

Romans 8:9-11

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- [0 : 0 0] Good morning, church. It's good to see you all this morning. We are in Romans 8 this morning. That's page 944 in the Pew Bible. Let me ask you to turn there with me.
- We are going to focus on verses 9 through 11 today. But for our reading, I'm going to start in verse 1 so we get the context. As we come to God's Word together, let me pray for us.
- Amen. Our Father, as we have just sung, how great is your steadfast love toward us.
- Lord, you have taken our sin and you have separated it from us as far as the east is from the west. Lord, there is no remembrance of our sin because of what Christ has done for us.
- Lord, we confess this morning that we need your Spirit to come and make this truth real to our hearts.
- [1 : 0 6] Lord, in our own selves, our hearts are so cold toward you. Our minds are so closed toward you and the things of you. So now, God, as we come to your life-giving Word, we pray that you would dwell richly among us by your Spirit and help us to behold wondrous things from your Word.
- Lord, we ask this in Jesus' name, Father. Amen. Well, let me read Romans 8, verses 1 through 11.
- There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.
- 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 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.
- 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. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.
- [2 : 2 8] 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. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 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. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.
- 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.
- When Beth and I were dating after college, we lived about two and a half hours away from each other.

I was living in Pennsylvania where I had a job, and she was living and working back home in New Jersey with her parents. So what that meant was that every weekend, I would drive two and a half hours on Friday after work to stay in the spare bedroom at her parents' place just so we could spend Saturday and most of Sunday together, and then I would turn around and drive another two and a half hours back to Pennsylvania.

[3 : 47] Needless to say, that was not very fun. And keep in mind, this was in the stone age when Skype and FaceTime didn't exist, that when we talked to each other on the phone, we could literally only hear each other's voices.

That was all we had. So when it became pretty clear to us and to the people whose godly wisdom we trusted that marriage was in our future, that that was the right path for us, we could not wait.

We planned a six-month engagement, which is crazy short if you haven't gotten married before. We booked the church. We booked the ladies' club for the reception.

We booked the caterers. We sent out the invitations. And if you've planned a wedding, you realize that that's an incredible amount of work. And at last, when our wedding day came, what happened? We took on a whole new status.

Now, we were legally husband and wife. Everything was now redefined. Legally, what was mine was hers. What was hers was mine. You see, we had taken on a whole new status in getting married.

[4 : 53] But with that new legal status of husband and wife came something else. Beth packed up all of her stuff, brought it all the way from New Jersey to Pennsylvania, and we moved into our first apartment together.

We actually started doing life together, taking up residence, dwelling in the same space. Then the real fun began.

Now, imagine how strange it would have been after getting married, after entering into this whole new status, where we were now considered one in a binding legal union. What's true of her is true of me, and vice versa.

Imagine if after all that, we wrapped up the reception, said goodbye to the guests, watched the caterers clean up and head home. Imagine if after all that, I then drove two and a half hours back to Pennsylvania, only to see her every once in a while when the weekend rolled around, and when we could get a chance to talk on our flip phones, and maybe write a letter or two.

That would have been very strange, would it not? Now, I know some married couples have seasons where they have to live apart for various reasons, but apart from those circumstances, don't you see the change in status goes hand in hand with the change of dwelling.

[6 : 09] What's pronounced legally, that these two are now one, gets then lived out relationally. And they don't just live in the same space, but financially, emotionally, physically, socially, there's this increasing union.

They really begin to dwell with one another. Now, what Paul is helping us to see in verses 9 through 11 of Romans 8, this great chapter about assurance, is that something very similar, but even more profound happens in a believer's relationship with God in Christ.

You see, over and over again in Romans, Paul has been saying, through faith in Christ, you have a new status. As chapter 5 of Romans will say, you've moved from being in Adam, the old humanity, under the curse of sin and death, and now, through faith, you are in Christ.

You are in the new humanity, where his gift of righteousness has brought life. Or, as Paul puts it right here in verse 1 of chapter 8, there's therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Through faith, we're united to Christ, now what's his becomes ours. You see, if God's verdict over Christ is that there's no condemnation, then that means God's verdict over us.

[7 : 34] Though in and of ourselves, we don't deserve it. It's the same. There's no condemnation. But you see, that's not the end of the story. This new status comes hand in hand with a new presence.

Three times in these three verses, 9 through 11, we're told that the Holy Spirit indwells the believer. That he comes and he takes up residence within.

