

LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

THE SPIRIT WHO GIVES LIFE V 1-4

Do you remember the Bali 9? Those young men condemned to death in Indonesia for drug smuggling? Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran were the 2 Australians in the group.

They had broken the law and they had to pay the penalty. It is hard to imagine the fear and dread with which they must have faced their future. Imagine their relief and joy if the judge had pardoned them and set them free.

But despite their good behaviour in prison, and all the efforts others made on their behalf they were executed by firing squad on the 29th April 2015.

We have broken Gods law and God has declared that the penalty for sin is death. We were under condemnation. There was no escape, nothing we could do to earn our pardon. Then we read these wonderful verses at the beginning of Romans chapter 8.

“There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus”

No Condemnation! Savour those words. We have been declared not guilty.

No condemnation! Not because the judge has decided to overlook our sin and by- pass the law but because He has paid for our sin fully by “sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be sin offering for us. We are under a new law, “through Christ the law of the Spirit who gives life has set us free from the law of sin and death. “

We all know about the law of gravity. If I drop something it falls.

If I drop something it will fall. If I catch it then the law of gravity has been replaced by another law that saves the object from smashing on the floor.

So the law of the Spirit who gives life overcomes the sin-death law to which we would otherwise be subject.

No condemnation! What comfort in these words. The slate has been wiped clean. I stand forgiven. Set free from guilt and shame. "...the righteous requirement of the law has been FULLY met in us who live not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."

We need to take hold of that truth when guilt stops me from living in the freedom of grace. I need to take hold of that truth when self-condemnation cripples my joy. I know how often I can feel that I am not good enough, not spiritual enough. I am selfish and self-centred. A lover of comfort. I care more for what people think of me than I do of pleasing God. When I am tempted to live driven by guilt I need to come in repentance to God. To remember that I live under the new law of the Spirit who gives life.

How do we live out this new life?

We are not saved by the Spirit's work in our lives to then continue to live in our own strength. Verse 4 says "And so he condemned sin in the flesh in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us ,who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.'

What does it mean to "live according to the Spirit"? The rest of Chapter 8 helps to answer that question.

THE SPIRIT AND SANCTIFICATION or LIVING ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is at work in our lives to make to grow us into the family likeness.

I remember years ago watching a father and son. The dad was walking down to receive communion at church and his 3 year old son was walking behind him. There was no mistaking whose son he was! The physical resemblance was there but even more noticeable was the way they moved. That little boy had the walk!

God has worked powerfully to bring us from death to life through the life giving Spirit. He now works in us, empowering us so can now begin to live out this new life, growing in Christlikeness. Developing the walk!

Let's see what Paul has to say about living according to the Spirit.....

1. A new mindset. Romans 8:5-7

Rom 8:5 talks about two sorts of people. "Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live according to the spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires."

There are two masters. People are either governed by the flesh, our old sinful nature, or they are governed by the Spirit.

We often think of a governor as being a political leader. The one who is in authority to make decisions and control policy, to rule.

A governor is also a small device that can be fitted to an engine to control the speed. It limits how fast the driver can go no matter how hard they push on the pedal.

Both images have that idea of control. Just as the Governor in a car sets the speed that the engine cannot exceed, so the Spirit sets our minds in a new direction. Before our new birth Paul says that...

V 7,8 Our old mind The mind ruled by the flesh..... was hostile to God, rebellious. It didn't submit to God's law, in fact it was powerless to submit to God's law. It was impossible for us to please God

God gives us a new mind set.

We begin to think differently. In my version the verse says we "have our minds set". In the original Greek the sense is that this is a work of the Spirit. Changing our minds so that our attention is directed to what He desires. I have my clock radio set on ABC classical music so when it goes off that is what I hear. I sort of get the picture of the Spirit tuning my mind to be able to listen to him and to be able to respond to God's truths. What is it that the Spirit desires ...He desires to glorify Jesus. I loved that illustration that Dave shared last week. The Spirit being like the spotlight that is directed on the 3 sisters. The spotlight focusses our attention on Jesus.

Of course this something we can be actively involved in as we cooperate with the Spirit's work in our lives. We can make choices about what we set our minds on what I focus on.

Are you taking time to spend time with Jesus?

The outcome is worth it. Life and peace. This life is pleasing to God.

