

Romans 8:5-11 “Life in the Spirit—Celebrating the Ministry of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost Sunday”\*\*<sup>1</sup>

Main Idea: Today is Pentecost Sunday, a perfect day to celebrate the ministry of the Holy Spirit. What difference does His presence make? According to Romans 8:5-11, there are two evidences of the Holy Spirit's presence in the life of every believer.

- I. The Holy Spirit affects our minds (5-8).
  - A. What's true of those influenced by the flesh?
    1. They pursue sinful desires (5).
    2. Their mind is death (6).
    3. They resist God and God's Law (7).
    4. They can't please God (8).
  - B. What's true of those influenced by the Spirit?
    1. They desire what the Spirit desires (5).
    2. They experience life and peace (6).
- II. The Holy Spirit affects our bodies (9-11).
  - A. He lives in us (9).
    1. We think differently.
    2. We behave differently.
  - B. He transforms us (10-11).
    1. We experience the life of Christ in us.
    2. We experience the power of Christ in us.

Make It Personal: Two implications...

1. If I have Christ, I have the Holy Spirit.
2. If I have the Holy Spirit, I have hope.

Today is a special holiday that most people don't even know exists. It is Pentecost, and it's the perfect time for us to celebrate the ministry of the Holy Spirit who came to earth and birthed the church so many years ago. Who is the Holy Spirit, and why did He come, and what difference does His coming make? To answer those important questions, we're going to turn our attention to a helpful passage that mentions the Spirit again and again. I've entitled today's message, “*Life in the Spirit—Celebrating the Ministry of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost Sunday*”.

*Scripture Reading: Romans 8:1-11*

What is Pentecost? The term comes from the Greek word pentekoste which means "fiftieth" and stands for the festival celebrated on the 50th day after Passover. Its Old Testament name is Shavuoth (which means "weeks"), and is there referred to as the Feast of Weeks, or the Day of Firstfruits, or the Feast of Harvest.<sup>2</sup>

So Pentecost has an Old Testament background. But it's in the New Testament that we see its true significance. We read in Acts 2:1-2, “When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place.<sup>2</sup> And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.”

This day celebrates the coming of the Holy Spirit and the beginning of the Church. It fits into the yearly church calendar as follows:

*Advent* (means "coming")--the four weeks prior to Christmas

*Epiphany* (means "manifestation")--Christmas

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\*\*Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

<sup>1</sup> For a previous look at this passage, see the Romans series preached at WBC in 1995.

<sup>2</sup> Deuteronomy 16:10 “Then celebrate the Feast of Weeks to the LORD your God by giving a freewill offering in proportion to the blessings the LORD your God has given you.”

*Lent*--the time of preparation before Easter

*Easter*--the celebration of Jesus' resurrection

*Pentecost* (means "fifty")--the coming of the Holy Spirit; in addition, Pentecost is the longest season in the church calendar, lasting 27 or 28 Sundays until the next observance of Advent.

The actual observance date of Pentecost changes from year to year, just like Easter does, because it always occurs 50 days after Passover. So because Passover moves on our calendar, so does Easter and Pentecost.

So the Holy Spirit, the third person of the triune Godhead, came just as Jesus promised. He came on a *day*, a specific day 50 days after Passover.

Why is that important? I can't underscore this enough. The coming of the Holy Spirit was a historical event. It happened at a point in time on a particular day (just like the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus did). Pentecost is part of the historical, redemptive work of Jesus Christ.

That means we don't repeat Pentecost. When someone prays, "Oh, Holy Spirit, do Pentecost again like you did in Acts 2," it's a faulty way of thinking. It's like saying, "Oh, Jesus, die again on the cross." Or, "Rise again from the grave." Pentecost is a one-time, non-repeatable historical event. We don't need another Pentecost, for one was enough, and one is all there will be. What we do need is for the Lord to give us a fresh understanding of the implications of what happened on the day so long ago.