And the word indwell means a settled, permanent residence. The Holy Spirit's not just passing through, here one day, gone the next.

The Holy Spirit's not like most of us when it comes to New Haven. We're here for a couple years, and we're on to something else, right? That's what I thought was going to happen to Beth and I. God had other plans. Maybe he's got other plans for you.

But no, the Holy Spirit is here to stay. He's settling in. He's never going to leave. So this morning, I want us, with the Apostle Paul here in verses 9 through 11, to pause and to consider and to rejoice in the reality that if you are in Christ, then the Spirit of God dwells in you.

[8 : 59] And we're going to do that in three steps, just looking at each of these three verses in turn. And in verse 9, we're going to see the fact of the Spirit's indwelling, just the brute fact of it, the reality of it.

And then in verse 10, we're going to see that there's present power in the Spirit's indwelling. And then in verse 11, we're going to see that there's future transformation because of the Spirit's indwelling.

Clear? Let's do it. Okay, first, the fact. Verse 9. Look at verse 9 again. 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. It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife.

You recognize that line? It's the opening line of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. Some people are shaking their heads. Am I the only geek here who's a Jane Austen fan? Okay. Jane Austen begins one of her greatest novels with just wit and irony and sarcasm, as only she can do.

[10 : 09] Here's a universal truth. That a man possessing good fortune must be in want of a wife. But here, you see, Paul is laying down a universal truth.

He is laying down a reality with no irony, no sarcasm, just full-on joyful truth. That the Spirit of God indwells everyone who belongs to Christ, and conversely, no one who does not belong to him.

Look at verse 9 again. Let me try to unpack Paul's tightly packed reasoning in this verse. I think it goes something like this. How can Paul be so sure that the Roman Christians, the you in verse 9, are no longer in the flesh?

That is that they're no longer in the realm or under the sway of that old self-centered nature that we inherit from Adam. That's what the flesh means here in Romans and in pretty much all of Paul's language.

It's our old self-centered fallen nature. How can Paul be so sure that they're no longer in that realm, but in the realm of the Spirit? That is in the realm of the Spirit's liberating reign and presence.

[11 : 21] How can he be so sure that that transfer has been made of them? Well, because the Spirit of God dwells in them. You see, the words, if in fact, there, don't so much cast doubt on whether the Spirit dwells in them.

Rather, Paul is showing the deep logical connection between being in the Spirit and having the Spirit in you. But how can Paul be so sure that the Spirit of the living God dwells in them?

It's quite a claim. Well, because as the rest of verse 9 says, if anyone doesn't have the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them, they don't belong to Christ at all.

So the question for Paul is, do you belong to Christ? Are you His through faith?

If yes, then there's no doubt in Paul's mind that the Holy Spirit dwells in you. And if the Spirit dwells in you, then you're no longer in the flesh, but you're in the Spirit.

[12 : 34] That is Paul's reasoning. And you see what the central plank of it all is. It's the reality, the truth, that the Spirit of God indwells everyone who belongs to Christ through faith.

Okay, now why is that such a big deal? Well, in the next two verses, we're going to see two implications of the Spirit's dwelling in us. But I want us to just pause for a second on the stunning fact of what Paul is saying.

That if you are in Christ, then the Spirit of God dwells in you. The Spirit of God dwells in you.

If you've been a Christian for a while, maybe that's become a very familiar thing to you. You were told, rightly, that when you put your trust in Christ, the Holy Spirit came to dwell within.

But do you realize, friend, what that means? Stop and consider who we are talking about here. The Holy Spirit of God.

[13 : 52] The one who hovered over the waters of creation, bringing life to what God the Father made through the Son. The Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit who descended in glory upon the tabernacle and the temple in the Old Testament with a glory so devastatingly holy that everyone had to bow down and no one could stand up because he was there.

The Holy Spirit who came like a whirlwind and fire at Pentecost and that launched the church into a mission that erupted and ripped through the first century with an energy and a life that is yet to cease even to this day.

The Holy Spirit who created worlds, who brought men and women to their knees, who conquered empires with the word of the cross, the same Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, as the Nicene Creed says.

This Holy Spirit dwells in you. I think we need to just pause for a second and take that in.

[15 : 22] In you, Christian. And so you realize that according to Paul and to the rest of the New Testament, there's no sort of two-tiered Christianity.

There's no sort of group of super-Christians over here who are indwelt by the Spirit and they've really got it going on. And then there's all the schmucks over here, the rest of us, who aren't indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

We're just getting by by the skin of our teeth. No, Paul is saying, if you belong to Christ, the Spirit of the living God has taken up settled, permanent residence within every single one of you.

