

The Spirit of Sanctification

by Dwight Pentecost

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living a Christian life by letting the Holy Spirit live through us, rather than trying to live it ourselves.

Duration: 36:00

Scripture: Romans 8:3-5, Romans 8:9, Romans 8:13, Galatians 5:16

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Sanctification"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the contrast between being controlled by the Holy Spirit and being controlled by the flesh. He explains that no one living under the law could keep the law because the flesh is weak. However, God sent his Son to judge sin in the flesh and free individuals from being ruled by their sin nature. The preacher emphasizes the importance of walking by the Spirit, which means living in obedience to the Holy Spirit's guidance. He highlights that the law perfectly reveals the holiness of God and the demands for fellowship with Him.

Transcript

The response of faith of Romans 6 to 11 is an act. I believe what the Word says. I didn't know it, I didn't feel it, I wasn't conscious that it happened, and yet because God said it, I believe it.

And when a child of God goes to God and says, I believe the record of Scripture, I have been crucified with Christ, that is an act. As a result of that act, there is an attitude. The attitude comes from the act.

Because I believe that I was crucified, I am one who is crucified. That's a new attitude toward myself. I am a liberated one.

And I get up every morning, and when I look at myself in the mirror, I say to myself, Dwight Soneko, you are liberated. You don't have to serve sin today. And every morning I tell myself that fact over again.

That's what it is to die daily. The fact that I look in the mirror when I shave and say, you're liberated, you don't have to serve sin today, doesn't mean I'm crucifying myself. I'm registering again the fact that I have believed.

And this dying daily does not have to do with establishing the fact. It has to do with my attitude toward the fact. So Paul said, I die.

That was once and for all, that's finished. But I consequently am one who is crucified, and I just tell myself, remind myself, and I live in the light of that attitude. And when I live in the light of that attitude, I am dying daily.

So we have the fact, we have the faith, the response to the fact. Now I'm moving into Romans chapter 8 to get the force, or the power, by which we live a Christian life. And may I say to you young people, and make it as plain as I know how, the word of God does not give us the responsibility of living a Christian life.

The word of God does not ask us to live a Christian life. The word of God asks us to let another live his life through it. I say to you that there is no power in the new nature, there's no power in the new capacity.

You cannot live a Christian life. I would even say you can't live a Christian life by yourself any more after you're saved than you can before you're saved. You can't do it.

You are charged with the responsibility to see that you are living a Christian life. So we have all the exhortations of the New Testament to godliness, but the responsibility, the wrath on you, is only to let another do it. And that's why Paul summarizes it so well in Galatians 2.20, I have been crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me.

And I like to define the Christian life this way. The Christian life is the life of Christ lived in me and through me by the Holy Spirit. The Christian life is the life of Christ lived in me and through me by the Holy Spirit.

I can't live a Christian life even though I have been crucified with Christ. Another has to do it through me, and the power or the force for the sake of alliteration is developed in Romans 8. There is therefore now no judgment to them who are in Christ Jesus, for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. The principle or the law or the rule of the Spirit who is life has freed me from being ruled by the principle of sin and death.

Now, Paul in verse 3 of Romans 8 tells us why a believer cannot live a Christian life. What the law could not do in that it was weak because it depended on the flesh. The weakness of the law was not the law.

The law perfectly revealed the holiness of God. The law revealed the demands that a holy, righteous God makes on those who would live in fellowship with himself. No man living under the Mosaic law was endowed as to what he should do, how he should act, how he should dress, what was right and what was wrong.

The law wasn't obscure in those points. It was very, very specific. The law, Paul says, was holy and just and good.

The law was holy in that it revealed the holiness of God. It was just in that it passed a just sentence upon those who do not conform to the law. The law was good in that it did that which God designed the law to do, to reveal his holiness, to reveal the kind of life God expects of those who walk in fellowship with himself.

The weakness of the law was not in the law. The weakness was in those to whom the law was given, for the law depended on the power of the flesh for its fulfillment, and there was no power in the flesh. Therefore, no one living under the law could keep the law.

Therefore, the law passed its just sentence upon all because they violated the holiness revealed in the law. Now, that's just all in Paul's mind when he says the law was weak, not because of what it was in itself, but because it depended on men who are characterized as flesh, and the flesh is weak. So what did God do? God sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin judged sin in the flesh.

That is, the death of Christ pronounced judgment on the flesh, or on the sin nature, by the old capacity, and liberated the individual from being ruled by that old capacity that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but walk after the Spirit. Here Paul introduces us to a teaching that is so vital, walking by the Spirit. Here I am, a child of God, with two capacities.