And that's what we're seeking this morning, as we begin a mini two-part series, "Because of Pentecost: Learning about the Holy Spirit from Romans 8."

Who is the Holy Spirit? He is God, specifically, the third person of the triune Godhead. He's the One foretold by the prophets (Isa. 44:3; Joel 2:28), announced by John the Baptist (Matt. 3:11), and promised by the Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:16-17).

What did the Holy Spirit do at Pentecost? He came to indwell the followers of Christ (Acts 2:1-4). He baptized all of Christ's followers into one body (1 Cor. 12:13). He formed the Church (Eph. 4:4).

What is the Holy Spirit doing today? Many wonderful things! He regenerates lost people (John 3:5; 16:8-11; Gal. 3:3; Tit. 3:5). He bestows spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:7). He gives us power for ministry (Acts 1:8; 4:31). He enables us to worship (Phil. 3:3). He intercedes for us (Rom. 8:26-27). He produces the fruit of Christlikeness in us (Gal. 5:22-23). He gives us assurance of salvation (Rom. 8:16). He teaches us (John 14:26; 1 Cor. 2:13; 1 John 2:20, 27). He transforms us (2 Cor. 3:3, 18).

Indeed, one of the greatest blessings we possess as the people of God is the Holy Spirit. But there are two reasons we may not be as thankful as we ought to be for the Holy Spirit. One is ignorance. We really don't know much about Who He is and what He does. The other reason is abuse. We flip through the channels on TV and come to a religious program, and see people exhibiting ecstatic behavior, with some preacher shouting, "You, too, can experience the blessing of the Spirit!" And we think, "If that's what living in the Spirit is all about, no thanks."

There is much confusion in our day regarding the Holy Spirit. One prominent charismatic leader by the name of Kenneth Hagin shared the following story:<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> as told by John MacArthur, *Charismatic Chaos*, 154

Sister Maria Woodworth-Etter was an evangelist during the early days of the Pentecostal movement in this century. I read the newspaper account concerning what happened in St. Louis, sometime before 1920. She was in her 70's, preaching in a tent which was full, when right in the middle of her sermon, with her hand uplifted to illustrate a point and her mouth open, the power of God came upon her.

She froze in that position and stood like a statue for three days and three nights. Think about that: All her body had to be under the control of the Spirit of God. She had no bodily functions the three days and nights she stood there.

According to the newspaper account, it was estimated that more than 150,000 people came by to see her in that three-day period. The third night, the Spirit of God released her. She thought it was the same night, and the same sermon, and she went right on preaching at the same place in her sermon.

The bizarre story raises three problems. One, why would anyone assume that such behavior is a demonstration of God's power? Where in the Scriptures do you see anything like it, unless you count what happened to Lot's wife (and she's hardly an example to emulate). Two, though newspaper reports are cited as proof of this event, the specific citations are not given, and no such report has been found. The third problem is that this charismatic leader attributes this incident to the Holy Spirit, saying that this woman was under the control of the Spirit of God. Which raises the question, "If that's what living in the Spirit is all about, is it any wonder that people are skeptical about the Holy Spirit?"

Beloved, that's not what living in the Spirit looks like. So what does it look like? How can we tell if a person has the Holy Spirit? What should we look for? We find the answer in Romans 8. In the first seven chapters in Romans, the Holy Spirit is conspicuous by His absence.<sup>4</sup> In the first seven chapters, He makes only two brief appearances, but in chapter eight, He is mentioned 19 times.

In the ESV Bible, the title over Romans 8 is, "Life in the Spirit." According to Romans 8:5-11, there are two evidences of the Holy Spirit's presence in the life of every believer.

#### I. The Holy Spirit affects our minds (5-8).

Verses 5-8, "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. <sup>6</sup> For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. <sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> Those who are in the flesh cannot please God."

