

Life In The Spirit - Romans 8:1-11

I. INTRODUCTION

A. *Preaching To Cases*

1. There once was a young preacher who had just landed his first congregation.
 - a. now this church was rather a small one and was composed entirely of the population of a small logging town
 - b. everyone in town worked for the town's lumber mill,
 - c. which was its only business and was involved in fierce competition with the mill just upstream
2. The preacher wasn't in town long before he had an experience that shook him up a bit.
 - a. he was taking a walk through the woods
 - b. and chanced to see the workers at the town mill pulling logs branded for the other mill out of the stream,
 - c. cutting off the branded ends, and running them through their own mill
3. The preacher was very distressed with this and so worked the rest of the week on a powerful sermon.
4. That Sunday he got up and preached his sermon entitled "Thou Shalt Not Covet Thy Neighbor's Property."
5. The sermon seemed to go over well.
6. Everyone told him, as they went out the door, just how much they loved his preaching.
 - a. "You really moved me preacher"
 - b. and "Best sermon I ever heard." were some of the remarks they made.
7. But that next Monday morning it was business as usual at the mill. They were still stealing logs.
8. So the next Sunday the preacher delivered a real "pulpit pounder" called "Thou Shalt Not Steal."
 - a. "Fantastic!" the people told him.
 - b. "Wonderful!" they cried.
9. But on Monday morning the other company's logs were still being swiped by the town mill.
10. Enough was enough! There's only so much a man can take and then he's got to act--this time he wasn't going to hold anything back.
11. The following Sunday he got up and preached on the topic, "Thou Shalt Not Cut the Branded Ends Off Someone Else's Logs!"
12. They ran him out of town!

B. *Romans*

1. While most of Romans up to this point has been Paul's rather general explanation of Christian doctrine,
2. Chapter 7 ends with an extremely poignant and powerful description of

- Paul's personal struggle with sin
3. And it is the heart cry of every genuine believer as they read it to say a hearty "Amen!!!"
 4. He gets down to the nitty gritty and calls it exactly like it is
 - a. he doesn't beat around the bush, he gets specific
 - b. he says, "The good I will to do, I don't."
 - c. "And the evil I will *not* to do, I do."
 5. In desperation, he cries out for help and deliverance from his inability to live as he knows God wants him to live, and as he inwardly he really *WANTS* to
 6. You see, Paul had been trying to live a righteous life through the power of his flesh
 7. But he couldn't because the flesh has no strength to live the life of the Spirit
 8. Chapter 8 reveals where the strength we need to live right comes from . . .

II. TEXT

A. V. 1

{1} ***There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.***

1. Paul writes these words with a tremendous sign of relief
2. You they are the resolution to the conflict and dilemma of Chapter 7
3. He wanted to do right, but couldn't
4. And as a result, he knew he was condemned
5. But here he finds release from condemnation

B. *Guilt*

1. Guilt is one of the most powerful emotions known to man
2. In fact, there are many schools of psychology that say guilt is the single greatest cause of mental and emotional disorder
3. All of us know the power of guilt to influence our actions:
4. It's a powerful motivator
 - a. Elizabeth Brinton, a thirteen-year-old Girl Scout, explained how she sold 11,200 boxes of cookies:
 - b. she said, "You have to look people in the eye and make them feel guilty."
5. It's amazing what lengths some people will go to get rid of their guilt
 - a. some years ago a new product called "Disposable Guilt Bags" appeared in the marketplace.
 - b. it consisted of a set of ten ordinary brown bags on which were printed the following instructions:
 - c. "Place the bag securely over your mouth, take a deep breath and blow all your guilt out, then dispose of the bag immediately."
 - d. the Associated Press reported that 2500 kits had been quickly sold at \$2.50 per kit
 - e. while most probably bought them as a gag, the point is still well made

- that people want desperately to get rid of their sense of guilt
6. One letter to the IRS read, "Enclosed you will find a check for \$150. I cheated on my income tax return last year and have not been able to sleep ever since. If I still have trouble sleeping I will send you the rest."
 6. One of the ways people try to lessen their sense of guilt is by proclaiming their innocence to others
 7. They think that if they can get others to say they're okay, then they must be
 8. "I'm okay, You're okay" was a hit slogan of a few years ago
 9. Frederick the Great, King of Prussia, visited a prison and talked with each of the inmates.
 - a. there were endless tales of innocence, of misunderstood motives, and of exploitation.
 - b. finally the king stopped at the cell of a convict who remained silent.
 - c. "Well," remarked Frederick, "I suppose you are an innocent victim too?"
 - d. "No, sir, I'm not," replied the man. "I'm guilty and deserve my punishment."
 - e. turning to the warden, the king said, "Here, release this rascal before he corrupts all these fine innocent people in here!"
 10. At their best, all of man's attempts to alleviate his sense of guilt are futile at best and damning at worst
 11. You see, man is guilty before God-guilty of sin
 12. It is the Holy Spirit who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgement
 13. There is only one place where guilt can be removed, and that is through Christ