The capacity to sin and the capacity to do righteousness. Now, I think one of the best illustrations of this we find in looking at an elevator. An elevator weighs several tons, and you put some well-fed people in it, it weighs a lot more.

And there's no power in that elevator to go from the ground floor to the top floor of the building. No power in that elevator whatsoever. And you know that.

And you know that elevator can't take you by itself to the top floor. But you get in that elevator, and you push the button for the top floor, and it goes up. Why? Not because the elevator has power in itself, but because a new power lifts that elevator from the ground floor to the top of the building.

You sever that cable that connects the winch to the elevator, and down it'll go. It'll go down every time. But it doesn't go down because a new power supersedes the law of gravity that operates it.

Or go with me out to Love Field. You stand alongside one of those 747s, and there it goes, five stories or so up into the air or more. Gigantic thing.

And every speck of gray matter in your head says, something as big as that can't fly. The law of gravity says that mass of metal, that can of sardines, cannot get off the ground. But you give your ticket to the counter agent, you walk on the ramp, and you sit down, you buckle your seat, and in a few minutes you're zooming up into the wild blue yonder.

Why? Because the law of gravity doesn't operate. Every once in a while we see that the law of gravity does operate. But the law of gravity is superseded by a new law.

A law that I don't understand, but thank the Lord that the engineers who designed the planes understand those laws of aerodynamic. And the law of aerodynamic supersedes the law of gravity. But when that law of aerodynamic does not operate, the law of gravity takes over, and down it comes.

Now you see, there are two laws in operation in that elevator. The law of gravity that pulls it down, and the new law that lifts it up. And whether it goes down or up depends on which law it's operating by.

And Paul is teaching us exactly that thing when he tells us, in every child of God there are two laws operating. The law of sin and death, the law of life by the Spirit. And when one is operating by the old law, he sins.

And when one operates by the law of life in Christ by the Spirit of God, righteousnesses are the product of the operation of that law. And Paul calls that a walking by the Spirit, Romans 8.4. Walking by the Spirit. Now, in my text it's translated walking after the Spirit.

And the word after suggests following an example, following a pattern that's set out. And if you take Christ as your example, or take the Holy Spirit as your example, then you are assuming obligation to live the Christian life. But that's not the best translation of this text, because Christ, while he is an example according to 1 Peter, that does not transfer the responsibility of living the Christian life to us.

And a good translation of this would be, who walk by means of the Spirit. Galatians chapter 5 and verse 16. This I say then, you be continually walking.

It's a present tense in the original text, and it signifies continuous, progressive action. You be continually walking, literally, by means of the Spirit. By means of the Spirit.

I have a very good friend, and one of my elders in my church stepped on a landmine in the Korean War, and his right leg was blown off, blown off just below the knee. And he walked with the use of an artificial limb. Most people know that he's even lost a limb.

He plays tennis, he goes skiing up in Colorado. There's a lot of things that I can't do with two perfectly good legs. He's adapted to his loss tremendously.

But this last Christmas time, he had taken his family up to Colorado, and they were skiing, and he got his skis crossed up on a slope, and he had a fall, and he broke the stump of his leg. They took him in the hospital. The doctor scratched their head and said, well, we don't know what to do with an amputee who's broken his stump skiing.

We've never had a case like this before. They flew him out to the old orthopedic man who had treated him after he lost his limb originally, and he set what was left of his leg, the stump, and put it in a cast and sent him back to Dallas. And when I saw Billy, he was walking with a crutch.

He had no leg on which to stand, quite literally, didn't have a leg to stand on, and he had no cast on which he could stand. He just had an empty pant leg. Yet here he was, coming to church and assuming all his business and his obligations in the church to his family, walking by means of a crutch.

If he had taken that crutch away, he'd have gone down in a heap. He couldn't stand by himself, but he walked by means of a crutch, consciously depending on that crutch for every step that he took. That's what Paul is teaching in Galatians 5.16. And if I can put it this way, when it comes to living the Christian life, you don't have a leg to stand on, and if you try to walk, you will go down in a heap.

But you have been given one upon whom you can lean. And the Spirit of God, when you lean on him, can support you so that you can walk so as to please him. And walking by means of the Spirit means to live in conscious dependence upon the support that there is in the Holy Spirit, so that you are kept from falling because of the strength of the Spirit.

In spite of your weakness, the weakness of the flesh, you are kept from falling into sin because of the strength of the Spirit. I have been crucified with Christ. I accept that fact and count myself as one who has been liberated from sin.

But when I walk, I do not walk as one who has power of himself. I walk in conscious dependence upon the Holy Spirit of God. And that's the essence of Paul's doctrine, and how true Philippians 4.13 is.

