

Meet Your Psychiatrist: He Gives You Real Life

by Warren Wiersbe

The Holy Spirit gives us real life, freedom from the law of sin and death, and helps us understand our new life in Christ.

Duration: 47:25

Scripture: Romans 7:7

Topics: "Human Nature", "Spiritual Freedom"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the theme of Romans chapter seven, which is the inability of the law to control or change our old nature. He emphasizes that our old nature knows no law and that every time God says 'don't,' we are inclined to do it. The preacher also talks about the dissatisfaction we often feel with our own work, whether it be preaching sermons, writing articles, or creating art. He highlights the fear of death as a chain that binds both believers and unbelievers, emphasizing the importance of being prepared to die in order to truly live. Additionally, the preacher mentions the shackles of guilt, worry about the future, and the love of money as hindrances to experiencing the freedom and life that God desires for us.

Transcript

During these Sunday evenings, we're examining the work of the Holy Spirit. Our approach is just a little bit oblique. We're talking about the Holy Spirit as our psychiatrist.

I don't mean by that that God's people are in need of special therapy. I'm just simply suggesting that we have in the Holy Spirit the kind of person and the kind of power that we need. What we've been doing is taking the names of the Holy Spirit, and by examining these names, better understanding his nature and his ministry.

Tonight, Romans chapter 8, I'm going to read the first 13 verses, and we're going to talk about the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of life. There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh. God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the

things of the flesh.

But they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be fleshly minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God.

For it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. 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. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit, and I think that that should be lowercase s. I don't think he's talking about the Holy Spirit there.

I think he's talking about the human spirit. He's contrasting spirit and body. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

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 give life to your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors not to the flesh to live after the flesh. 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. Have you ever tried to define life? Webster tells us that life is, quote, this will edify you, an organismic state characterized by capacity for metabolism, growth, reaction to stimuli, and reproduction. I'd hate to cheer that at a basketball game.

Samuel Butler, the great moral philosopher, said that life is one long process of getting tired. W. S. Gilbert of the famous Gilbert and Sullivan team said, Life is a joke that's just begun. I was interested to discover what John Maysfield had to say about life.

As you know, he was the poet laureate of England up until his death. We're familiar with some of his poetry, I Must Go Down to the Seas Again. And Maysfield said, Life is a long headache in a noisy street.

And when I read that, I thought to myself, that's what you get for living in London. But when you read the New Testament, you don't find people defining life like that. Paul said, For to me, living is Christ.

It's a person. And dying is gain. Paul had the secret of life, the Holy Spirit of God.

Romans 8 is the great chapter in Romans on the Holy Spirit. Some 19 times in this chapter we find the Holy Spirit mentioned. The Holy Spirit of God is the spirit of life.

God has life in him, essentially. The life that you and I have, both physical and spiritual, is a gift. Only God has life essentially.

It says of Jesus Christ, In him was life. You can't say that of any of us. Our life is loaned to us.

We have the gift of eternal life, which we shall possess forever. But our physical life is loaned to us. We are stewards of the life that God has given to us.

You and I as parents do not create life. We just simply pass it along. That's all we can do.

We have not yet learned how to create life, and we haven't yet learned how to resurrect the dead. The Holy Spirit of God is the spirit of life. God wants us to live, not just to exist.

He wants us to live. In verse 2, Paul makes a tremendously important statement about life. He says, For the law or the principle of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

The key word here, of course, next to the word life, is the word free. God suggests to us here that life involves freedom from bondage. You can hardly say that a slave, chained and whipped, is really living.

Now, he may have physical life, but he's not really living. Living involves freedom from bondage. Now, sad to say, there are many Christian people who are not really living.

They're in bondage. And in the verses that we read tonight, the Apostle Paul suggests three shackles that the Holy Spirit of God breaks in our lives if we'll let him. Now, we're going to be wading through some rather heavy theological talk, so I trust you'll just focus all your attention on the word of God and let the Holy Spirit teach you tonight.

There are three shackles that keep people from the freedom and life that God really wants them to have. Shackle number one is guilt. Now, you would be amazed how many people live under a dark cloud of guilt.

