

Romans 8:1-39

Sanctification-Our Response to the Universal Good News of the Gospel: *“Living Life in the Power of the Holy Spirit Who Lives in Us”*

When do you get paid? I get paid on the 15th and 30th of each month. Maybe you get paid once a week or maybe monthly. But one thing is for sure, we all love pay day. We love it because the people we work for make a deposit into our bank accounts. We then take that money and buy things we need and pay bills we need to pay in order to live a decent life and provide for our families. If we are wise we will also take some of that deposit and give it away to do the Lord’s work and help others, and we will also save some of it for a rainy day. We love payday because on payday we get our deposit.

In the Christian life there is also a payday. The payday is the day of our conversion to Christ. It is the day we are born again. It is the day we are saved. It is the day we move from a position of death and alienation from God to a new position of life, rebirth, and reconciliation unto to God through what God has done for us in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. On this payday God makes a deposit in our lives that’s greater than any amount of money we could ever receive.

What kind of deposit could this be? Who is it? The deposit is the Holy Spirit. Jesus said in John’s gospel just before his crucifixion, that he would not abandon his disciples in his death but rather he would send them a Paraclete, an Advocate, a Helper, a Counselor, the Holy Spirit, who would **“be with them and in them.”** (Jn. 14:17) The Holy Spirit would replace the bodily presence of Jesus in the lives of the disciples by living in them and leading them into all truth.

The apostle Paul, in his letters to the Corinthians and Ephesians, often speaks of the Holy Spirit as being a deposit made into our lives. In Ephesians 1:13 he says, **“And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession- to the praise of his glory.”**

In our text today Paul gives us the secret to living the Christian life. Now that we are in Christ God wants to do a new work in our lives. He wants to take the old man, the sinful nature of Adam, and obliterate it and replace it with the new man, the sinless nature of Christ, the second Adam, so that we can become all that God has saved us to become. God’s way equals life, man’s way equals death, and the way to get God’s way in your life is to come to Christ for your salvation and receive the deposit of the Holy Spirit that God makes in your life so that you can grow in Him.

The first thing the Holy Spirit does in our lives is he sets us free.

In the first verse of our text Paul reminds us of something wonderful that we considered last week when we looked at Romans 7. Paul says, **“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.”** (v. 1-2)

When we are outside of Christ we stand under condemnation because we stand under the law- God’s perfect moral and spiritual standard for human creatures. The reason we stand under condemnation is because when we take our lives and line it up with the law we become acutely aware of just how far we fall short. Since we fail to keep the law we stand condemned as lawbreakers but when we come to the Savior who has kept God’s law perfectly for us and has died a condemned death in our place we are set

free from the Law's condemning power over us! The condemnation is taken away, forever. **"Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus!"** (v.1) Praise the Lord!

Yet there is still a problem. Even though we have been saved and rescued from the condemnation of God for failing to keep the law, we still struggle with sin. If you were here last week you will remember Paul talking about not doing the things he wants to do but instead doing the things he didn't want to do. He said in his heart that he delighted in the goodness of God's law (he wanted to do it) but he found another principle at work in his life that was waging war against him and causing him do the works of the flesh.

It's very frustrating when you don't do the things you want to do and the things you don't want to do you do! **"Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!"** (7:24-25) Because Christ is our rescuer there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. **"The law of the Spirit of life has set us free from the law of the spirit of death."** (v.2)

But not only are we set free from condemnation by the Holy Spirit we are also set free to live a life pleasing unto God in the power of the Holy Spirit. The cycle of doing the things you don't want to do, and not doing the things you ought to do can be broken by the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul says in the text that when we come to faith in Christ and the Holy Spirit is deposited into our hearts we begin to fall under the control of another master. Look at v. 9. **"You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you."**