Where is your mind set??

2. Living According to the Spirit. A new power Verses 9-12

Paul wants the Romans to know that if they are in the realm of the Spirit, if Christ is in them, then the Holy spirit is in them. God lives in them through the person of his Spirit. He wants them to know that they have not just been saved from the penalty of sin but they have been saved from its power. V11 says:” And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies because of his spirit who lives in you. “

He doesn't want them to miss this point. God, who by his power raised Jesus from the dead, will by that same power give life to their mortal bodies.

Not only do they have a new pardon, they also have a new power.

The same is true for us.

Paul expresses this new relationship with God in several ways but they all reflect the closeness of the relationship that the believer has with God through the indwelling presence of the Spirit. He talks about: In Christ. Having the spirit of Christ. The spirit of God lives in you. Christ in you. The Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you. Being in Christ and having Christ living in me could be thought of like 2 hands interlinked. Is my right in my left or my left in the right? We in Christ and he is in us through the person of the Spirit. God himself lives in us through the presence of his Spirit.

Remember what Jesus promised his disciples in John 14:23 “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.”

Are you “in Christ Jesus” (verse 1) Pardoned because Jesus has fully paid for your sin? Brought from death to life.?

Then he is empowering you to live out this new life by his indwelling Spirit

3. Living According to the Spirit. We have a new obligation.

V:12,13

This next section starts with a THEREFOR. It is the application of these amazing truths.

1. We no longer have an obligation to live according to the flesh. We don't owe it anything. V 12 Paul calls on his readers to make the choice not to live according to the flesh. He tells them to "if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live".

We still live in a fallen world and we all know that our old sinful natures are still there. Jesus has won the war against sin and death, but there are still skirmishes going on in our hearts while we live in this time between Jesus resurrection and his return to take us home!

What does it mean to put to death the misdeeds of the body? It sounds pretty final and brutal. Like putting them before a firing squad and sometimes it may be like that. More often I think, we will find that it is a daily choice of not giving into the old sins so that their hold on us weakens and they die from starvation.

How?? "by the Spirit". We don't resort to doing this in our own strength..... that would be relying on the flesh. We do it by relying on the power of God's Spirit who now lives in us. Learning to listen to the Spirit's prompting in our hearts and asking for his help to say no and to choose the path of life and peace. To love sin less and to love Christ more.

4. Living by the Spirit of God.. We have a new relationship with God. V 14-27

FOR ...

And there follows more encouragement to live lives of obedience and service to God.

“For those who are led by the Spirit are the children of God”

The Spirit not only empowers us but leads us in this new life.

And the Spirit has brought about our adoption as Gods children.

It is through the Spirit that we can use that intimate name for God, Father. So when we pray

It is the Spirit himself that enables to do that. Don't take this for granted. It is a sign of the new birth that we have and the new relationship that we have entered into.

Packer says:

Christians may be tempted to doubt the truths of our new relationship with God “to fear that fellowship with God will be broken because of their wobbly up and down sort of Christian lives. (I really like that description. Does that describe how you feel sometimes?) Packer goes on to say, “But Paul answers that fear by pointing out that we have been adopted for all eternity into God's family and that God's Spirit in us constantly reassures us that we are his children.”

Being his children gives a picture of the intimacy and trust that we can have in our relationship with our mighty God but it also means that we are heirs. We will one day share in his glory. What a hope we haveand so Paul can write in verse 18 “I consider that our present suffering is not worth comparing to the hope that will be revealed to us.

In the meantime the Spirit helps us as wait for the time when we not only be saved form the penalty of sin, and it's power but also its very presence. In our humanness we don't know how to pray

as we ought but the Spirit intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. v26,27. What an encouragement in our weak and faltering prayers the Spirit takes them and intercedes on my behalf.

No wonder that Paul finishes this chapter with words of such encouragement in verses 28-37. God has wonderfully pardoned us through the work of Jesus on the cross and brought us to new life through the work of the Spirit. He empowers us to live out this new life as he lives in us through the Spirit. He assures us of his commitment to us as our Father.

Because of this we can say with absolute confidence that “All things work together for those who love him and have been called according to his purpose”.

We can face the future knowing that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord! He lives in us in the person of his Spirit!

How can anything separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.