You'll notice that Paul begins here with, There is therefore now no condemnation. Now, he's been talking all through these chapters about this matter of freedom from guilt. He says in verse 2 that there are two laws in contrast to each other and in conflict with each other.

There's the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, and there's the law of sin and death. Now, the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus means the principle of grace under which we live. The law of sin and death is God's law, God's moral law, that operates in our lives to reveal sin and to produce death.

Now, the law of sin and death is the law under which every unsaved person lives. The wages of sin is death, and the strength of sin is the law. Now, this leads us on a little excursion that I think is very important.

When God originally revealed his plan of salvation, he didn't say one word about law. When man sinned back in Genesis chapter 3, and God moved in on the scene, and here were Adam and Eve, and they had sinned, and God said something. God said, the seed of the woman is going to crush the serpent's head, and the serpent is going to bruise her seed's heel.

In other words, God made the promise that a redeemer was going to come. Now, Adam and Eve believed this promise. It's rather interesting that Adam called his wife's name Eve, which means life-giver.

God had said they were going to die, but Adam believed God's promise that she was going to produce seed. He said, well, if God said it, I believe it, therefore I'm going to name her life-giver. He was saved because he believed God's promise.

Now, God made a promise that a redeemer was going to come. Then he chose Abraham because through Abraham, this redeemer was going to be born. Jesus was not born a Gentile, he was born a Jew.

And God said to Abraham, through your seed, all the nations of the earth are going to be blessed, not just the Jewish people, but the Gentiles. And God didn't say one word about law. When God made his covenant with Abraham, you know what Abraham was doing? Sleeping.

Genesis chapter 15. A deep sleep came upon him. And while he was in this deep sleep, he had this vision with God.

And God said, I want you to know what I'm going to do. He talked about the future of the Jewish nation, and he made his covenant with Abraham. He didn't say, now Abraham, if you do this and if you don't do that, and if you don't eat this and don't do that, I will... Oh, no.

It was purely by grace. From the very beginning, God's relationship with man was purely by grace. Now that raises the question, why then the law? We can understand his promise to Adam and his promise to Abraham.

What about his precepts to Moses? Well, the word of God tells us why the law came in. The law came in to reveal sin. God never gave the law to save anybody.

The law came in to reveal sin and to condemn sinners. My friend, you can't save somebody until they're lost. You can't set them free until they know they're in bondage.

You can't heal them until they know they're diseased. You can't raise them from the dead until they know that they're dead. You've got to have sinners before you can have saints.

And so God added the law, God brought the law in as a revealer of sin and as a condemner of sinners. So God's law is the law of sin and death. It reveals sin and it condemns to death.

The soul that sinneth, it shall die. Now, God put something down inside of every one of us, saved and unsaved, that knows about this law. We call it conscience.

Conscience is that inward witness that condemns us when we've done wrong. In the early chapters of Romans, Paul says the Gentiles don't even have the law. God never gave the law to the Babylonians or the Egyptians or the Romans.

He gave the law to the Jews. But he said, interestingly enough, wherever you go among the Gentiles, you will find that they are holding these same precepts and they feel guilty when they break them. How come? It's written in their hearts.

It's conscience. I wish more were being said these days about conscience. We need to talk more about conscience.

Conscience is that inward monitor, that inward judge, that when we've done wrong, condemns us. Now, Paul is telling us here that every unsaved person lives under the law of sin and death, condemned, guilty. What do people do about their guilt? Let's just talk about unsaved people.

What do unsaved people do about their guilt? Here's somebody who feels very guilty about something. What can he do about it? Well, he can be crushed by it. I have met people who have just lived with their guilt and like a pressing heavy burden, it has just crushed them.

And they've lost their physical strength and their emotional power, and they're just done for. God never meant it to be like that. There are others who go the opposite extreme.

When they feel guilty, they try to escape it. And, of course, you can run off to some place of entertainment or you can get involved in some kind of activity and for a little while forget about your guilt. Did I not tell you about the man who was driving his truck down the highway and the motor was making noise? And not knowing how to fix the motor, he just pulled off to the side of the road and he loosened some of the mudguards and they made more noise than the motor and he couldn't hear anymore.

Now, some people do this about guilt. I do not want to be critical of our professional friends because I thank God for anybody who tries to help anybody with their problems. But I fear that sometimes professional counselors, psychiatrists and psychologists, don't deal with the causes of guilt, they just deal with the symptoms.

