

Main Idea: According to Romans 8:5-11, there are two primary 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: Consider two wonderful implications.

- 1. If I have Christ, I have the Holy Spirit.
- 2. If I have the Holy Spirit, I can have hope in the struggle.

*Scripture Memory Song (“Redeemed people sing the Word”):* Isaiah 46:3-4

It's a joy to open our Bibles to Romans 8 and continue our series *The Secure Struggler*. Do Christians struggle? Yes, we do. All of us. Until we see Christ. But if we're in Christ, we are *secure* strugglers. Security in Christ is a wonderful reality, and sadly, far too many are not experiencing it. But Romans 8 will help us.

Some say that Romans 8 is the greatest chapter in the Bible. That's certainly debatable, but its importance can't be overstated. It is packed with life-changing, security-producing truth, as we began to see last week with “No Condemnation in Christ,” Romans 8:1-4. This morning it's “Life in the Spirit,” Romans 8:5-11.<sup>2</sup>

I'd like to begin with an important, personal question. *How can I tell if the Holy Spirit is me?* I asked Google that question and found a couple of interesting responses.

One was a post by someone who asked the related question, “*What are the signs of having the Holy Spirit?*” and then shared, “I'm asking because I've never shouted, jumped, or cried uncontrollably in church as some do in my church. This is seen as catching the holy ghost. And comments are made about not “getting happy” and/or shouting from the pastor. I have cried by myself because of thankfulness for God's greatness, blessings, mercy, and grace, and my sins. I've never uncontrollably shouted,

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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 8 series preached at WBC in 1995.

<sup>2</sup> Here's an overview of our future messages, as the Lord allows.

Romans 8:12-15 (or 12-17) “The Benefits of the Spirit”

Romans 8:16-21 (or 18-21) “Secure Sufferers”

Romans 8:22-27 “We Groan, He Groans”

Romans 8:28-30 “The Promise of a Good Outcome”

Romans 8:31-34 “If God Is for Us”

Romans 8:35-39 “Secure in the Love of Christ”

jumped/erratically moved, ran, or spoken in tongues. Is this a sign I don't have the Holy Spirit?"<sup>3</sup>

I feel for this person, and many others in similar situations. They lack of security, don't they?

I also found this post. In answer to the question, "What are the physical signs of the Holy Spirit's presence?" AI generated this answer: "Physical manifestations of the Holy Spirit include sensory feelings such as warmth, tingling, and goosebumps, along with emotional responses like tears of joy or conviction. Historically, biblical accounts describe dramatic physical signs such as a mighty wind and tongues of fire at Pentecost, and symbols like a dove, cloud, wind, or fire. Additionally, some believers interpret physical experiences like trembling, shaking, or trance-like states as evidence of the Spirit's presence."

There is such confusion about the Holy Spirit. It shows up when I hear statements like, "The Spirit was really moving in our church today. Lots of singing and testifying and even some shouting and dancing! Why, we didn't even get to the sermon!"

I believe that today's message is timely. *Life in the Spirit*. Romans 8:5-11. The Holy Spirit is mentioned twenty times in the first twenty-seven verses of Romans 8. And what does His presence produce? If the Holy Spirit has His way with us, how will He manifest Himself? Hold on to your seats. There's not one mention of tingling and goosebumps in Romans 8, nor shaking, nor trance-like experiences. But there are two very unmistakable evidences that He is alive and at work in our midst.

They are *mind* and *body*. Our *thinking* and our *behavior*, specifically, changed thinking and changed behavior. Those are the two evidences of the Holy Spirit we see in today's text, Romans 8:5-11. And those are the two outcomes we will experience if He is living in us and we're cooperating with Him. Let's read our text and behold its beauty.

*Scripture Reading: Romans 8:5-11*

We have great reason to be thankful for we are so blessed. One of the greatest blessings we possess as the people of God is the Holy Spirit.

Yet there are two reasons we may not be as thankful as we should 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 television channels or social media posts and see people exhibiting fanatic, even ecstatic behavior, and some preacher shouting, "You, too, can experience the blessing of the Spirit!" And our response is, "If that's what living in the Spirit is all about, no thanks."

The confusion isn't new. Over three decades ago John MacArthur wrote a timely book called *Charismatic Chaos* to expose people to the dangers of building a view of the Holy Spirit based on human experience and the mishandling of the Word of God. Here's an example of the confusion, a story shared by one prominent charismatic leader, Kenneth Hagin:<sup>4</sup>

"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.