For some strange reason, we like to apply 4.13 particularly to finances, because that's in the context later. But when Paul says, I can do all things through Christ, which fact strengthens me? He's saying that we can lean upon the power of Almighty God with the confidence that he will not let us down. Our crutch will not break.

That's what it is, walking by the Spirit. Along with the doctrine of walking by the Spirit, I want you to turn to Ephesians 5.18. Paul writes, Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit. Now, I might well assume from your previous training you are very familiar with these doctrines of the Spirit.

But I'm afraid to assume anything, even though I know you know it, and I want the privilege of treating you as though you've never heard it before, and we're introducing it to you for the first time. I know it's not true, but I want to do it anyway. It's good to be reminded of these things.

Frequently there is confusion between three of the works of the Spirit. The baptizing work, the indwelling work, and the filling work. The baptizing work, we defined it many times in the course of our talks with you, is defined in 1 Corinthians 12.13. It is the sovereign work of the Spirit of God that joins a believer as a living member of the body of which Jesus Christ is the head.

A favorite expression of the Apostle Paul is the phrase, In Christ Jesus. How did I get into that exalted position? I was baptized into it. I was placed in that body.

I was identified with Christ by the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit. The second work we refer to is the indwelling work of the Spirit. In the Old Testament, God chose to occupy the tabernacle and later the temple.

He used the tabernacle and the temple as that place from which he manifested his glory and through which he demonstrated his presence. God dwelt in the tabernacle or the temple in Israel. In the New Testament, God is fashioning a new temple.

Described in Ephesians 21 and 22, The body groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye are builded together for inhabitation of God through the Spirit. All believers corporately form the temple in which God dwells today, and individual believers as a part of that temple are indwelt by the Spirit of God. The very moment one accepts Christ as a personal Savior, he is baptized experientially into the body.

The very moment one accepts Christ as a personal Savior, he is indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God. This work of the Spirit of God was prophesied by our Lord in John 16, verse 7. I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away. For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you.

But if I depart, I will send him unto you. John 14, 16. I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because the sea is not near the north end.

But ye know him, for he dwelleth with you." He dwelleth with you. That was the relationship of the Holy Spirit to believers in the Old Testament. He dwelt alongside of them to be their enablement, to be their crutch, to be their power.

He dwells now with you, and he shall be in you. He shall be in you. The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament was an external crutch.

The Holy Spirit in the New Testament is an internal crutch. I don't know how to illustrate this. If I take my friend Billy, who broke his leg, when I talk about him walking by means of a crutch, that's external.

Now suppose I could say that the surgeon planted a new bone inside Billy, and he walked by that new bone instead of by the old broken one. Then you would have an internal support. But in the Old Testament, the Spirit of God dwelt with them, and Christ prophesied, He will be in you.

And on the day of Pentecost, in Acts chapter 2, the Holy Spirit of God came to move into the body of believers and into individual believers, and the bodies of believers became his temple. And we are indwelled. That's why Paul can write 1 Corinthians 6.19, Know ye not that ye are the temple of the Holy Spirit that dwelleth in you? That's the indwelling work.

I have been baptized at once and for all. I am indwelled. That is a permanent indwelling, because Christ said he'll abide forever.

Those are some of the works of the Spirit to believers that have to do with their position. But when we come to Ephesians chapter 5, we have to do with a work of the Spirit in relation to their experience, in relation to their daily life, where Paul says, Be not drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit. Now, the filling of the Spirit is not the same as the indwelling.

And when we use the word filled, we think of a vessel that is empty, and we're thinking of pouring something into that empty vessel until what is poured into it comes up to the top. Filled, in that sense. That's why there's so much confusion between the indwelling and the filling.

The Spirit indwells me, and in that sense he fills up what was an empty void before. And so a lot of people have missed the distinction between the indwelling and the filling. They do the same thing.

But Paul has an entirely different idea when he says, Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit. And he, in order to teach us what the filling of the Spirit is that we don't know anything about, he contrasts it with drunkenness with which we are familiar, I trust by observation only. Don't be drunk with wine.

Now, what happens when a man is drunk with wine? The man who is drunk is brought under the influence of, or the control of, a force or a power apart from himself. He's brought under the influence or power of a force outside of himself. And when a man is drunk, everything about him changes.

He might be a Mickey Mouse kind of a little guy when he's sober, and when he's drunk he wants to fight the world. He's willing to pick out the biggest guy and take him on. He's so timid he wouldn't even sing in his own shower with the door closed.

When he's drunk he wants to stand in the street corner and sing Oh Solo Mio and wake up everybody in the block. When he's sober he can walk in a straight line, and when he's drunk he can't. Bangers all over the place.

