

Lent 5  
April 2, 2017

*"You Have a New Heart Powered by the Holy Spirit"*

### **ROMANS 8:11-19**

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**A**nd 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. <sup>12</sup> Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. <sup>13</sup> For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, <sup>14</sup> because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. <sup>15</sup> For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." <sup>16</sup> The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. <sup>17</sup> Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. <sup>18</sup> I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. <sup>19</sup> The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.

As you sit here this morning your wonderful heart muscle is pumping precious blood to feed the 75 trillion cells in our body. You have over 60,000 miles of blood vessels and capillaries. This past week your heart pumped over 10,000 gallons of blood throughout your body. We stand in awe of how our God has designed the heart to serve human beings and all of his creatures.

More powerful even than the human heart is the Holy Spirit that functions in the lives of Christians. It is the Holy Spirit that created a new heart that believes in Christ for the forgiveness of sins and the escape from the judgment to come. You no longer believe and trust in your own self and your own strength to be saved. It is the Holy Spirit that keeps your faith in Christ alive and feeds that faith through the Word of God, the blessings of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

It is hard for me to begin to express to you what an honor and privilege it is to take you through these verses we just read to you that speak to us about a new heart that is powered by the Holy Spirit.

**<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.** Just look at how powerful the Holy Spirit is! The Spirit was involved with our heavenly Father in raising Jesus from the dead. That same Spirit will also be there on the last day along with the Father and Jesus to raise our mortal bodies back to life again.

In the Nicene Creed we confess that the Holy Spirit is the Lord and Giver of life. The Spirit was there at creation hovering over the waters and bringing life to this earth. The Holy Spirit will be there to give life to your body when Jesus returns. It is also the Holy Spirit

who has taken spiritual dead people like us and brought us to life in Christ Jesus our Savior. As it says in our text, "he gives life to our mortal bodies through his Spirit who lives in you." It is also the Holy Spirit that keeps that heart of faith beating by constantly taking you back to Jesus as your hope of forgiveness rather than turning inwardly to yourself.

We have our sinful flesh that always wants to turn us inward toward ourselves. As Martin Luther said, "The human heart is an idol factory." The world around us says, "Trust in your heart. Follow your feelings." The Holy Spirit creates life in our mortal bodies by constantly turning us to Jesus so that we sing, "In Christ alone my hope is found."

**<sup>12</sup> Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it.** I have no obligation to my sinful flesh. My sinful flesh tells me that I am not good enough for God to love me and I must do more in my life to earn God's favor. That's when I tell my sinful human heart I am not listening to you. I owe you nothing. The Holy Spirit leads me to want to serve Christ not to earn his favor but because he has loved me and rescued me when I did not deserve to be rescued.

If you take a needle and poke it into your finger and then squeeze your finger blood will come out. Poke into any part of your life and you will bleed a love for Jesus that wants to serve him in his kingdom. Romans 8 begins with the words, "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." It ends with the words thought that nothing in all creation will ever separate us from his love. We live each day in total amazement at what Jesus did to declare us not guilty when we deserve to be condemned for our sin. That's because the Holy Spirit has given you a new heart that believes what you believe.

**<sup>13</sup> For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, <sup>14</sup> because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.**

"If you live according to the sinful nature, you will die." If I were to keep giving into my sinful flesh and its desires, then I will die. I will start justifying my sinful actions and even justifying myself before God by constantly making excuses. The faith in Christ will die. I will lose what Christ has done. I will be eternally lost. That's why it is such good news that the Holy Spirit is alive in me and in you putting to death the misdeeds of the body. When sin pops up, the Holy Spirit causes us to rise up and go on the attack against the sin. He gives us armor to wear and the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.

What happens in your home body when there is invasion of nasty germs. If you get a sliver in your finger, the white blood cells are sent to attack the infection. There is all out warfare. The yellow stuff is a result of the dead white blood cells that were fighting for you.

How many times the Holy Spirit has led you to say no to sin this past week of your life here on this earth. Thank the Holy Spirit for all those times you have said, "I never want to see that happen in my life." Thank the Holy Spirit for all those times you have prayed so fervently, "Lord Jesus forgive me."

Oh, don't you love these words, "because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God?" Sometimes we hear people say, "I accepted Christ into my heart." Wouldn't it be much better to say, "I was led by the Holy Spirit to believe in Christ Jesus my Savior?" Jesus said in John 3, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit." Ephesians 2 says, "Because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even we were dead in transgressions."

The Holy Spirit loves to lead us. It says we are led by the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit leads you to see your sin. The Holy Spirit convicts you and warns you and shows you the judgment to come. The Holy Spirit then leads you to Jesus. Your eyes of faith see every transgression placed on Jesus. You see him being punished in your place. Because of Jesus you believe with all your heart you are a dear child of your heaven Father.

**15 For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."** Paul is writing these words about slavery to Christians living in Rome who were familiar with slaves who had no rights. It has been estimated that one third of the Roman Empire was made of slaves. The devil and my own sinful flesh like to put me down and beat me into submission. "You are worthless. You can't do anything right. You aren't that special. Why don't you go back to trying to proving yourself worthy." Then the Holy Spirit steps in and says, "You are have the position of sonship." When Roman boys reached a certain age, they were given a big party and the father proudly said "This is my son."

The Holy Spirit makes you so sure you are sons and daughters instead of slaves that you boldly cry out to your God, "Abba Father." The first prayer I learned as a little child was, "Abba Father. Amen." Abba is a term of endearment. The Holy Spirit leads you to pray boldly to your heavenly Father. Think of how often you prayed to your God this past week as your dear heavenly Father. Beating inside of you and flowing through every part of your being is this confidence you are a dear child of your heavenly Father.

The Holy Spirit will not let you forget this fact. **16The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.** Notice how closely your news spirit in Christ is connected to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit keeps testifying to you over and over again that you are dear child of God. I was holding my little grandson this past week as my daughter finished packing her bags. I held him in front of the mirror to so he could see his grandpa holding him. It was too much for him to process. He seemed to be confused and even a little afraid. The Holy Spirit loves to hold a mirror in front of you and show you over and over again that you rest in the arms of your heavenly Father. That removes all our fears. As Jesus said in John 10, "No one can snatch them out of my Father's hand."

Because you are dear children of your heavenly Father through Jesus you are heirs of a whole better life coming in the future. **17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs— heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.** It says here we share in Jesus' suffering. Jesus went to the cross because there was no other way to be saved. We suffer with Jesus when we insist that there is no way for people to be saved except through Jesus. But we are also co-heirs with him of the glory that is waiting for us. Jesus was raised to life with a glorified body and we will be raised to life with a glorified body. We never grow tired of hearing Jesus pray the night before he died, "Father, I want those you have given me to be

with me where I am and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.”

The sufferings in this life for the name of Christ, or just any suffering in life is small compared to the glory that will be hours. <sup>18</sup> **I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.** This is not our real home. Our real home is with Jesus in the place he has prepared for us, the hope of glory. We can look at troubles and say, “In the light of eternity does it really matter.” Even God’s creation yearns and longs for that day when Jesus returns and there will be a new heaven and new earth. National Geographic films display the violence in nature with the words, “In nature there are no happy endings.” In the verses coming after this we are told we groan inwardly for a whole new world because we have the first fruits of the Holy Spirit. We have tasted the first fruits of Jesus resurrection and we know the best is yet to come. We are so thankful for the new hearts that have been given to us by the Holy Spirit and new hearts empowered by the Holy Spirit. Amen.