavior.

But the truth of the matter is you cannot turn flesh into spirit. God has not seen fit to give us that power. You see, Christianity never happens from the outside changing the inside. Christianity begins with a change on the inside, which extends to the outside. God gives new life, and that new life begins working its way out.

[18:19] Now, I want us to pay attention to Paul's term, life in the Spirit. This is a person in whom the Holy Spirit has already done the transforming work.

And we know it's not perfection, and we need to be clear about this because people get confused because we still sin. We still struggle.

In fact, later in this very chapter, Paul will tell us that Christians, that by the Spirit, they must put to death the deeds of the body.

But something fundamental has changed. The Christian lives in a new realm, has a new master, a new direction, and that change becomes visible in what Paul calls their mindset.

That's why it says, set their minds. Now, that term means more than thoughts passing through their head. It is something that reaches beyond our intellect and affects our affections and will.

[19:29] Another way to say to set your minds is, it's about the orientation of the person. You with me on that? The person who's in the Spirit will naturally desire the things of the Spirit, set their minds of.

The person in the flesh will set their minds on the things of the flesh. The person over here, by setting his mind on the Spirit, doesn't move over here. And here's the other great news.

The person who's over here, who's having thoughts of the flesh, doesn't move back over here. Are you with me on that? It's about your orientation of the person.

So Paul is asking, what do you value? What do you love? What do you pursue? What captures your heart? What do you believe life is ultimately about?

That's the mindset. As one author states, it's the gravitational pull of your life. And Paul says it's the Spirit that changes that.

[20:40] See, in the spirit of life, the Christian begins to desire God, to love Christ, to care about holiness, to grieve over our sin, to love God's words, to want God's glory.

Again, we're not going to do it perfectly. But the core of our being is we're going to really desire these things. And that distinction matters because the question is, have I ever had a fleshly thought?

Of course we have. It isn't, have I ever fallen into sin? Of course we have. The question is, what is the fundamental direction of my life?

Before Christ, sin was your realm. Now sin is your enemy. And don't miss this.

These are only two categories. Flesh and spirit. There is no third option.

[21:53] There's no middle ground. There isn't a permanent third category of someone who's supposedly indwelt of the Holy Spirit, whose life remains fundamentally unchanged and oriented entirely toward the flesh.

That doesn't exist. Verse 9 will make this clear. It says, you, however, are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if in fact, the spirit of God dwells in you.

Doesn't mean Christians can't behave fleshly. Doesn't mean Christians grow at the same rate. But it does mean this. Where the spirit of God gives life, the spirit of God changes the direction of your life.

You don't make that happen. God makes that happen. Now, why does this matter so much? Let's take a look at verse 6.

Where does it take us? For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the spirit is life and peace.

[23:12] Now I want you to notice how strongly Paul says this. He doesn't say to set the mind on the flesh eventually leads to death. He says is death.

And to set the mind on the spirit is life and peace. What he's saying here is that there are present realities that ultimately reach their final destination.

The flesh belongs to the realm of death. The spirit belongs to the realm of life. And this exposes the great lie of sin.

In case you did not know, sin always promises life. It always promises life. Sin never shows up at your door. Hey, I'm here to destroy you.

Right? I'm here to wreck your relationship with your family, your kids, your wife, your life, whatever. Sin doesn't do that. Sin shows up and says, hey, I'm here to satisfy you.

[24 : 26] I'm here to make you happy. I'm here to give you what you deserve. Hey, what I offer will make you free.

Because you know why? God is withholding something good from you. You deserve better. See, that's the lie of Genesis 3.

God said, you will surely die. Satan said, you surely will not die. And humanity has been believing that lie ever since. Reality is, sin promises life, yet pays in death.

It reaps destruction. Not in the end, but now. And Paul says, the opposite is true of the spirit. To set the mind on the spirit is life and peace.

And we know that Christianity is not merely adopting a new world view. It's not simply becoming more religious. Christianity is life from the dead.

[25 : 36] Spirit makes us alive to God. And ultimately, Paul will tell us in verse 11, the spirit who raised Christ from the dead will give life to our mortal bodies.

So we know it gives life, but we know there's this wonderful, beautiful world called peace. Let me tell you about this word. Peace is a glorious word.

It is a magnificent word. Now, when we think peace, we often think about a feeling, right? I'm calm. I live in the sea and tranquility.

Right? I have no anxiety. Serenity now. Right? We want this calm. Paul's talking about something deeper. And those that were here for Romans 5 will know this incredible truth.

Therefore, since we've been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

[26 : 41] peace with God. This is the most important peace that man can ever experience. It's peace with God. Verse 7, we'll talk about hostility towards God.