Everything about him has changed. Why? He is being controlled by another, and drunkenness or filling with wine is contrasted with filling of the Spirit. To be filled with the Spirit is to be controlled by the Holy Spirit, just as to be filled with wine or drunkenness is to be controlled by wine.

This word filled, it was used by the Greeks. It normally had to do with movement or motion. When they talked about filling the sails of a ship, with wind, they weren't thinking of just empty sails that fill it out.

They were thinking of the resultant movement that came because the sails were filled with the wind. What was filled with the wind moved. Filling, then, has to do with being possessed or controlled by the Holy Spirit so that our course of life or course of conduct is under his control, under his authority.

Do not be brought under the influence or control of wine, but you be under the influence or control by the Holy Spirit. Now the question comes, how is one filled with the Spirit? How men thinking and writing on this have complicated this simple teaching. From what we said in last hour, you ought to come up with the answer with no help at all.

A man is not brought under the influence of wine by painting a bottle and putting on a shelf and looking at it. The only way he gets drunk with wine is to voluntarily submit to it by imbibing it. And now this takes us back to Romans 6, the word yield.

A man is not under control of the Spirit of God until he submits himself to the Spirit's control. But this word yield or present. Myself, I don't like to use the term yielding, because when we use the English word yield, we use it of something we do unwillingly because we're overpowered by it.

That's what the word yield suggests. And I don't know, something in the back of my neck stands up every time I come to an intersection and I see the triangular sign that says yield. So you've got to give up your right.

And everything that's natural in me says, I don't want to give up my right, why shouldn't he yield to me? But I'm overpowered and overmastered, so I do what the sign says. It suggests reluctance. And the word I like to use is the word present.

The word present instead of the word yield. And I think that's closer to the Greek text. So all through Romans 6, if you're using a text that has yield, yield, yield, it suggests that somebody's standing over you with a club ready to bash you if you don't.

Change it to the word present, and remember again that the word present was the word that was used at a wedding when the hand of the bride was put into the hand of the bridegroom. And when he took her hand that was put in here, when she presented herself to him, he could say, you are mine. When she presented herself to him, she, because of her love and devotion, was voluntarily submitting to his authority.

It was her love that caused her to set aside her independence and bring her into submission to a new head. And when Paul uses the word present in Romans 6 and Romans 12, he is saying that your response to the love of the Lord Jesus Christ for you ought to lead you to present yourself to him, to put yourself under his headship, under his control, under his authority. And that presentation makes possible his control.

The voluntary submission of the child of God to the Spirit of God makes it possible for the Spirit of God to fill or to control him. There is one baptism, there is one indwelling. Neither of these are ever repeated, but there ought to be innumerable fillings in which the child of God, over and over, is consciously submitting himself to the Spirit's direction and the Spirit's control in his life.

The Spirit of God will never rule an unwilling subject. The Spirit of God will not enforce his will on the child of God. The Spirit of God will not live the life of Christ through the child of God apart from the consent of the child of God.

A hymn that we sing, and have become so familiar with it we've lost its punch, is the hymn, Moment by Moment I'm Kept in His Love. The secret of the Christian life is to believe something. I have been crucified with Christ.

And then, moment by moment, to walk in conscious dependence on the Spirit of God as my strength so that the Spirit of God, moment by moment, can live his life through me. I believe that is the great lesson in Romans chapter 8. A new law operates by virtue of the fact that I have been crucified with Christ. When I consciously depend on the Holy Spirit, he will live his life through me.

Unless we get the idea that a Christian, by the flesh, can live the Christian life, Paul goes on in Romans 8.5 and says, they that are after the flesh have a mind for the things of the flesh. They can't live a Christian life. They that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit, they are the ones that can live a Christian life.

To be carnally minded, that is to live by the all mind, is death. We'll produce that which is dead. But to live by the Spirit, to be walking by means of the Spirit, is life and peace.

That carnal mind is at war against God. It is not subject to the law of God. Neither indeed can be.

And he's talking about the all mind in the of God. It is not subject to God's control, the Spirit's control. So then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. And so be it that the Spirit of God dwell in you, and he most certainly does, because he indwells. If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus in the dead dwell in you, and he most certainly does because of his indwelling work, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall make alive your mortal bodies. That is, you'll live a life of righteousness and godliness by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Righteousness is the product of the Spirit working his life out through a child of God.

But he cannot work his life out until there is voluntary submission to his control. A fact, you die. Faith, the response to the fact.

Submission to the Spirit's control makes it possible for the Spirit to live the life of Christ through the child of God. See you later. This concludes Side B. If you would like more information on the cassettes available from Campus Crusade for Christ, write to Tapes, Campus Crusade for Christ, San Bernardino, California, 92414.

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