How can you tell if someone is living a life under the control of the Holy Spirit? Will he speak in tongues and manifest other of the spectacular gifts? There is a book in the Bible that mentions such manifestations of the Spirit (1 Corinthians), but that book was written to a church that by and large abused the Spirit's ministry, and had a faulty understanding of His intent.

You ask, "Well, do you believe that the Holy Spirit works in spectacular ways in our day?" My answer is, yes, I do. His work is spectacular, but in what way? What does

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<sup>4</sup> as S. Briscoe puts it, p. 154

the Bible say the Spirit affects when He's at work in our lives? Does Paul say He will cause people to shout aloud, or freeze in position? No. He says the evidence is the *mind*. The Holy Spirit manifests His presence in our minds. He's in the business of changing the way people THINK about life.

Many people today might not think of the *mind* as the place where the Holy Spirit gives evidence of His presence. But we should. Notice the emphasis on the "mind" in this section (5-8). Verse 5 begins (AV), "For they that are after the flesh do MIND the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit." And verse 6, "For the be carnally MINDED is death, but to be spiritually MINDED is life and peace. Then verse 7, "For the carnal MIND is enmity against God."

Don't miss this. Contemporary charismatics often minimize the mind, and encourage people to shift their minds into neutral and focus on "feeling" the Spirit. And it's not just charismatics. I googled the words "feel the Spirit" and found an article by that title. Here's how it begins:

Maybe you noticed the change when you were baptized and confirmed a member of the Church. Maybe you felt a calm assurance while listening to general conference. Or maybe you felt that uplifting warmth in your heart as you listened to friends bear testimony in church or at youth conference. Most of us have felt the comforting presence of the Holy Ghost at one time or another. For some it is a common occurrence. For others it doesn't happen very often. If you feel like you fit best in this second group, maybe putting into practice some of the ideas shared by a group [of teens]...from British Columbia, Canada, will help you feel the Spirit more regularly.<sup>5</sup>

Then the article offers these suggestions from teens.

"Sometimes I just try to smile," says Lorena. It may sound simple, but smiling and having a positive attitude really helps Lorena feel the Spirit—especially when she starts to feel down at school.

Ariel shares a similar experience: "One day I was rushing to school, and I don't know why, but something told me to take my scriptures with me. So I quickly put them in my bag and went to school." She goes on to say, "It just so happened that I had a really bad day. I think I was in the last class of the day, and I was looking in my bag and saw my scriptures there. Just seeing them made me happy and brought the Spirit to me, and I knew that this bad day wasn't so bad and that everything would be okay."

Oh, by the way, the article I just read was written, not by a charismatic, but by someone from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, a Mormon. It could have been written by many evangelicals.

Please don't misunderstand. The Holy Spirit does affect our feelings, but that's not His primary interest, nor where He starts. How does the Holy Spirit manifest His presence? Paul says that the Spirit goes to work on our minds.

There's a strong contrast in this section between the "flesh" and the "Spirit." There are two categories of people in the world (those in the flesh/those in the Spirit). There are two outlooks (those who mind the things of the flesh/those who mind the things of the Spirit). There are two patterns of conduct (those who produce the works of the

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/new-era/2011/10/feeling-the-spirit?lang=eng>

flesh/those who produce the fruit of the Spirit). And there are two ultimate results (those in the flesh experience death/those in the Spirit experience true life).

Let's take a careful look at the contrast between these two outlooks.

**A. What's true of those influenced by the flesh?** Notice four characteristics, paying careful attention to the use of the mind.

1. *They pursue sinful desires (5).* Verse 5 (AV) "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh." What does Paul mean by flesh? A person in the flesh is an unsaved person. We are all born in the flesh, that is, in the fallen, condemned state of Adam. A Christian is no longer in the flesh (he's in Christ), but he can be influenced by the flesh. And what is true of those who allow their minds to be influenced by the flesh? What do they pursue? Sinful desires.