Paul is contrasting peace with God versus hostility with God. See, the fact is, before God changes us, we were hostile towards God.

We were enemies of God. And now, we are enemies who've been reconciled through Christ. So, the greatest peace God gives you isn't peace with your circumstances.

The greatest peace that God gives you is that you have peace with God. The creator, the most significant being in the universe. You can have money, health, family, success, comfort, and still not have peace with God.

And if you don't have peace with God, you don't have peace where it matters more. But the Christian can walk through suffering and still have peace with God.

[27 : 58] Why? Because peace with God doesn't depend upon everything being right around us. Do you know that? We all think, if we get all this stuff in order, I'm going to be at peaceful.

Guess what? You can have peace even in a storm of life. I rejoice that the Sign family, in this moment, have that peace with God in the middle of this suffering and pain that they're enduring. They are right with God. Because everything, everything has been made right between us and God through Jesus Christ. That's what he came to do.

So the question is, why is the flesh death? Why is this contrast so severe? And this is what brings us to Paul's next point. Whom do we resist?

Notice it says, this is the third point, verse 7, for the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God. The mind set on the flesh is hostile to God.

[29 : 11] Maybe you were here, you do not know Jesus Christ, you're wanting to check him out. Most likely you're taken aback by this statement.

Because this is a staggering diagnosis of humanity. See, Paul doesn't say that the flesh is merely indifferent toward God.

Paul says hostile towards God. It means to have enmity. It means a state of deep-seated ill will towards God.

And the truth of this destroys one of the most popular myths about humanity. And that myth is fallen humanity is somehow neutral toward God.

All too often, we picture the unbeliever sitting somewhere in the middle. Right? God is over here, sin is over there, and that person is neutral considering his options.

[30 : 12] Paul says no. Paul says the natural heart already has an orientation. And that heart is the opposite direction from God.

Now, here's the mistake we make. And you might be an unbeliever thinking this, hey man, I don't walk around saying I hate God. I don't say that. I pray. I'm pretty religious. I show up at church. I'm here today, aren't I? Is that okay? I even admire Jesus. I don't know. So BK, what are you talking about?

What, this hostility? See, let me show you where this hostility shows itself. It becomes visible in your life when the true God asserts rightful authority over you.

You see, fallen humanity doesn't necessarily object to having a God. what the world objects to is God being God.

[31 : 15] Right? We don't mind a God who helps us. A God who blesses our plans, who blesses our Thanksgiving dinner, our family, right, who makes us better.

And we don't mind a God who stays in the place we assign him to. But, the God of Scripture says, I made you.

You belong to me. I determine what is good and evil. You are accountable to me. You must repent, you must bow to my son, and your life belongs to me.

You see how that changes things? Because the fundamental cry of the human heart is, or the human flesh is, I will rule me.

That's the hostility. Sin is not merely breaking a few rules. Sin is rebellion against the king of kings. At its root, sin says, God does not have the right to tell me how to live.

[32 : 34] That's the core of what sin is. And that's why rebellion can look openly wicked or, in some cases, extremely respectable.

One person says, I don't need God, I'll live however I want. The other says, I don't need grace, I'm a good person.

You see, one person rebels through immorality, the other person rebels through self-righteousness. But both have the same person sitting on their throne, self.

You see, here's the thing, the flesh doesn't merely want to break God's rules, the flesh wants your throne. You get that? Wants to rule.

And that is why we need more than behavioral modification. But Paul's going to teach us that there's still another problem. And it introduces why we need God.

[33 : 44] Let's look at the rest of verse 7 here. It says, for it does not submit to God's law, indeed it cannot.

Then verse 8 reads, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. That's an incredible statement. Notice Paul's progression. One, the flesh is hostile toward God. two, therefore, it cannot, it does not submit to God.

And then, it cannot submit to God. And finally, it cannot please God. And church, this is where we have to allow scripture to say something about us that our pride does not want us to hear. life is not, our problem is not merely we make bad choices. If that were true, we would just introduce better choices, right?

[34 : 50] Give you better instructions, better education, better examples, help you with better habits. Now, those things help a lot socially, but they can't help you with the problem that Paul is introducing here.

Because the problem isn't merely what you do, it's who you are. you get that? The problem is who you are.

See, first, we know it does not subject itself to the law of God. We know God's law says God has the right to tell you how to live, but the flesh says no.

And then Paul introduces the second thought, you can't. God. You can't. The flesh can't please God.

Now, for some of you who are more theologically minded, you probably recognize where we're going. We're stepping into a territory that is often discussed under the heading of Calvinism.

