“Led By The Spirit”

September 9, 2018

Matthew 4:1-10

Please find with me the eighth chapter of Romans.

Did you know that two-thirds of a human being is invisible? This is what you are according to the Bible. I Thessalonians 5:23 *“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole* ***spirit and soul and body*** *be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

You see, you can’t see or touch your spirit or your soul. Let me show you what this means. Through your body you sense the physical world around you. You feel cold or you feel warm. Your soul is your personality. And your soul includes these three things: your mind, your emotions, and your will. And your human spirit is the part of you that enables you to sense right and wrong as well as to be aware of the existence and presence of God.

Now, in order to live as the LORD directs, you need to operate your life from your spirit to your soul to your body and not from body to soul to spirit. By that I mean listen to God’s quiet voice speaking to your human spirit first. Then let your spirit influence your soul and your soul will then influence your body.

When was the last time you engaged your mind in a decision and then wondered whether or not you should do it?” That’s operating from the soul. That’s putting your soul ahead of your spirit. And when you do that; when you leave your spirit out of the equation, you end up justifying yourself with lots of justifications and reasons. I know. I’ve done it many times, just like you have.

Let’s say, for example, you arrived at work tomorrow morning and immediately you are confronted with a huge issue. If you proceed to deal with that issue only with your mind or even your body, you will, likely, suffer lots of grief in your spirit. But, if you, first, stop yourself and listen to the LORD speaking to your spirit, you will then be able to then use your mind as well as your body to solve the problem simply because you operated from your spirit first. And, you’ll be solving the problem with the strength that comes from the LORD.

I’ve titled today’s sermon “Led By The Spirit.” Shall we pray?

Deep within you is your spirit. It is beyond your feelings, beyond your imagination, and even beyond your desires. This is the most critical part of your makeup as a human being. Today’s sermon, as you will see, is first a message to your spirit; then a message to your mind, your emotions, and your will, followed by action.

Think with me about the wonder of God’s creative designs. You are a spirit with a soul inside a body. You are an ingenious creation of a Perfect, loving Creator. He made you exactly as you are. And He also made you for Himself.

Let’s read Romans eight and see just how much these words affect your spirit as well as your mind; verse nine.

Romans 8:9 *“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. (10) And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*

*(11) But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. (12) Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.*

*(13) For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. (14) For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*

*(15) For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. (16) The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: …”*

These few verses describe at least some of the reasons why God has sent His Spirit to indwell you. But, we want more than reasons. We want to operate our lives, as Paul says here, “spirit-first.”

Here’s what the LORD says in this paragraph.

First, some are “in the Spirit” and some are “in the flesh” verse 9.

So, where are you? Those who are “in the flesh” are those who are saved. You might be a Church member. You might be very religious. You might pray. But, if you are “in the flesh,” you are not yet saved. How do I know that? Listen again to the words of verse nine. Romans 8:9 *“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”*

All of those who have the Holy Spirit in them belong to Christ. Those who don’t are not His.

And did you notice the same Person is referred to by two descriptions? The Holy Spirit is both “the Spirit of God” and “the Spirit of Christ.” That’s because God is a Trinity, three Persons and One God at the same time.

God, the Holy Spirit, the Spirt of God, the Spirit of Christ dwells within those who are quote “in the Spirit.” And, those who are “in the flesh” do not belong to the LORD.

So, you can see that this is the major distinction between those in your household who are Christians and those who are not. Christians belong to Christ. And where the Christian is, the Holy Spirit is.

And we know that God loves the entire world. But only those who have repented and received Jesus as their LORD and Savior are quote “His.”

So, the question is simple. “Who do you belong to?” “Are you His?” You ask “How do I know if I am His?” Answer: you are indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

Can you see how these words reach past your mind into your spirit? Today, if you’ve never received Jesus as your personal LORD and Savior, you need to linger no longer. Trust His crucifixion and trust His death and trust His resurrection and trust His ascension by acknowledging that you are a sinner and that you need Him to save you. He will.

First, some are “in the Spirit” and some are “in the flesh.”

Second, since Christ is in you, your body is dead and your spirit is alive; verse ten. Romans 8:10 *“And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.”*

You were born in sin and you sinned by choice, by habit, by nature, and by history. That’s because sin indwells your body. And sin always brings death. But on the other hand, once you are saved and have become righteous by simple faith in Christ, you have life in your spirit. Your spirit is alive to God.

Nothing can be more wonderful to a person than to have life and righteousness. You have God’s life and God’s righteousness. You are a new creation in Christ. So, says Paul, consider this simple truth. Your body is dead. That means sin operates through your body. And every time you give in the sin, you are, in essence, giving in to death.

But, conversely, every time you give in to righteousness, you are, in essence, giving in to life.

First, I am “in the Spirit.”

Second, Christ’s righteousness is alive in me.

Third, the Holy Spirit will one day quicken your body just like He has quickened your spirit.

Today, you have a body that is called “the body of this death.” When Christ comes to rapture His Church, your body will be quickened, which means, “made alive.”

There are lots of reasons why Jesus rose from the dead. And here’s just one more. He intends to quicken your mortal body and make it an in corruptible, immortal body.

Romans 8:11 *“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.*

I Corinthians 15:51 *“Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, (52) in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. (53) For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

*(54) So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. (55) O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?*

*(56) The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. (57) But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

The Christian is the only one who can truly rejoice at a funeral. Why? Because the death of the body is not the end. God has a plan for your life even after your death.

First, some are “in the Spirit” and some are “in the flesh.”