And if they can convince a person, oh, don't feel too badly about robbing, oh, don't feel too badly about what you did, after all, other people do it. If they can lower your standards enough, then you don't feel guilty anymore. Or if they can get you to do some kind of penance.

You remember the Charlie Brown comic strip where accidentally Charlie Brown hit Lucy in the face with his elbow. And of course, she went into one of her usual feminine hysterics, he hit me, he hit me, and he felt very guilty about this. So he goes to her psychiatric booth and he sits down and says to her, you know, I hit this girl.

About that point, she reaches right straight through and slams him right in the face. And he gets up from the ground and says, I'm cured, I'm cured. If we can do some kind of penance, if we can write an extra check for charity, or if we can do some kind of a penance, then we don't feel quite so guilty.

But all we're dealing with are the symptoms. We've got to deal with the causes, you see. Now, Paul is telling us here how God took care of the causes.

How God went right down to the very root of the thing so that nobody has to feel condemned. Now, at this point, I'm going to dare to disagree with traditional interpretation of Romans 1 through 13. For many, many years, I taught that Paul was talking about two kinds of Christians here, a carnal Christian and a spiritual Christian.

I don't think he's talking about that at all. Because several statements here he applies to everybody, not just to a few. I think Paul is talking in verses 1 through 13 about the saved man and the unsaved man.

Now, watch this. He contrasts them. He says in verse 1 that the saved man walks after the flesh.

The unsaved man walks after the flesh. The saved man walks after the spirit. Here are two spheres of life.

Now, he's not saying that the Christian is always spiritual. But what he's saying is the way of life for the unsaved person is flesh. That's what he lives for, his old nature.

It doesn't mean he's immoral necessarily. It doesn't mean he's a bank robber or a narcotic smuggler or anything like that. It just simply means he lives in the realm of the flesh.

Whereas the believer lives in the realm of the spirit. Verse 2, the unsaved man is under the law of sin and death. The saved man is under the law of the spirit of life.

Down in verse 5, the unsaved man minds the things of the flesh. The saved man minds the things of the spirit. Consequently, verse 6, the unsaved man, minding the things of the flesh, is headed for death.

The saved man, minding the things of the spirit, possesses life and peace. In other words, the saved man has life, God's life, and he has peace. Now, the unsaved man does not have peace because verse 7 says he's at enmity with God.

I can't conceive of a saved person, even a backslidden saved person, being at enmity with God. Disobedient to God, yes. But not at enmity with God.

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God. It is not subject to the law of God. Neither indeed can be.

So you have the saved man who has peace. The unsaved man who has war. He's at enmity with God.

You move on. Verse 8, the unsaved man in the flesh cannot please God. But the saved man in the spirit can please God.

If you are in Christ, God says, this is my beloved Son in whom I'm well pleased. I may not always be acceptable to God, but thank God I'm always accepted with God. There's a difference.

Now, the key is the Holy Spirit. Look at verse 9. If he were talking about carnal Christians and spiritual Christians, he could never write verse 9. He says to all of the Roman saints, but ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit. You're in one of these two spheres.

If so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you, if the Spirit is in you, then you are in the Spirit. Now, he's not talking about walking after the Spirit. He's not talking about the fullness of the Spirit.

He's talking about what sphere are you in. Somebody here tonight who has never been born again, you may be religious and moral and kind and gracious, but you're in the realm of the flesh. That means sin and death and enmity and bondage.

There may be a backslidden Christian here tonight, but you know Jesus is your Savior, the Holy Spirit lives in you, therefore you are living in the realm of the Spirit. You don't have to be backslidden, but you are in the realm of the Spirit. You're not under the law of sin and death.

Verse 9, Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. The difference is the Holy Spirit. Now, have you ever had a serious disagreement with somebody and it really ate on you? Maybe you and a good friend had a falling out.

Maybe you and a sweetheart or wife or husband or loved one had a falling out. I remember several years ago, a very dear friend of mine, one who has been close to me and helpful to me for many years, somebody started some lies around about him. And some of these lies got to me, and sad to say I should have known better, but I believed a couple of them.