[36 : 00] I know some of you say, yay, Calvinism. Some of you guys are like, boo, Calvinism. But I'm not here to teach you what Calvin taught. I'm here to teach you what the word of God teaches us.

And before we decide whether we like a theological label, we need to honestly deal with the words that are sitting in front of us in our Bibles. Paul says it does not submit to God's law itself to the law of God.

And then it says indeed it cannot. So one, it does not. Number two, it cannot. Theologians call this moral inability.

Now, people get this mixed up a lot. Paul is not saying the unbeliever desperately wants God but God won't let him into heaven.

That's one of the wrong understandings of what he's talking about. Paul here is not describing someone pounding on heaven's door saying let me in, let me in, and God says you cannot because I didn't choose you.

[37:08] That's what it's not talking about right here. You see, man's inability is tied to their unwillingness.

You with that? With me on that? inability is tied to unwillingness. The unbeliever will not submit to God because their heart is opposed to God.

So someone who's opposed to God doesn't show up knocking on the door. Doesn't happen. And because their heart is opposed to God left by themselves they will never submit to God.

Their problem is moral. It is spiritual. It's never physical. It's what's called the fundamental! problem of the heart. And this brings us to the T of tulip.

And if you don't know what tulip is other than a flower, it's a system to understand Calvinism, but T is an acronym for the word total depravity.

[38:22] Now I don't want us to misunderstand this term. Total depravity does not mean utter depravity. What that means is it doesn't mean every human being is as wicked as he possibly could be.

We know that's not true because we know unbelievers love their children, right? They can be generous, they can show tremendous courage, they can be good neighbors, they can sacrifice themselves for others, they can perform acts that greatly benefit society.

Total depravity does not mean that everybody is as bad as they possibly could be. So get that thought out of your head. Total depravity means that sin has affected every part of who you are.

The sin, this realm of death that you live in, it's affected your mind, your will, desires, affections, and bodies, and obviously your relationship with God.

The Bible at no place teaches that there's like this little righteous island that exists within you that's untouched by the flesh in the world that you live in.

[39:39] Like some people believe there's just this ray of God within you. And if you can tap in to that ray of God, you can somehow rescue yourself from the domain of darkness to the domain of life.

But that is not what Scripture teaches. You see, that's why salvation requires something far greater than persuasion. Salvation requires regeneration.

We don't merely need better information. We need a new heart. we don't need a new direction. We need life.

We don't merely need to turn over a new leaf. We need to be born again. And we need to understand this carefully. And you'll remember Nicodemus John 3, one of the greatest teachers in all of Israel, one of the most educated men, obviously not an immoral pagan, approaches Jesus Christ and says, what must I have?

Jesus doesn't say, do this, do that. He just simply says, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus did not need religious improvement.

[41:01] Nicodemus needed a new birth. And this is why this doctrine is not merely some theological argument for people who like debating Calvinism.

this is the truth that scripture clearly teaches. Now the question is, why does this matter to us?

Now I know some of you, you'll know immediately how it matters. You can fit this into where you live, but one of the things as a pastor of, man, it's getting close to 20 years.

I see this come up is, what do we do with our kids? Right? One of the most painful situations is parents struggling to relate to an adult child who does not share their faith.

faith. The fact is, when our children are young, they're easy to teach, to correct them, and to require obedience of them.

[42:13] But when they become adults, our responsibilities change, right? Right? Our responsibility continues, but our authority changes.

the fact is, we cannot keep relating to them as though they were eight years old. And this is especially tough when our child rejects our faith.

I'm just walking through this with a friend, he's got four kids, and two of the three that are following the Lord serve with him in the same church where he's an elder, but the fourth one has kind of gone her own way, gone the way of the world.

And I asked him, what are the holidays like? You know, when she comes home, she purposely lives on the other side of the continent, and he just simply said it's tough.

And I just simply asked the question, how do you connect with her? How does that happen? And he just simply said he and his wife look for every opportunity to love her and to show love to her.

[43:27] Because they understand this one truth. They cannot give their kid a new heart. They can't.

Right? He feels the pain, but he keeps looking for opportunities to love his daughter. And I know some of you carry that same sorrow that we all do.

We love our children, we pray for them, we long for them to know Christ, but there's certain limits about what we can do. You know, to no longer preach to them is difficult because sometimes when we preach, we're saying, hey, we'll have a closer relationship if only you accepted Christ.

That's an unfair thing to put on them because God hasn't renewed their heart. It often means examining how we communicate with them.