Let's probe the verb the apostle uses here. What does it mean to "set one's mind on the things of the flesh" [AV "mind the things of the flesh"]? An illustration might help. It's supper time, and the food is on the table. Mom calls for Junior to come to the table, but the child keeps playing. She calls a second time, but still he ignores. Finally, in desperation, she says to her husband, "I've had it! That child won't MIND me." What did she mean? She means, "That child won't OBEY me."

To "mind the things of the flesh" is to obey what the flesh desires. Commentator John Stott gives us this helpful word (87), "Now to 'set the mind upon' the flesh or the Spirit means to occupy ourselves with the things of the flesh or the Spirit. It is a question of our preoccupations, the ambitions which compel us and the interests which engross us; how we spend our time, money and energy; what we give ourselves up to. That is what we set our minds on."

A person influenced by the flesh pursues sinful desires. What else is true?

2. *Their mind is death (6).* Notice verse 6, in the AV, "For to be carnally minded is death." What does that mean? The TEV puts it this way, "To have your mind controlled by human nature results in death." Have you noticed how our society is becoming increasingly obsessed with death? We make entertainment out of killing. The music industry and Hollywood and video games cater to this fascination with the morbid. That's the way it is with those influenced by the flesh. "For to set the mind on the flesh is death."

3. *They resist God and God's Law (7).* In verse 7, the AV uses the word "carnal," which comes from the same word translated "flesh" in verse 5. The ESV uses the phrase in verse 7, "For the mind that is set on the flesh." What's true of the mind that's under the control of the flesh?

There are two indicators. One, it resists God. Verse 7 says that it's "enmity against God" (AV). In the ESV, it is "hostile to God."

The second indicator that the mind is under the control of the flesh, seen at the end of verse 7, is that it resists God's Law. It "does not submit to God's law," says the ESV and NIV. In fact, the problem is worse than that. It's a double limitation. The person doesn't submit to God's revelation, and the truth is, he is not able to do so.

Which leads to the bottom line...

4. *They can't please God (8).* Verse 8 draws this sobering conclusion, "Those who are in the flesh cannot please God." This is not a small problem, my friend. This is serious, deadly serious. A person in the flesh, that is, a person who has never been

born again by the Spirit, an unregenerate person, does not have the ability to please God. He can't do it.

He knows he should, for he's created in the image of the One he resists. He knows he fails to do so, for the conscience that God has given him, tells him so. He feels terrible when he fails to do so, yet he cannot change. He cannot please God as long as he is in the flesh.

Do you know what that means if you are a parent? You cannot turn your child into a God-pleaser by giving him or her rules. That's not to say you shouldn't teach him or her rules. Rules are needed, certainly God's rules, and even your own house rules. But rules cannot change your child's fundamental problem. As long as he or she is in the flesh, he or she cannot please God, nor do they want to do so.

You can't legislate righteousness for your children. Righteousness must come from within, and must be the result of the Holy Spirit's working. So, if my children aren't having their devotions, I can lead them to the Word (and should), but I can't force them to love the Word, nor the God who gave us His Word.

The reality is, if a person doesn't have the Spirit, he's still in the flesh, and if he's still in the flesh, that person cannot please God.

But thank God for Pentecost! Two thousand years ago on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came, as Jesus promised He would, and launched what some refer to as the "age of the Spirit."

Jesus said in John 16:8–11, "And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: <sup>9</sup> concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; <sup>10</sup> concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; <sup>11</sup> concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged."

But He doesn't merely convict. He grants new birth. Paul calls it "the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit" in Titus 3:5. The Spirit enables spiritually dead people to repent of their sins and receive Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord.

So what about *that* person, the person who has been born again by the work of the Holy Spirit, and thus possesses the Holy Spirit? That person is no longer "in the flesh." That person is a new creation (2 Cor 5:17). That person now has the potential to do what they could not do before, namely, they can please God. And they will want to please God, and they will please God as they learn to yield to the Spirit's influence.

**B. What's true of those influenced by the Spirit?** According to this passage, two characteristics stand out about such a person.