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<sup>3</sup> [https://www.reddit.com/r/TrueChristian/comments/13u8okx/what\\_are\\_the\\_signs\\_of\\_having\\_the\\_holy\\_spirit/](https://www.reddit.com/r/TrueChristian/comments/13u8okx/what_are_the_signs_of_having_the_holy_spirit/)

<sup>4</sup> John MacArthur, *Charismatic Chaos*, p. 154.

“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.”

As MacArthur points out, the story raises some serious 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 bizarre 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, of all people, we who believe in the sufficiency of the Scriptures ought to be thankful for the Holy Spirit. How can we tell if a person has the Holy Spirit? What should we look for? We find the answer, in part, in Romans 8. Up until now in Romans, the Holy Spirit has been conspicuous by His absence.<sup>5</sup> In the first seven chapters, He makes only two brief appearances, but in chapter eight, He is mentioned twenty times (ESV). But what does the Holy Spirit do? How does He work in the life of a Christian?

According to Romans 8:5-11, there are two obvious evidences of the Holy Spirit's presence in the life of every believer. As we'll see, the Holy Spirit affects *our minds* (5-8) and *our bodies* (9-11). Let's look at them and then we'll come to the Lord's table.

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

Notice the emphasis on the “mind” in verses 5-8. Verse 5 says, “For those who live according to the flesh set their *minds* on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their *minds* on the things of the Spirit.” And verse 6 says, “For to set the *mind* on the flesh is death, but to set the *mind* on the Spirit is life and peace.” Then verse 7, “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.”

Don't miss that. Contemporary charismatics often minimize the mind, and encourage people to shift their minds into neutral and “feel the Spirit”. Is the Holy Spirit concerned about our feelings? Certainly. He created our feelings. I've entitled a later message in Romans 8, “We groan. He groans.” Feelings matter. But feelings are not the primary focus nor evidence of the Spirit.

The mind is. He targets our *minds*.

You say, “Wait a minute. What about speaking in tongues and the other spectacular signs gifts? Aren't those evidences of the Spirit's work?”

Good question. Yes, there is essentially one book in the New Testament that mentions such manifestations of the Spirit. It's 1 Corinthians. And that book was written to a church that by and large abused the Spirit's ministry and had a faulty understanding of His intent. The spectacular is not His main focus. Your mind is.

You ask, “Well pastor, do you believe that the Holy Spirit works in spectacular ways in our day?”

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<sup>5</sup> As Stuart Briscoe puts it, p. 154.

My answer is, absolutely I do! And I see it happening every week at WBC. Is that because He's causing people to shout and roll in the church aisles? No. It's because He's changing the way people *think* about life.

Do you realize how much power it takes to change people's minds? What would it take these days for a person who voted red to have a meal and a loving conversation with a person who voted blue? I'll tell you what it would take. Power. A change of thinking.

I used to think life was all about me, and was a self-focused, fearful people-pleaser. But now I know life is all about Him, and I am learning to please Him and not people. Who changed the way I think? The Holy Spirit did! How? Through the ministry of His Word.

This church is filled with examples of people who have changed the way they think. We have people who used to think the purpose of life was partying, or making money, or achieving fame, but no longer. Now they think that Jesus and His kingdom are worthy of their all. Who produced that change? The Spirit did (and continues to do so for change is a process). How? Through His Word. Talk about spectacular power!!

There's a strong contrast in this section between the "flesh" and the "Spirit." Essentially, there are two categories of people in the world (those in the flesh, and those in the Spirit). There are two outlooks (those who mind the things of the flesh, and those who mind the things of the Spirit). There are two patterns of conduct (those who produce the works of the flesh, and those who produce the fruit of the Spirit). And there are two ultimate results (those in the flesh experience death, and 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, and notice how they are all connected to *the mind*.

1. *They pursue sinful desires* (5). Listen to verse 5 in the 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. But a Christian is no longer in the flesh. He's now in Christ). Yet even a person who is in Christ can be influenced by the flesh.

And what is true of individuals who allow their minds to be influenced by the flesh? They "set their minds on things of the flesh". In other words, they pursue what the world pursues, what they used to pursue.

Let's probe the verb the apostle uses here. What does it mean to "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 little guy 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 does she mean? She means he won't *obey* her.

To "mind the things of the flesh" is to pursue what the flesh desires. Commentator John Stott gives us this helpful explanation, "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."<sup>6</sup>

That's the first characteristic of a person influenced by the flesh. He or she pursues sinful desires. Here's the second.

