



HICKORY GROVE

BAPTIST CHURCH

True Christianity – Part 2

November 10, 2019

Romans 8:5-11

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⁵For 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. ⁶For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. ⁸Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

⁹You, 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. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹If 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.

(Pastor prays)

This passage is filled with life and light and hope. Here is real encouragement and true Christianity for every worn-out mother and burned out dad. Here is clean pure water to drink for your soul, for every unmarried Christian who's striving to live for Christ in a world that keeps saying you're alone. For every Christian student who feels the constant pressure of sin closing in on you, this passage is a lifeline and a rock under your feet. It will keep you from sinking. For every secret sinner who carries a load of emotional guilt, for every person who's been slighted by racism or saddled with anxiety or feels like they're drowning in the deep waters of depression, here is the life raft that says, "Hey you're gonna be OK."

If it's true for Kanye West, it's true for us! Jesus is King and His people are protected and provided for. And His people are headed somewhere. True Christianity takes a room full of

people, like this church, different people, and brings us together as one at the cross of Jesus Christ. If you are a Christian, you are now surrounded by brothers and sisters in Christ. This is your family and you know about family: you don't choose them, but you do love them.

In the passage that we talked about last week, Paul emphasized those living in the flesh without Christ and without real hope, and he concluded his argument with a real negative tone in verse 8 by saying those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

It is a terrible thing to believe in God and yet be in the flesh and to feel the weight of living and yet know that your life, no matter how much good you do, will never please God. And I'm asking you today to turn and receive the free grace of God found at the cross of Jesus Christ. And for all of you who are believers, I want you to take great courage and hope in knowing that the same spirit that raised Jesus from the dead is living in you.

Real Christianity is a Miracle of God's Spirit

In Christ, you are different.

Ray Ortlund was right when he said this passage is filled with grandeur. Besides God, the greatest reality in the entire universe is your soul. Let's go back and get the first part of verse 9 in context. And to do that we have to back up to verse 8. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But verse 9 says, you, however, are not in the flesh but in the spirit. That little phrase in verse 9 is a sharp contrast that says, "Hey, you're not like those who are dead in sin." Paul is putting confidence into the heart of that little church in Rome, He even uses the emphatic "you." They are like us. When you are in Christ, you aren't bound to the flesh, you aren't characterized by the flesh, you don't belong to the flesh. You are different. It's true that if we do not have Christ's spirit in us, then we do not belong to Christ at all. But every true Christian has received the Holy Spirit. John 14:17 says, *even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.*

Jesus promised to be with you and in you so that every move you make and every breath you take is a supernatural Jesus-influenced move. And it makes you different so that you do everything differently. When we are heartbroken, we don't weep as those who have no hope. If we have enemies, we love them. If people persecute us, we pray for them. If you're a husband, you actually love your wife as Christ does the church. If you are a wife, you lovingly

submit to your husband as the church does to Christ. If you are single, you find joyful contentment in Jesus. If you are a student, you make sure no one despises you because of your youth, but you set an example for the believers in conduct and in love, in faith and purity. When you are in Christ, you are different! You are slow to become angry, quick to forgive and seek to honor Jesus in every single circumstance. And you do this not because you're so strong but because, according to verse 11, the same spirit that raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you right this second. Real Christianity is a miracle of God's spirit. Thank God that in Christ you are different.

In Christ, you belong.

There are two great words in verse 9 and also in verse 11 that speak to the great security and confidence that God gives us in Christ. And the Holy Spirit's confidence is the antidote to anxiety. If anxiety is a poison, then these two words are designed to neutralize it. The words are *dwell* and *belong* . *Dwell* is the primary one. You will see it once in verse 9 and twice in verse 11, and each time Paul uses the word "dwell," he is describing the way we are filled with the Holy Spirit.

But before I deal with the word "dwell," I want to think with you about the word "belong." Let's read verse 9. *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. Anyone who does not have the spirit of Christ, does not belong to Him. But the opposite is true as well. Anyone who has the spirit of Christ, belongs to Him.* What a great word in a world of individuality and isolation, to belong is a soul-satisfying truth. To know that I'm not alone and am loved unconditionally and forgiven freely at the cross of Christ. Isn't that what the Lord said to his people in Isaiah 43:1-2? *But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. 2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.*

If that was true for the rebelling Israel, how much more is it true for those who have turned from sin and have received Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit! We need to see ourselves belonging to Christ. We need to see ourselves as Christ's possession. Surely that's what Paul meant in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. *Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the*

Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. That's the word "belong." It's good to know that you belong to the God of the universe who loves you with an everlasting love in Jesus.

There's another word in this passage that speaks to our belonging to God in Christ and it's the word "dwell." Let's read verses 9 and 11. 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.* 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.*

There is so much here in these two verses. For instance, verse 9 teaches us that several different expressions are synonyms. Being in the Spirit is the same as having the Spirit in us. The Spirit of God is also called the Spirit of Christ. To have the *Spirit* of Christ in us is to have *Christ* in us.

This reminds us that Christianity isn't how *we* obtain God, it's how *God* obtains *us*. That word "dwell" comes from the word "house." When you put your faith in Christ, it means that God the Spirit has taken up residence in you and this is where He lives. That's confidence. This is also a theological passage where the Trinity is on full display. What the Father does, He does through the Son. What the Son does, He does through the Spirit. Wherever each is, there the other is also! This is our great triune God who saves us, sanctifies us and keeps us eternally secure. But we aren't just talking theology. This truth has direct practical effects. You are different and you belong.

In Christ, you are alive.

Verse 10 speaks to the active righteousness of Christ. We are not just saved by His death on the cross; we are saved by His perfect righteousness mentioned at the end of verse 10. Even though our physical bodies are dying and without Christ we are dead in sin, verse 10 says we are alive because of the finished work of Jesus.

That's the Great Exchange. He who knew no sin became sin so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. Another beautiful consequence of being filled with the Spirit is found in verse 11. As you read it, see that two times in verse 11 Paul says that God raised Jesus from the dead and He will give life to your mortal bodies. This is the Gospel, to have life *now* and to

have life to *come*. Our bodies are mortal because of Adam's sin, but our souls are alive because of Christ's righteousness and resurrection.

The resurrecting Father loves us and the resurrected Son lived and died for us, and the spirit of resurrection dwells in us. Because God so loved the world that He gave His only son that whoever believes in Him would not perish but have eternal life. And that if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

(Pastor prays)