*1. They desire what the Spirit desires (5).* Notice the other side of the contrast in verse 5, "But those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit." How can you tell if a person is influenced by the Holy Spirit? Paul says they "live according to the Spirit." That simply means they live according to the desires of the Holy Spirit.

A Spirit-influenced person desires the things of the Spirit. What are those things? They are the things consistent with the purposes of the Holy Spirit. What are His purposes? What does He desire? Jesus gave the answer back in John 16:13-14. The Spirit has two desires for believers.

The first is to guide us into truth. Jesus says in verse 13, "Nevertheless, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth." So the Spirit wants us to

know truth. What truth? The truth He Himself has revealed and given to us in the Scriptures (see 2 Peter 1:20-21).

His second desire, which grows out of the first, is to glorify Christ. That's what Jesus said in verse 14. "He shall glorify me."

Don't miss that. This is what a person who is influenced by the Spirit desires. He desires what the Spirit desires. He loves the Scriptures, and he loves to bring glory to Christ.

Dear friends, living in the Spirit isn't something mystical, but very practical (see 1 Cor 2:6-15). You can see it. There's clear evidence of it. If you want to know if you are living under the influence of the Holy Spirit, if you are "keeping in step with the Spirit" (Gal 5:25), ask yourself two questions. Do you love to learn and live according to the Book He's given us? To put it another way, do you cherish personal times in the Book, as well as corporate times in the Book with your church family?

And secondly, is it your greatest desire in life to bring glory to Jesus Christ? Do you consciously seek to live your life, to do your job, to spend your money, to raise your kids, to do all that you do, for the honor, fame, and pleasure of your Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ? To the degree those things are true, you are living under the influence of the Holy Spirit, so thank Him! To the degree those things are not true, you are quenching Him (1 Thes 5:19), and perhaps grieving Him (Eph 4:30).

Paul mentions another characteristic of this Spirit-influenced life. First, people under the Spirit's influence desire what the Spirit desires.

2. *They experience life and peace (6)*. Notice the contrast at the end of verse 6, "But to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace." What does that mean? It means that while the flesh produces death, the Spirit generates two virtues. The first is "life"—that which is wholesome and edifying, not just existing, but truly living. And the second is "peace"—the shalom that God intended His image-bearers to enjoy when He first created us, peace with God, and peace with one another.

"For the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace," explains Paul in Galatians 5:22. It's the Holy Spirit who produces Christlike virtues in the lives of His people.

So life and peace, that is what people living in the influence of the Holy Spirit experience. Life. And peace.

May I speak frankly? That which tears down and cuts and destroys is not of the Spirit. When a parent refuses to speak to a grown child because of a past conflict, that's not the evidence of the Spirit. When a church member verbally tears apart another church member over Sunday dinner, that's not the evidence of the Spirit.

But this is. When a teen sees a friend who is not on speaking terms with someone, and says, "Hey, I know you've been hurt, but let's work things out. I'll go with you." That's life and peace, and that's what the Holy Spirit produces.

When a spouse who's been hurt chooses, not to retaliate, but to overcome the evil with good. That's life and peace, and that too is what the Holy Spirit produces.

When you walk into a room, and everyone is bad-mouthing the boss, or the president, or whoever, and you choose, instead of speaking words that tear down, to speak words that edify, that is life and peace. And that's powerful evidence that the Holy Spirit is at work in and through you.

And of course, when you see someone who is lost and heading to a Christless eternity, and you love that person in practical ways, and share with them the good news of

salvation through Christ, that too is solid evidence that the Spirit is at work, producing life and peace.

This is the mind of a person who is influenced by the Holy Spirit. When the Spirit is controlling us, He makes His presence known by transforming the way we *think*. The Holy Spirit affects our minds.