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<sup>6</sup> John Stott, p. 87.

2. *Their mind is death* (6). Listen to verse 6 in the KJV), “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 increasingly obsessed with death? We make entertainment out of killing. Video games. The music industry. Hollywood. They all cater to this fascination with the morbid. That's the way it is with those influenced by the flesh.

3. *They resist God and God's Law* (7). Paul's language in verse 7 is strong. “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.”

What's true of the mind that's under the control of the flesh? Two frightening indicators. First, it resists God. It “enmity against God,” says the AV. It's hostile to God, says the ESV. Second, it refuses to submit to God's law. In fact, such a person has a double limitation. Not only does he refuse to submit to God's standard, but the truth is, he is not able to do so. And this leads to the fourth characteristic, the bottom line.

4. *They can't please God* (8). Verse 8 presents a sobering reality, “Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.” Don't miss that. A person in the flesh, that is, an unregenerate person, a person who has never been born again by the Spirit, does not have the ability to please God. He can't do it.

Friends, when we see an assassination taking place in Utah and government buildings burning in Kathmandu and drone bombings in Ukraine, and we wonder, “Why can't people just love each other?” We need this category. We need the same category when we're trying to make sense of the hostile brokenness we see in our own community.

People in the flesh cannot please God. They don't have the power to change.

Do you know what that means if you are a parent? You can't legislate righteousness for your children. The change must come from within. If my children and grandchildren aren't having their devotions, I can lead them to the Word (and should). But I can't force them to love it. A person in the flesh cannot please God.

What do they need? It's not *what*. It's *who*. They need to come to know God the Holy Spirit. How do you receive the Holy Spirit? It's not complicated. You receive the Spirit when you repent and receive Christ.

Check out Ephesians 1:13–14. “In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.”

You say, “I've received Christ.” Then you have the Holy Spirit living in you.

You say, “But I don't feel anything.” Well, what did you expect to feel? Hunches? Tingling? Goosebumps? That's not what you need, and that's not what He's intent on producing. This is.

**B. What's true of those influenced by the Spirit?** When the Holy Spirit is at work in our lives, this is what He produces, two characteristics in the lives of people.

1. *They desire what the Spirit desires* (5). Notice the other side of the contrast in verse 5 (AV), “But they that are after the Spirit (do mind) the things of the Spirit.” The verb is implied. How can you tell if a person is influenced by the Holy Spirit? It shows up in his or her desires.

How can I tell if I am living in the Spirit? Take inventory of your desires. A person living in the Spirit doesn't want to live for himself. He has no mind of his own, for Christ is now his mind and the will of Christ is his new law. As William Barclay puts it, “He is Spirit-controlled, Christ-controlled, God-focused.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> William Barclay, p. 104.

Does that describe you? If so, you're seeing the work of the Spirit. If not, you're resisting His work. A Spirit-influenced person desires the things of the Spirit. What are those things? What does the Spirit desire? Jesus tells us in John 16:13–14. "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. <sup>14</sup> He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you."

So according to Jesus, the Spirit has two desires for believers. One is to guide us into truth. That's verse 13. The Spirit wants us to know truth. What truth? The truth He has revealed to us in the Scriptures. His second desire is to glorify Christ. That's verse 14, He shall glorify me."

Don't miss that. A person influenced by the Spirit desires what the Spirit desires. He loves the Scriptures, and he loves to bring glory to Christ. Living in the Spirit isn't mystical, but very practical (see 1 Corinthians 2:6-15).

If you want to know if you are influenced by the Spirit, ask yourself two questions. Do you love to learn, live, and share the Word of God? And is it your greatest desire in life to bring glory to Jesus Christ in all you do? If so, the Holy Spirit is at work in your life. And for this He deserves thanks. If not, you are not yielding to His influence, but rather to the flesh.

Spirit-influenced people desire what the Spirit desires. What else?

2. *They experience life and peace (6).* Verse 6 says, "To set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace." In the AV, "To be spiritually minded is life and peace." What does that mean? The Holy Spirit produces Christlike virtue in His people. The flesh produces death, but the Spirit generates two virtues. The first is "life," that which is wholesome and edifying. And the second is "peace", shalom, the kind of life that God intended His people to enjoy when He created us.

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

Or to put it another way, to say that the Spirit gives life and peace means that He produces *security* in the struggle. He doesn't eliminate the struggle (as we'll see in a couple of weeks, Christians do a lot of groaning; see verse 23). But He gives us life and peace in the midst of the struggle.