Friends, does that not change how you see yourself? More importantly, does that not change how you see God and His great grace and His great purpose?

Now, I realize some of you here are not Christians. Maybe you're interested in spiritual things. Maybe you're not so sure about this Christianity thing just yet. Let me say to you that you're very welcome here.

[16 : 48] We want this to be a place where you can explore and hear what Christianity is all about and ask good questions and see whether or not Jesus is who He says He is. And I imagine that for you, all this talk about the indwelling Holy Spirit probably either seems very curious to you and maybe you want to know more, or else, maybe more likely, this just seems totally absurd.

How could anyone believe such a thing? But you know, if you think about it, is it all that absurd?

If there is a God who made us and who loves us, and if that God in love took our humanity upon Himself, and if He bore our worst, if He bore our failure and our selfishness and our sin so that you and I could be released from it, is it so hard to believe that that God who made us, who loves us, is it so hard to believe that that God would also want to be near to us?

to be with us, to not just be a God above us or over us or even a God among us, but to be the God within us, closer to us than we are to ourselves.

Maybe it's not so strange. Maybe it's exactly what we've all been longing for. So that's our first point.

[18 : 27] Just the fact of the Spirit's indwelling. But what's the implication of all this? If the Holy Spirit dwells in us, what does that mean?

So in the next two verses, Paul will show us, and if we could sum it up with one word, that one word would be life. Life.

In verse 10, we see that the indwelling Spirit is life. And in verse 11, we see that the indwelling Spirit will give life. In verse 10, this life means present power.

And in verse 11, this life means future transformation. Let's look at the present power. Verse 10, but if Christ is in you, notice by the way, before we go, here's an aside.

Notice by the way how differently Paul describes the Holy Spirit here. The Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ. Here he just says, if Christ is in you, what's Paul doing?

[19 : 25] Is he sort of getting all of his categories confused? Is for Paul the Spirit in Christ just sort of one person? No. What Paul is saying that the Spirit of God and the Son of God and the Father, though they are very distinct persons in one God, their actions can never be separated.

That Jesus, from the Father, sends the Spirit and the Spirit mediates the presence of Jesus into our hearts. This is the same thing Jesus taught in the chapter from John that we read earlier in the service, that he was going to send a helper, the Holy Spirit, and he would dwell in you.

And then Jesus is going to say, oh, and my Father and I will come and we'll make our home in you. You can see how reading passages like Romans 8, like John 14, how the early church in faithful interpretation of Scripture would speak of God as triune, one God, eternally existing as three persons.

But that's not Paul's main point here. He's talking about the present power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Back to verse 10. If Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

Now, friends, Paul in the rest of the New Testament is quite clear. Being a Christian does not exempt you from physical death. The body, as Paul says here, is still subject to death because of sin, because we still inhabit this fallen world.

[21 : 04] But that is not the whole story for the Christian. Even though our outward bodies waste away, even though we get sick, even though we wrestle with mental illness and physical illness, even though we struggle with aging and dementia, even though, unless the Lord returns, each one of us in this room will physically die.

Despite of all that, Paul says there's another principle at work within us. The Spirit is life because of righteousness.

Oh, we could have spent the whole morning on just that one phrase. I was actually tempted to just preach a whole sermon on the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

The Spirit is life because of righteousness. First, whose righteousness? Yours? Has the Spirit come and given you life because of your moral goodness?

Because of your worthiness? Because of your record? No. God takes up residence in you because of His righteousness. This is the message of the entire book of Romans.

[22 : 18] In our high school Sunday school class this morning, we tried to spend most of our time thinking about this idea of God's righteousness. That God's righteousness has come to us the guilty as a gift through Jesus Christ, the righteous one.

And this makes Christianity totally different than anything else. Every other religion, friends, is about offering a righteousness to God in hopes that He'll love and accept us.

but Christianity is about receiving a righteousness from God with the assurance that nothing then can separate us from His love and acceptance. And because of that righteous status, the righteous given to us through Jesus' faithful life and sin-bearing death, because of that, there is nothing keeping the Holy Spirit from coming and taking up residence within and bringing a new power of life where once there was sin and death.

The power of sin has been broken through the righteousness of Christ and now the Spirit comes flooding in with unstoppable life.

Now what does that present power look like? Well, Paul has actually been telling us and he'll go on to tell us right here in Romans 8.

