The Indispensable Ministry of the Holy Spirit

Romans 8:5-11 - John MacArthur

Well I welcome you, this morning, to our church and to the wonderful fellowship of the people of God here. Our fellowship is around the Word of God and we are currently in a series looking at the life of the believer as impacted by the Holy Spirit. We've been saying in this somewhat brief series that the Holy Spirit perhaps the most invisible member of the Trinity in terms of people's thinking and knowledge. We all understand a lot about God, there's an awful lot of emphasis on the attributes of God and the works of God. We certainly emphasize Christ and all of His work and His person and character and His life. And just to balance out, understanding that each member of the Trinity is equally worthy with each other member of the Trinity. I want to help you to worship the Triune God in a more full way, to help you understand the true work of the Holy Spirit.

But it isn't just that. It isn't, as I've been saying to you, it isn't just the fact that we have not as much a focus or concentration on the person of the Holy Spirit, though He is worthy of equal praise. It is that what is attributed to the Holy Spirit is certainly unworthy of His name. There is a blasphemy of the Holy Spirit that goes on all the time. People are more reluctant to blaspheme God the Father, or even Christ the Son, but seems to be open season on the Holy Spirit.

If you were to look at Christian media as sort of an ignorant bystander and try to figure out a theology of the Holy Spirit by watching Christian television, this is what you might assume that the Holy Spirit, whatever it is, is some kind of power. It's a kind of power that knocks people down, it knocks them down to the floor and leaves them lying there stunned. It is a kind of power that operates strangely enough at the swoop of a man's hand, or by pressing somebody on the head with one's hand. Whatever this force is, whatever this spirit is, it also makes people mumble incoherent gibberish. It also makes people throw their hands in the air, roll their eyes back and try to keep their balance as they wobble to the music. That's what you might conclude.

The Holy Spirit, whatever this Spirit is, is a force that makes you lose control of your body and your mouth and your minds, and you fall into some emotionally bizarre, irrational behaviors. That is not the Holy Spirit. That is insulting the Holy Spirit.

You say, "What is that phenomenon? The power of suggestion, the power of group expectation, the power of manipulation, it has nothing to do with the Holy Spirit whatsoever. Would the Holy Spirit cause such things by showing up in places that dishonor Him, that misinterpret the Scripture which He wrote? Would He show up to validate bad theology and false teachers and be absent in places where both the Holy Spirit is honored and His Word is honored? I would think that if the kind of phenomenon that you see on television or in those kind of meetings were really of the Holy Spirit, all of you would be falling down and mumbling incoherently all the time because the Holy Spirit moves in those who honor Christ and honor His Word.

What is the true work of the Holy Spirit? What is He really doing? What is His power accomplishing? Let me help you with a little linguistics. There is a word for Spirit in the Old Testament, it's *ruach*, a parallel in the New is *pneuma*. They are both onomatopoetic words, both *pneuma* and *ruach* are words that have in the very pronunciation air in motion. And that's the intention of the word "Spirit," it is motion, it is force. The fundamental meaning of *ruach* the Old Testament word for Spirit, is power, energy, force, life. One third of the times that that word appears in the Old Testament and it appears many times, one third of them refer to God, to the Spirit of God.

But the emphasis of the word *ruach*, Spirit, and the word *pneuma,* in the Greek in the New Testament, is not on immateriality. It is not simply to emphasize the fact that this person in the Trinity is immaterial. That is not the point.

The word means power, energy, force. The emphasis is on that. So when you say *ruach Yahweh*, the Spirit of God, you're talking about the power of God, the energy of God. *Micah 3:8* gives us a good illustration of this. In *Micah 3:8* it says, *"I am filled with power with the Spirit of Yahweh."* To be filled with the Spirit of *Yahweh* is to be filled with power. Again, it does not refer to immateriality that is why the translation, the old translation of Holy Ghost is so inadequate. Ghost is simply a word that speaks of something immaterial. And, by the way, something that doesn't exist. But the word is Spirit and it is not an emphasis on the immateriality but on the overpowering energy. In fact, I would suggest the violent force of God. And the power of God is violent. One writer says, *"Yahweh's ruach* is the blast of God, the irresistible power by which He accomplishes His purposes, whether creative or destructive."