## II. The Holy Spirit affects our bodies (9-11).

Verses 9-11, “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. <sup>10</sup> But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup> 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 we step back and look at the whole of Romans 8, we see that the Holy Spirit is involved in a variety of ministries in the life of the believer (as John Stott observes, p. 84). The Spirit subdues our flesh (5-13). He witnesses to our sonship (14-17). He guarantees our inheritance (18-25). He helps our weakness in prayer (26-27). It would not be an overstatement to affirm that the entire Christian life is made possible by the Holy Spirit. Without the Spirit, we could not become a Christian. Without the Spirit, we could not live the Christian life.

But because of Him, because of *Pentecost*, what was and would remain impossible, now becomes reality. Even to the transformation of our bodies.

In the first century world, influenced as it was by Greek thought, the body was seen as unimportant to the gods. Your spirit matters, but your body doesn't matter. So do whatever you want with it. It's your spirit that will last eternally, not your body.

Not so, says the true Creator God. When He saves a person, He purposes to save the *whole* person, the part you can't see and the part you can, the invisible and visible. And He sent His Spirit into the world to guarantee this will happen.

We learn in verses 9-11 that the Spirit is very interested in our bodies (notice the mention of the “body” in verse 10, and again in verse 11). Indeed, Paul tells us that the Spirit works with our bodies in two ways.

**A. He lives in us (9).** Verse 9 begins, “You, however.” In the AV, “But YE.” Stop there. “You” is emphatic. Something was different about the people in Rome that received this letter. What was it? In the ESV, “You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you.”

This is vital to see. The mark of a genuine Christian is the presence of the Holy Spirit. He *dwells in you*. Your body is His temple, says 1 Corinthians 6:19. And what's the litmus test to determine if a person has the Spirit? Tongues speaking? No. Bizarre behavior? No. It's a changed life. It's a person who is allowing the Spirit to influence his mind and body.

What's true of a person who doesn't have the Holy Spirit? Verse 9 couldn't be clearer, in the AV, “Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.”

We need to be sure we understand the terms here. To be “in the Spirit” and to “have the Spirit dwelling in us” are synonyms, that is, they are two phrases describing the same thing. Also, to have the Spirit dwelling in us (verse 9) and to have Christ dwelling in us (verse 10) are the same thing.

Do you realize what this means? Having the Spirit is the privilege of every Christian, not just some "elite" group, and certainly not restricted to those who claim to have received some "second blessing." How does a person receive the Holy Spirit? Does he need to experience some second work of grace? Is that what the text says? Not at all.

Notice the first words in verse 10. "*But if Christ is in you.*" Jesus Christ died and rose again to redeem a people. Those who repent of their sins and believe in Him belong to Him. And those who belong to Him possess His Spirit. The moment we were saved, we received the Holy Spirit. He lives in us.

What happens to people who have the Spirit? Two results.

1. *We think differently.* At first glance, verse 9 makes it sound like the flesh has *no* influence on us ("You, however, are not in the flesh"). But 7:25 says otherwise ("With my flesh I serve the law of sin"). How do we reconcile these statements? Positionally, we are not "in the flesh" any longer, for we have died to the flesh. But the practical reality is that we are also still dying to the flesh. We continue to battle that which we are no longer in.

The flesh used to be our master, and we were powerless to do other than serve that cruel, God-defying master. But that has changed. That's no longer our position. We now think differently about the flesh than we used to think. And the Spirit enables us to think differently.

How does He do it? He uses His Word, and we are to cooperate with Him in this process. Proverbs 23:7 makes it clear, "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he." Ephesians 4:23 exhorts us, "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind."

So if we have the Spirit, we think differently. Or at least, we should, and could be thinking differently. And will be thinking differently, if we are keeping in step with Him.

And here's where the body enters the picture. It's not just our thinking...

2. *We behave differently.* The Holy Spirit makes a difference in the way the people of Christ live. He affects our thoughts, yes, and our behavior too. People who cooperate with the Spirit use their bodies in ways that are different from those who don't have the Spirit.