And I noticed that there came between me and my friend a coldness and a wall. Now, he did the right thing. He called me up one day and he said, let's have lunch together, and we did.

And he just laid the whole thing on the table, and I realized how wrong I had been. And so we apologized to each other, and our friendship has been great for many, many years. Now, this is the condition of the unsaved person between him and God.

You see, you are at enmity with God if you are unsaved. You are having a battle with God if you're unsaved. You are out of fellowship with God if you're unsaved.

Now, how does God settle this? Well, verse 3 tells us how he settled it. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, the law was not weak, our flesh was weak. God's law was good, holy, just, and spiritual.

But we're unholy, unjust, and unspiritual, so the law couldn't save us. God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, not in sinful flesh, his flesh was not sinful, his nature was perfect. In the likeness of sinful flesh, he came as a man.

And for sin, that means for a sin offering, condemns sin in the flesh. Jesus died. He bore the enmity.

Now, here's the way it all wraps up. Here's where the Holy Spirit comes in. When you are saved, God gives you the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit down inside says the war is over. Abba, Father. And when you trust Christ as your Savior, you're able to look up and say, not judge, not lawgiver, but Father.

So, this takes care of the first thing that shackles us, the shackle of guilt, the chains of guilt. When you know Jesus as your Savior, there is no condemnation. Now, let me quickly apply this to the believer.

I meet believers who don't have freedom because they still feel guilty. And they come and say, Pastor, you know, I'm saved, but boy, I remember what I did ten years ago. Sometimes when I'm leading in prayer, this flashes in my mind.

I feel like shutting my mouth and sitting down. Who am I to get up and lead in prayer what I did ten years ago? Now, let me just say two words about this. Number one, everybody here tonight has something he's embarrassed about.

There's not a one of us who can stand up and say, hey, read my diary. Here, play my tapes. Everybody has something he's embarrassed about.

Secondly, the devil loves to reach back and get a hold of those things and just beat you with them. I have met Christians, saved people, who are useless to God because they are shackled by guilt. Now, will you just once and for all lay hold of the truth? Lay hold of it now.

Whatever sins we have committed, there is no condemnation. Not less condemnation, not partial condemnation, not delayed condemnation, not Christian probation. There is no condemnation.

That's the grace of God. And the Holy Spirit of God witnesses this down inside so that when you feel that guilt coming, and nothing can shackle you like guilt, when that guilt starts coming, just say, Spirit of God, make it real to me. Turn to the Word of God.

Read Romans 8. And God will say to you once again, look, I've given you my Holy Spirit. The Spirit is life, not death. He's the Holy Spirit, not the Spirit of sin.

He's the Spirit of salvation, not condemnation. There is therefore now no condemnation. You're in the Spirit, not in the flesh.

You are a child of God. You're not at enmity with God. I've moved you into a whole new sphere of life.

Now, stop worrying. Stop beating yourself. Stop doing penance.

Stop mourning. You have turned this over to me. Now believe my word.

There's no condemnation. You're free from guilt. I remember hearing a missionary tell a story about a couple of those houseboys.

You know, on the mission field, it's much cheaper and much more practical for our missionaries to hire national help than it is for them to take time to do these things. We don't send missionaries to Brazil to wash dishes. There are Brazilians or other people who can wash the dishes.

There were two houseboys. This one houseboy had stolen something from the missionary, and his friend held it over his head. And he was getting some good, old-fashioned blackmail out of it, and he was getting out of work.

He'd say, You better do this. Well, that's your job. I'll tell.

And for several days, this boy was just in bondage. Finally, it dawned upon him that the wisest thing he could do was to go and tell the missionary. So he did.

He went and he said, This is what I did. I am sorry. I restore it, and you may punish me any way you want to.

You may discipline me. It was all settled. Well, of course, the missionary did the Christian thing.

He forgave him, and they prayed together. And a few hours later, the forgiven houseboy was doing his chores, and along came his enemy, and said, Wait a minute. I'll tell the missionary.

He said, Go ahead. I've already told him. That instantly broke the shackles.

Now, when the devil comes to you and says, Fine when you are to be singing in the choir. Good when you are to be ushering. Oh, you're great staying there with that hymn book, singing off key.