When you talk about the Spirit of God, you're talking about a person who is essentially the expression of the violent power of God, divine energy, the power that is as great and as infinite and limitless as God Himself is great and limitless. It is the Spirit of God, the violent power of God through that third person of the Trinity that creates the host of heaven, *Psalm 33:6,* by ruach *God creates the host of heaven.* That is power. One moment there is nothing, not even a universe, let alone a universe filled with moving bodies in orbit and in a split second they all exist. That is the power of the Spirit of God, *ruach*. It is the power that gives energy to judges, like Otheniel and Samson in *Judges chapter 3 and Judges 14*, the *ruach* of *Yahweh* is the power that takes hold of His prophets, picks them up, carries them somewhere and drops them in a different place, *Ezekiel 3, Ezekiel 11, 1 Kings 18*. We're talking about mighty force.

Those people who are confronted and endued by the acts of the Spirit of God, experience supernatural power. The Holy Spirit did not limit His power to creation. He does not limit His power to destruction, although there are evidences in Scripture of both. As far as we are concerned as believers, we need to get beyond the material expressions of divine power which I have been speaking about, power to create, power to render the unique supernatural work of certain men on earth, power to pick up prophets and move them somewhere else and go inside and understand that the great creative power of the *ruach* is working in the lives of men. His power is inside of us. It is not to knock us down, make us babble, or flip out into some emotional trauma, it is a power that is, for the most part, invisible, actually in and of itself it is invisible.

An illustration of this power would be drawn from *Psalm 51*. David had sinned greatly, terrifying sin. He had lusted after a woman who was not his wife by the name of Bathsheba. He took her in acts of adultery and then wanting to take her permanently, arranged for her husband who was a faithful soldier to be abandoned in the heat of the battle and therefore to die at the hands of the enemy. The sin was overwhelming, murder, adultery. And David pours out his heart in *Psalm 51* and he is pleading for God to forgive him. He's pleading for God to wash him. He's pleading for God to take away the pain of his guilt and his fear.

And kind of at the sum of it in *verse 11 of Psalm 51* he says this, *"Do not take your* ruach *from me. Do not take Your Spirit from me."* He's not talking about losing his salvation because in the next line he says, "Restore to me the joy of Your salvation. He hadn't lost his salvation but he had lost his joy.

What does he mean then, *"Don't take away Your Spirit from me?"* I know what he means. He had something specific in mind. Saul…Saul. He had a good sense of the history.

There had only been Saul before him. So the history of monarchs was very brief. God took away the Spirit from Saul in a special sense. In ancient Israel, the Old Covenant day, the Holy Spirit came upon kings and priests and prophets in a unique way. That's not all he did. No one could be saved without the Holy Spirit, even in the Old Testament. No one could be sanctified without the Holy Spirit even in the Old Testament. The Holy Spirit was doing His work then of striving with men's hearts to produce in them repentance. The Holy Spirit was…was moving on the writers of Scripture to write the Holy Scripture. The Holy Spirit was doing His work then. It doesn't become as clear as it does in the New Testament and it isn't as complete as it is in the New Testament. But the Spirit was doing His work or no one would be saved, no one would be sanctified. But in addition to that normal work of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit came in a special way on kings and priests and prophets and rested on them with supernatural power. And David's fear was that what happened to Saul would happen to him. So this personal prayer to God is that God would sustain the presence of the Spirit upon him or he wouldn't have the power to rule the way he needed to rule, power for rule, power for spiritual leadership, power for spiritual wisdom.

In the New Testament, that expands that work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said to His disciples in the Upper Room of the Holy Spirit, He said, *"He has been with you, He will be in you."* Of course He's been with you, or nothing would happen. You wouldn't repent, you wouldn't believe, you wouldn't progress spiritually, you wouldn't be illuminated to understand the scriptures. He has been with you but He will be in you. This is not a question of absence and presence, but a question of degree. There is a fullness of the Spirit now on all believers. Think of it this way. We're all kings, we're all priests, we are all prophets, right? We all have the responsibility to proclaim the gospel. We are all kings and priests. So the anointing in the fullness of the Spirit comes upon all of us to empower us, as it were, to be those who reign in the Kingdom, those who take men before God as priests would do, and those who preach for God to men as prophets did.

