

Romans 8:9-11 ESV

9 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. **10** But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. **11** If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus[a] from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

We have been discovering together how God sought to dwell with his people from the beginning of creation. Now, I fully recognize that this may be an idea that seems foreign to many of us. Many individuals read about God, especially in the Old Testament, and conclude that he is unapproachable. However, if you read scripture more carefully, you will find God has moved to reconcile with humanity. More specifically, God has been on a mission to restore Eden and walk with us, as he did with Adam and Eve in the beginning.

While God has been on a mission to reconcile his creation, he has also been seeking to make his people holy. This is where our hang-ups often occur. God is holy and can not have fellowship with unholiness, so he has always made provisions to set his people apart so he could dwell with them.

In the garden, he covers the nakedness of Adam and Eve with the skins of an animal. The sacrifices allowed God to dwell among his people in the tabernacle and the temple, but as we learned last week, "it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins." (Heb 10:4) God only allowed those sacrifices to provide a covering; what was required was a perfect and sinless sacrifice, so God the Father sent his only Son who came to earth and willingly laid down his life for the forgiveness of sins. Jesus said, "**18** No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father." (John 10:18)

Now, it would be easy to think that that is the end of the story, but in reality, it is only the beginning because not only did God save us, but he saved us for a purpose, and that purpose looks much like the purpose he gave Adam and Eve in the garden. God redeemed his original plan, and the mission given to Adam and Eve is now given to those who believe in His Son. We are to carry out the command to be 'fruitful and multiply' (Gen 1:28) by sharing our hope with others so they might experience new life.

There's only one minor issue...

How? How are we going to complete this incredible task on our own? I grew up in church... I experienced people as they really are. Surely, this can't be God's plan, can it? Let me tell you from Ephesians 3:10, God in his infinite wisdom knows exactly what he is doing through His people, the church. We are told...

10 that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

In case you have any doubt, this is the same feeling the disciples had when Jesus was discussing in John 16 his ascension back to heaven to be seated at the Father's right hand. They didn't want Jesus to go. Can you blame them? We've all felt that way at some point in our lives. We've been given a task, and barely the training required to complete the task, but then someone tells us we are on our own. The feeling of terror comes over us as we are bound to mess up.

After Jesus explains that he must go and prepares his disciples for his departure the disciples are filled with sorrow. Until Jesus says something that should send us to our knees in amazement. He tells the disciples that it's better that he goes because if he doesn't go, then the helper can't come. (John 16:7) Jesus promises them something that we should be thankful for as the modern church; he promises them and us the Holy Spirit. Not Jesus, who is only in one place at a time, but the Spirit of God himself, who takes up residence in the life of every believer at the moment of their salvation, guiding them and leading them throughout life.

Consider with me then how we, as the modern church, have diminished the role of the Spirit of God, the third person of the Trinity to the degree that the Holy Spirit is almost unrecognizable. We have reduced the Spirit to the likeness of a fairy who gives us goosebumps during a 'powerful' worship service or a genie who grants us wishes, or worse yet, we confuse the Spirit of God with the voice of our conscience conveniently giving us permission to do or not do what we want to.

With this in mind, let's look closer at these three verses from the passage today to see exactly what the Spirit's role is in a believer's life.

Every Believer is Indwelt by the Spirit-

9 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.

The first thing to recognize is that there is perhaps no clearer verse in scripture than this one to affirm that every believer is filled with the Spirit of God at the moment of their salvation. Yes,

perhaps there are moments when we experience the nearness of God more so than other moments, but do not be fooled. Every believer is filled with the Spirit. To not be is to not be saved.

Paul reminds us that we are no longer in the flesh but in the Spirit. When he says, "If in fact", it should be interpreted as... Because Paul is confident that God is dwelling in these Roman Christians as I am of you this morning. He reiterates his original point by saying that anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. Note the changing of the Spirit, Spirit of God, and Spirit of Christ. This is simply how closely each member of the Godhead is at work in tandem and interchangeably in the life of every believer.

Simply put, to not have the Spirit of Christ is to not belong to him. Christian, don't listen to me; listen to Paul's words. You are filled with the Spirit.

Secondly... **The Spirit Applies the Life of Christ to Every Believer**

10 But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

The Spirit of God accomplished two things in this passage that I think we could easily miss. The Spirit of God is responsible for applying the life of Christ to our lives. That is significant because, number one, when God looks at us, the Spirit of God, which has taken residence in our lives, the Father looks at us as if he were looking at his Son. Positionally, we are viewed as righteous in God's eyes.

Secondly, not only does he apply the life of Christ to us so that God views us as righteous, but he applies the life of Christ to us so that we are empowered to live like Christ more and more. So, as we live for God, it's as if Christ were living through us. The Spirit of God, which again has taken residence in our lives, is now causing us to live like Christ. No longer are we forced to live in sin according to the law; rather, we have positionally fulfilled the law in Christ and are liberated to love God and our neighbors. The Holy Spirit is not an experience, he is life!

Now bear in mind what Paul said in **Romans 7, "18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. 19 For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. 20 Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me."**

I am convinced that Paul is being honest about his struggle to try and live for God in his flesh, but more and more, we are learning to live in the Spirit, and less and less, we see this struggle

playing out in our lives. It's a process that we will never complete on this side of eternity, and yet we should see progress in our lives even if, at times, it feels like 1 step forward and 2 steps back.

Finally... **The Spirit Gives Life to Every Believer**

11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus[a] from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

Not only is the believer filled with the Spirit of God, but the Spirit applies the life of Christ to us and empowers us to live like Christ, and the Spirit gives us newness of life. Similar to the Spirit's role at the dawn of creation, when we see the Spirit hovering over the waters involved in the creation (Gen 1:2), here we see again the Spirit involved in creating life, now in the believer. Consider what Paul says in 8:11, "The same Spirit which raised Christ from the dead is now at work in you."

This means two things: as our earthly bodies pass away, it is the Spirit that allows us to be resurrected like Christ into an incorruptible transformed body.

However, it also has implications right here right now. The Spirit has given us the very life of Christ so that our lives give way to life. No longer is our work futile and fruitless; instead, we are involved in the very same work of Christ, redeeming all of creation and making it holy so that God can dwell with his people. Practically speaking, this impacts our relationships, our marriages, our homes, and our workplaces. We are given a similar call to that of Adam and Even in the garden, and we are empowered by the very Spirit of God to do it!

With this in mind, let's go back to the mount of olives and be reminded of what Jesus said to his disciples in **Matthew 28:18-20**, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.**19** Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in[a] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

The command given to Adam and Eve to be 'fruitful & multiply' has now been given to the church. We have been empowered by the Spirit of God and given everything we need to accomplish this incredible task. Perhaps you, like me, sometimes wonder if God knows what he's doing. Look around the room for a minute. This is God's plan. This group of individuals, together with all of the churches around the world, will carry forth the gospel into the dark

places and see the Spirit of God “who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.” (Romans 4:17)

Listen to the words of C.S Lewis- "It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest most uninteresting person you can talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare. All day long we are, to some degree, helping each other to one or the other of these destinations. It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all of our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics. There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations - these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit - immortal horrors or everlasting splendors."

What I said earlier about the church. It's true. The church can be a tough place where horrible things can happen, but it's the church Jesus says, "The gates of hell will not prevail against." (Matt. 16:18) I have to believe, and I do, that God knows what he's doing, that he has given us his Spirit, and that it's through the church that God will expand his Kingdom to the end of the earth, redeeming a people for himself and making them holy as he is holy so we can all dwell together with God in eternity.

The Spirit- Fills, Applies, and Gives Life to Every Believer