

The Holy Spirit 4:
Romans 8: The Life Giving Spirit

Sermon

Hobart, July 7th, 2012

Devonport, August 4th, 2012

Launceston, August 5th, 2012

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Scripture Reading:

Romans 8:1-14

Life in the Spirit

¹ So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. ² And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death. ³ The law of Moses was unable to save us because of the weakness of our sinful nature. So God did what the law could not do. He sent his own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body God declared an end to sin's control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins. ⁴ He did this so that the just requirement of the law would be fully satisfied for us, who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit.

⁵ Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. ⁶ So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. ⁷ For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God's laws, and it never will. ⁸ That's why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God.

⁹ But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them do not belong to him at all.) ¹⁰ And Christ lives within you, so even though your body will die because of sin, the Spirit gives you life because you have been made right with God. ¹¹ The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.

¹² Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, you have no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do. ¹³ For if you live by its dictates, you will die. But if through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature,* you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children* of God.¹

* Greek *deeds of the body*.

* Greek *sons*; also in 8:19.

¹Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. "Text edition"--Spine. (2nd ed.) (Ro 8:1-30). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

INTRODUCTION:

A. AT THIS TIME OF YEAR, WE ARE FOCUSING ON THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND THE CHURCH

1. On who the Holy Spirit is,
 - a) What he does in relationship with God, and relationship with us as God's people, the body of Christ
2. We have seen in I Corinthians 12 how the Holy Spirit gifts individuals to serve God, the Church and the world

B. WE SAW IN ACTS 2, THE IMPACT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN CREATING AND LEADING THE CHURCH

1. In binding the members together with Christ
 2. And with one another
 - a) Learning, living and sharing the life of the Trinity together
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S.P.S:

A. TODAY WE ARE GOING TO LOOK AT ROMANS 8

1. A deeply profound chapter that discusses the role of the Holy Spirit in the new life and relationship we have been adopted into,
2. And how we are to live by the Spirit today, as we look forward to the future that lies ahead

B. PRAYER

BODY:

II. ROMANS 8:1-30

Life in the Spirit

8 So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.

1. After spending the first part of his letter to the Christians at Rome, explaining how we are all lost and condemned without God in our lives,
 - a) Paul now makes this statement, a dramatic and victorious proclamation of the good news in the midst of the bad
2. The problem is all solved, “now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus!”

² And because you belong to him, the power* of the life-giving Spirit has freed you* from the power of sin that leads to death.

3. As those who belong to Jesus, we are freed from the dominance of the inner workings of sin within our hearts and minds that leads us away from God, the only source of life

³ The law of Moses was unable to save us because of the weakness of our sinful nature.* So God did what the law could not do. He sent his own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body God declared an end to sin’s control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins.

4. God did what the law couldn’t do by sending Jesus to be one of us, sharing our human existence and all its problems.
5. But Jesus never fell victim to sin and evil.

* Greek *the law*; also in 8:2b.

* Some manuscripts read *me*.

* Greek *our flesh*; similarly in 8:4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12.

6. Jesus' final act of loving sacrifice--his taking on sin, the evil forces and death--won victory over all that stands against us, and divides us from God and his ways and his life

⁴ He did this so that the just requirement of the law would be fully satisfied for us, who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit.

B. JESUS LIVED A PERFECT LIFE

1. He fulfilled all the requirements of the law on our behalf

C. THE HOLY SPIRIT REPLACES THE LAW

1. And is superior to the law in that it enables us to understand and know God and his ways in a way the law could not do

a) And on top of that the Spirit enables us to turn away from our sinful nature that wants to live apart from God

b) And live in relationship with God through his Spirit dwelling in us and leading us

2. So as vse 1 states so boldly, we are no longer under any condemnation, because through the Holy Spirit we belong to Christ

⁵ Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. ⁶ So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. ⁷ For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God's laws, and it never will. ⁸ That's why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God.

3. Clearly sin is living contrary to God, separate and antagonistic to him and his ways

D. CONTROL

1. The repeated use of the word "control", seems to imply we are passive objects controlled by the Spirit, or controlled by sin

2. Professor of Greek, Carl W. Conrad, explains this, starting by quoting vse 7;

"Sinful nature's mentality is hostile towards God: it doesn't subject itself to God's law-it doesn't even have the capacity to do so." The believer, on the contrary, CONSENTS TO, COOPERATES with the guidance of God's Spirit. In terms of what the Greek of these passages seems to me to indicate, the believer is not a puppet whose strings are being pulled but rather one who is cooperating with a power enabling him/her to become what he/she ought to be and do what he/she ought to do.²

3. What is being focused on in these verses is our choice to allow either sin or the Spirit to be the core influence and guide of our lives that we willingly and actively follow

a) Vse 12 talks about us having no "obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do."