So this is the fullness of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, now deposited on all believers as He, as we read in *1 Corinthians 12*, places us into the body of Christ, gifts us with all enabling to do all ministry that He's committed us to do and then we all drink of Him, which means He takes up permanent residence inside of us with those before His coming on Pentecost, He was with them, now He is in us. It's a question of fullness, completeness, richness.

And what is He doing? What is He doing in this ministry? There's no more creating. The material world is created. His creative work now is spiritual creation. He creates spiritual life, conversion, regeneration. He sanctifies, He equips, He gifts, He calls, He produces fruit, He provides power. And when I talk about power, I'm talking about violent force. And I don't think we often think about this, but the power exhibited by the Holy Spirit, the power exerted by the Holy Spirit in your life is a violent power. If you understand your condition before you were saved, you will understand just how violent it was, dead in trespasses and sin, blind to the truth of God, and we'll see more about that in *Romans 8*. Profound corruption to the core. Profoundly dead, the walking dead, that's the diagnosis of all human beings before they come to Christ. A violent power comes over the dead and gives it life. And then sanctifying power is released to fight against and overthrow corruption. And one day that same power will recreate a new you fit for eternal life in heaven. This is an amazing power.

And the Holy Spirit's power is also behind the writing of Scripture. All Scripture is God-breathed, *pneuma* from God. That's speaking of Holy Spirit authored. Peter says that men were moved by the Holy Spirit to write.

Let me tell you what that was. Let me give you an explanation of that. A man sits down to write. He has his own ideas, his own thoughts, his own predispositions, his own presuppositions.

He has the things that are interesting and important to him and he's going to write. And all of a sudden, here comes the Holy Spirit and blasts that man's mind and literally shatters everything but what the Holy Spirit wants him to put down. It is a violent force that overrules all that man's thoughts, all that man's expectations and ambitions, and desires and he's left with nothing but this totally overwhelming realization that he must write only one thing and that's what the Spirit of God wants him to write. That's power, power to overrule men's ignorance, leading them into truth. Power to overrule their prejudices, power to overrule their preferences so that what you get in the Bible is the Word of the Holy Spirit through writers who were writing what they wanted to write, but what they wanted to write was reduced by an overwhelmingly violent act upon their minds, carried out by the Holy Spirit which banished everything else…everything else.

That's why David's final words, *2 Samuel 23:2*, are, "*The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me and His Word was on my tongue."* Every writer of Scripture is reduced to only that which the Holy Spirit desires to be said, overpowering the limits of human knowledge, human wisdom, human understanding. And then settling in on exactly what the Spirit wanted said.

So the same amazing powerful work is done in inspiration that the Spirit of God is effecting in the life of the believer in whom He dwells. As this is the Word of the Spirit of God in the Scripture, because it is a perfect expression of His mind, so it is that in the life of the believer the Spirit of God has a mind and a will in perfect accord with the Father's, we'll see later in *Romans chapter 8*, and He works to blast away everything that stands in the way of the fulfillment of that purpose and that will.

So there is a violence to this, although we don't experience it, we're not tortured by it, we're not twisted by it. There are times when we know we're in a battle and our flesh is fighting against the work of the Holy Spirit as we fight temptation.

In the New Testament, the person of the Holy Spirit is more fully revealed. We don't have the full picture in the Old Testament. We do have the full picture in the New Testament. In the New Testament the full ministry of the Holy Spirit is revealed, as I've been saying, in the life of the believer. And by the way, only to those who know Christ…only to those who know Christ.

Why is it that people attribute all of these terrible things to the Holy Spirit? Because they don't know Christ…they don't know Christ. When the Spirit is come, *John 16:13*, Jesus said, *He will guide you into all truth, He will not speak on His own initiative but whatever He hears He will speak, He will disclose to you what is to come. He will glorify Me. He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you. He, says again, takes of Mine and will disclose it to you.*

If you belong to Christ, the Spirit will be your teacher. You will correctly understand Him and correctly understand Christ. *First John 2:20* says, *"He is the anointing that teaches you all things so you don't need any men to teach you because He is your teacher."* He overcomes your ignorance. He overcomes your prejudices. He overcomes your dispositions. This is the *ruach* of *Yahweh*.

