

If the Spirit of God Lives in You

Thomas Robinson, *Embraced by a God of Love 2*, October 4, 2015

Romans 8:5-11

⁵ For those who **live lives determined by flesh**

think in a way that can't see beyond the things of the flesh,
but those who **live according to Spirit**

think in a way opened to things that only the Spirit can do.

⁶ For it is **death** to limit the thinking to its enslavement to the flesh,

but **to open your thinking to all that the Spirit does is to receive true life and peace.**

⁷ For the pattern of thought of the flesh with its self-focus

is hostile to the very reality of God being God.

It does not submit to God's will expressed in the Law;

it even blocks off the possibility.

⁸ Those who live in the realm of the flesh and its small gods

simply cannot be the people the one true God created them to be.

⁹ **You**, however, **do not live lives determined by flesh**

but **lives encompassed by Spirit,**

if in fact **God's Spirit dwells in you.**

Anyone who does not have **the Messiah's Spirit** is not part of him.

¹⁰ But **if Messiah is in you**, although the body is dying, still struggling with sin,

the presence of God's Spirit is life itself

because of God's faithful righteousness.

¹¹ **If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you,**

he who raised Messiah from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies

through his **Spirit** who dwells in you.

Romans 8:38-39

³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Messiah Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:1-4

¹ Now, however, nothing can bring condemnation for those who are in Messiah Jesus! ² For now the law, under the power of the Spirit who gives the life in Messiah Jesus, has itself set you free from that same law as it was wielded by sin to bring death. ³ For God has done what was impossible for the law on its own to do, because it was weakened by the flesh. By sending his own Son in flesh so like our sin-enslaved flesh and to deal with sin, God condemned sin itself in that very flesh. ⁴ God's purpose was that his faithful righteousness promised by giving the law might come to its full reality in us, who walk a path not determined by the flesh but empowered by the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 3:16

¹⁶ Do you not know that you (pl) are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you (pl)?

2 Corinthians 6:16

¹⁶ For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." [Ezk 37:27; Ex 29:45].

Realizing What God has Done

Rom 8 focuses on the new reality brought about by what God has done in faithfulness to his promises long ago, now brought to full reality in Jesus the Messiah and the active work of God's Spirit. It deals with the deep/complex brokenness, sin, & suffering we're caught in.

Good guidance was not enough. Even God's Law could't free us from the enslavement, but it made the problem clear and distinct. It led up to God's coming to his people in Jesus.

In him uniquely, God did what no amount of guidance or law for us could do: God brought his own life and reality into the broken human situation. He took on himself our death.

He treated us not just as rebels but as beloved creatures enslaved by sin and death, and condemned sin itself. God stayed with us in his Spirit. God embraced us with his love.

A Mind Shaped by Reality

That reality shapes a way of thinking (*phronema*), of seeing ourselves and the world and God.

It says that we don't live in a closed world limited to the stuff we can touch and control.

It says the universe of God is far vaster and more loving than the world bounded by human desires, ambitions, violence, self-centeredness, aspirations – “the flesh.”

Paul knows that God is reality, but he sees most people living as though “flesh,” that closed frame of human power and gods, were everything. “Spirit” is not just another element of human potential, our “spirituality.” He is God's own life present in our dimension/life.

“Flesh” is a set of blinders. It limits us to seeing only the passing world from our limited perspective. It blocks off our view of true God who is life. It ultimately limits us to death.

We in the Spirit ... The Spirit in Us.

In 8:9 Paul challenges us to let the meaning of God's reality, God's work, God's embrace sink in. You are not “in flesh” but “in Spirit.” God's Spirit is the deepest reality of the world you really live in. You are “in Spirit” because that Spirit of God lives in you, Jesus' followers.

What the ancient Tabernacle and Temple pointed to comes to fulfillment in us and can be a reality for every person. We become the movable tent for a God who is always moving.

But even more, God begins a process of drawing us into his ultimate and eternal life in a way that keeps all the individuality and physicality that God created for us.

All of God and All of Us

Paul wants to make it clear that what happens when we trust in what Jesus has done in his life, teaching, death, and resurrection brings us into a full relationship with the whole, deep, complex reality of the One God revealed in scripture. He intentionally unfolds a variety of ways of describing the presence of God through the Messiah and the Spirit in our lives. We have no power to bring this about. It can only be a gift of God's grace.

But the meaning for us is profound. When the Spirit of the Messiah, who embodies God's people, is in us, we are part of him, belong to him. We share in all that he did and experienced and accomplished. Yes we still live in a mortal body that struggles with sin and will ultimately die physically, but the Messiah's presence means that the Spirit's unconquerable life is already present in our physical life, fulfilling God's ancient promises.

The Spirit encompasses even our dying bodies, just as He raised Jesus from the dead. We begin even now to participate in a life living in this physical world that will be renewed in the resurrection. Only the God who creates can overcome and reverse the power of death. A vast new world opens before us starting now. We live into that eternal life.