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus,

14. This word "condemnation" is only found twice in the NT
 - a. here and in Chapter 5
 - b. it is a special word referring to the punishment that comes as a result of being declared guilty
 - c. Paul's point is this:
 - 1) we do not need to fear that God will punish us for sin
 - 2) we don't have to worry that God is going to smite us
 - 3) or that we stand in jeopardy of slipping into hell
 - d. because Jesus died for us, the judgment that was do us for our sin passed to him
 - e. He bore the full weight of punishment
15. This truth should once and for all set us free from a plague of guilt
16. You see, guilt has two sides to it
 - a. the *legal* side, and the *emotional* side
 - b. on the legal side, guilt is one's standing in relation to the law
 - 1) if you have kept the law, you are *innocent*
 - 2) but if you've broken it, you're *guilty*
 - 3) and because you are guilty, you are subject to *judgment* and *punishment*

- 4) this legal dimension of guilt is something that is a *judge's* business
 - 5) it is his or her ruling that defines you as either guilty or innocent
 - 6) as in a speeding ticket and going to court
 - c. the *emotional* side of guilt is something different
 - 1) this is your personal *sense* of having violated the law
 - 2) it's the emotional response to *being* wrong
 - 3) in other words, you *feel* guilty because you *are* guilty
 - 4) and being guilty, you know that you deserve some kind of punishment
17. Now, here is where we need to sort things out . . .
- a. if you are a believer in Christ, then your sin was fully and finally paid for by Christ
 - b. there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus!
 - c. and since you *are* no longer guilty, there is no room for guilt *feelings*
 - d. in fact, let's not even call them guilt; let's call them *regret*
18. There are some Christians who struggle with lingering and persistent feelings of guilt
- a. several years ago I had the opportunity to share with a woman who had sinned in a pretty serious manner
 - b. she was consumed with guilt and as I tried to share the hope of forgiveness we have in Christ,
 - c. she shook her head and said that her sin was too much, too great, too ugly
 - d. she thought her only hope for release from guilt lay in having bad things happen to her
 - e. she had resigned herself to letting any and everything happen to her because she felt she deserved it as punishment
 - f. I asked her to look at me; she was so despondent, her eyes were downcast and looking at the floor
 - g. then I said, "Could you really go to the foot of Jesus' cross as He hung there paying for the sins of the world, and wait till just after He cried out, 'It is finished!' and then look Him in the eye and say, 'No, it isn't. What you've done isn't enough Jesus.'"
 - h. tears just burst out of her eyes as in that moment she realized that Jesus died for her sins too, all of them
 - i. she said, "No - oh no. I could never say that." Then she paused and said, "Oh my!"
 - j. with tears streaming down her face, this big smile broke out on her face
 - k. the reality of Christ's forgiveness settled over her guilt numbed heart and set her free!
 - l. she was never the same after that because in that moment, she was born again!
19. While the world will always struggle with guilt, the Christian is free of it
20. But Paul wants to make sure his readers know what it means to be a genuine Christian and not just one who pretends, so he says that they are those . . .

who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

21. Even in that day there were those who professed with their mouths that they were believers, but did not live like it
22. The only kind of Christian that can live guilt free is the kind that doesn't live by the old ways but instead lives by the Spirit

C. V. 2

{2} For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

1. 38 times in 7:14-24 Paul uses the word "I" or "me"
2. But the word of choice in Ch. 8 is "Spirit"
 - a. in fact, while he's only used it twice up till now in Romans
 - b. in Ch. 8 he will use it 20 times!
3. And what is it the Spirit has come to do?
4. Set us free!
5. As He has already so clearly shown us, we are dead to sin and alive to God
6. Where does the power come from to live this new life?
 - a. not from the flesh
 - b. but from the Spirit of God who gives us life

D. Vs. 3-4

{3} For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,

{4} that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

1. What the law was unable to do was make me righteous
2. And it was unable to make me righteous because my flesh was fallen and weak
3. At best, the law could only beat my flesh like a farmer flogs a dead horse and tells it to get up
4. Poem

*To run and work the law commands,
Yet gives me neither feet nor hands;
But better news the gospel brings:
It bids me fly, and gives me wings*

5. What the law couldn't do, God did
 - a. He first *declares* us righteous through faith in Christ
 - b. then, by delivering us from what it was that ensured our prior failure - a flesh dominated life
6. You see, God has given us a new power source = The Spirit who lives *in* us!
7. You hear me say this often, but listen to it again
 - a. Jesus died for our sins
 - b. &
 - c. He rose from the dead to give us new life
 - d. because He died to remove the barrier of sin between God and man

- e. His rising ensures the Holy Spirit can now come to live in us and provide the strength to live right and well

E. V. 5

{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, the things of the Spirit.