As I was saying, in the New Testament everything becomes clear that salvation is something the Father initiated, the Son validated, and the Holy Spirit activated. He regenerates the elect. He gives life. He sanctifies them. He moves them from one level of glory to the next, to the next, *2 Corinthians 3:18*. And one day He will glorify all of us, verse 11 we'll look at a little later. He will raise our mortal bodies from the dead in our final glorified form.

So the Holy Spirit is this power, this power person in the Trinity who regenerates us, sanctifies us, and one day glorifies us. We're given then an amazing and rich revelation of His gracious violent explosive power that basically recreates us and empowers us in righteousness and ultimately empowers us for eternal glory.

So where the Holy Spirit's power is being manifest, it will not produce foolish, mindless flops on the ground, gushing incoherent babble, ecstatic buzz, or hot flashes of emotions. All those behaviors have absolutely nothing to do with the Holy Spirit. They are a mockery of His true work.

When the Holy Spirit is moving with a *ruach* of *Yahweh*, people will be saved, sanctified, united, enabled, gifted, empowered for worship and service and obedience to Holy Scripture. They will be coherent, rational, thinking, orderly and faithful to the Word cause that's His work.

Now let's go to *Romans 8*. I always like to give you a little introduction. By the way…(laughter)… well, at least by my definition, anyway. The book that's mentioned in the Grace Today, Charismatic Chaos will give you a lot of material that I'm not covering in this series about the Charismatic Movement. I could upgrade that book but all I would do is change the illustrations, not the theology. So if you want to get a copy of the Charismatic Chaos, it will fill in a lot of gaps for you.

Now as we come in to chapter 8, we come into the Holy Spirit's chapter. The book of *Romans* kind of breaks up…and I guess you could say God's section is the first one, chapters 1, 2 and 3, in which the whole human race is left guilty before God under His divine judgment. Then Christ's section comes, chapters 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7, where we come to the work of Jesus Christ on the cross which provides the salvation that we need from the wrath of God, from the judgment of God because of our sin laid out in the opening chapters. And now we come to the chapter on the Holy Spirit. So we've seen God's very strong section on the whole human race being under divine condemnation and judgment, Christ's wonderful gracious provision, and now the activating of the redemption that God initiated and Christ validated comes by the work of the Holy Spirit. As we read in *1 Corinthians 12:3*, nobody could even say Jesus is Lord, which is what you say when you're saved, *"If you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord, you're saved."* You can't say it except by the power of the Holy Spirit, because you're unable to do that, as we see, unless He by His violent power overwhelms your corruption and enables you to do that.

Let's start in verse 1, *"Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."* That is the summation of the Good News. That is confirmed at the end of the chapter. The end of the chapter is all about that, verse 34, who is the one who is going to condemn, and then there's a litany of possibilities and options and theoretical possibilities, none of them are able to separate us, we are in a permanent, everlasting, no condemnation status. We have literally been removed from the condemnation of chapters 1, 2 and 3, by the work of Christ in chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7. We understand that. There is no condemnation.

How did this happen? How did it get activated in us? We know God planned it. We know Christ executed it on the cross but how does it get applied to us? Answer: the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit.

Now we get into the work of the Holy Spirit in putting us into this saved condition, this no-condemnation status. The first thing that we looked at and it's right there in verses 2 and 3, He gives us life out of death. He makes us alive. The Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. Law used here is principle. You could even call it a paradigm, a dominion, a domain. We lived in a kind of living death. We were under the dominating

principle of sin and of death. *We were dead in our trespasses and sins,* to say it the way Paul said it in *Ephesians 2*. And *then came the Spirit of life, and set us free from the law of sin and death.* That is the first work of the Holy Spirit. That is the work of regeneration. That's what it means to be regenerated, born again, given life from the dead. That is the work of the Spirit of God. You must be born of the Spirit, Jesus said in *John 3* to Nicodemus. And, of course, what makes it possible is verse 3 that Christ Jesus, the Son of God, gave Himself an offering for sin. He took our place. He died our death. He paid the penalty in full and thus condemned sin. The Law can condemn the sinner, the Law can't condemn sin but Christ in His death condemned sin in His own human flesh as an incarnate man.

So because of the work of Christ in verse 3, we can be given life. But it's not automatic and it's not based on human will, it's based on the work of the Holy Spirit who gives us life from the dead. Okay, that's the first thing we see about the work of the Spirit. He gives life, regeneration.