Sure, that's great. Who are you to be sitting in a classroom at Moody Bible Institute? Why should you be out knocking on doors? Yeah, if people knew you like I know you, just turn and say, You know what? Jesus knows me, and he has forgiven me, and I know he's forgiven me because his Spirit's in my heart. Now, if you don't have the Holy Spirit, you're under the bondage of guilt.

And oh, how wonderful is that freedom when the guilt is gone. Now, there's a second shackle that binds people and keeps them from enjoying life, and that is failure. Oh, how many Christians, I'm talking about Christians now, oh, how many Christians want to live a better life, and they have a rough time doing it.

In fact, if I may get just a little bit more personal, I dare say that in every Christian life here tonight, there is one particular sin that may bother you. Now, I don't need to know what it is. Every man knows the plague of his own heart.

But there may be somebody here tonight who says, Pastor, I would really be living for Christ except I have a tendency toward greed and a love for money, and I think I've pulled a few deals, and I'd like to get over this. And somebody else says, My problem is temper. I'm like Moses.

I can lose my temper, and if only I could get victory. I'm so ashamed of myself after I do it. Somebody else says, Well, my particular problem is gossip.

I'm just like a blotter. I take everything in and get it backwards, and then I share it with everybody else. And somebody else may say, Now, Pastor, nobody knows this, but I fight a real battle against my appetites.

And maybe somebody says there's a real problem with lust or pride or criticism. Every man knows the plague of his own heart. Now, God wants us to be perfect.

You knew that. Even though we are not under law, we're under grace. God hasn't changed His standards.

I've told you, I'm sure, about the preacher who was preaching against sin. For several weeks, he just preached hard against sin, and a church member came up and said, I'm sick and tired of hearing this preaching about sin. You're preaching to Christians.

Sin in the lives of Christians is different from sin in the lives of other people. And the preacher wisely said, Yes, it's worse. Oh, how easy it is for us to say, Well, you know, I'm saved, and so I can get away with this.

I have a hard time believing that God would permit under grace what He condemned under law. Adultery is still adultery, and lying is still lying, and stealing is still stealing. In fact, our commandments are even deeper because in the Old Testament, all you had to do was perform the act.

In the New Testament, all you have to do is have the attitude. If you hate somebody, that's murder. If you lust, that's adultery.

And so our battle is even more. Now, Paul talks about this. He said, look, the Holy Spirit can set you free from the shackles of whatever sin is defeating you.

Failure. Would you look at verse 4? That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who are walking not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. It doesn't say we're supposed to obey the law.

It goes beyond that. It says the righteousness that God requires is not manufactured by us. It is fulfilled in us by the Holy Spirit.

Let me drop a statement into your heart that I trust you'll never forget. Your old nature knows no law. There never was a law given that could control or change or discipline your old nature.

That's the whole theme of Romans chapter 7. In Romans chapter 7, Paul raises the question, was the law good or bad? He said, well, the law is good, but we're bad. And every time God says don't, we want to do it, and we do it. Just like children, all you've got to do to children is say, now look, I just made a cake, don't go near it.

And they'll start walking, and it has smaller and smaller concentric circles. I came through Lincoln Park, I think it was last spring, and they'd painted all the benches green, and they had signs on all the benches, fresh paint, do not touch. I stood there and watched.

Everybody who walked by just reached over and touched it. There is something in my nature that when you say no, I say, who said so? I wouldn't dare tell you that except you're the same way. This is why students sometimes have a hard time with rules.

It's not that the rules are bad, it's just that we're the way we are. Now, the old nature knows no law. Somebody tonight says, I am going to determine that all this next week I will not tell one lie.

I'll guarantee you'll tell more lies. You read Romans chapter 7, you discover that the minute you say, I won't do it, you do it, or I will do something good, we don't do it. Our nature is this way.

So the old nature knows no law. The new nature needs no law. Can you imagine giving laws to the Holy Spirit? The Father doesn't say to God, the Holy Spirit, I've got some new laws for you.

The Holy Spirit doesn't need any laws. The Holy Spirit is perfectly able to carry on His work without any laws. He is the Holy Spirit.

Now, the thing that Paul is telling us is this. When the Holy Spirit of God is allowed to work in our lives, He fulfills the law. It's a process.

