
“Life in the Spirit pt. 4”

ROMANS 8:4-11

AUGUST 20, 2023

PASTOR BRIAN SMITH

WILDWOOD CHURCH

EAST MOLINE, ILLINOIS

AT A GLANCE

The Holy Spirit gives us life here and now, but that’s not all He does. He will also give life to our mortal bodies on the day of resurrection! We know this will happen because God has already shown His resurrection power when He raised Jesus from the dead!

INTRODUCTION

We have a new identity in Christ. We are no longer in the flesh, but rather we are in the Spirit. We know that we are in the Spirit if the Spirit of God dwells in us. That is, if you have been born again by the Spirit and indwelt by the Spirit, then you know that you are in the Spirit. And if you are in the Spirit, **the Spirit is life because of righteousness**. The Spirit works in you in a number of ways, many of which I spoke of in part 3. Death may surround us, but life fills us!

But there’s more to this amazing story of life from death! Last week we saw several ways the Holy Spirit gives us life here and now in verse 10. Today we’re going to see how the Holy Spirit will give ultimate life in the hereafter.

⁴in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. ⁵For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. ⁶For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. ⁸Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. ⁹You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹If 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.

PERFECT ONENESS

I want you to note that verse 11 begins with a surprise similar to verse 10. In verse 9 Paul referred to the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ. Then in verse 10 he seamlessly switched to Christ. Now in verse 11 he changed it up again to the Spirit of Him who raised Christ from the dead.

Verse 11 says If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you... Who raised Jesus from the dead? The Father. The Holy Spirit is called the **Spirit of Him who raised Jesus...** or the Spirit of the Father. Paul has referred to the Spirit as the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, Christ, and now essentially the Spirit of the Father. All without one ounce of explanation. As I said last week – the Trinity is in complete agreement, total unity. Perfectly distinct & perfectly united.

Isn't it comforting to know that our Triune God is perfectly unified in seeing our redemption fulfilled? Perfectly aligned around the mission of God – Jesus, sent to restore fallen man to proper relationship with the Father through his death and resurrection, the Holy Spirit sent to bring the dead to life and empower them to advance the mission of God.

Now this is not Paul's point, but it begs the question of what kind of oneness did Jesus have in mind when He prayed the High Priestly prayer in John 17?

"The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me." John 17:22-23

This may not be Paul's main point here, but it does teach us something of what Jesus had in mind for His Church. I want you to see that Paul's focus in this whole paragraph is life in the Spirit, spirit-filled life right now, and Spirit-produced resurrection life to come. The rest of the letter has to do with keeping our eyes focused on the age to come and on living in humble unity until that day. So, while it may not be his main point here, the call to unity that follows in the rest of the letter is built upon the unity of the Godhead seen here in verses 10 and 11. The trinity is perfectly united on the mission of God and you and I ought to be as well. Nothing else matters.

RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD

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. Not only does the Spirit of Christ in us give us life here and now, but through the Spirit the Father will do for us what He did for Christ – He will give us resurrection from the dead!

Transformational life on the inside right now, transformational life on the outside still to come!

The phrase **our mortal bodies** conveys the reality that what we currently have is wasting away as Paul says, *"So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day." 2 Corinthians 4:16* This is the present reality of living in the tension of the already and not yet. Our bodies are dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

But what we anticipate in the resurrection is our mortal, or lowly, body being raised up as a glorious body. *"But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself." Philippians 3:20-21*

Paul gives us an illustration to help us understand what kind of body will be raised. *"But someone will ask, 'How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?' You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain...So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power..." 1 Corinthians 15:35-43*

Are you frustrated with your body? Well, guess what? All your frustrations will be a thing of the past as the body you have will be compared to a kernel or a seed that goes into the ground and comes up as a plant! Imagine that!

SOURCE OF ENCOURAGEMENT THROUGHOUT THE AGES

The resurrection of our bodies has been a source of encouragement for the Church from the beginning. Paul wrote in *Romans 6:5*, *"For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his."* Certainty, based on the resurrection of Jesus. Without that, this is all foolishness. This was Paul's point in 1 Corinthians 15.

“...if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.” 1 Corinthians 15:14-17

We are claiming that dead bodies will be resurrected. That’s a scandalous claim. But we do not shy away from it because it has already happened. Jesus was raised from the dead and He lives today. How do we know Jesus was resurrected?