Secondly, because of this life, He enables us to fulfill God's Law. He enables us to fulfill God's Law. This is the heart of what Paul is going to say here and I want you to really get a grip on this. Please notice verse 4, *"So that we now have life which is possible because of the sacrifice of Christ on our behalf,* in verse 3, *sin has then been condemned in the flesh of Christ who died as an offering for sin, so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us."*

Now listen, what will happen when you are regenerated is you will for the first time in your life fulfill the requirements of the Law of God. Not perfectly, but to some degree. Why is this so? Why will I now having been regenerated fulfill the Law of God? Why will I now obey the Law of God in attitude and action? Why? Because verse 4 says, *"We do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit."* That is a fact, folks. That is a fact. That is what it means to be a Christian. There's no such thing saying, "I'm a Christian, I have been given life from death by the power of the Holy Spirit, but I have no interest in fulfilling the Law of God.

Wait a minute. That's not possible. These are sequential so that this is a purpose clause, you have been delivered from death into life so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, or *Ephesians 2:10. You've been created unto good works which God before ordained that you would walk in them.* You have experienced a real resurrection, spiritually speaking. You now walk, you now walk, that's daily life, as we saw last time, you now walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. Walk is the word for daily conduct. Your daily conduct is consistent with the Spirit who is the power, the energy, the violent force in you. That power of the Holy Spirit literally came into your condition of spiritual death with a blast and brought life and now that same power, that same overwhelming, controlling, dominating power of the Holy Spirit drives you in the direction of obedience to the Law of God. Your nature is changed. Your mind is changed. Your will is changed. Your affections are changed. This is a total transformation.

Now, look back at verse 4. There are only two kinds of people in the world, only two, that's all there are. There are the people who walk according to the flesh and there are the people who walk according to the Spirit. God never divides people by culture, by race, by education, by sex, by social strata, money. God only recognizes two kinds of people; those who walk according to the flesh and those who walk according to the Spirit. Those are non-believers and believers. Those are the unregenerate, and the regenerate. The people who are the walking dead and the people who are the walking living, that's all there are.

Now at this point, the Apostle Paul probes down deep into the pathology of fallenness, the pathology of corruption. And usually, if you're a Bible student and you want to talk about sin and depravity, you go to *Romans 3* and you look at *Romans 3* and you hear the Apostle Paul reciting all those

Old Testament verses, "*There's none righteous, no not one. There's none that seeks after God."* And you go all the way from *Romans 3:10 to 20* and you've got the whole list of those kinds of things that do and don't happen. And that is certainly a powerful, powerful description of fallenness. But it isn't as powerful as this one here. This is the most penetrating, pathological description of fallen humanity that you will find, I think, in the writings of the Apostle Paul. What he says here is *that these people do not walk according to the Spirit but according to the flesh.* They walk according to the flesh.

He doesn't stop there. Go to verse 5. *"Those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh."* Go to *verse 6, "For the mind set on the flesh is death."* Go to *verse 7, "The mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God, it doesn't subject itself to the Law of God, it is not even able to do so." Go to verse 8, "Those who are in the flesh cannot please God."* Now there is a substantive pathology of the condition of unregenerate people. That's just amazing. They walk in the flesh because they mind the things of the flesh. They are dead. They are hostile toward God. They can't subject themselves to the Law of God, they're not able to do it. They can't please God.

Now do you understand that's what you've been delivered out of? Now because of the work of the Holy Spirit, you have been given life and the continuing, sanctifying work of the Spirit, we'll talk about the regenerating work which happened when you're saved, the ongoing sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit is an ongoing powerful movement of the third member of the Trinity in your life to drive you in the direction that He wants you to go. You are now walking in the Spirit. You're literally carried along in the direction of your life by the things of the Spirit, by the mind that is attentive to the Spirit, that is not hostile to God, is able to fulfill the Law, is able to please God.

This is the great work of regeneration and sanctification. This is not a small thing. Some people walk in the flesh, that's their behavior because they mind the things of the flesh, that's their thinking. And they are therefore dead, that's their condition. Others walk in the Spirit, that's their behavior; they mind the things of the Spirit, that's how they think. And they enjoy life and peace. That's the flow of Paul's thought.

