

## **The Spirit and the Flesh**

### ***Romans 8:5 - 11***

*<sup>5</sup>Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. <sup>6</sup>The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; <sup>7</sup>the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. <sup>8</sup>Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. <sup>9</sup>You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. <sup>10</sup>But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup>And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.*

**We often see divisions among people today. People can be divided by race, gender, background, money, age and level of education. We often speak of the “wrong side of town,” “the other side of the tracks” and similar clichés. God doesn’t invoke or use the types of divisions that we do. God divides along the lines of “in Christ” and “out of Christ.” Another way to describe God’s division is the one Paul introduced in today’s Bible lesson...living according to the sinful nature or the Spirit-filled nature. We can also describe that division as living according to our way or God’s way. Donald Grey Barnhouse has written that “*according to the Word of God, there are only two kinds of people in the world, those who have been born once and those who have been born twice.*”**

**David Jeremiah wrote “*as we have already learned, Romans seven is dominated by the words I, me and my. In contrast, Romans eight is dominated by the Holy Spirit, who is mentioned by name nineteen times in this chapter.*” The Holy Spirit makes it possible for us to transition from life out of Christ to life in Christ. The Holy Spirit convicts us of our sins and converts us through the Gospel.**

**The result of the sin-filled way is death. The result of the Spirit-filled way is life and peace (6). Consider some indications or symptoms of the sin-filled life in verse 7:**

- Hostility toward the Lord God**
- Reluctance to submit to God in any way**
- Under ownership of the enemy and not under the leadership of Christ**

**Baptism is a public and symbolic sign of what God does privately and literally in the life of a person who comes to repentance and faith in Jesus. Baptism symbolizes our death to the old way of life and resurrection to a new way of**

life in Jesus. Verse 10 spoke to this transformation that God facilitates in the believer's life. Indeed, verse 11 teaches that we never really enjoy life in its true fullness until we come to Christ.

There is a difference between existence and life. Existence implies that all the necessary organ functions are in place to keep one going. Life however implies a richness that is more than just organs performing their intended duty. In the language of the New Testament, there were two words for life. One word was "bios." Bios implied mere existence... an almost animal like march through life consumed with basic drives like hunger, breathing and security. The other word was "zoe." Zoe implied a deep, invigorating, enriching kind of life where one enjoyed emotions, other people, service, love and relationships. The body made "bios" possible. But it takes the Holy Spirit to enjoy "zoe" kind of life. David Jeremiah has suggested that the Holy Spirit inhabits, invigorates and in-spires every believer.

There is a temptation to grow complacent or satisfied with our relationship with the Lord. There is so much to the Lord and the life He offers us in Christ that we cannot allow ourselves to think that we have seen or done it all. The Lord offers new joys and mercies each day. Indeed, Jeremiah once wrote "*for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning*" (Lamentations 3:22-23).

#### Applications . . .

1. Recall the circumstances of how you came to faith in Christ. How old were you? Where did this take place?
2. What dimensions of your faith are in need of reinvigoration or rejuvenation? Give those areas to the Holy Spirit as you pray.
3. When you consider yourself, are you merely existing or truly living? Which word, "bios" or "zoe", best describes your life?
4. Spend the next week asking God to enrich your life with chances to love and serve Him as you encounter others.
5. Take time today to pray for three people you know by name. Pray for them to enjoy all the richness of life that God has available to them.