⁹ But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them do not belong to him at all.)

4. The Holy Spirit is God, God present with us, meaning we are present with God

a) We allow the Holy Spirit rather than our sinful nature to urge us, to guide us, to empower and enthuse us, to free us from the influence of our sinful nature

5. Here Paul equates the Holy Spirit with the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ.

a) Because the Father and the Son and the Spirit are all one, all members of the Godhead,

¹⁰ And Christ lives within you, so even though your body will die because of sin, the Spirit gives you life* because you have been made right with God. ¹¹ The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus

² Carl W. Conrad, "Control by the Spirit," Forum Discussion, B-Greek, Jan 2005, <http://lists.ibiblio.org/pipermail/b-greek/2005-January/032985.html>, (Conrad taught at Department of Classics, Washington University (Emeritus), cwconrad@artsci.wustl.edu, <http://www.ioa.com/~cwconrad/>

* Or *your spirit is alive*.

from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.

6. The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ is again called the Spirit of God (v9, 11)

a) The Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead

7. That same Spirit that led Jesus' in his life on earth and raised him from the dead, does the same for us

¹² Therefore, dear brothers and sisters,* you have no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do.

8. We are freed from the power and influence of our sinful nature

a) Our obligation, our alliance, our relationship and thus our loyalty, is now with God, not with our sinful nature that leads us away from God

¹³ For if you live by its dictates, you will die. But if through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature,* you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children* of God.

9. We are adopted into the family of God, to be his children by the Spirit who leads us in God's life

E. KARL BARTH TALKS ABOUT HOW THIS BEGAN AT PENTECOST

1. Jesus breathed his life into us through the Holy Spirit, making us his people, God's people who live his way

In the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Whitsun, there is a movement—*pneuma* means wind—from Christ to man. He breathed on them: 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost!' Christians are those breathed upon by Christ.

..To have inner ears for the Word of Christ, to become thankful for His work and at the same time responsible for the message about Him ...that is the

* Greek *brothers*; also in 8:29.

* Greek *deeds of the body*.

* Greek *sons*; also in 8:19.

freedom which we obtain, when Christ breathes on us, when He sends us His Holy Spirit.

If He [the Holy Spirit] approaches me and takes possession of me, the result will be that I hear, that I am thankful and responsible and that finally I may hope for myself and for all others; in other words, that I may live in a Christian way.

..So this is, in other words, a gift of God. It has to do with a new birth, with the Holy Spirit.³

2. We are reborn, adopted into the life that is Father, Son and Spirit.

a) To receive the gifts of the Spirit and the blessings of life with God

b) And to respond by sharing that life and the gifts of the Spirit with God and others

¹⁵ So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children.* Now we call him, "Abba, Father."

3. Australian theologian, M.D. Springer stresses that the Spirit does not force us to comply. It isn't a one way relationship, but two way

The personhood of the Spirit signifies that ...the Spirit's function is involvement with us in reciprocal interpersonal relationship. The relational work of the Spirit's person is not unilateral but only in cooperative reciprocal involvement with Jesus' followers as family together.

4. He adds that this is..

...not optional or arbitrary relationship, nor negotiable relationship selective to our terms.

Thus, Jesus' intended relational outcome of the Spirit's involvement in relational work is somewhat contingent on our compatible reciprocal involvement in the relationship; in this limited sense, whether the Spirit's

³ Karl Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline*, 1959, Harper & Row, p.138-140.

* Greek *you received a spirit of sonship*.

* *Abba* is an Aramaic term for "father."

relational work is sufficient can be in part measured by the extent of our relational reciprocity. This is not to say that we are the significant cause of the outcome of the Spirit's relational work, but only to indicate that the Spirit does not work unilaterally and impose any outcome or conclusion on us as in power relations.⁴

5. So although we are saved by grace, we can resist the love and help God gives through his Spirit

a) In other words, we can grieve the Spirit, we can limit the work of the Spirit in our lives and in the church by resisting him and insisting on doing things independently

6. On the other hand, the more we gratefully and humbly yield to, and embrace the Spirit's help, the more we grow in the fruits of the Spirit, the more effective members of the body of Christ we become

¹⁶ For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children.

7. The Holy Spirit connects our Spirit with God

a) That's what the Holy Spirit does, connects, builds relationships, makes us one with God

b) This connection is at the deepest level of our being

¹⁷ And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering.

8. We share in all that God's life in human form encompasses.

a) We share in Christ's inheritance and the glory of being God's children

b) But we also share in Christ's life of loving, selfless sacrifice for the benefit of others

9. Stringer talks about our adoption into God's family

⁴ M.D. Stringer, M. D. , *The Lord and Giver of life: The person and work of the Holy Spirit in the trinitarian theology of Colin E Gunton* , Doctoral thesis, University of Notre Dame Australia, Fremantle, WA., 2008

Adoption (however the term is perceived) is the trinitarian relational process of family love to be constituted together in the trinitarian relational context of family.