This week I walked the Greenway Trail and one side of me was a flowing stream. The water was clear and the creek was clean and lively. On the other side of me in a portion of that walk was a gully or pit full of stagnant dirty water. It smelled bad and soon it will have mosquitoes swarming it. The water was this way because it was not flowing. It reminded me of something my pastor taught me about the Holy Spirit when I was a teenager. I was going through a faith crisis because I had a couple of friends who experienced what is known in charismatic circles as "baptism in the Holy Spirit." They were telling me I had not received the fullness of the Holy Spirit at my conversion. There was still more of the Holy Spirit for me to get and I would not receive him in his fullness until I was baptized in the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues. I began to doubt and so I went to my pastor and he said, "Scott it is not a question of whether or not you have all of the Holy Spirit. When you come to faith in Christ you get all of the Holy Spirit you will ever get. The question is does the Holy Spirit have all of you?"

That's it. Paul tells us we are controlled by the Holy Spirit when we come to Christ. We now have a new person in charge, he is the Holy Spirit and he has come into our hearts to enable us to die to all of the things in our lives that brings death and is not pleasing to God. He has come to set us free, make us new, and give us the abundant life. The Holy Spirit is in control but we must yield to him. We can quench the work of the Holy Spirit. Paul said in Ephesians, **"Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."** (Eph. 4:30)

The second thing the Holy Spirit does in our lives is he helps us.

There is great truth in the text that I do not fully understand. I never will fully understand it. It can't be fully understood this side of heaven, but it gives me great comfort nonetheless. The fact that I can't understand actually intensifies the comfort that it gives.

Paul says in the text that when we are weak the Holy Spirit helps us. **"In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us**

with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.” (v.26)

To me that is good news because I know that I do not always pray rightly. I am a sinner. It is possible for my motives to get messed up in prayer. Nor do I always pray. Sometimes I go through a dry spell or fail to be diligent in prayer. Sometimes when I am praying I may be at a loss for words because I do not know what to pray or how to pray for a particular situation, yet the text says that in those times the Holy Spirit **“intercedes with groans that words cannot express.”** The good news of that truth is the Trinity. **“He who searches our hearts (meaning God the Father) knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.”** (v. 27) In short, the Holy Spirit is our perfect prayer partner. His motives for us is always pure and his words prayed for us are always perfect, just what the doctor ordered.

I do not understand all of this, in fact, I think my understanding or anybody's understanding of this text is shallow, but I believe it is true. We have a helper, the Holy Spirit, who is always interceding for us. He does so many other things for us. He recalls to us the things our Savior taught us. (Jn. 14) He gives us the right words to say when we bear witness to the truth. (Matt. 10) He gives us spiritual gifts (I Cor. 13) and he gives us power so that we may serve the Lord (Acts 1). He gives us so many things but perhaps the greatest thing he does to help us is He prays prayers of intercession for us to the Father. Who knows how your life and your salvation has been wrought (accomplished) and blessed by the Holy Spirit? Here we are talking about the unseen work of the Spirit, it is beautiful when you think about it.

The final thing the Holy Spirit does for us, according to the text, is he gives us assurance.

If we have any chance of living a blessed Christian life then we must have assurance that we are truly the sons and daughters of God. If we are constantly doubting our salvation we will live in fear and we will do things from the wrong motive. Instead of serving Lord out of the realization that He loves us and has truly saved us we will try to serve Him to make up for our past failures or to earn our salvation, which always fails. But if we have assurance from the Holy Spirit that we truly are Christ's sons and daughters then we will not walk in fear and we will live in confidence knowing that we are the Lord's. This assurance frees us to obey the Lord for the right reasons.

Paul says in the text that **“we did not receive a spirit of fear when we came to Christ but rather the Spirit of sonship”** (v.15) and by that Spirit we are enabled to cry **“Abba God our Father.”** (v.15) **“The Spirit Himself testifies we our spirit that we are God's children”** and we are **“the heirs of God and co heirs of Christ.”** (v.17) The Holy Spirit assures us of the promises of the gospel. The gospel promises that nothing will ever separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Death won't do it. Demons won't do it and our failures won't do it because Christ alone has saved us and he never loses any of his sheep. (Jn.10)

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, amen.