It's a day-by-day experience. May I make this very simple suggestion to you? Don't let your lives become sin-centered. Don't wake up in the morning and say, oh, I wonder how many times today I'm going to gossip.

Oh, I wonder how many times today I'll have lustful thoughts. If you wake up with that attitude, you'll do it. Instead of your life being sin-centered, your life had better be Spirit-centered.

We wake up in the morning and we say, Holy Spirit of God, I can't fulfill the law. My nature won't let me. My body is not sinful, but my nature is.

And my old nature is going to use my body or the new nature is going to use my body. Now, Holy Spirit of God, I want you to work through me today and fulfill the righteousness of Christ. Now, there are two little words you need to get a hold of.

Number one, the word mind. I said that Paul was describing the saved man and the unsaved man. But you see, you can pick this up a little higher and you can say to the saved man, look, if you have a fleshly mind, you'll get into trouble.

In fact, Paul does this over in verse 12. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors. We have an obligation.

We are debtors, but not to the flesh. You don't owe the flesh anything. You don't owe the flesh one thing.

You are a debtor not to the flesh, to live after the flesh, but you are a debtor to the Holy Spirit. Have you paid your debt to the Holy Spirit? You know, we sing, Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe. This is true, but we owe something to the Holy Spirit.

If it hadn't been for the Holy Spirit, you wouldn't be saved. The Holy Spirit gave Jesus a body. Hebrews tells me it was through the Holy Spirit He gave that body on the cross.

The Holy Spirit helped to raise Him from the dead. The Holy Spirit of God convicted you of sin and revealed Jesus to you. The Holy Spirit wrote the Bible, a part from which you cannot be saved.

The Holy Spirit of God gave you the faith to believe. When you believed, the Holy Spirit sealed it and became the down payment of your future inheritance. You owe the Holy Spirit a great deal, and more than anything else, He lives with you.

Now, I love the Lord Jesus because He died for me, but I think it's just as difficult to live with me. The Holy Spirit is closer to me than any other person on the face of the earth. He can read my thoughts.

My wife can't read my thoughts. Well, sometimes she can, but the Holy Spirit can read my thoughts. He knows the intents of my heart.

He lives inside of me. That's love. It takes love to live with me.

It takes more love to live in me. Now, the Holy Spirit of God wants to work through us. How do we do this? He tells us here, verse 13, For if ye live after the flesh, He's talking to Christians now, you'll die.

If the believer grieves the Holy Spirit and starts living after the flesh, it means death. It means death to his power. It means death to his joy.

It means death to his peace. It means death to his youth. It just kills everything.

It could kill him. But he says, If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. Here's how we handle the body.

The word mortify. You know what a mortician is. One who deals with death.

From the good old Latin word that means death. Rigor mortis. Mortify.

Put to death. The Holy Spirit is not only the Spirit of life, He's the Spirit of death. And when we find ourselves struggling against that sin that so easily besets us, we say, Spirit of God, kill it.

Now, He doesn't put to death the body. He puts to death the deeds of the body. And the Holy Spirit of God works this way.

Have you trusted Him to do so? Now, not only is He the Spirit of death, and negatively He overcomes sin, but He's the Spirit of life, and positively He produces righteousness. And so the two are in balance. All day long, we have the Holy Spirit putting to death the things that we shouldn't do, and giving life to the things we should do.

The best way I know to pay your debt to the Holy Spirit is just let Him have His way. Read the Word of God daily. The Holy Spirit loves to feed on the Word.

Pray and worship God. Love God's people. The Holy Spirit loves to have you love God's people.

And you'll find that as you yield to the Word of God, let your mind get filled with the Word of God. Spend time in prayer and fellowship. The Holy Spirit of God just works in your life.

It's a beautiful experience. So the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of life who breaks the shackles of guilt. And He breaks the shackles of failure and defeat.

Thirdly, there's a third chain that binds people and robs them of real life, and that is the fear of death. The fear of death. Now, He's talking not only to believers but to unbelievers.

There is a fear of death. I will not go into this in detail. I just want to drop this into your heart now.

Unless you are prepared to die, I'm talking to Christians as well as unsaved people, unless you are prepared to die, you are not prepared to live. Will you remember that? It's the ultimate that determines the immediate. Let's take the matter of money.