[23 : 55] Let's paint a picture. The present life of the Spirit means a new mindset, verse 5. If you live according to the Spirit, you set your mind on the things of the Spirit.

It's a whole new desire or controlling passion for your life. You're no longer bound to just think about yourself and how you can exalt yourself and how you can win others' favor for yourself, but you're bound and you're captivated and you're drawn out into loving Christ and delighting and exalting in Him.

You have a whole new mindset. The power of the Spirit also means a new submission to God and God's word.

That's verse 7. Paul says there, if you're in the flesh, you don't submit to God, you're hostile to God, you don't submit to His word. The implication is that the opposite is true. If you're in the Spirit, if the Spirit dwells in you, then out of our new desires come a new obedience.

You see, the Spirit comes and He changes not just our inner desires, but also our habits, also the way we live, also the shape of our life. Of course, we will always wrestle with temptation and sin in this life, but what Paul is saying here is that more and more sin loses its control over us.

[25 : 26] More and more we delight in God's ways now and new habits begin to form. This new life also means a new witness within that we are children of God.

This is jumping ahead to verse 16. Friends, I don't know about you, but I think most of us struggle with an old voice in our heads, a voice of condemnation, of shame, of guilt.

An old voice that stretches the whole way back to the garden that comes and tells us that we need to work harder and prove ourselves that God doesn't really love us and have our best, so we need to do it on our own to fit in.

But you see, now, because of the indwelling Holy Spirit, because the Spirit is life, because of righteousness, that old voice is met by another voice, the voice of the Spirit witnessing to our spirit that we are God's children, heirs of eternity, awash in dignity and glory that's nothing like this world or the favor of the world can give.

Last, this new life in the Spirit means that there's a new groaning within us, a new groaning for the new creation and the Spirit's help for us as we pray.

[26 : 58] That's verse 23 and verse 26 and 27. This life that's in us because of Christ's righteousness through the Spirit means that there's an inner longing for God's future.

There's an inner groaning to see creation healed and for his justice to come and make things right. And when we don't even know how to pray for that, Paul says, the Spirit prays for us.

And though we might not be able to hear those prayers on our behalf, we can be sure that with them come peace and joy and a renewed sense of the love of God.

So, brothers and sisters, Christian, the Spirit is life in you.

Next week, we'll go deeper into what that looks like for us to be active in that life-giving power in the present, what it means to put sin to death, to live by the Spirit. We'll talk about some of our responsibility and all of that next week, but this morning, I wonder if we just need to hear a word of comfort and encouragement.

[28 : 19] Perhaps you're discouraged and disappointed in your own lack of holiness. Perhaps you're feeling stuck. How can I ever overcome this area of sin in my life?

How can I ever change? How can I ever meet the challenge that lies before me now as a follower of Christ? Well, friend, the short answer is, in yourself, you can't.

But, the Holy Spirit dwells within you. So, you don't have to remain stuck.

You don't have to remain in that relationship that you know isn't pleasing to Christ. The Holy Spirit dwells in you. He will give you the courage to end things if you need to end things, to walk away, to ask for help.

You don't have to go back to that sinful habit. The Holy Spirit dwells in you in that habit, that behavior. It's not you anymore. It doesn't define you anymore.

[29 : 26] It doesn't have dominion over you anymore. You belong to the Spirit and He dwells in you. And if you've been too afraid to ask for help, too embarrassed or ashamed, listen to what the Holy Spirit says to your spirit.

You are a child of God. And there's no place for shame here. We're all sinners and we all stand on the righteousness of another, the righteousness of our faithful Savior, Jesus Christ, and He has made us all sons and daughters.

So there's no more shame. There's no more fear. And that old way of living, it's not your future.

There's present power through the indwelling Spirit. But last, this is our third big point, the fact, the present power, power.

But Paul goes on to say there's future transformation. Verse 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.

[30 : 56] Where is all of this heading? Not just our service this morning, which you're thinking, well, I hope it's heading to coffee downstairs or something cold to drink because it's hot in here.

Where is all this heading? Not just your week at work. Is it heading to a promotion? Is it heading to a vacation? Where is all of this heading? Your life.

What's the destination that God has in store for those who belong to His Son and are indwelt by His Spirit? Paul says if you want to see your future, then look to Christ Jesus.

If you want to see where God is taking you, then look to your King. Look to your King who entered into such deep solidarity with us, who took hold of us so firmly and so completely in the incarnation that now what's true of Him will be true of us.