The ability to fulfill God's Law comes from the regenerating power and the sanctifying subsequent work of the Holy Spirit. All of a sudden you have a love for the Scripture, you have an interest in the Scripture, you have a hunger for the Scripture. You want to know God. You want to love God more. You love His Word. You want to hear His Word. You want to understand His Word, you want to obey His Word.

The basic axiom is simple. There are two kinds of people, those that are after the flesh, that mind the things of the flesh, they're dead. They're the living dead. Can't fulfill the Law of God, can't please God, no capacity, that's depravity. The unsaved person habitually controlled by his unregenerate and depraved humanness hates God, hates the things of God. To one degree or another, he will manifest that hate. But in the heart he hates the things of God, cannot fulfill them at all.

Let me dig down a little bit into this because I think it will be helpful for us. Go to verse 5, *"Those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh." Phroneo* is the Greek verb, *phroneo,* to be disposed to, to be disposed to, to be bent toward. The noun form is *phren,* sometimes *phren* refers to the seat of all mental affections and mental faculties, expresses any form of mental activity, any mental activity whether it's emotional or willful or any combination of the emotions and the will. It isn't the word for mind. It is not the word for mind. The word for mind is *nous* and it's *1 Corinthians 2:16,* we have the mind of Christ. This isn't the word for mind. This is the word for disposition. This is the word for bent. This is the word that describes

the way you go. In fact, the best way, I think, to translate it is the deliberate intentional mindset. The unsaved person is dominated by a deliberate intentional mindset controlled by the flesh.

What is the flesh? It's not just his physical body. It's not just that which you can touch and see. It is his fallen humanness. It is not just his physical body, it is the invisible thought patterns in his mind that inform the behaviors of the body, it is his fallenness and you can't fix it. You can't fix it. You can't fix it by education, that isn't the answer. You can't fix it; it's a controlling internal force of fallenness, corruption, the flesh.

The New Testament talks a lot about the flesh, talks about the affections of the flesh, talks about confidence in the flesh, the deeds of the flesh, the desires of the flesh. It talks about the religion of the flesh, the prayers of the flesh, the worship according to the flesh, the God of the flesh, the corruption of the flesh. It simply means your fallen condition without God. You're a walking dead person, but you're a corrupt one.

Those people who John says love the world, things that are in the world and the love of the Father is not in them. And everybody unredeemed is like that. They indulge the flesh and its corrupt desires. That's what Peter said, they indulge the flesh and its corrupt desires. That's the fact. And they can't fulfill the Law of God. They go on violating the Law of God and the penalty for that is…what?... wages of sin, death.

On the other side, there's another pathology here. Go back to verse 5. Those who are according to the Spirit, implied here again, *phroneo* mind the things of the Spirit. Verse 6, *"And the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace."* It makes a completely different pathology. We now are not hostile to God, we willingly subject ourselves to the Law of God. We're able to do that by the Holy Spirit and we can even please God.

How much can we please God? I'll tell you how much we can please God. Think of Enoch, how much did Enoch please God? He pleased God so much and he was a man with like passions like ours, he pleased God so much that one day he took a walk with God and God just took him right into heaven. And you know, I'll tell you something about Enoch, he walked with God, try this one, for 365 years. Oh, it's so hard to be a Christian, I've been a Christian for twelve years, it's really hard to be a Christian, really hard… You say, "But yeah, Enoch lived in a perfect world." What? Two generations after Enoch, what happened? God drowned the entire earth. How do you walk for 365 years uprightly before God? Walk with God and just one day God says, "I'm just going to take you with Me, let's keep walking. Walk right into heaven."

What did it mean to walk with God? It meant to please God. It meant to be obedient to what he knew God desired. It meant to commune with God. All of a sudden for us there's a new vent, there's a new disposition, there's a new direction, there's a new controlling influence in our lives and it's the power of the Holy Spirit. The very author of the Scripture that we are to obey lives in us, and not only lives in us to instruct us but lives in us to empower us to obey that instruction. And so we do mind the things of the Spirit, verse 5 says. The things of the Spirit would be those things that are precious to the Spirit which would be the same things that would honor Christ and God and would be revealed in Scripture. We have a new controlling power. We no longer are under the power of the flesh, which is death, but we are, verse 6 says, under the power of the Holy Spirit. We have a mindset on the spirit, that's our mindset, and that is because we live in a world of life and peace… a world of life and peace, true blessedness. We are alive to God and at peace with God. We are literally driven by this same violent power of the Holy Spirit toward what honors God.