Everybody wishes he has more, I'm sure, but let's just talk about money. Money in itself is not sinful. The love of money is.

A person who is worried about the future cannot enjoy the use of his money. But the believer who is obeying the Word of God and investing his money according to the Word of God doesn't have to worry about it. Death is not the end.

Let's take our service. I have yet to do anything that I'm satisfied with. Many a time I go home from preaching a sermon wishing I could re-preach it.

People pick up a cassette of the sermon and I say, oh my, I wish I could edit that. I have yet to write an article that I'm really satisfied with or even a book. I'd like to go back and rewrite it.

Someone has said people who paint ought to be shot after they finish a picture because they're always repairing it and working on it. You're never satisfied with what you do. And Jesus said after you've done your best, what are you? Unprofitable servants.

So we know this. If I thought that my ministry was circumscribed by my life, I'd be very discouraged. I'm looking forward to that time when I shall minister to the Lord and not have to worry about all the defects of my ministry.

If you have the idea that heaven for the believer is a cloud and a harp and a robe and a five-minute learn-how-to-play-the-harp book, you're in for disappointment. Heaven's a place of fulfillment, eternity, endless eternity, having a fulfilled ministry and singing a song that never has to be improved upon and writing a poem that never has to be improved upon. It would be tremendous.

Now, in verse 11, Paul talks about this. He says, if you're shackled by the fear of death, listen, but if the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, and he does if you're saved, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also give life to your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. When you were saved, the Holy Spirit moved into your body.

When Jesus came to save you, he took upon himself a body. But when you were saved, the Holy Spirit moved into your body. He sealed your body until the day of redemption.

That means that even if you die and your body turns to dust, the Holy Spirit of God is still in control of your body, and he will give you a resurrection body. Now, I've told you many times, resurrection is not reconstruction. God's not going to put the pieces back together.

It's going to be brand new. There's continuity, but not identity. We're going to know each other, and we're going to be perfect, but it's not going to be the same pieces.

Why does the Lord drop this into the middle of Romans 8? Because death is a major thing. The kind of life I live today will be tested by my death. Now, alas, there are some Christians who are not laying up anything in the future.

They're wasting their money and wasting their talents and wasting their strength. But Paul is saying to us here, don't worry about death. Don't let the fear of death bother you, because God has broken that shackle.

The Holy Spirit lives in you, and he's the Spirit of life. And one of these days, if you should die, he's going to raise you up. I think that this also applies to our attitude toward the death of others.

Now, we've all had loved ones to die. I think sometimes Satan wants to use this grief to shackle us. A person can get under such a dark cloud of grief, and the devil can use that to hinder us.

Paul says don't let it happen. You've had a loved one to die in Christ. Don't mourn as those who have no hope.

The Holy Spirit knows about that body. The Holy Spirit sealed that body. One day, the Holy Spirit will raise that body.

So he is the Spirit of life. He gives to us eternal life. That takes care of the problem of guilt.

No condemnation. He gives us victorious life. That takes care of the shackle of defeat and failure.

No obligation. And he gives us resurrection life. That takes care of the shackles of death.

There's no limitation. And so with the Holy Spirit of God, there's no condemnation, and there is no obligation to the flesh, and there is no limitation. We have God living in us.

That's why later on in this chapter, he says, if God be for us, who can be against us? I want to suggest that sometime tonight, you and the Holy Spirit get alone. Quiet yourself down. Talk to him.

Talk to him about guilt. And let him witness to you that the blood of Jesus Christ has taken care of all your sins, past, present, and future. Talk to him about defeat.

And ask him to take over your mind and let you think like a Christian. Talk to him about the future. Let him witness to you there's nothing to be afraid of.

He's got the future in his hands. If you're a Christian, you have the Holy Spirit. Does the Holy Spirit have you? Father in heaven, we're thankful for the indwelling Holy Spirit who gives us freedom.

What a paradox that the law of the Spirit of life makes us free. The law of sin and death puts us into bondage, but the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus sets us free. We're thankful, Heavenly Father, that he counteracts that law of gravity that would drag us down, and he lifts us up.

I pray that you will encourage people tonight to step out into liberty through Jesus Christ. For it's in his name that we pray, amen.

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