That's part of what it means that Jesus is the Christ, is the Messiah. In the Old Testament, the Messiah stood for His people. What was true of the King was true of the people.

[32 : 21] If the King obeyed, the people got blessed. If the King disobeyed, everything went downhill. But now Christ, our perfect King, has come. He's taken hold of us as people so that what's true of Him is true of us and He's taking us there.

And friends, what do we know is true of Jesus? It's that God the Father raised Him from the dead through the power of the Holy Spirit.

And Paul says if that same Spirit dwells in you and He does on the last day when the trumpet sounds and Christ returns to judge the world and make all things new, you too will be raised to unceasing, transformed, physical, material, unending life.

And nothing is going to stop it. now there are many saints in this room, many believers in this room who have run the race faithfully for many years.

And brothers and sisters, you know better than many of us what it means to have, as Paul says, a mortal body, a body that grows old and weary, weary.

[33 : 53] But know this, saints, one day the Holy Spirit in you, who has continued to give your spirit new life and vitality through all of life's trials and temptations, that spirit who has empowered you to live for Christ day in and day out will one day make your body new, just like Christ, your Savior.

You will be raised anew on the last day, you will run and not grow weary, you will walk and not faint. All the effects of sin on the fall of your body will be undone and God will get the glory for conquering all the effects of sin, even undoing death itself.

But if you're here this morning and your race is just beginning, if your body is still pretty healthy, if you seem to be doing okay, if you're in your 20s, you can pull all-nighters, do all that good stuff that people in their 30s and 40s shouldn't do anymore, well friends, you need to hear this too.

You need to see what sort of future God has in store for you. You need to see that the indwelling of the Spirit means that what lies ahead of you in Christ is not something less physical, less joyful, less thrilling, but more.

What's ahead of you in Christ is life. So when you are tempted to trade Christ for the pleasures of this world now, when you are faced with that bargain, remember where the Spirit of God is taking you.

[36 : 19] Remember that this life isn't your only shot at joy, that this life isn't the terminus of all your desires, that the days of your youth aren't the only chance that you get to enjoy life and have pleasure.

you see, the Spirit's indwelling presence means that you are destined for the new heavens and the new earth and the resurrection of the body where the present joys of this present age will be seen as just the foretaste that they are.

It's almost impossible for us to imagine what it will be like to live in a renewed creation that's been liberated from sin and death, that's been liberated from evil and injustice, that's been liberated from shame and guilt.

It's almost impossible for us to imagine how rich it will be to drink the joys that God, our Creator, intended us to drink and to drink in these, in our bodies.

After all, God created us in a body, didn't He not? He redeemed us through a body, the body of Christ that's been resurrected and His future for us will be in the body made totally new.

[38 : 02] joy. And it means all the things that you want to enjoy and experience in this body.

The rightful enjoyment of those things will not be withheld from you in God's future. Following Christ, friends, doesn't mean less joy, but more, infinitely more, and He's put His Spirit in you to make sure that He gets you there.

So, friends, if you belong to Christ, if you belong to Him through faith and the Spirit of God, the very Spirit of the living God dwells in you, and that means life, life now and life to come.

So, let me wrap up by asking, do you have that life? Do you want it?

In your more sober moments, do you see how lifeless your life has been? then, friends, hear the call of the gospel that Jesus says, I've come that you might have life and have it to the full.

[39 : 31] Jesus says, everyone who comes to me, out of your heart will flow a river of living water by which He meant the Spirit who dwells within.

a life that will start to overflow its bounds of our old way of being until in the future to come it will overflow and transform even our very physicality.

Friend, you want that life, and if you want that life, then you must come to Christ, the life giver, the one who died and rose again for you so you could be right with God and so you could receive His indwelling Spirit and have that life.

Life now and life to come. Let's pray. Father, we pray that you would help us to grasp more deeply the reality of the indwelling Spirit within.

And, Father, as we've meditated this morning on some of the truths that this brings, things, Lord, I pray that you would help us to see that begin to shape our lives, shape how we think, shape how we act, shape how we love and how we long.

[40 : 55] But most of all, Father, in this moment, we just give you thanks and we give you praise that you would look upon us, guilty sinners, sinners, and you would choose to take up residence within, that you would come and you would dwell within us, and that where we had chosen death again and again and again, you would come and free us to choose life and to be alive.

Lord, help us as a church to be people who live by your Spirit, we pray. Amen.