

SERMON NOTES

SERIES: Romans: God's Power for Salvation
TITLE: Walking According to the Spirit

SCRIPTURE: Romans 8:1-11

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PASTOR: Charlie Boyd

The book of Romans is a masterfully written exposition of the gospel of God. Without a doubt, it is the foundation of authentic Christianity and the most articulate, systematic understanding of our faith found in the Bible. Countless lives have been changed by the truth found in this ancient letter, and it continues to change lives today. Interestingly enough, Romans was written to Christians. So, while the good news found in Romans can certainly bring people to faith in Jesus, the actual focus is on how the gospel helps Christians think rightly about God, life, faith, and Christian community. If you want to grow to know God more personal and intimate way, this letter is for you!

I think we all can agree that none of us is perfect. We all struggle with things that we know we shouldn't be doing. We all struggle with sin. What sin do you struggle with the most? That sin that always seems to trip you up and suck you in. What is it? The question we are looking at this week is this—How can we say “no” to that sin?

REVIEW: Romans 6,7,8 talk about how the Gospel that saves us, changes us. In Romans 6 we saw how, because of our union with Christ, we are now dead to sin and alive to God, so everything that's true of Jesus is true of us. In Romans 7 we saw how we still struggle with sin because we still live in mortal bodies that are temptable. We saw how that trying harder to obey God only results in more failure and guilt. So, what's the answer—Romans 8 gives us the answer. As we learn to “walk according to the Spirit,” we experience freedom from sin and guilt, and we live the kind of lives that God desires for his people.

READ 8:5-8: From God's perspective, there are two kinds of people in the world, fleshly-minded people—non-believers and Spiritually-minded believers—people who have trusted Christ for salvation. What is the “flesh?” READ John 3:6: According to Jesus, “flesh” is everything humanness is apart from new birth. People who are “of the flesh”—their natural spirit is dead because of Adam's sin—define their life within the limits of their physicalness or flesh. They have their minds “habitually dominated” by what makes them look good and feel good. They experience life outside-in through what they see, hear, touch, taste, and feel. The “flesh” is not just what people do. It is who they are apart from new birth. It's their core identity apart from God.

Spiritually-minded people have received the Spirit and through the new birth have been made new—spiritually alive to God. The Holy Spirit “installs” in God's people the actual, risen life of Jesus so that his life is now their life.

READ 8:9-11: Notice how Paul refers to the Spirit—“the Spirit,” “the Spirit of God,” “the Spirit of Christ,” “Christ in you,” and “the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead.” Just like Jesus (Col 2:9), a believer has all the fullness of the Godhead dwelling in their mortal body. The main focus here is on Jesus—you are in the Spirit—you have the Spirit of Christ in you—Christ in you.

So, how do we say “no” to sin?

(1) We need to reframe how we see ourselves. Through work of the Holy Spirit—you are made spiritually alive to God because Christ is in you—he takes up residence in your life, and he becomes your life. You have the actual, risen life of Jesus living inside you so that his life becomes your life lived through your

unique frame (cf. Gal 2:20). Do you see yourself as the living embodiment of Jesus? Also, we say “no” to sin by setting our minds on the “things of the Spirit.”

What are the “things of the Spirit?” Well, the “things of the Spirit” are not (1) having your mind set on theology, doctrine, and Bible knowledge as an end in themselves. They are not having your mind preoccupied with supernatural manifestations of the Spirit—healing, gifts, miracle.

The one and only job of the Spirit is to “glorify” Jesus (Jn 16:14)—meaning, the Holy Spirit takes him who is alive in “your frame,” and he makes him come alive to you. The job of the Spirit is to take the Gospel truths of who Jesus is, what Jesus has done for you, and what Jesus wants to do in living his life through you and make that your life. Said another way, the job of the Spirit is to get you to fall in love with Jesus. The job of the Spirit is to knock us over the head (in a good way) with these great Gospel truths of justification, atonement, adoption, freedom from sin and condemnation. To show you their significance and power—to disturb you and comfort you with them—to lift you up and spur you on. The Spirit does not draw attention to himself. The Spirit puts the spotlight on Jesus and keeps it there so we can see Christ in us, our hope of glory. So, the second thing we need to do is...

(2) We need to remind ourselves of Spirit-inspired, Gospel truth. To set your mind on the things of the Spirit is to set your mind on the things of Christ.

The pull of sin is not great when I feel the pull of the Spirit toward my Savior.

For Discussion:

When you listen to Bible teaching, you should be listening with an ear to learn, but also an ear to share with others what you are learning. Keep that in mind as you discuss today’s message. How do you need to internalize this message so you can share this Good News with someone God might bring across your path this week who needs to hear it?

1. READ Romans 8:1-11. Talk about your own struggle with personal sin. You don’t have to name the sin—you can share that with the group if you want, but you don’t have to—but talk about why that particular sin seems to suck you. What is it about certain sins that can pull you in almost with you even thinking about it?
2. Focus on 8:5-8: Talk about the two kinds of people in the world. What distinguishes the two groups? What is the same between the two groups?
3. What is the “flesh?”
4. What does a “Spiritually-minded” person look like?
5. Focus on 8:9-11: Why do you think that Paul describes the Spirit in so many different ways? How do these different ways of describing the Spirit speaks to our struggle with sin?
6. What does it mean “to set your mind on the things of the Spirit? What doesn’t it mean? Discuss how “setting your mind on the things of the Spirit” does not mean setting your mind on theology, doctrine, or Bible knowledge as an end in themselves. Discuss how “setting your mind on the Spirit” does not means being preoccupied with supernatural manifestations of the Spirit—healing, gifts, miracles. What did Jesus say is the one and only job of the Spirit? (Jn 16:14).
7. Did the picture frame illustration help you see the truth in this text? How so?