This brings us to the second way the Spirit works with our bodies. First, He lives in our bodies. Secondly...

**B. He transforms us (10-11).** Keep in mind that the work of the Spirit is always related to exalting Christ. So if the Spirit is doing something, Christ will be exalted. Thus, when it comes to His work of transformation, we experience the Spirit's work in two ways.

1. *We experience the life of Christ in us.* Verse 10 says, "But if Christ is in you." By means of His resident Spirit, Christ is in us. It is the Spirit's aim to reproduce the life of Christ in us.

Notice the next clause in verse 10, "But if Christ is in you, *although the body is dead because of sin*, the Spirit is life because of righteousness." In what sense is my body dead? In this sense. Before I was saved, I used my body to sin and do things that result in death. Then the Spirit entered my life, entered my *body*, and I died to that former ambition.

And He gave me a new ambition, one that Paul describes in Romans 6:11-13, "So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Let not sin therefore reign **in your mortal body**, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your

members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.”

This is called sanctification. Because of the Spirit’s work in us, we experience “life because of righteousness,” as Paul says at the end of verse 10. That’s what the Spirit wants, and that’s what we want too, “life because of righteousness.”

And for that to happen, we need power, don’t we? To move from death to life, from unrighteousness to righteousness, that takes power. And that too the Spirit provides.

2. *We experience the power of Christ in us.* Don’t miss the reference to the Trinity in 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.”

See the Trinity? God the Father raised from the dead God the Son by the power of God the Spirit. That happened two thousand years ago. Here’s what’s amazing. What the Holy Spirit did with Christ then, He’s still doing with us now.

Ponder that. The same power that the Spirit exerted in Christ’s resurrection is now at work in us, specifically, in our bodies.

When I’m tired, I find it so much easier to sin. Can you relate? “Honey, I didn’t sleep well. I deserve a little slack this morning.” In other words, you can’t expect me to be holy when my body is tired, can you?

Friends, we can experience the very resurrection power of Christ in our bodies. The Spirit’s intent is to show His power by giving life, Christ-like life, to our mortal bodies. Ultimately, that will be true when we receive our glorified bodies, and what a day that will be! But the Spirit intends for the transformation to begin now. He specializes in changing what we do with our mortal bodies now.

Are you seeing the evidence of this in your life? Because of Pentecost, we can think differently, and use our bodies differently than we used to. And we will, if we’re cooperating with the Holy Spirit. Are you? Am I?

Perhaps you’ve not thought much about the Holy Spirit before. I recommend that we get to know Him better. How? Start by putting your trust in Christ, and the Spirit will take up residence in you. Then begin to study the Book He’s given us, the Holy Bible, and see what He’s revealed about Himself.<sup>6</sup> And read a good book about the Holy Spirit. Get to know Him, and His Christ-exalting intent for our lives. I recommend:

-J. I. Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit*

-John MacArthur, *The Silent Shepherd*

-Jerry Bridges, *The Pursuit of Holiness*

#### Make It Personal: Two implications...

1. *If I have Christ, I have the Holy Spirit.*

2. *If I have the Holy Spirit, I have hope.*

In a moment, we’ll sing together these words. It’s a fitting charge as we finish this sermon on the holiday known as Pentecost.

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<sup>6</sup> Is the Holy Spirit involved in ways we’ve not considered in this message? Yes indeed. Here are a couple to consider. He gives spiritual gifts (see 1 Cor 12 & 14). He equips us for spiritual warfare (see Eph 6).

*O spread the tidings 'round,  
Wherever man is found,  
Wherever human hearts and human woes abound;  
Let every Christian tongue proclaim the joyful sound:  
The Comforter has come!  
The Comforter has come, the Comforter has come!  
The Holy Ghost from heaven, the Father's promise given;  
O spread the tidings 'round, wherever man is found:  
The Comforter has come!*

**Closing Song:** #257 “*The Comforter Has Come*” (all three verses)