Second, since Christ is in you, your body is dead and your spirit is alive.

Third, the Holy Spirit will one day quicken your body just like He has quickened your spirit.

Fourth, since the Holy Spirit indwells you, you are obligated to live according to the Spirit and you are not obligated to live according to the flesh; verse twelve. Romans 8:12 “*(12) Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. (13) For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”*

The term “mortal” comes from the Latin. It means “death.” Your body is a “death” body. So, Christian, why would you ever think you are obligated to live according to the influence of the flesh? It’s not the normal Christian life. The normal Christian life is to live according to the influence of the Spirit Who lives within you.

So, ask yourself this. “Am I obligated to the Spirit?” If you answer yourself “Yes, I am obligated to the Spirit,” then completely surrender yourself to Him. He is perfectly able to handle anything that comes into your life.

Now, remember, these words are words to the Christian. So, obviously, the Christian is tempt-able. You still have sin dwelling in your mortal body. So, “put it to death” every time you sense yourself being influenced by it. Here’s Romans 6:11 *“Likewise reckon [count true what is true] ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. (12) Let not sin [stop letting sin] therefore reign [have dominion] in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts [desires] thereof.”*

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Second, since Christ is in you, your body is dead and your spirit is alive.

Third, the Holy Spirit will one day quicken your body just like He has quickened your spirit.

Fourth, since the Holy Spirit indwells you, you are obligated to live according to the Spirit.

Fifth, if you do this, then you are being “led by the Spirit”; verse fourteen. Romans 8:14*“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. (15) For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. (16) The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: …”*

Oh, how much a Christian misses out on when he chooses to disregard the Holy Spirit’s ministry within him1

Everyone here today who abides in the words of Romans 8:9-13 is “led by the Spirit of God.” How do you know that? By one word. It’s the word “for.” Romans 8:14*“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God…*

Far too often those who preach the Bible on the topic of the leading of the Holy Spirit completely miss out on the “leading of the Spirit.” That’s because we make His leading something rare or quote “extra.” The leading of the Spirit is not an extra or even a “once in a while” experience for the Christian. It’s the normal way for a Christian to live.

Remember this. Whose house you are living in? Stop living inside His house as though you own it. You don’t. I Corinthians 6:19 *“What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? (20) For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.”*

Folks, when you finally see that your way doesn’t work, you will cry out to the LORD for His way. But, for some of us, it takes years. We listen to far too many preachers. Instead, be led by the Spirit. Ask yourself. *“Is the Holy Spirit influencing me right now or am I being influenced by the flesh?”* It’s not complicated. Rather, it’s a matter of complete surrender. You see, the Holy Spirit, Who lives in you, is the owner of your body and your spirit. And He is not content with partial control. He wants full control of you. Nothing else is acceptable. Nothing else works. Nothing else is worth even considering when you see Who He is and what He wants to do.

Recently Janet and I got to share with two ladies from town here about the LORD. And here’s some of what we said at the beginning of the conversation. The difference between every religion in the world and having a relationship with God is this. Every religion says “we do something for God.” Christianity says “God does something for us.”

If Christians could see this difference, it will make living the Christian life a blessing and not a bore. When Christians come to see the message of “God does it all when we surrender all,” when we will experience the fruits of the One Who lives within us: love, joy, peace, longsuffering-patience, gentleness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control, and such things as these.

Jesus compares this relationship to the relationship a vine has to its branches. Here’s what He says. John 15:4 *“Abide in [remain, stay, linger, and do not leave the fellowship of] me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. (5) I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.”*

You see, the Spirit Who indwells you is the Spirit of Jesus Himself. You are living in His house. And just as Jesus is totally dependent upon His Father, you, when you are led by His Spirit, find yourself, totally dependent upon Jesus. Can a branch do anything? A branch can’t even fight against the vine. All the branch can do is wait on the Vinedresser (your Heavenly Father) to tend to you (His branch). Your calling is to simply “let Him tend to you. He knows exactly how to nourish and trim and work on you. You see your Heavenly Father is able to work on millions of branches at the very same moment. He can work on Chinese branches as well as Peruvian branches as well as Canadian branches as well as American branches. “Let Him have His way with you.”

And here’s a word from the OT Prophet Zechariah. Zechariah 4:6 *“Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by [human] might, nor by [human] power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.”*

Now, who here is choosing to be led by the Spirit today? Who hears the Spirit speaking in his or her spirit? Who here wants to life of the Spirit of Romans 8:9-14? It’s already yours. You have just been too “self-oriented” to receive it.

Let go of your own life. Here’s how Jesus puts it.

Mark 8:35 *“For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. (36) For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul [life]? (37) Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul [life]?”*

God has created you with a spirit and His Spirit is right now dwelling within your spirit. And, if you are operating by letting the flesh influence you, you will not quote being led by the Spirit. You see, God’s voice is not audible (Yes, is was while Jesus was on earth). Yes, He does speak through thunder and a whirlwind and an earthquake. But, His voice is quiet and almost imperceptible. More often than not, He speaks directly to you through the words in your Bible. Those of you who don’t have time for His Word will not be led by His Spirit. So, when you have something to do this week, stop, be still and listen to the LORD speaking to your spirit. Even ask yourself “What does the LORD say about it in His Word?”

Here’s the prayer for this week. “Holy Spirit, I’m listening. I completely surrender the rights to myself to You. Speak to me. And I will follow Your leading.”

I can’t imagine the Holy Spirit being anything but ready to head your cry.

Shall we pray?

Hymn # 383 “Fill Me Now”