And yes, faithfulness to Christ can bring rejection. temptation. But we also have to ask whether our own harshness is contributed to distance.

[44:50] We must not assume every painful consequence is suffering for Jesus. Our children need to hear the truth. And they also need to hear that we love them.

Because this goes right to the heart of the gospel. what do we think salvation is? Is salvation God helping people who can ultimately rescue themselves?

Or is salvation God giving life to people who cannot rescue themselves? And then Paul drives this nail into this false thinking.

Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. Remember, in the flesh you are a part of a whole realm.

You're not neutral, therefore you can act like the flesh or act like the spirit. It's not that they struggle to please God, not that they don't please God as much as they should.

[46:08] the text simply says they cannot please God. So when we make that expectation on them, we're creating something they cannot do.

You see, by the time Paul reaches verse 8, every door to human boasting has been shut. You see, the flesh is hostile towards God.

The flesh does not submit to God. The flesh cannot submit to God. And the flesh cannot please God.

And now perhaps we finally ready to understand why Romans 8, 1 is extraordinary good news. there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Let me conclude. If you love someone who does not know Christ, it doesn't have to be your kid, it can be your workmate, your neighbor, a friend.

[47:28] If the person is in the flesh, you need to understand they cannot submit to God. They cannot please God. So we ask, what hope is there?

That's why Paul shares with us verse 3, for what the law could not do weak as it was through the flesh, remember last week, God has done.

This is the gospel. Paul has brought us to the end of ourselves so that we can see the magnificent of what God has done. The flesh could save itself, Christ didn't need to come.

If we could make ourselves righteous, we wouldn't need the cross. If we could transform our own hearts, we wouldn't need the Holy Spirit.

God simply says, we can't. So God says, I did.

[48:39] God sent His Son. God condemned our sin in the flesh of Christ. God gives His Spirit. God gives life. God makes peace.

And God begins changing the very desires of those He saved. So the question this morning isn't merely, am I religious, or do I believe in God?

The question is, am I in the flesh, or am I in the Spirit? I'm not asking you to ask if you're perfect. You're not. I don't want you to ask whether the battle with sin is over.

It isn't. I want you to ask a legitimate question. Do you know which side you really live on?

And if you claim to live on this side, in the Spirit, has there been fruit of that? Has God produced within you a desire for Christ?

[49:39] Do you increasingly want what He wants? Do you grieve over your sins that you once defended, or do you want merely for God to bless your life, or has the Spirit created within you a desire for your life to belong to God?

And Christian, when you see that work in yourself, don't look around at unbelievers with pride, right? the difference is you were smarter, better, more naturally spiritual.

The fact is you needed God to do what you could never do for yourself. And if you want a reason to be thankful for this Thanksgiving, it's to be thankful for what God has done.

There is no room for boasting. there is only room for thanksgiving, for worship, for amazement at His grace. There is no condemnation.

There is simply life, peace, and the indwelling Spirit, and ultimately resurrection and glory. Not because we did enough for God, but because what we could not do, God has done.

[51:06] Let me pray. Father, some of these texts are filled with depths and riches of Your grace and Your mercy and Your love towards us.

And they reveal the truth that we are confronted with. Is my life drawn to the things of this world or is it drawn to the things of Christ?

Because if I am in Christ, if I have life in the Spirit at some level, I will be drawn to the things of You. Now, there might be someone here who has indeed lived in the Spirit but still struggles.

people. And that's okay. Because God doesn't leave us alone. He gives us a church and other believers to walk with us through these struggles and pain of life.

We do not have to make decisions on our own limited understanding, but we have the collective wisdom of godly people here who all too often have walked through the exact same experience that we all have.

[52:33] So, Lord, I ask that You would continue to not only transform us but to encourage us. And this section of Scripture is really a lift up and a praise prayer, as one author says, just on how God is always good at His Word.

It is the ultimate teaching on the assurance of God. or the assurance of our faith because it's based on a perfect God.

Father, forgive us for our boasting, our pride, for thinking there's something special about us.

Father, I consider any type of understanding that we happen to take in and understand is an act of Your grace.

So, I thank You for those things. And, Lord, I ask You for I just give You thanksgiving for this time we can come under Your Word, we can understand this Word, we can ultimately understand how it applies to us and our life.

So, I give You praise for what You have done for us. So, Lord Jesus, I pray that even for someone who is here, who is wanting Your Spirit and keeps asking, what do I need to do, what do I need to do, I pray that they would come to the realization that it's simply God has already done it, just accept it, love Him, and put your faith in His work, not yours.

[54:17] God, we thank You for this Sunday in Your most holy and precious name, Amen.