“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.” 1 Corinthians 15:3-8

EYE-WITNESSES OF THE RESURRECTED JESUS

When Paul wrote this letter there were hundreds of eye-witnesses, including all of the apostles who were still alive and still bearing witness, as Luke recorded in Acts 4. *“And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.” Acts 4:33* I want you to note that this was testimony of eye-witnesses, many of whom paid dearly for what they claimed to have seen with their own eyes. Most of the apostles mentioned here were brutally martyred for what they claimed to have seen with their own eyes. Furthermore, Acts was recorded by a physician, a man whose education and livelihood had to do with life and death of the human body. This is not backwoods folklore.

Take it from Jesus’ own mouth as recorded in Revelation 1. *“When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, ‘Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.’” Revelation 1:17-18*

ASSURANCE THAT HIS PAYMENT WAS RECEIVED BY GOD

Which is why Paul can say so confidently, *“But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.” 1 Corinthians 15:20* The resurrection of Christ is the basis of our own resurrection and indeed of our entire faith. Jesus’ resurrection is the assurance that God has accepted His sacrifice as effectual for your salvation from judgment. *“Because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.” Acts 17:31*

We know that Jesus’ teachings and His sacrifice are right and true because God raised Him from the dead. There have been countless so-called prophets declaring that they have the answer to death and judgement. They are all dead. Jesus is alive! The resurrection is the proof that what Jesus claimed about Himself is true. He is the only way to the Father. His resurrection proves it.

This is the most basic confession of a Christian, *“Because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” Romans 10:9* Faith is belief in the resurrection of Jesus and that He will raise us up. *“Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?’” John 11:25-26*

WE LONG FOR THAT DAY

I draw your attention to the future tense of the promise here in **Romans 8:11**. The resurrection power of the Holy Spirit **will also give life to our mortal bodies**. We long for that time, as Paul wrote in 8:22-24, *“For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until*

now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved... Romans 8:22-24

The Spirit of God dwelling within us is evidence of our presence in Christ, of our salvation (cf. 8:9), and He serves as the basis of our future hope in which our mortal bodies will be redeemed from death to live forever with God in Heaven. What a glorious day that will be!

IT GIVES US HOPE TO ENDURE HARDSHIP & LOVE SACRIFICIALLY

Until then, the resurrection serves as motivation to endure hardship, even the loss of all things. *“For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ... That I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death...”* *Philippians 3:8, 10*

The resurrection is where we set our hope for justice and vindication and recognition for what we’ve done, not now, not here. How does our hope of being raised to share in the resurrection glory of Christ make a difference now?

Jesus was once at a banquet with a lot of powerful and influential people. He turned to his host and said, *“When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”* *Luke 14:12-14*

The future resurrection of our bodies, and the eternity that we’re going to spend with Jesus in Heaven, ought to inspire incredible sacrificial love in the life we live today. It should invoke the kind of selfless service to others who cannot repay you that Jesus speaks of here. It should comfort you to know that the Lord sees and the Lord will repay according to His abundant grace. Whatever reward He chooses to give for faithful sacrifice here is going to be far greater than you could possibly imagine and it will last forever. That’s the power of the resurrection! That’s what the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead will do for you.

IS THIS A HARD SAYING?

As we prepare for communion, I’m reminded of what many called a “hard saying” in John 6.

“Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.” *John 6:54* Jesus didn’t mean physically, but spiritually, symbolically. But fleshly, carnal people do not understand spiritual things. They followed Him to because he fed them dinner the night before and now they wanted free breakfast. Lots of people associate with Jesus for the benefits. But when He told them this spiritual truth, they turned and walked away. Are you tripped up by this spiritual truth that your body will be raised in the resurrection of the dead? Is this a hard saying? Or is it a source of deep encouragement to endure to the end?

The truth is we’re all going to be raised in the end. It’s just a question of where we will live forever. *“Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.”* *John 5:28-29*

How do you ensure you will be raised to the resurrection of life? Repent and believe the Gospel!

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bruce, F. F. (2008). *Romans: An introduction and commentary*. Inter-Varsity Press.
- Doriani, D. M. (2021). *Romans*. P&R Publishing.
- Hughes, Kent R. (1991). *Romans – Righteousness from Heaven*. Crossway.
- Kruse, Colin G. (2012). *Paul's Letter to the Romans*. W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
- Longenecker, Richard N. (2016). *The Epistle to the Romans*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
- MacArthur, John. (1991). *Romans 1-8*. Moody Publishers.
- MacArthur, John. (1991). *Romans 9-16*. Moody Publishers.
- Moo, Douglas J. (2018). *The Letter to the Romans, Second Edition*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
- Mounce, Robert. (1995). *Romans*. B&H Publishing.
- Schreiner, Thomas R. (2018). *Romans, Second Edition*. Baker Publishing Group.
- Sproul, R. C. (2019). *The Righteous Shall Live By Faith – Romans*. Ligonier Ministries