Flesh? That's just death. That's why whatever unregenerate people do is called in *Hebrews 9:14* dead works, because they're dead. *First Timothy 5:6, "She that lives in pleasure is dead while she lives."* But we have been given spiritual life and now we have that life because we've made peace with God, that's fellowship with God, reconciliation to God, the end of alienation and all the life that comes with that. This is just a profound understanding of the mighty work of the Holy Spirit in us, sweet communion with God, God's grace continually poured out to us, His mercy unending, His love shed abroad in our hearts, joy forever, inner assurance that all is well, a love for God, a love for the Word of God, a love for obedience, a longing to feed our souls on His truth. Now, does this mean we're perfect? No…no. We struggle with the flesh because residually it's still there. We are not in the flesh. We don't mind the things of the flesh, that's not our mindset. We don't live according to the flesh, but the flesh is after us and it's hanging on, it's the body of death in *Romans 7* that's attached.

But its power has been severely blunted by the presence of the Holy Spirit. Our minds now are such that we are no longer hostile to God, as those are in verse 7. We are subject to the Law of God. We are able to obey that Law by the power of the Spirit. And we can, as verse 8 says, even please God.

Now you're seeing some power, overcoming this corruption that is so profound and deep in every human being, and the Holy Spirit has overcome it to enable us to obey the Law of God and that would start with loving God and pleasing Him as well.

There's one other ministry that I want you to notice here and we'll kind of work our way up to it a little bit. Let's go to verses 9 and 10 and maybe 11. You're not in the flesh, summing up what he has said, signifies the state of grace, the state of salvation. The decisive proof*, you're not in the flesh but in the Spirit if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone doesn't have the Spirit of Christ, He doesn't belong to Him."* I mean that's so basic, isn't it? Notice Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ…same. You're not in the flesh, you don't mind the things of the flesh, you don't walk according to the flesh, you're not in the state of death, all that is summed up there. But you're in the Spirit, you walk in the Spirit, you mind the things of the Spirit. You have life and peace. This is true if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. The mark of true salvation is the presence of the Holy Spirit.

There's no such thing as a believer without the Holy Spirit. This is another terrible Charismatic error that somehow you can be saved and not have the Holy Spirit. You couldn't be anything other than a wretched, corrupt sinner apart from the Holy Spirit's work. And it's not just a one-time work and then you've got to try to find Him, it's an ongoing work. So that the evidence of the transformation is the indwelling Spirit, *oikeo (?)* means to live in as a home. The Holy Spirit's taken up residence in you, *1 Corinthians 3:16, you are the temple of God*…you're the temple of God, the Holy Spirit. *First Corinthians 6* says the same thing.

And the reverse is said at the end of verse 9, *"If anyone doesn't have the Spirit of Christ, he doesn't belong to Him."* Spirit, Spirit of Christ, Spirit of God showed that the Holy Spirit sustains the same relationship to the second person that He does to the first person, and each to each other. This is the mark of a true believer. And because you have the Holy Spirit dwelling in you, it changes how you think, it changes how you act, it changes what you love, it changes what you do, it changes how you talk because of His power overwhelming your fallenness.

So, we see that the Holy Spirit is there empowering the work of regeneration, and empowering the work of sanctification. There's one final one, and this would be the last point for now, He raises us to immortality, glorification. The final aspect of our salvation, which is nearer now than it's ever been, is our glorification. Is that the work of the Holy Spirit? Well let's look at verse 10.

"If Christ is in you," or since Christ is in you, "*though the body is dead because of sin…"* In other words, look, we're not saying Paul wants to make clear you're not dead, we're not saying you're not going to die, okay? We're not saying that. You're going to die…you're going to die, and you know that. If Christ is in you though the body is dead, there's a deadness in your body, there's a death principle in your body because of sin. That's not going to change. You don't fix that in this mortal body. That's the way it is. But you're spirit is alive because of righteousness. It's been literally covered in the imputed righteousness of Christ, your inner person, the person that you are that lives in that body, you're alive with eternal life, but your body, it's not going to get fixed down here. Again, it's the body of this death.