Despite his embodied departure, Jesus definitively asserted the ongoing truth of his church family not having to experience the relational condition of orphans only because the Spirit would replace him to extend and complete the relationships together necessary to be the whole of God's new creation family.

The Future Glory

¹⁸ Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later.

10. As with Christ, the glory in the end will far outweigh any sacrifices or suffering we go through now

¹⁹ For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are. ²⁰ Against its will, all creation was subjected to God's curse. But with eager hope, ²¹ the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay. ²² For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

11. The time before that future day is subject to all the ups and downs of living in a world divorced from God and his ways

a) We are subject to all the injustices, selfishness, greed, death and decay of this age, just as Jesus was

²³ And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children,* including the new bodies he has promised us. ²⁴ We were given this hope when we were saved. (If we already have something, we don't need to hope* for it. ²⁵ But if we look forward to something we don't yet have, we must wait patiently and confidently.)

²⁶ And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness.

* Greek *wait anxiously for sonship*.

* Some manuscripts read *wait*.

12. This is the Comforter, the Paraklete at work

- a) We need his help and strength as we wait for our full rights as adopted children, and our new bodies, and the complete freedom from the effects of sin, of living apart from God in a broken and suffering world

²⁶ And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness.

For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. ²⁷ And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers* in harmony with God's own will.

13. This is the way the Trinity works

- a) Just as the Father and the Son are one in heart, mind and action, so is the Spirit and the Son, and the Spirit and the Father
- b) And the Spirit is at one with us, knowing our thoughts and cares, just as he knows the thoughts and cares of the Father

14. So the Spirit is our connection with the Father

- a) Communicating to the Father our innermost thoughts and cares, and communicating the love and will of the Father to us through Jesus the Son

²⁸ And we know that God causes everything to work together* for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. ²⁹ For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

15. The Father works through the Spirit to cause everything to work for good

- a) So we can be like his Son, the member of the Godhead who became one of us, and the first human to be resurrected and glorified

* Greek for God's holy people.

* Some manuscripts read *And we know that everything works together.*

³⁰ And having chosen them, he called them to come to him. And having called them, he gave them right standing with himself. And having given them right standing, he gave them his glory.⁵

III. THE ONGOING WORK OF THE SPIRIT

A. ROMANS 8 MAKES CLEAR,

1. that as we saw at the beginning of the church at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit enables us to know the truth about who Jesus is,
2. The Holy Spirit shows us the Son, who shows us the Father
 - a) The Holy Spirit joins us with Jesus, who joins us with the Father
 - b) The Holy Spirit helps us worship with Jesus, to share in his worship of the Father
 - c) The Holy Spirit helps us to live with and be like Jesus, who lives with, and is like the Father

CONCLUSION:

B. SO THE HOLY SPIRIT IS ALL ABOUT LIFE IN RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND ONE ANOTHER

1. The life of God which is the life of love
2. Michael Jenkins sums this up;

The Holy Spirit is “God in procession”. God sharing God. ..

The God who is Love does not reserve himself but flows outward, creating out of nothing all that exists and freely embracing all creation.

⁵Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. "Text edition"--Spine. (2nd ed.) (Ro 8:1-30). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

By the power of the Spirit, Christ came into the world and lived the divine life of unreserved love, and now Christ shares with us this same life through the same Spirit.

The call to discipleship, the call to follow Christ, is the call to enjoy the life and love of Jesus Christ in our human reliance upon God the Father through the power of the Holy Spirit.⁶

A. THE HOLY SPIRIT PLAYS AN IMMENSE AND VITAL ROLE IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

1. The Spirit teaches us who we are in the light of who God is, and what God is doing with us, for us, and through us
2. And that purpose is all about God being a relationship, and inviting and restoring us into relationship with him and others
3. The Holy Spirit does not force us to comply or co-operate, but does urge us to do so, so we can become in Christ, in relationship with the Father, who we are created to be

B. IMPORTANTLY AND CENTRALLY THIS PURPOSE IS NOT TO BE THE BEST WE CAN BE AS SEPARATED INDIVIDUALS

1. The Spirit enables us to be the best we can be as individuals joined to God, who are also joined in relationship with other members of the body of Christ
2. As the body of Christ, we yield and submit to and serve, just as Jesus yielded and submitted and served
 - a) We serve God first of all
 - b) And we serve him by serving one another in the church first of all
 - b) And together we help each other serve the rest of mankind

C. PRAYER

⁶ Jenkins, p. 206