This is the powerful evidence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. It shows up in the way we *think*. The way we think about money, success, politics, retirement, everything. The Holy Spirit affects our minds. But He doesn't stop there.

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

In Romans 8, we learn that the Holy Spirit is involved in a variety of ministries in the life of the believer. As John Stott points out, the Spirit subdues our flesh (5-13), witnesses to our sonship (14-17), guarantees our inheritance (18-25), and helps our weakness in prayer (26-27).<sup>8</sup> So it's obvious that the Christian life would be impossible apart from the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

In verses 9-11, we learn about two activities relating to His ministry with our bodies. You'll notice that Paul mentions "body" in both verse 10 and verse 11.

**A. He lives in us (9).** Paul begins verse 9, "You, however." In the AV, "But YOU." "You" is emphatic. Something was different about the people in Rome that

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<sup>8</sup> Observation by John Stott, p. 84.

received this letter. What was it? Verse 9 says, “You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you.”

Don't miss this. The mark of a genuine Christian is the presence of the Holy Spirit. He *dwells in you*. He has made His home in you, if you're a believer in Christ. You are His temple (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). And what's the test to determine if a person has the Spirit? Again, there's no mention of tongues speaking here, but of a changed life.

On the other hand, what's true of a person who *doesn't* have the Holy Spirit? The rest of verse 9 couldn't be clearer. “Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.”

We need to be sure we understand the terms here. To be “in the Spirit” (verse 9a) and to “have the Spirit dwelling in us” (verse 9b) are synonymous. These are two phrases describing the same reality. Also, to have the Spirit dwelling in us (verse 9) and to have Christ dwelling in us (verse 10) are (to borrow a figure of speech) two sides of the same coin.

Do you know what this means? Having the Spirit is the privilege of every Christian, not just some elite group of super-saints, 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 post-salvation work of grace? Is that what the text says? No. What does verse 10 say? “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 are saved, we receive the Holy Spirit. He lives in us.

What happens to people who have the Spirit? Two results. The first we've seen.

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 back in 7:25 Paul says it does (“with my flesh I serve the law of sin”). How do we reconcile these statements? In a positional and legal sense, we have died to the flesh, but practically we are dying to the flesh. And the Spirit enables us to overcome its powerful influence.

How does He do it? Paul doesn't develop the answer for us here, but certainly does elsewhere. He does it by affecting our minds.

In Ephesians 5:18 we're told, “And do not get drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit.” We are already *indwelt* by the Spirit. Here we're commanded to *be filled* with the Holy Spirit, that is, to submit to His control.

And why do we need His control? For many reasons, one of which Paul just put on the table back in Ephesians 4:23. “And be renewed in the spirit of your mind.” We need renewed minds. We need to think differently. And the Holy Spirit helps us do that.

2. *We behave differently.* The Holy Spirit makes a difference in the way we live. He affects our thoughts, yes, but also our behavior. People who cooperate with the Spirit use their bodies in a way that is different from those who don't have the Spirit. Different habits. Different approach to money, and parenting, and success, and retirement, and everything.

This is Galatians 5, another eye-opening text if you want to learn about the Holy Spirit. Listen to Galatians 5:16–25: “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.”<sup>17</sup> For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.<sup>18</sup> But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.<sup>19</sup> Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality,<sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions,<sup>21</sup> envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.<sup>22</sup>

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,<sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.<sup>24</sup> And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.<sup>25</sup> If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.”

If we have the Holy Spirit, He will manifest His presence by affecting both the way we think and behave. There will be fruit. We will think differently and behave differently. And if that’s not happening, it’s because we are not keeping in step with Him (Galatians 5:25) and possibly even quenching Him (1 Thessalonians 5:19).

**B. He transforms us (10-11).** Remember, the work of the Spirit is always related to exalting Christ. When we submit to the Spirit’s work, He produces two effects.

1. *We experience the life of Christ in us.* Notice verse 10, “But if Christ is in you.” Stop there. By means of His resident Spirit, Christ *is* in us. The Spirit’s aim is to reproduce the life of Christ in us. Now notice the rest of 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? Here’s one sense. I used to use my body to sin and do things that result in death. I loved to sin even though my sin was destroying me.

And then the Spirit of God entered my life, and when He did I died to that old ambition. He gave me a new ambition, the one Paul describes in Romans 6:11–12, “So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.<sup>12</sup> Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions.”

Because of the Spirit’s work, we can experience the life of Christ in us.