The only hope for you is to get freed up from this body of death and all that comes with it in your fallen brain as well. And so we read in verse 11, "*But 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."*

How many times does he have to tell us, where does the Spirit live? In you, in you, in you, in you, in you, in you, in you. Why? Because you couldn't live one moment pleasing God without His power. You couldn't overcome your corruption without His power. Not only does the Holy Spirit do the work of regeneration and the work of sanctification, but here we find that God who raised Christ from the dead, we know God raised Christ because that's what it says in *Romans 1 to 4*, God the Father raised Christ from the dead to validate His ministry, to vindicate His ministry, and that's what God's going to do with us. He's going to give life to our mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. Look, we're all going to die. One of my dear friends just died. I spent some time with him this week, cancer ate away his head. Just a precious friend and knew it wasn't going to be long and so I prayed that the Lord would take him into His presence this week. It was…it was a horrible thing to see. I had never seen cancer literally eat a person on the outside until there was virtually nothing left. That's the body of this death. That's how it is. It may not be as visible as that in all cases. This body is going to die.

The truth of the matter is, the day of our death is better than the day of our birth because the first time we were just born into sin. And the next time we die, we're going to be reborn into perfection, holy perfection. Even though the body dies, the Spirit lives forever. But some day, when you die, your spirit goes to heaven, absent from the body, present with the Lord, far better to depart and be with Christ. Get that?

You're not going to limbo, you're not going to purgatory, you're not going to some holding place, you're not going to get stuck waiting for the next train to heaven on some endless track… *absent from the body, present with the Lord*, leave here, there you are, immediately you're going to see the Lord. But you're going to be a spirit without a body until the final resurrection. And in the final resurrection, according to what the Apostle Paul says, the Lord Jesus will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory. Wow! He's going to give us a body like His resurrection body, like His body that ascended into heaven, like His body that walked through walls How's He going to do it? By the power that He has demonstrated.

Who's that power? The Holy Spirit, that's what it says right here in verse 11, through His Spirit who dwells in you. Someday the Holy Spirit is going to recreate you. You say, "Is He going to go down to the grave? I hope it's not all gone by the time this event happens." It won't matter, He's got the formula. He knows what an imperfect person you are because He's lived in there for a long time. He also has a perfect understanding and a perfect schematic to make the perfect you which will bear some distant relationship to what you are here. He will recreate you. That is power.

Is that not power? To recreate everyone who believes into their immortal bodies? All the saints of all history, this is the work of the Holy Spirit. This is the work for which He is to be exalted, freeing us from sin and death, enabling us to fulfill the Law, transforming our nature and giving us a glorified body that will dwell forever in heaven.

As I've been thinking about the Holy Spirit, there's a lot more to come, I've been looking up some hymns trying to find old hymns on the Holy Spirit. Some of you sent me books, I have enough. You all are amazing. You have supplied me with plenty. And I found an old hymn, just interesting to see how people were thinking about the Holy Spirit, this would be 160 years ago, 1850. The writer says, "Spirit of God, descend upon my heart…descent upon my heart, wean it from earth through all its pulses move, stoop to my weakness, mighty as Thou art, and make me love Thee as I ought to love." There's a believer praying through that verse that the Holy Spirit would give him a greater love for the Holy Spirit Himself.

Second verse, I like this, "I ask no dream, no prophet ecstasies, no sudden rending of the veil of clay," in other words, some transcendent experience, no angel visitant, no opening skies," no trip to heaven, "but take the dimness of my soul away. Help me see the truth." And then the last verse, "Teach me to love Thee as Thine angels love. One holy passion filling all my frame, the kindling of the heaven descended dove, my heart an altar and I love the flame."

The Holy Spirit wants to set you on fire to love Him, to love the Son, to love the Father. Not nonsense, this is the true work of the Holy Spirit. More to come.

Father, we thank You for our time this morning. Thank You for the consistency of the precious Word that we open up and how, no matter where we go, the ring of truth is just overwhelmingly clear and loud, firm, distinct. Thank You that You've given us this wonderful revelation of all things that we need to know and what we have learned we desire to put into practice and into worship as we honor and serve our Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Hear our prayer, we pray. Amen.