1. Paul now brings the flesh and Spirit into sharp contrast here
2. They are mutually exclusive
 - a. we cannot be in the flesh and the Spirit at the same time
 - b. we are either in one or the other
 - c. not both at the same time
3. That brings up a provocative question: What mode do you *normally* live it, the flesh or the Spirit?
4. By "normal" I mean "usually"
5. You will occasionally hear someone say something like, "So & So and I were talking the other day and she said, such & such, and I just got all in the flesh and said . . ."
6. What they are implying is that up to the point were they "got in the flesh," as they put it, they were "in the Spirit."
7. Uh-uh! No way.
8. They were in the flesh all along
 - a. it just became clear to them when the opportunity arose to see it for what it was
 - b. if they had been in the Spirit, they wouldn't have reacted in the way they did
9. That is what Paul is saying here
10. When we are in the Spirit, we come at life from a totally different perspective
11. Being in the flesh isn't only manifested when we do something obviously wrong
12. Being in the flesh is just relating to life the way we did before we came to Christ
13. But when we are in the Spirit, we aren't concerned with self, with "I-ME-MINE"
14. We are content to let God be God and to Be our God by working in our lives and circumstances to accomplish His will
15. The process of spiritual maturity is the process of learning to live "in the Spirit" not "in the flesh"
16. Being mature means seeing our normal mode being spiritual rather than carnal
17. There's something else we need to look at here, but we'll come back to it later

F. Vs. 6-8

{6} For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace.

{7} Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

{8} So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

1. By "carnally-minded" Paul means that we still live according to the flesh
 - a. that we still order our lives by the same things that marked our lives before Christ
 - b. the carnal mind is at odds with God
 - c. and it cannot be reformed
 - d. it can only be transformed
2. Christians who live *in* the flesh, live *by* the flesh, and live *for* the flesh, are walking *contradictions* because they CANNOT please God
3. You see, God made man for His own pleasure
4. When man fell into sin, God then redeemed for His own pleasure
5. But the carnal Christian cannot please God which works against the very reason and purpose he or she exists
6. This is why there is not more miserable place to be than a carnal Christian
7. Problem is, they rarely see their own misery
 - a. they're so carnal, they're blind to the truth
 - b. the end up making everybody else miserable!
8. What's sad about this is that even the lost of this world know that something is wrong with people who say they are Christians, but who live no differently from non Christians

G. V. 9

{9} But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

1. What makes a Christian a Christian?
 - a. not going forward at an altar call
 - b. raising your hand
 - c. signing a pledge card
 - d. attending membership classes
2. What makes a person a Christian is the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit
3. The moment a person repents and puts their trust in Christ as Savior and Lord, they are born again
4. The agent of this new birth is the Holy Spirit
5. He comes to dwell within
6. He then becomes the source of a new life
7. If the Holy Spirit dwells in us, we face a radical dilemma: How can we NOT live in the Spirit?
8. How can the flesh dominate us once the Spirit has come?
9. The answer is, in reality - it can't!

H. Vs. 10-11

{10} And if Christ *is* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin, but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness.

{11} But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

1. Paul repeats what he's already told us in other places
2. This is the truth he's been developing
3. Knowing and applying it makes all the difference!
4. You see, while there may be this present struggle between the flesh and the Spirit, ultimately, the resurrection of Christ guarantees that the Spirit wins
5. And even the body will be changed
 - a. just as our inner person has been changed by the Spirit
 - b. so the outward will see a transformation
 - c. the mortal body, the flesh, will be liberated from the effects of the curse

III. CONCLUSION

A. *Mind Set*

1. In a practical sense, the key for moving out of the flesh and into the Spirit is found in v. 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, {and here it's implied - they set their minds on} the things of the Spirit.

2. It is our *mind set* that determines where we will live
3. We make the choice
4. Outward circumstances may not change - but the choice of how are we going to respond to what is going on around us is ours to make
5. With what mind set will be move through life

*One ship drives east and another west
With the selfsame winds that blow.
'Tis the set of the sails
And not the gales
Which tells them the way to go.*

*Like the winds of the sea are the ways of fate,
As we voyage along through life--
'Tis the set of a soul
That decides its goal
And not the calm or the strife.*

6. The Holy Spirit gives the believer a new set of mind which brings life and peace
7. We can never overcome the flesh by the flesh, we need to yield to the Spirit
8. Dwight L. Moody once demonstrated this principle like this:
 - a. "Tell me," he said to his audience, "how can I get the air out of the tumbler I have in my hand?"
 - b. one man said, "Suck it out with a pump."
 - c. but the evangelist replied, "That would create a vacuum and shatter it."
 - d. finally after many suggestions, Moody picked up a pitcher and quietly filled the glass with water.
 - e. "There," he said, "all the air is now removed."
 - f. he then explained that victory for the child of God does not come by

working hard to eliminate sinful habits,
g. but rather by allowing the Holy Spirit to take full possession