2. *We experience the power of Christ in us.* Verse 11 is one of the most amazing yet often overlooked verses in the Bible. We see the Trinity here. We learn how the Christian life works here. I want you to memorize this significant verse. To help you, I want to sing it for you (in the NIV). You can play it back later and learn it.

“And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.”

See the Trinity? “And if the Spirit [that’s God the Holy Spirit] of Him who raised Jesus [that’s God the Son] from the dead [that’s God the Father, the One who raised Jesus from the dead; Acts 2:24] is living in you, he who raised Christ [that’s God the Son] from the dead [that’s God the Father] will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit [that’s God the Holy Spirit], who lives in you.”

Amazing. God the Father raised from the dead God the Son by the power of God the Holy Spirit. And here is what is equally staggering. What the Holy Spirit did with Christ, He is doing now with us. Ponder that. The same power that the Spirit exerted in Christ’s resurrection is available to us this week.

Have you ever said the following? “The Christian life doesn’t seem to work for me. My past is just too ugly, my habits too ingrained. I guess I’m just not cut out to be Christian.” My friend, the Christian life doesn’t work for *any* of us if it were up to us. But the Triune God Himself says it can work. If we are in Christ, no matter what our background is, we can experience the very resurrection power of Christ. Where? In our bodies. The Spirit is intent on giving new life to these mortal bodies.

This raises two questions. When? And how? First, when will this happen? Ultimately, at Christ’s second coming. But in a very real sense, it’s happening now. The Holy Spirit specializes in setting people free from sin and making them look like Christ.

How? Not in a flash, not by a zap, but progressively. He is taking us on a journey, a walk (a term the Bible loves to use to describe the Christian life). And what does the Spirit use in this journey to help us experience the life and power of Christ? He



uses two wonderful tools in this renovation project, both of which He brought into existence.

He uses the Book and the Body. The Spirit uses the Book He has given us and the Body He has created, that is, the church, to give us the power we need in order to produce the transformation He desires.

You say, “I want to experience the Spirit this week!” Great! So get in the Book and get plugged into the Body. For unlike justification which is entirely a work of God, sanctification is a work of the Spirit in which we are commanded to participate.

Oh my brothers and sisters, think of the implications. Because we have the Holy Spirit, there ought to be a difference in our lives and there *can* be. They ought to be an obvious distinction between us now and us before Christ, and there *can* be. Likewise, there ought to be an obvious distinction between us now and the unsaved people we do life with at work and school, and there *can* be. We should see a difference in our values, in the jokes we tell, the way we spend our money, the way we raise our children, the way we treat our elderly parents, the way we talk about our president, and in our attitudes toward the boss, and more, and there *can* be. The Spirit’s presence ought to be producing an obvious transforming effect on us in each area of our lives.

Is He doing that in your life? Do you see the evidence of the Spirit’s work in you, again, not in some ecstatic way, but in these common, seen by all ways? Mind and body.

George Croly says it well in this old hymn penned in 1854.

*Spirit of God, who dwells within my heart,  
wean it from sin, through all its pulses move.  
Stoop to my weakness, mighty as you are,  
and make me love you as I ought to love.*

*I ask no dream, no prophet ecstasies,  
no sudden rending of the veil of clay,  
no angel visitant, no opening skies;  
but take the dimness of my soul away.*

*Did you not bid us love you, God and King,  
love you with all our heart and strength and mind?  
I see the cross— there teach my heart to cling.  
O let me seek you and O let me find!*

*Teach me to feel that you are always nigh;  
teach me the struggles of the soul to bear,  
to check the rising doubt, the rebel sigh;  
teach me the patience of unceasing prayer.*

*Teach me to love you as your angels love,  
one holy passion filling all my frame:  
the fullness of the heaven-descended Dove;  
my heart an altar, and your love the flame.*

Make It Personal: Consider two wonderful implications.

1. *If I have Christ, I have the Holy Spirit.*
2. *If I have the Holy Spirit, I can have hope in the struggle.*

Let’s sing together the little chorus I taught you last week. The words are simple, memorable, and essential.

First verse: *Christ is all I need. Christ is all I need. Christ is all I need. Christ is all I need.*

Second verse: *You died for me. You were nailed to the tree. You rose from the dead. You are coming again.*

Third verse: *Christ is all we need. Christ is all we need. Christ is all we need. Christ is all we need.*

**Closing Song:** #210 "*Jesus Paid It All*" (all four verses)

**Communion**

**Member care announcement** (no livestream)

**This evening:** *2 Peter 2:1-10a* Preachers in Training